

PARENT FORUM MEETING NOTES

MEETING NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2ND MAY 2018 AT 18.00 IN THE LECTURE THEATRE

PRIORY GOVERNORS PRESENT: Graham Arr-Jones, John Griffiths (Chair of Governors), Peter Colebourn, Sarah Hinks, Sarah Roberts and Susan Carpenter

APOLOGIES FROM GOVERNORS: Penny Leach, Radha Stuart and Suzanne Howells

ALSO PRESENT: Tony Smith (Headteacher), Karen Clinton (Deputy Headteacher), Julian Ashworth (Deputy Headteacher) and Emma Brinkhurst (Clerk)

Parents: 20

Welcome and Introductions

John Griffiths welcomed parents and thanked them for joining the Governors at Parent Forum.

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

One parent had a son in Year 8.

One parent had a son in Year 8.

One parent had two sons in Year 8.

One parent had a daughter in Year 7.

One parent had a daughter in Year 7.

One parent had a daughter in Year 7.

One parent had a son in Year 7.

Peter Colebourn - Co-opted Governor.

One parent had a son in Year 8.

One parent had a daughter in Year 8.

One parent had a son in Year 11.

One parent had a son in Year 8 and 11.

Sarah Roberts – Parent Governor and has a daughter at the school.

One parent had a son in Year 9.

One parent had a son in Year 8 and 10.

One parent had a daughter in Year 8 and 11.



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Sarah Hinks – Co-opted Governor/Safeguarding Governor had three children come through Priory.

Graham Arr-Jones Foundation/Trust Governor had two sons come through Priory.

Tony Smith - Headteacher

Julian Ashworth - Deputy Headteacher

Karen Clinton - Deputy Headteacher

Susan Carpenter - Co-opted Governor and member of Staff.

John Griffiths – Foundation/Trust Governor

Mr Griffiths gave an update to parents:

BUDGET

There is extreme pressure on the school budget and we are now spending more than our revenue which means we are reducing the surplus we have been 'carry forward'. We are in a position where we clearly need an increase in the budget share (Income). Two weeks ago Mr Smith and Mr Griffiths met Maria Caulfield (MP) to explore funding issues in particular those raised as part of the #FlatCashEd - School Funding campaign. Maria was pleased that the government had secured an extra £1.3 billion for schools. At the meeting a graphical illustration was used to demonstrate that funding levels were now similar to 2013/14 and yet there has been significant cost increases. It was felt that Maria did listen carefully to the points raised and she assured us she would take this back to government.

Multi Academy Trusts (MATs)

Priory is researching partnerships and MATs with a view to exploring a Lewes wide Trust which will enhance the educational provision across the area. As we are at a research phase it is important to note that any decisions have not yet been made.

Key points raised by parents at parent forum:

Uniform

A parent read out a letter saying he was very pleased yesterday the school had used common sense and let students wear polo shirts in Year 7 due to the warmer weather. The parent would like the school to now take another step and allow Year 7 girls to wear skirts. The parent felt the uniform is unfair as it only applies to Year 7s. The parent had a petition which was signed by 270 people for the Governors and Mr Smith. The parents explained that a number of letters have been sent to Governors, Mr Smith and Mrs Twilley. The Parents suggested a solution could be a zero tolerance policy for shorter skirt lengths and that students could be asked to wear trousers if their skirt length was too short. The Parents felt the Year 7 girls



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being in trousers made them look like little business man and masculine and the students felt unattractive. The parents felt that the policy for Year 7 girls was unfair as it does not affect the whole school and causes resentment for Year 7s. Mr Smith explained that this policy was brought in as members of staff were spending a lot of time correcting uniform. Mr Smith stated that teaching and learning was the priority and students have plenty of opportunity to express themselves outside school. Mr Smith said visitors comment on how smart the Year 7 students uniform look. Another parent said boys don't have a choice as they can't wear shorts. A parent asked if there was any parental consultation on the uniform changes. Mr Smith said research was carried out but parents could not be asked as the Year 6s had not started at Priory. A parent felt Mr Smith could have asked 20/30 parents for their views. It was felt if this had happened the school would have got a variety of opinions. The parents wanted to sit down with Mr Smith and Governors to discuss this next week. Mr Smith said this would not be able to be held next week as he would need to discuss with staff/governors. Mr Griffiths stated that there is a full governors meeting on May 17th and he would ensure the petition and parents views will be discussed and that following that meeting the governors would get in contact with the parents involved in the petition to discuss next steps.

Averages across year groups

A parent asked if there is any national comparator for the year group averages that are produced on reports. Mr Ashworth explained that there are no national averages and schools had to use their own assessment models. Priory uses a ladder system from grade 1 to 9 (which reflects GCSE grades). There is now no average across schools nationally. The school provide averages for each year group so parents can compare their child's progress to that of the average across their child's year group.

Homework consistency

A parent raised an issue with their experience of inconsistency across subjects of setting homework i.e. English was not setting homework. The parent also said that books do not seem to come home so the parent could not see if they had been marked. Mr Ashworth said that teachers have students books available at parents evening. Parents commented that as slots at parents evenings are only 5 minutes once per year this was not enough time. Some teachers seem to set homework every week and some hardly set any. Mr Ashworth said as rule homework should be set every three lessons. Mr Ashworth asked parents to let the school know if there are inconsistencies by emailing the relevant teacher and cc the Head of department/Curriculum Leader. Mrs Clinton explained that, as part of the monitoring process, homework is reviewed terms 2, 4 and 6. As part of this the Senior Leader and Curriculum Leader use Show My Homework and Work Scrutiny to assess homework. There should be a variety of homework set not always written tasks e.g. an online quiz, research and revision to broaden students' skills. Parents asked if books could be sent home perhaps once a month so parents could have a look. The school's marking policy (feedback policy) was spoken about which uses WWW (What Went Well) and EBI (Even Better If.) Teacher feedback (green pen), peer assessment (purple pen) and self-assessment (red pen) are used. My Maths was mentioned - perhaps once a month students could be provided with a task rather than just using My Maths continually for Maths homework.



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Setting policy

Mr Ashworth said there was no setting in Years 7-8 in Years 9-11 there is setting for Maths and Science and in Year 8 P.E is broadly set. English teach mixed prior attainment groups in all years and last year the GCSE results were very strong with an average of just under half a grade added (compared to the national average).

There is a perception that maths is an issue but some of this stems from the last Ofsted report which was three years ago - the report was based on 'early entry' results for maths GCSE sat in November). This is significant as many students improved their grade in the summer session but this was not clearly acknowledged as the inspection was in February. At the time the government was trying to discourage early entry and whilst many schools did change their policy in September and only use a summer sitting Priory did not as students had prepared for the exam.

A lot of work has been undertaken since the report and the summer 2017 results in maths were very strong, with 1/5 of a grade added plus the highest grade 5-9 in the Local authority (along with one other school)

Ofsted

Our last Ofsted inspection was three years ago this was due in February this year but in April the inspection timeframes were changed to every four years, however the school can be inspected at any time.

After school sports clubs

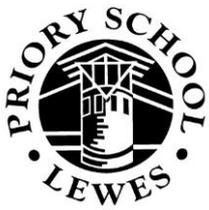
A parent mentioned that her son loves sport and football but the school's football club was cancelled in February. The parent had contacted the school and was aware that the teacher who had led on football has left the school due to promotion however there seemed to be little in terms of football clubs since then. Mr Smith said the school do offer a wide range of sports archery, Zumba, yoga and rugby to name but a few. Mr Smith would report this to PE but was optimistic as the school has recruited a new PE teacher for September who is a football specialist.

East Sussex Music Instrumental Service

A parent asked if there was any update on the announced proposals to close East Sussex Music Instrumental Service. Mr Smith reported that he had read that the county council was going to go ahead with the consultation despite the petition and opposition. This was confirmed by a parent. Mr Smith explained that once a decision has been made the school would look into options for students. Parents were asked to write to their local councillors in support.

Budget

A parent asked if there is anything parents can do to best use resources and support school's with the reduced budget. Mr Smith said the school will be able to balance the budget this year but not the next two. Mr Smith said parents can write to their local MPs to raise the budget issues and keep the #FlatCashEd



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campaign live. Mr Smith will send something out to parents again soon. Mr Smith and some secondary Headteachers will be going to Westminster to meet a group of 6/7 MPs to talk about the budget.

Teacher strikes over pay

A parent asked about the 1% additional pay increase for teaching staff that has been in the press. Mr Smith said that five schools were identified to be balloted by the NEU (National Education Union). This meant there were many schools which were not subject to strike action. Mr Smith felt all teachers should be paid the increase but this needs to be funded by the Local Authority as Brighton and Hove's had done or by central government. If this is not funded schools do not have the money in their budgets to pay these increases. If this did happen without funding there would be significant problems in some schools e.g. potential redundancies. ESCC schools follow the ESCC pay policy which the unions advise schools to follow. Mr Smith apologised to parents that the school had to close last week for one day and tomorrow due to this.

Assembly on mobile phones and mindfulness

A parent's daughter found the assembly on mobile phones and mindfulness positive and used her mobile phone less and continues to monitor her usage. The parent wondered if more of these topics could happen in assemblies.

Reading books

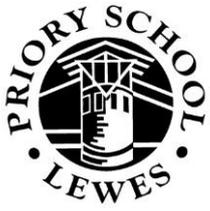
A parent was concerned that students don't read books in school and read extracts or poetry not quality texts. Mr Smith said the school Librarian arranges a lot of activities within school for example, recently holding the scholastic book fair. Some parents said their children say they can't get into the library on break/lunch as they said they need a library pass. It was mentioned the school have STAR (Stop Everything And Read) time a reading slot for students and staff every term where everyone reads. Mr Smith mentioned that staff put a poster on their door saying what they are currently reading. Mrs Clinton mentioned at the start of English lessons there is a 5 minute silent reading slot. It was suggested perhaps the school could have an after school book club. It was felt a lot of these constraints were due to curriculum. Mr Ashworth said there are recommended reading ideas on the school website: <http://www.priory.e-sussex.sch.uk/index.php/school-information/news/1233-rr>.

Assessments in Year 7

A parent mentioned their child is getting stressed with the assessments and is competitive. The parent asked if the school can control the number of assessments - as there are far too many. The school expects Curriculum Leaders to develop the assessment frameworks for their area. It was felt that it is better for assessments to occur throughout a student's time at Priory as this means they are prepared and used to this before there Year 11 exams rather than just assessments/exams in Year 11 only.

No outside door on toilets

A parent said that their child feels they have no privacy when buying sanitary products in the toilets as there is no outside door on the toilets so anyone walking past can see in. Mr Smith said that the pastoral



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teams have a large amount of sanitary products that the students can have for free which were donated. The parent felt that their child might not want to ask their pastoral team for these due to embarrassment. Mr Smith said the machines could be moved and will consider this.

Mr Griffiths thanked the parents for attending.

Parent Forum closed at 7.25pm.