

## PARENT FORUM MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11<sup>th</sup> January 2017 AT 18.00 IN THE LECTURE THEATRE.

PRIORY GOVERNORS PRESENT: Sarah Roberts, John Griffiths, Audrey Whyte, Jason Knight, and Graham Arr-Jones

HEADTEACHER: Tony Smith

PARENTS: 18

ALSO PRESENT: Emma Brinkhurst (Clerk)

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

John Griffiths (Chair of Governors) welcomed parents and thanked them for joining the Governors at Parent Forum.

The Governors were introduced by John Griffiths.

John Griffiths gave the parents an update – key points were:

The Year 9 Options process is approaching with the Year 9 options evening on Thurs 2<sup>nd</sup> February which follows the new curriculum including Ebacc (The English Baccalaureate) options.

Budgets: The Governors look at the school budget as part of their meetings at the moment the annual budget is ok there will be increased costs occurred to the school through the levy for apprenticeships. Next year the school will use every saved up amount of money they have as budgets get tighter. This school is in a good position compared to some. In the future 2018/2019 national funding is coming in. At Priory the figure per pupil for funding is low. This is made more difficult by the Government changing things so regularly.

John Griffiths asked if we could go around the room and if parents could say their name and what year(s) their child(ren) are in at Priory.

One Parent had a child in year 11 and had another child coming to Priory.

One Parent had a child in year 9.

One Parent had a child in year 9.

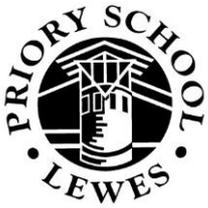
One Parent had a child in year 8, a child that has left Priory and one that is coming.

One Parent had a child in year 7.

One Parent had a child in year 7.

One Parent had two children in year 7 and two children that had left Priory.

One Parent had a child in year 7.



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One Parent had a child in year 7, 9 and 11.

One Parent had a child in year 10.

One parent had two children in year 7 and one in Year 9.

One parent had a child in year 7 and 10.

One parent had a child in year 7 and 10.

One parent had a child in year 10.

One parent had a child in year 10 and two children that have left school.

One Parent had a child in year 7.

The school have received an email from a parent who is unable to attend Parent Forum about acrylic nails – Tony Smith said we would come back to this email later in the evening if time.

John Griffiths asked the parents in attendance if anyone would like to start the forum with a particular question or query to the Governors or/and Headteacher.

### SCHOOL MEALS

**Q A parent asked if there was any update since the last Parent Forum on school meals following parents' comments about the quality and choice of school meals that were available?** Tony Smith said that the school have had a potential issue in regard to surveys due to data protection raised by a parent. As the survey would be done by an outside agency and this would mean sharing data. So the survey needs to be done by the school rather than the catering company/outside agency. The school are looking into how this could be done at the moment.

**Q A parent asked even if the survey was anonymous?** Even with anonymous surveys we need to be careful.

Even using the school's Insight system which is a well-known company this would be difficult as this would still be sharing of data. All parents are asked to sign the privacy notice which allows us to share data with agencies such as the LA but we have to be aware when parents state they do not wish data shared.

### ATTENDANCE OF STAFF

**Q A parent asked that the school have a big emphasis on student attendance do you have the same for staff attendance. As the parent mentioned their child has had supply teachers who don't know about the subject they are teaching or have come thinking they are teaching another subject?**

John Griffiths mentioned that every year the governors are provided with a dashboard summary of the school's attendance. The school's attendance against the national average is poor in certain student groups. This is not just a Priory issue this seems to be across Lewes down to Primary school level. The Governors are looking into attendance of pupils with special educational needs and pupil premium.

Mr Smith said that the school have a stringent staff absence policy and procedures which are under employment law. The school can put support plans in place for staff and ask for medical certificates where



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necessary. If a member of staff is on a training course we get a supply teacher in for cover. Unfortunately not all teachers who come from supply agencies are of the quality we would aspire to. Some days the school can really struggle to get someone to come into cover. The school do state what they would like i.e. a specialist teacher of Maths but sometimes the supply agency do not have a specialist teacher available.

### **Q Do supply teachers have access to the scheme of work or planned lesson information?**

The Curriculum Leader/Subject Leader would normally set up the lesson if the school were aware of the absence – including putting books in the classroom ready. If a member of staff phones in ill by phone/email the school try to arrange cover as soon as possible. We do have three of our own Cover Supervisors to help ensure greater continuity and consistency of practice.

### **Q How do you quality control the supply teachers?**

The Subject Leader tries to drop in on lessons where supply teachers are but this depends if they are teaching themselves. Tony Smith said he also tries to drop in on these lessons. If we received feedback of poor supply teachers we do say to the supply agency we do not want that person again. Another parent said it had not been a problem for her child when they had a supply teacher or cover supervisor they always had the plans. The benefit of our own Cover Supervisors are they know the school and the school's procedures and the students know them as a member of staff. Unfortunately the school can't afford any more of their own cover supervisors due to budget constraints. Also if there is no cover required on a particular day these members of staff become surplus (although are redeployed to other tasks).

### **Q What qualifications do Cover Supervisors hold?**

We aim for Higher Level Teacher Assistant Qualifications as the minimum.

### **Q What Safeguarding/security checks do you have in place for Supply Teachers?**

Reception would follow our safeguarding procedures at the school checking their badge and ID.

### **Q What about longer staff absences?**

If the school are aware of a longer term absence i.e. someone is signed off for two or three months we would recruit to fill the position.

### **Q What about maternity leave?**

We recruit for maternity leave for teachers. Teacher recruitment is very challenging at the moment and highly competitive sometimes schools get no applicants. It can be costly as if schools can't recruit supply agencies have to be used.

### **Q Do you know your staff percentage of absence?**

Tony Smith said he does provide the Governors with information of working days lost term by term. Against the national averages we are not vastly different.

### **Q A parent said when their child has supply teachers they say the behaviour in the classroom is bad?**

The school do try to have other members of Staff including the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) drop in and monitor classes that have supply teachers. Supply teachers are provided with a pack on arrival that includes information about our behaviour rules and how to contact a member of SLT on call. Part of the school values include respecting others. It was mentioned by a parent that their child has said to them that when they have a supply teacher they don't have to work. The parent said to child that you do have to work when you have a supply teacher.



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As well as saying to the supply agencies we don't want particular teachers we do also say we would like particular teachers again as well.

### E-Safety session for Parents

**Q A parent asked if there was an update about the session for parents on e-safety that was mentioned at the last Parent Forum?**

Tony Smith said that this is being organised by Nick Hockin and PC Ross and the Lifeskills department - a date will be coming hopefully before Easter.

### Parent Forum Minutes

**Q A Parent asked if the Parent Forum Minutes are available on the school website?**

Tony Smith advised Parent Forum Minutes are put on the school's website.

**Q A parent asked how the actions from the Minutes are followed up from Parent Forums?**

Tony Smith said that he takes back any action points back to SLT. Members of SLT then cascade anything relevant to their teams via the Curriculum Leaders who pass this information down via their Link Meetings. Tony Smith said that at the next parent forum action points are discussed.

### Maths

A parent mentioned following the previous parent forum they contacted their child's maths teacher after the Head of Maths mentioned extension resources are available.

Tony Smith mentioned following the previous parent forum meeting one of the Governors carried out a classroom visit to the maths department. The Governor explained they spent three hours with the department this included speaking to students and staff. The Governor also spoke to Karen Clinton (Deputy Headteacher.)

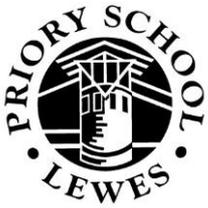
**Q Will the school be reviewing the absence from streaming in Maths?**

No, we will not be reviewing the absence of streaming in Maths mixed prior attainment teaching will continue in Year 7 and 8.

Parents mentioned that the Head of Maths at the previous forum was explaining that the new GCSE deconstructs Maths it is now mathematical reasoning and problem solving and the mastery approach.

**Q How can we help our Year 11 children with the new Maths GCSE?**

They need to practice, practice and practice. In classes teachers are providing exam style questions for them to work through. They all have PLC (Personal Learning Charts.) The school will be running Easter revision sessions and after school sessions for those that need extra support. Walking talking mocks are used by the school as well.



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### **Q Can parents see the PLC?**

Tony Smith was not sure but would check.

### **LUNCHTIME OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**

#### **Q A parent of a year 7 student asked if there are footballs available for the students to use at lunchtime?**

Tony Smith said each House Team office should have a football which students can borrow. Tony Smith mentioned the school have got a health improvement grant and are going to use this money to get four/five items of outdoor gym equipment. Tony Smith said that it is easier when the weather is better as the students have more room including the field which is out of bounds in winter. The school have more shelters available thanks to funding by the Friends of Priory (FoP). Tony Smith said that the school are very grateful to FoP – they are fantastic supporters of the school.

#### **Q Could there be some more footballs available at the House offices for students?**

There are four houses so four games of football can be going on at lunchtime and in winter the tennis court is really the only place these can be held.

#### **Q Do students bring their own footballs?**

Yes some do.

### **LIBRARY – LUNCH/BREAK TIMES**

#### **Q A parent said that their child can't always get into the library at break/lunch – is there limited numbers?**

At break students can go to the library to get a pass for lunchtime – but these are limited due to the library capacity.

### **BUDDY SYSTEM**

#### **Q Do you have a buddy system at the school?**

At the start of the new academic year when the new Year 7s come we do. But the new Year 7s soon outgrow their buddy.

### **WHOLE SCHOOL LUNCH TRIAL**

It was mentioned that a trial of a whole school lunch is likely to happen this year following student/parent comments. The school are not sure if it will be physically possible to get all year groups through on one lunch. There are four serving points (in summer there are five.)

#### **Q Will this be a longer lunch?**

Yes.

#### **Q Will this affect the start and end time of the school day?**

No it will not affect the start and end time of the school day. If we wanted to change the start and end time there would be a consultation with parents.

### **Whole class detention – over break**

A parent was concerned that their child's whole English class were kept back at break time and could not get food or exercise. Tony Smith said that there is a school policy of no whole class sanctions but this may



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have been a supply teacher/new member of staff who was not aware of this. Tony Smith said he would take this information back.

### **Students missing classes due to absence – how can they catch up**

#### **Q If pupils miss classes due to absence do teachers give students work to catch up on?**

No teachers would not give students work to catch up on they would not have capacity to manage this for every absence. Tony Smith said that students can use show my homework and the students' shared drive. Students could also approach their teachers direct about missed work. Tony Smith said curriculum guides are also available on the website which are a useful tool. These can be found via this link:

<http://www.priory.esussex.sch.uk/index.php/parental/curriculum>.

### **New student report format**

A parent felt that the Year 11 reports are more detailed and more personalised. Rather than for the other year groups where the parent felt the sentences were "pre-cooked". Tony Smith said that Julian Ashworth involved a group of parents with the format design of the report. Some parents felt that just one word for a subject instead of a sentence was not good. Tony Smith said that members of staff are working on the subject feedback to improve on this. A parent felt the format of the form with the averages being on the back is difficult to use as you have to keep turning the page to see this information. Tony Smith said he would take this information back.

#### **Q A parent asked that if the student reports are going to be handed out in tutor time could they be put in envelopes please?**

Tony said he would take this information back.

#### **Q A parent asked if it would be easier for the school if all correspondence was sent via email only - parents could opt in/out for receiving paper copies if they wanted?**

Tony Smith felt this was a good suggestion and could be sent out to parents to decide on how they wish to receive school mailings. Tony Smith to take this information back it was also felt that this would save on postage costs too.

#### **Q A parent asked if they can see their child's report via the Insight system?**

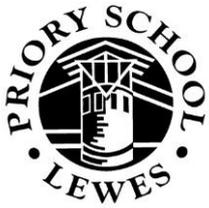
Tony Smith said that parents should be able to.

### **SHOW MY HOMEWORK**

Parents mentioned that at the last parent forum show my homework was spoken about. Parents are still finding that their children are saying they were given no homework in lessons but when they log in four pieces of homework are showing. Tony Smith said that homework should not be able to be seen until the go live date has happened. Tony Smith said there have been some recent issues with the website. Tony Smith said following the last parent forum he sent an email to all staff saying not to set homework over the holidays. A parent asked if show my homework can be compatible with all types of computer systems as some parents said their children can't view the PowerPoints.

### **PARENTS BEING ABLE TO GET INTO THE SCHOOL FOR PARENT FORUM**

Parents asked if a receptionist could be available to let people in the locked door for parent forum. Tony Smith explained due to the rail strikes some members of staff can't get home as they live a distance away so need to finish at a set time. The reception is one member of staff down at the moment due to the Receptionist leaving. It was felt that a Governor could be in the reception area to let people in for future forums.



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**Q A parent suggested that perhaps a mobile number could also be put on the door for anyone arriving late to ring to be let in?**

This was felt to be a good idea and will be looked into for the next forum.

**Q A parent asked if the Head Boy and/or Girl could be invited to attend the next Parent Forum or student representatives depending on their availability?**

Tony Smith said that it is sometimes difficult to get students to commit to attending evening events. Also, this was very much a forum for parents to express their views.

### Pupil Voice

**Q Have the Year 7 students been asked for their feedback on the transition from Year 6 to Year 7?**

Julian Ashworth has spoken to small focus groups but not a wider amount of Year 7s at the moment.

**Q Would a school wide yearly survey be useful for the school –what went well etc?**

It was felt that this was a good idea and a survey is coming out soon.

### Online teacher booking for parents' evening

**Q Parents mentioned that you only have five minutes to book all the teachers you want before the system times you out for parents' evenings - could the length of time be increased to maybe ten minutes?** Tony Smith said 90% + satisfaction has been reported by parents for the online system. Tony Smith would take this information back.

### Parent Voice Group (PVG)

A parent said that all parents are welcome to attend the next Parent Voice Group meeting which is on Mon 20<sup>th</sup> February 7pm-8.30pm in the conference room. The PVG is a body of volunteer parents/carers supported by the Senior Leadership Team (who are sometimes invited to attend and discuss particular issues with the Group). Information on Parent Voice Group and Minutes are available on the front page of the school website bottom left.

The meeting closed at 19:30

**Next meeting: Wed 10 May 2017 18:00 Lecture Theatre**