



PARENTS FORUM MEETING NOTES

ON WEDNESDAY 11TH JUNE 2014 AT 19:00

IN THE LECTURE THEATRE

Priory Governors present: John Griffiths, Graham Arr-Jones, Pauline Quinton, Penny Leach, and Peter Colebourn

Headteacher: Tony Smith

Parents: 6

Pauline Quinton welcomed parents and introductions were made.

The Lewes Co-operative Learning Partnership update

Graham gave an overview of the progression of the partnership explaining the schools involved with us as a Foundation School is Western Road. The five partner schools are South Malling, Southover, Rodmell, Pells and Iford and Kingston. It was explained the proposed implementation date has changed from the 1st May to the 1st August this is due to legal paper work including the Articles of Association taking longer than expected. It was outlined that there will be no change to terms of conditions for staff. Pauline explained she recently attended an area meeting for Chairs of Governing Bodies and the main message from this meeting was for Schools to look after themselves and to not expect much from the local authority. So Pauline thought this local partnership was even more important with this news and we would be stronger as part of the partnership. An example was given of how working together with another school has already worked with Sarah Timlin temporarily being Assistant Head at Western Road School. Graham said that on Monday there was a meeting at Western Road School with all the schools involved in the partnership to explain about the Memorandum of Understanding document to the partner schools. Graham thought this was a very productive meeting and it was interesting to meet other Governors. Pauline mentioned that on Friday 27th June there is a get together of all the schools involved in the trust to celebrate this partnership.

Q Why is Wallands School not part of the partnership?

They were uncertain of joining the partnership and felt they were not ready for a change in their status. But they could always become part of the partnership in the future.



Parents introduced themselves and explained the issues they would like the group to discuss.

Key points discussed were:

Homework and Show my homework tool

A parent of a Year 7 student said they would like their children to have less homework so they could have more time at weekends doing leisure activities. Another parent did not agree and they felt their child (Year 8) could be pushed to progress further with more homework. Some parents did not understand how much homework their child was getting and deadlines. TS explained about the show my homework tool which parents can use to look at what homework their child has got and deadlines. TS explained that some teachers also add additional resources to the bottom of homework if a student wants to research a topic further ie a link to a website or additional documents. Some parents felt that homework should be increased through the school to help with GCSEs and progressing onto further education. Another parent said they use the show my homework tool and find it very useful as they also look at other student's homework from the same year to compare teaching and homework set. Some parents were concerned about the irregular amount of homework students have sometimes a heavy workload and sometimes a lighter work load.

Performance targets and levels – changes to the curriculum

TS informed parents that levels and targets will be going in September for Year 7. TS will be speaking to Governors of the Teaching and Learning committee on the 24th June about these proposed changes and then informing parents of these.

Q Mr Ashworth spoke to parents before about different ability levels of students working together in mixed ability lessons. When the parent asked her children about this they didn't know if this was happening. Is this happening and how is it going as when it was previously discussed parents were unhappy about this?

TS - There were some initial concerns from some parents but no recent concerns have been raised. Those parents with lower and middle level students were very supportive of this. The main change was the introduction of mixed ability lessons in Year 7 English. This will progress to Year 8 next year. Despite initial concerns things seem to be going well and staff have had training this week.

Teaching Staff responding to emails

Parents were very happy with the way they are able to contact teaching staff via email.



Improvements to the school

Improvements discussed were:

- The clock outside on the school building being fixed
- French flag put up
- carpets

Q How did the last day go for the Year 11s?

TS - It went very well this year, the students did shirt signing on the Thursday and Friday they went to the leisure centre. The students arranged their own last day assembly which was very good. The School handled the last day differently this year including holding a meeting with parents. The Student Leadership Team worked hard with the other Year 11 students this year.

Uniform

Petition received from students

Pauline informed the parents she had received a petition from some students about whether or not female students should wear ties. Pauline was very impressed with the students for sending this into her. This will be discussed at the full Governing body meeting in July.

A parent thought some students looked appalling in the school uniform especially after school examples given were girls in short skirts and holes in tights.

TS spoke about the uniform correction the teaching staff are doing at the school to improve uniform offences.

Q A parent raised concerns about the amount of supply teachers their child had for a year to replace where a Science teacher had left. The parent was concerned as their child is in Year 10 and now has modules to do?

TS explained we have a permanent member of staff in this role now. Unfortunately, the school was not able to secure a teacher in the middle of the year and had to use a supply agency. In order to reduce the impact the school had to move existing teachers to prioritise the Year 11 students.

One parent wanted Mrs Nulty to know her child thought the assembly on feminism was very good.



Q One parent was concerned to hear about some self-esteem problems with a group of Year 10 girls. What does the school do to support children with anxiety and anorexia?

TS summarised the help that is available to students:

1. School Counsellor
2. Support from House staff
3. FLESS service
4. CAMHS referral
5. Student Mental Health First Aiders
6. External Agencies

TS spoke about FLESS saying that nearly fifteen students have been referred to them from Priory. This number use to be about two or three a year unfortunately they can't take any more referrals due to the high demand for the service. A high amount of anxiety from some students is around examinations. There is increasing pressure on young people both in their personal lives and at school due to the current climate.

Q Is some of the anxiety from students due to examinations only occurring in Year 10 and 11 would it help if they were used to an examination setting in earlier years at school like private schools?

This was discussed and this was not thought to add to anxiety as in Year 7 students have CAT tests and Year 9 Insight testing. There have been formal mock exams in KS4.

Q What are the early signs that students show of anxiety?

A lot of the time the student will tell a member of staff about their concerns.

Future Career prospects

Some parents were concerned what jobs will be available to young people in the future. Various discussions about this topic occurred including supporting all students in both academic and vocational activities to support them in their futures. The Careers advice department and external careers advice are available at the School.



Duke of Edinburgh award

A parent explained that she was glad this award was now available to the students as this is good for helping with team work.

Work Experience

The parents were highly positive about the students attending work experience in Year 10. In the discussions it was said that some schools do not offer work experience any longer. It was agreed that work experience was a valuable for the students to attend.

PQ thanked parents for coming and for their contributions.

Meeting ends: 20.15

Next meeting: to be determined