

Remote and Blended Learning – Chailey School’s journey

An evaluation and summary of progress, and identification of next steps

September 2020

‘Lockdown’ – March-July 2020

- Like most schools, lockdown hit us quickly and with only a little preparation in place
- The issues below are those we identified and faced in this period, and the commentary that follows outlines and evaluates our solutions:
 1. Managing workflow – providing a coherent structure for remote learning to take place
 2. Gaps in teacher expertise and confidence in using online learning tools
 3. Gaps in parental and student understanding of online learning tools
 4. Managing workflow – engagement and challenge for students
 5. Managing workflow – access to resources and digital equipment for students, particularly the disadvantaged
 6. Monitoring and assessing student engagement and progress
 7. Maintaining a sense of community and pastoral support in troubled times, particularly for the disadvantaged
 8. Evolution (or revolution?) in online learning – introducing ‘live lessons’
 9. Planning for scenarios in 2020-21
- Managing workflow – structure for learning: we moved quickly to an **adjusted timetable of work set online, using our existing SMHW**, for all year groups – this worked successfully
- Teacher expertise and CPD: expertise in using online learning tools was initially uneven - strong in some faculty areas but patchy elsewhere; there was therefore a clear need for rapid staff training and sharing of the expertise in using various online learning tools - by April, **a strong programme of online CPD**, collated and then administered in a structured and accessible way through **Microsoft SharePoint** and using a range of training materials (many developed by colleagues) was in place and running. Key training to make remote learning as effective as possible was identified for staff as compulsory – engagement with staff was very positive and **key staff (e.g. Dan Hallam) became central** in developing training, supporting staff, and communicating with ESCC – collaboration was very strong, and confidence built rapidly
- Gaps in parental and student understanding of online learning tools – this was built on the basis of **individual queries**; there were some hard-to-reach students who did not (or could not) access the remote work;
- Managing workflow – engagement: the approach to this evolved in **response to parental feedback** – initially **Edulink** was used by teaching staff to record points for completion or non-completion, but this was reported as demotivating by parents. The **pastoral team**, therefore, gathered information on a weekly basis, at who was not completing work, and **engaged with targeted supportive communication with home**;
- Accessible resources and plugging gaps in digital provision – used SMHW as the key point for resources, but also increasingly included SharePoint (and also Forms) as useful Cloud places for sharing resources. In terms of hardware, application for **laptop scheme** swiftly made (but took time to arrive), and those students without laptops identified (**particularly disadvantaged students**) and supplied with these or other school laptops
- Assessing and formative feedback – system of feedback on work developed as lockdown continued; formative assessment improved through the use of **online quizzing** and then through **targeted questions in ‘live lessons’**;

- The need for monitoring and reporting – as lockdown continued, it seemed prudent to ‘report’ from each subject area, **(a) the expected quality (given ability), and (b) quantity of remote work completed by each student** – this would then prove useful for students (in seeing how their output was regarded, given distance from ‘real’ classroom), parents (in seeing how well their children were doing and where potential gaps were in their learning), the pastoral team (in providing robust evidence on who needed additional intervention), and SLT (in evaluating the success of strategy and targeting areas for improvement). Although there was a little expected ‘turbulence’ with this approach (mostly from parents whose perception of what their children were doing differed from that of teachers), this provided very valuable information in planning further action and **intervention in September** in particular;
- Maintaining community and pastoral work – as lockdown continued, we stepped up our pastoral work – tutors were required first to email and then phone all their tutees as a **‘welfare check’**, by June, structured Teams meeting with tutees were also in place – **targeting the disadvantaged** and any others about whom concerns had been raised were specifically targeted for this; recorded **weekly ‘virtual’ assemblies** were also run to help to maintain some **sense of school routine and contact** for our community
- Using feedback from parents – this helped the school **to evaluate and continually ask questions** as to its approach; such feedback (sometimes unsolicited, sometimes through requests) **was nearly always supportive**, but sometimes offered suggestions for improvements – these lines of communication were kept open with the headteacher very often replying to them personally; the **headteacher** also communicated with parents and students in a **weekly newsletter** to keep community links, and more frequently with staff to maintain morale and support; members of SLT with support staff also, when time permitted, ran weekly/fortnightly activities (e.g. photography competition, gardening tasks) to enhance staff well-being and keep spirits up;
- Moving to Teams and ‘live lessons’ – by June, it was time to further **enhance our remote provision for remote learning by moving to ‘live lessons’ using Teams**; sufficient staff expertise had now been built up with support mechanisms in place, and ESCC had finally managed to set up the Teams groups for staff – this could now commence, firstly with tutor groups to build up both **staff and student confidence** in using this, and then increasingly with all teaching groups; **protocol for behaviour and safeguarding procedures for staff** were laid out and established; after some initial teething issues (e.g. ICT issues, students using the ‘Chat’ function for off-topic chat), these generally ran very well; some ICT issues – there was considerable **support for staff from pastoral team**, and classroom teachers were encouraged to work in pairs on live lessons, with a phased approach to its introduction;
- Students back in school – in terms of **student confidence and mental well-being** about returning to school in a Covid climate, and also for the **academic progress for Year 10 students** in particular, the last 2-3 weeks of the summer term saw all students return to the physical environs of the school either for a **tutor session** or, in the case of GCSE students, a **series of lessons from different subject areas** on subjects that were most difficult to teach and learn ‘at a distance’ – these were warmly received
- Preparation for 2020-21 – whilst it was impossible to predict exactly what school would be like in September 2020, it was clear that we needed to (a) pay close attention to possible changes in **student mental health** (hence the steps taken in the above section), (b) consider how **adaptations to subject curricula** to address critical gaps in knowledge and understanding, as well as any **intervention for groups or individual students** could be planned, and (c) begin to **plan for high quality and effective blended learning**. To support this preparation, two days of **INSET time** was set up to give staff thinking and preparation time for this (see next section for approach taken)

'The Return to School' – September-October 2020

- By the time of return to 'full' school in September 2020, clearer guidance from the DfE was available on remote and blended learning, and our approach had responded accordingly
- Our approach will need to be **flexible** according to changing circumstances as well as availability of resources
- Staff planned for this with the guidance beneath and the following thinking in mind: *'Schools should ensure remote education, where needed, is high-quality and aligns as closely as possible with in-school provision.'*

DfE Expectations for students self-isolating:

1. Curriculum sequence linked to school's curriculum experience.
 2. Use high quality online and offline resources and teaching videos.
 3. Provide clear explanations of new content delivered by a teacher in the school or through high quality curriculum resources e.g. Oak Academy.
 4. Check work to gauge how well students are progressing and adjust pace and difficulty in response to questions or assessments.
- The school therefore planned its remote and blended curriculum provision with three main scenarios in mind:

Scenario A: all year groups in school, but some individuals at home e.g. smallish numbers in self-isolation

The key consideration when preparing and setting work for Scenario A is to ensure, as best as possible, that students have lessons via 'remote learning' that means that they will have covered the same sort of material and subject matter and are not behind nor in a hugely different place when they return to lessons and learning in school. In other words, they are 'up-to-date' with their work by completing the remote learning set.

In order for this to work effectively, the following should be adhered to:

- Remote Learning should be set on 'Classwork' on SMHW.
- Set work every 1-3 weeks depending on subject area.
- Where possible, units should be shared out between teachers.
- The resources should be in the form of **coherent, structured 'lessons'** (a **stated objective or enquiry question** for the overall learning might help show this - or a clear 2 sentence introduction) rather than just a collection of activities
- Long-term research projects are to be avoided
- We will 'check' work through assessments that are submitted. These should only be the assessments that are being set in class, and would normally be the standard faculty assessments identified in the faculty's assessment policy.

These options provide guidance on how this may be achieved:

Option 1: Follow slides used in class (students should record in books slide numbers covered in each lesson).

This should ideally include the following content:

- a recorded explanation
- written work or activity
- link to worksheets on SharePoint
- link to videos, reference to GCSEPod etc.

Option 2: Oak Academy* or similar online resource covering the same/very similar subject matter with brief instructions recorded on a PowerPoint slide or written on SMHW.

Option 3: A unit that follows your curriculum sequence but is pared down (includes the content in Option 1).

The work must be available from Monday 28th September 2020. The Inset Day on the 23rd September can be used to plan and organise the initial weeks of this programme in advance. This, however, is likely to be an ongoing requirement as work proceeds through the term.

Scenario B: some bubbles or year groups at home; others in school

Arrangements for this will, to some extent, depend on what groups are at home and whether this means that there is a reduction in teaching group commitments for staff in school. If there is no reduction in taught lessons for members of staff in school, then there can be no 'live lessons' provided for those at home - teachers' time will be committed to teaching their in-school groups; arrangements (and lessons/learning) via Scenario A will be followed. [The exception for this would be in the development of either live 'sound and PowerPoint' streaming of lessons via Teams or Stream \(or recording of those lessons\) to students isolating at home – trials in this are currently being run \(October 2020\);](#)

However, if a year group (for example) or entire teaching group is 'isolated' at home, then the following model is proposed:

- 'Live lessons' shall be provided by the class teacher(s) for each class (or year group if that can be seen to work) in the proportion of one 'live lesson' to two 'independent working' lessons (or one 'live lesson' per week for core subjects)
- A 'live lesson' may not necessarily be a full 50 minutes nor require the teacher's face to appear through a 'Teams' screen; however, it should have three key elements incorporated in it: (i) an element of teacher modelling or explanation (which would be difficult in an 'independent working' lesson; (ii) the teacher asking the students questions – formative assessment, usually using the 'Chat' forum for answers for instance; (iii) the opportunity for the students to ask the teacher about the learning – again, this could be via the 'Chat' forum. These are the elements that would be missing from the 'independent working' lessons where work would be set that followed up, and connected to, the learning from the 'live lesson' or prepared for the following lesson
- The existing school timetable would need to be adhered to for this pattern of lessons, and this system would need to start operating immediately or within 3 days (tbc) of a group being asked to isolate at home

Scenario C: complete lockdown

If this occurs, then we move to an enhanced version of what was operating towards the end of last summer. Essentially, it will be as described in Scenario B but for all year groups. The existing school timetable would need to be followed (*this may be adapted in a similar way to that of last summer's 'lockdown' – to be discussed and confirmed*);

TD/ RT

October 2020