



# Haberdashers' Adams' Federation

Members of the Family of Haberdashers' Schools  
Adams' Grammar School & Abraham Darby Academy

CEO Newsletter

Issue 2

Autumn Term 2009

*"Education is about instilling values and creating dreams"*

*"We believe that all our students can do amazing things with their lives, whatever their background, whatever their abilities and aptitudes, wherever they start from."*

Dear Parents and Carers

It is now 12 months since the Abraham Darby Academy opened and the Haberdashers' Adams' Federation was established with common governance over the two schools.

The aim was to develop "Two Schools with One Vision", to develop an ethos and atmosphere at the Academy similar to that at Adams' and through the Federation to share best practice leading to further improvements and rising standards in both schools.

## The Philosophy:

*"Talking up students' aspirations is crucial. If you look out for the things that people are doing well and emphasise the positive, dealing with the negative in a sensible and tactful way, you're likely to make people exceed their own notion of their potential. And that's what education is to a large extent about, isn't it? Helping people go beyond where they think they might go."*

## and Mission:

*'To develop in young people of all abilities the traits necessary for them to play a useful, productive and leading role in society in the Twenty First Century, and to enable them to exceed their own notion of their potential.'*

The two schools aim to provide their students with outstanding opportunities and aim to create an ethos of the highest possible personal achievement. To this end there are four aspirations for all students: -

- To develop students who are ambitious, hard working and successful.
- To develop in students an intellectual interest and curiosity in their studies. We want them to be excited by their studies.
- To see students fully involved in extra-curricular activities and aspiring to do these to the best standard possible.
- To encourage all students to aspire to the highest of standards of behaviour and to have high principles and values.

While accepting there is a long way to go, the early signs are that it will be a success. Public examination results have improved in both schools and there is strong

evidence of increasing co-operation at all levels leading to improvements in both schools.

## Public Examination Results.



At Adams' the public examination results were the best ever achieved, with over three quarters of pupils reaching A/B grade at A

level and a similar percentage at A\*/A grade at GCSE. Thirty-five pupils scored straight A grades at A level, and 5 pupils achieved 11 A\*s at GCSE.

At Abraham Darby Academy all the main attainment figures show a significant improvement on those ever achieved by the predecessor school.

Percentage of students with 5 or more passes at Grades A\* - C = 64%

Percentage of students gaining 5 or more passes at Grades A\* - C (incl. English & Maths) = 38%

Aptitudes, abilities and ambitions vary more greatly at the Academy and the significant



improvement on the results of previous years indicate that far more students exceeded their target grades than those who fell short of them. There were outstanding results from students of all abilities.

As always the feeling of the Senior Leaders in both schools is that there is still room for the results to improve much more over the coming years.

### Governance

The Governing Body are the Schools' Board of Directors. They set the targets for the two schools and the Federation, their policies and evaluate progress. We are blessed with very capable, hard working, ambitious & innovative Governors.

Currently we have a Federation Curriculum and Specialisms Committee, a Federation Pupil Welfare Committee and separate Finance and Buildings Committees for each school.

Dr Henrietta Harnisch, the Chair of the Governors Curriculum Committee, said at the end of the last meeting, "It is fantastic to see just how far the Federation has developed in such a short space of time." There are a number of obvious factors behind this:

- The way that Steve Hawke, the Principal at the Academy has embraced the Adams'/Haberdashers' ethos and aspirations, so that he and Michael Barratt, the Head at Adams', are talking very much the same language to staff, parents, students and the wider community.
- The willingness of both Senior Leadership Teams to share best practice and to learn from

each other. This has been greatly advanced by the move of Lee Hadley from Adams' to become Vice Principal at the Academy and the movement of Gary Hickey the opposite way to become Deputy Head at Adams'.



- The use of the Adams' Training School as a shared resource has meant it has become a catalyst for the improvement of Learning and Teaching in both schools and the sharing of ideas and best practice between staff.

The important thing to grasp is that both schools are gaining from sharing ideas. Both schools now have common databases and common methods of evaluating students and staff performance. We are now looking for a common strategy for the development of Learning and Teaching by drawing common themes out of the current evaluation of departmental performance which staff in the two schools can then work on and develop together.

Dr Harnisch also said, "Mr Hadley has become a champion in the Academy not only for raising aspirations, but also for developing a curriculum to meet the needs of students of all abilities and aptitudes in line with our aspirations."

***"We will develop a curriculum that meets the needs, sparks the imagination and brings the best out of each individual student according to his/her ambition, aspirations, ability, interest and learning styles"***

***"Young people will respond to challenge as long as that challenge is relevant to their individual needs and aspirations"***



### Training School.

The Training School (first initiated by Mr Hadley, then developed by Mr Hickey and now under the leadership of Mr Duncan Bowdler, formerly Head of Economics and Business Studies at Adams') has become a catalyst for the improvement of Learning and Teaching in both schools and the sharing of ideas and best practice between staff. Examples include:-

Last year there was a series of Training Days on outstanding lessons, outstanding teaching and stretching the most able for staff in both schools. There was a

Joint Staff Training Day on post 16 collaboration to help prepare for the new Academy Sixth Form which opened in September. Six members of staff received Research Bursaries last year and seven will receive them this year. They are given to encourage engagement in research in different areas of Learning and Teaching and then the results are shared with staff in both schools. There are currently 18 teachers involved in the MA in Education programme.

There are a number of staff receiving bursaries towards other studying: Ben Bransfield (MA English), Alan Morris (OU Maths module) and Christine Crowe (OU Spanish module), all with a view to improving or broadening their subject knowledge. Support staff are also involved in the training programme. E.g. MA in Business and CIPFA.

There were four GTP students in the two schools last year. This year there are another four GTP students. There were seven other Initial Teacher Trainees and seven Open University students in the Federation throughout the year.

From September 2009 all staff induction materials (including a common Staff Induction Handbook) will be available to staff in both schools on line.

We are now looking to offer training on a wider basis to T&W schools in association with the LA – Members of a Masters Cohort from across Telford and Wrekin, totaling four separate schools (and one parent) are starting on the last part, dissertation, of an MA in education.

There was a pilot scheme where Lower Sixth students at Adams' were asked to reflect on their learning in particular lessons and feedback to staff, and we hope to gradually expand this out across both schools in the future.

An Observatory Classroom has been established at Adams' where staff can record and review their lessons. Ultimately we hope to build a library of exemplar teaching from all members of staff across the two schools.

Staff in both schools are becoming increasingly used to planning and working together, and in observing each other's lessons. This is increasingly taking place across the Federation also.

We have also offered the opportunity for parents to get involved in learning opportunities including language classes and the MA in Education.

Primary school outreach regularly takes place in areas related to the specialisms of the two schools – Languages, ICT, D&T and Performing Arts.

### Partnership with Parents.

**We strongly believe that parental aspiration and involvement is the single most critical factor in determining a pupil's success. Education at its best is a partnership and the success of any student depends on a positive and effective relationship between parent/guardian, Academy and student. A strong factor in the success of Adams' over the years has been that pupils and parents have fully bought into its ethos and aspirations. There is evidence that this is now emulated at the Academy.**

*“The person who accepts any less of him/herself in life than he/she is truly capable will never be really happy”*

*“Shoot for the moon - even if you miss you'll be among the stars”*

### The Haberdashers Company



The Company is trustee of three main grant-making foundations and four schools foundations. The latter were established by members of the Company in the 16th and 17th centuries that now support **eleven** schools in both the maintained and independent sectors. The Foundations own the land and buildings of the schools and provide income to them, and the Company provides a number of governors for all the schools. There are over 10,000 pupils in all and nearly 1,300 staff.

They have a number of charitable funds through which, for example, they can help pupils and former pupils towards costs of GAP Years, personal development projects and vocational training. They can offer a limited amount of help towards degree courses in cases of genuine hardship. They do on occasion support schools for items such as sports team tours or other group trips. They also run Haberdashers' School Leavers' Overseas Projects – the current projects are in Sri Lanka, South Africa and Zambia. There are also a number of Bursaries available for staff. Applications for the use of these funds should be made through the Headmaster or Principal.

They also run a variety of events each year which allow governors, staff, students and parents of all the Haberdashers' Schools to come together making them truly a 'Family of Schools' e.g. the annual Governors' Training Day, Fraser



Birds Rugby Sevens Competition, the 'Habs 6' Girls Competition and the Monmouth Enterprise Initiative for Sixth Formers. In addition this year musicians from all the schools will be playing in the Handel Concert in London on 13<sup>th</sup> November.



For more information about the Haberdashers' do visit their website. [www.haberdashers.co.uk](http://www.haberdashers.co.uk)



### Students

We are increasingly trying to bring students from the two schools together e.g Clubs such as the Science Club and Debating Society holding joint events;

musical groups from one school playing in the other's assemblies or holding informal lunchtime concerts; the Handel concert in London; shared events for Prefects and the Student Councils. There were sessions last term where Adams' Sixth Formers provided one on one Maths tutorials to academy Year 11 students and we hope to replicate them again this year.

### Chief Executive Officer.

I will be retiring at Christmas. My role in overseeing the beginnings of the new Academy and the development of the soft federation between the two schools has been achieved. Both schools have headteachers who have a strong belief in the Haberdashers'/Adams' ethos and the aspirations, ideas, skills and energy, drive and determination to take them forwards confidently into the future. It is time for 'the old man' to step aside and to give the 'young bucks' their head.

I will not be going completely. I have already taken over the role of Clerk to Governors and will be returning on a part time consultancy basis to assist Governors and

when asked to advise on the future development of the two schools and the federation between them.

### New Build

We are excited to announce that T&W have chosen Kier as the contractor to complete their BSF programme. The Academy has been the test project through the preferred bidder phase and will be the first new build to be completed.

Mr Jeans, Chairman of the Haberdashers' Educational Committee said of Kier's Design for the new Academy, "The building is inspirational and will make a real statement about the educational aspirations of the Academy and of T&W."



Mr Steve Hawke said, "The design reflects the Haberdashers' concept of 'Enlightened Traditionalism' – a building outside which will reflect the architecture of the gorge and reflects its status as a World Heritage Site; inside it is designed to provide an educational environment for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. With the Leisure Centre and Woodlands Primary School on the site, it will provide outstanding sporting, musical and performing Arts facilities for our students and the local community"

The builders will be on site early next year and the buildings will be complete by September 2011.

Adams' will gain from the BSF programme also, that comes in a later phase. However we have already begun talks with T&W about our plans, so that we will be ready to progress our plans if the opportunity arises sooner.

All in all then, the Academy and the Federation have started well. We all recognise that there is still a lot to do. We have ambitious targets and our aim is to exceed them!

The motto will continue to be:

*"You don't have to be ill to get better"*

Jim Richardson  
CEO

The Haberdashers' Adams' Federation