

- This week is National Apprenticeship Week.
- The theme of the week is 'Look Beyond' and will celebrate the diversity and value that apprenticeships bring to employers and apprentices.
- The main messages being promoted to young people is to think beyond well-known post-16 routes of 6th form and university, and consider apprenticeship options.
- Last week, Year 9 students visited the Post-16 Options Fair in the gym to explore some of these options.
- For many students, they were sure that a 6th form route would be their choice after Year 11, but speaking to other providers gave them a chance to consider what else is available.
- Part of my school role is to make links and develop partnerships with businesses so that you, their prospective employees, can benefit from their knowledge, experience and advice.

- As part of our school Aspirations Programme there are a number of activities that rely upon the goodwill and input of businesses, for example:
- The annual careers fair; Year 10 work experience; Year 11 mock interviews; Aspire High talks; CV writing and student mentoring.
- These employer experiences are all very valuable, but I think the most interesting aspect of our business partnerships is talking to current employers and finding out what they are looking for when they advertise for new employees.
- The information they give us, helps us, the adults in school to develop our Whole Curriculum to ensure that you are well prepared for the future world of work.
- When it comes to recruiting staff, employers stress how important, well-developed personal qualities and skills are.

- Yes, grades and qualifications are needed to demonstrate a level of attainment and knowledge, but once you have made it to the interview stage, employers are looking for a well-rounded person.
- By that I mean, someone who is trustworthy, determined, resilient, is adaptable and can work with others.
- In my recent business meetings, the desirable skill I have heard mentioned most, is collaboration.
- Putting it simply, collaboration is what makes teamwork successful.
- Employers want staff who can work as part of a team, who can listen, communicate ideas and appreciate that others will have different viewpoints and perspectives
- As we move through the 21st Century, and jobs and skills become increasingly specialised, collaboration, cooperation or working in partnership has become more important than ever.

- Whether that be face to face, as part of a large group, or online, the ability to contribute ideas, but crucially, listen to, understand and appreciate somebody else's perspective is very much valued.
- Of course this sounds simple, but it is not always easy, or straight forward, as recent examples have demonstrated.
- On a national scale, a good example of people seeing events in a different way is the EU referendum.
- On Friday at 11pm the United Kingdom ended it's 47 year old relationship with the EU, bringing to a close over 3 years of debate around whether we should remain or leave.
- No one really knows how this decision will affect you or me in the future, but the differing viewpoints have divided the nation.
- A more local community example of differing perspectives is linked to Dr Pulle's assmebly, when he talked about the possibility of the school growing in size.

- The local authority see the development as a good thing, as it will open up more spaces to local children.
- Some staff and students may see one of the positives as working and learning in new and updated buildings.
- But some parents may be worried about there being too many students on one site.
- On this issue, nobody is right or wrong, so everyone must be listened to before a decision is made – this is called consultation.
- Our own perspectives are unique. We tend not to see things as **they** are, but as **we** are....by that, I mean....
- We look at situations and interpret what other people say and do, according to our own set of past experiences, culture, faith and values, all of which help us form our beliefs about ourselves, about others, and about the world in general.

- It is as though we are looking at the world through distorted or coloured lenses - and everyone has their own personal prescription or colour for their glasses.
- Of course, it's important to remember that if somebody is articulating a viewpoint that you feel is morally wrong, such as a racist view, we should not just accept this, but should challenge it in an appropriate and non-confrontational way, or report it to somebody else.
- For our school community to function effectively and happily, we must all work hard to collaborate, appreciate each other and demonstrate mutual respect – something that the vast majority of you do on a daily basis.....so thank you.
- Here at school, every one of us in this room will today, almost certainly, be faced with a situation, an event a conversation or a decision, that we view differently to somebody else.

- For example, that could be a student viewing a behaviour point as unfair, or a teacher not agreeing with a colleague's view in a meeting - the key is how we react in that situation.
- The same applies if we were all to discuss our thoughts on politics, faith or sport – if we all thought the same, life might be easier, but also quite boring.
- We should, and we do, celebrate diversity and difference as a good thing.
- Our school community is a microcosm of society.
- It includes people from different backgrounds and faiths, with different abilities and aspirations.
- This is why we promote the values of PRIDE, and in particular, empathy.

- Students and staff working in partnership so that we all have a sense of belonging and ownership is something we need to work hard at every day – and at some stage, in fact during most days, everyone of us, will get it wrong, in some way.
- An important part of this partnership work is ensuring that you, as students feel that you have a say in what's working, what needs improving and what could be introduced here at school.
- There are a number of ways in which we currently capture Student Voice: through surveys, conversations and meetings.
- The official method we use, is the Student Council. Although this group works hard, it is impossible for them to reflect the views and perspectives of all 2000+ students.

- For this reason, this week, we will be introducing a new online version of the Student Council, called Smart Councils.
- Smart Councils involves every tutor group discussing questions, created by students on school related topics that they feel need to be considered, and acted upon.
- The first question will be sent to your form this week and your form captain will explain how the process will work.
- So, in summary, my simple message to you this morning is...whether it be at home with your family, at lunchtime with friends, in the classroom with your teacher, or in your future workplace, work hard, to collaborate, with others.
- Listen, think before you speak, try not to judge other viewpoints, and do your best to show empathy.
- If you do this, then others are more likely to behave the same way, towards you.
- Thank you for listening.

