

## **Parents share in school's success**

### **Immediate release**

An Ashford high school is going places – and is determined to take parents with it.

The North School, which raised its game in record time after receiving a poor Ofsted rating in 2014, has since continued to make huge progress in improving standards and boosting achievement.

The school's parents' forum is just one way in which mums and dads are now kept informed about the changes that are transforming both the behaviour of pupils and the progress they are making.

The North was put into special measures after receiving an 'inadequate' rating from Ofsted in February 2014, but after just 16 months of what was described as "highly effective leadership" by the Swale Academies Trust, the watchdog reversed that decision.

The school has introduced a new curriculum to boost results in English, maths and science, and has set up two 'communities' – Essella and Mabledon – to make sure pupils benefit from good quality pastoral and academic care.

Key leaders from each community team told the parents' forum about the benefits of the new approach, with Mabledon community principal Stefan Eede pointing out that lateness was just one of the areas that had seen an improvement.

"We used to record 150 late pupils per day," he said, "but under the new structure, that figure has fallen to just 10 or 15. Children are arriving on time and they are arriving ready to work."

Lee Cregeen, Essella community principal and chair of the termly forum, said practices introduced in all Swale Academies Trust schools had made a big difference in areas such as exclusions. At the North, the number of exclusions had fallen dramatically, from 305 in 2014 to just 106 in the current year, he said.

“This reflects a number of improvements, including better communication with parents and the fact that each community holds a daily meeting to discuss the events of the day and the consequences for students who have misbehaved.”

The meeting heard that one of the things that had improved behaviour was focusing on consistency. “We call it ‘certainty over severity’,” explained Marcia Henry, Mabeldon’s vice-principal. “Pupils know what will happen if they break the rules and we apply the sanctions fairly and without exception.”

Parents had a chance to ask questions and were reminded about the school’s new website, which has strengthened communications between home and school.

“We have been working hard behind the scenes and the forum is a way of making sure that parents understand what we are trying to achieve and encouraging them to support our efforts,” said head teacher Nicki Hodges.