

**Churchill Community Foundation School and 6th
Form Centre**

**Summary of Review of Year 7 Curriculum by SLG
for Parents**

December 2010 – February 2011



The review was completed in Term 2 and 3 2010/2011 by the Senior Leadership Group.

The aims of the review:-

- To identify the positive impact of the Accelerated Year 7 Curriculum upon both academic and personal performance
- To identify areas of the Accelerated Curriculum that require further consideration and development
- To look specifically at how differentiation supports learners of all abilities.

What was done:-

- Data about performance at KS2 and in the CAT tests was considered
- Year 7 Lessons were observed
- Iris Behaviour Log was looked at and analysed
- A survey was sent to tutors and teachers
- An online survey was available to Year 7 Parents
- Groups of Year 7 students were interviewed by the Year 10 Learning Team

What did we learn?

- Year 7 has a significant proportion of students with lower levels of literacy than other year groups in the school
- The majority of students are happy, have settled well into secondary school and making satisfactory or good progress.
- Teaching was outstanding or good in 70% of lessons observed (26 in total) Lessons were thoroughly planned - this ensured that students were developing the learning described in the objectives. In the best lessons plans were well paced, interesting and varied in activity.
- Thinking Skills are a focus of the best lessons
- There is an excellent range of well-designed resources using a variety of media, combined with interesting and often lively presentation
- There are high levels of pupil motivation, demonstrating a desire to learn and to ask questions or offer ideas that added to the impact of the lesson
- There are positive relationships in the classroom – teacher/pupil and pupil/pupil
- Behaviour of Year 7 is good. Students with a high number of negative IRIS points have been identified by teachers and disruption to learning is managed well.
- Some learning groups students did not have the necessary equipment.
- The use of praise was frequently given verbally but there was not enough reference to IRIS rewards in lessons.

What do staff say about Year 7

- Teachers and tutors feel that they have positive relationships with Year 7 students and that they are able to meet the learning needs of the majority of students.
- Teachers identified their concerns as being the impact of split classes, some rooming issues and poor peer relationship/ immaturity of some learning groups.
- Tutors were pleased with the way that Year 7 had settled – saying that they seem happy and confident and have adapted to vertical tutoring well.
- Many tutors felt that the older students had been very supportive of Year 7.
- A high number of teachers and tutors felt that Year 7 had really benefitted from taking part in the Okehampton residential.

What have Parents told us? (76 responses)

- 94% of parents responding felt that their child was happy.
- From the 6% of parents who feel that their child is not settled they have not necessarily (80%) told us about this.
- 92% of parents felt that their child had coped with the transfer from Primary School.
- Over 70% of parents were pleased with the quality of information supplied by Churchill to support the transfer process.
- Parents felt that students were making good progress in most subjects and specifically mentioned:-

Subject	
RE	4
History	4
Art	5
Music	2
Dance	7
Spanish/French	8
Science	6
Technology	9
English	3
PE	4
Drama	1
Geography	5
Maths	3

- Homework was an issue that really split parental opinion. There were strong views about the quantity, type and values of homework from both supporters and dissenters.

- Common themes for consideration in the light of this review were:-
 - The number of homework projects set early in Year 7.
 - Too many posters.
 - The need for students to develop research skills of planning and structuring research before being set research topics.
 - The differentiation of homework for less able.

- Parents thought that the highlight of Year 7 so far had been:-

Highlights	
New opportunities / Variety	7
Playhouse Concert	8
Okehampton	18
Technology	7
New Friends	16
Science	1
Sports teams	5
Contact with older students	4
Independence	8
Oasis	3

- Other specific comments made by parents have been or are in the process of being followed up individually.

What the Year 7 Students say:-

- Students like the variety, freedom, having different teachers, making new friends, new subjects.
- They consider the highlights of Year 7 so far to be Okehampton, tutor challenges, Technology, Science, House matches, Christmas concert.
- They felt that they have settled well but that a map of the school and less homework at first would help them to settle better.
- They were very positive about the following subjects making them feel challenged:-
 - Geography, Art, Technology, English, PE, Drama, Dance, History, Maths and Language
- They were clear about My Maths homework needing more explanation, too many posters for homework and that they liked longer projects but often needed more time to complete them.
- They felt that the most annoying thing was when others disrupt their learning.

- They liked vertical tutoring
- They gave overwhelming positive feedback about friendliness and support from older students

Recommendations

The Senior Leadership Group have discussed the findings and shared all of this feedback in more detail with Faculty Coordinators, Heads of House, teachers and tutors. Our recommendations are:-

- To pass on praise for the many positive contributions each faculty has made to ensuring that students in Year 7 are happy and have settled well into Churchill.
- For teachers to make sure that there is clear differentiation of learning objectives, expectations and outcomes between and within Learning Groups
- That teachers continue to develop Thinking Skills in lessons
- There should be a review of project based homework set early in Year 7
- There should be explicit teaching of research skills to support project based learning
- Teachers should always identify of specific web sites / resources for Year 7 students to select /research information.
- Use of IRIS rewards needs to increase
- To pass on positive parental feedback regarding care and guidance provided by the pastoral system to tutors
- To explicitly praise/reward older students for their contribution to supporting Year 7
- To address the poor organisation of equipment for learning