

Notes from WHHS Parents' Forum: Tuesday 9th October 2018 @ 18:00

Attendees: K.Murphy (Chair, Community Governor), A.Roll (Principal), A.Boot (Deputy), S.Purewal (Assistant Principal), J.Nelson (Assistant Principal), C.Swalwell, M.Banks, J.Williams, L.Chambers, J.Darley, K.Crockett

Items Discussed

1. Previous Actions Update

Actions from 9 th October 2018	Responsible	Status
Chair to liaise with school regarding development of Parent Forum website page.	Governors	Ongoing
<p>Outcome: The previous forum notes are now available on the school website. There is currently a new website being developed, led by Mr Baker. Decision therefore made to put efforts into new site rather than old one. The new site is planned to be launched at the end of the summer term.</p>		
Ensure that the school calendar is working and includes all school events.	SLT	Outstanding
<p>Outcome: Mr Roll reported that this was in place, parents reported that there are currently still school events missing e.g. Ski Trip. ACTION: Mr Roll to address this ASAP and report back to Chair, so that it is rectified before the next forum.</p>		
Ensure that letters to parents are available and kept up-to-date on the website.	SLT	Completed
<p>Outcome: Reported to be complete, parents agreed that it was the case.</p>		
Explore whether link to purchase is viable for revision books utilising an affiliate account.	SLT	Ongoing
<p>Outcome: Mr Nelson is reviewing and updating curriculum information on the website, including links to subject texts. He will explore the potential of these being link to an affiliate account e.g. Amazon. There was noted to be confusion over which book should be purchased, where there were tiered papers and parents would like it to be clearer, which one their child requires. ACTION: Mr Nelson to resend email to parents regarding suggested texts purchase.</p>		
Topic for next Parent Forum to be 'how can parents and school work together to empower their child'	Governors	Ongoing
<p>Outcome: This is an important discussion topic and will be added to the agenda in the future. All discussion topics at this meeting tie into this.</p>		
Provide opportunities for parents to attend sessions in all year groups, to support their child's learning.	SLT	Ongoing
<p>Outcome: The school are providing more briefings for parents, so that they are aware of what the course content consists of and how they can support their child in said subject. This is not yet consistent across all subjects and work continues. Parents reported that the Maths session for parents was very good.</p>		
Investigate if Maths and English clubs can be available to year 10 pupils.	SLT	Completed
<p>Outcome: The sessions have been extended to year 10 pupils so that intervention begins earlier. The sessions are optional, but there has been a good uptake in some subjects. It was reported that the current year 10 pupils appear to be more proactive in approach – this may be due to them being the</p>		

first intake to have accessed Learn to Learn.		
Mr Arnold to speak to Holywell to identify what reading assessment system they are using.	SLT	Outstanding
<p>Outcome: Still unclear what assessment system feeder schools are using and why there is discrepancy between primary and secondary assessment.</p> <p>Mr Arnold has been proactively attempting to engage with the primary schools and will report back on his findings.</p>		

2. Careers Strategy (Topic Presentation, please refer to slides)

Mr Nelson presented on the Careers Strategy, with focus on *what is it* and *what can parents do to support it*.

- All schools are required to have a Careers Leader, this is Mr Nelson at WHHS.
- The school has one parent who works for Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), they have supported the school by participating in careers advice talks and mock interviews – this has been of great benefit.
- Previously, the Local Authority (LA) provided careers advice to schools, this changed and with the introduction of Academies there was no support from Government – responsibility has been shifted to schools to provide. Schools now independently decide how to provide this service.
- Following The Gatsby Report, there were new national expectations set for all schools, with associated benchmarks. All schools are expected to meet the standards by the end of 2020.
- Aspiration and Careers Education (ACE) has been introduced, which is the program that the school will be following. It includes tutor time activities and links to careers and PHSC.
- Tutors have regular conversations with pupils. The pupils are assigned a scale (using the new GCSE grade format e.g. 1-9). Pupils would aim to achieve a grade 4/5 by the end of year 11 and a grade 9 by the end of year 13.
- ***Why is there an expectation that pupils should know what they want to do at a specific age? This could be demotivating for pupils. Does it need to be graded? It is good to have support and researching options is helpful, but the pupil may still not know what they want to do at the end of it.***
- The concept is to help aid pupils identify what they want to do by making them aware of the options available. It is about communication with the young people, what could they apply for and myth bust what roles exist in different organisations e.g. JLR does not only employ engineers.
- An ACE grade was provided on pupil reports and was intended to encourage parents to enter into a dialogue with their children, to also let the pupil know where they are on their journey.
- ***Did students know their grade before they saw it in the report?*** They should have been aware of it, as form tutors would discuss with the pupil. This was reported to not be the case for all pupils, some had been upset that they were receiving a low grade. There needs to be context and pupils need to understand why they have been awarded a specific grade – what they can do to increase it. **ACTION: Mr Nelson to look into why some pupils were unaware of grade prior to report and ensure that the process avoids this.**
- ***What is the grade based on?*** It is an indication of what steps have been made by the pupil, to explore and research career options.
- ***A pupil could do lots of research and still not know what they want to do, how would this affect their grade?*** It was felt that grade should refer to what the pupil has actively engaged in rather than whether they were clear what their future career aspirations were. **ACTION: Mr Nelson to consider and communicate how the grading is linked to the process, rather than future career decisions.**

- The process is important as regardless of whether pupils know what career they would like to pursue, there are important timeframes for them to be aware of e.g. post-16 applications etc.
- The school have been having conversations with pupils for years about careers, but parents were not necessarily aware. The parents' involvement is really important in the careers aspiration journey.
- Parents felt that pupils should not be judged by their future career aspirations, as there are a spectrum of children. Regardless of a pupil wanting to go onto university, each preference should be supported.
- ACE begins at the end of year 7 (summer term), so that the pupils can first settle into school following transition from primary.
- Students have access to careers software (Fast Tomato), this can be accessed from home also.
- All students will receive *taster* sessions in year 8 for subjects they have no had before, but that are available as option choices – this supports an informed decision.
- School is trying to identify organisations that can facilitate *industry days*, where all pupils from a year group visit. Difficult to find organisations that can cope with 140 pupils visiting at the same time.
- Work experience is being reintroduced in year 10 – there are significant safeguarding checks that need to be fulfilled for this to take place.
- Each year 11 will receive an independent careers advice meeting.
- How can parents help: by setting high aspirations. The school does not know best and wants to establish a dialogue between parents, pupils and school.
- Parents can engage in a dialogue about ACE, the work that they are doing in it and what they have found out – where their interests lie.
- Facilitation of careers software at home (Fast Tomato)
- The school cannot provide the careers strategy without the community's support, specific support includes:
 - Work placement opportunities
 - Providing a talk on a career
 - Communicating ideas for improvement
- The school needs to look at Birmingham opportunities as well as Worcester, due to its geographical location.
- **Have parents received information on the Careers Skills Show?** No not all parents have. **ACTION: Mr Nelson to chase up and ensure information is sent to all parents.**
- Not all careers require a degree, but are still a valuable career – so any appeal to parents should include a range of options, including work experience placements.
- Chartered Bodies are actively looking at working with schools, they are trying to encourage students to engage with the career pathway as a primary choice, rather than secondary at a later date.
- **Can we share careers fairs with other schools?** School would like to hold a fair and tap into all the local regions. We can work with other schools and share these events.
- It was suggested that the next step is for Mr Nelson to write to parents, identifying what they can do to support the Careers Strategy. Asking for parents to link with their work places and/or support in ways such as careers talks, mock interviews etc. **ACTION: Mr Nelson to write to parents.**
- Information on the steps involved in the various stages throughout the year groups would be useful.

3. Pupil Termly Reports (Discussion Item)

Miss Purewal led this discussion item, specifically focusing on how we can improve reports.

- Currently parents receive three reports a year (one per term), two summary reports and a longer report at the end of the summer term.
- Focusing on the report received in December, is it in the right format, does it provide what parents want to know, is it clear?
- Parents indicated that it would be helpful to be able to see previous attainment grades, so that they could see progress over time.
- There was discussion regarding a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) colour being associated with the attainment grades, to indicate if a pupil was on target to reach their end of year target grade. Overall parents felt that this would be useful, but should not replace the attainment grades. It was suggested that the grades should be RAG rated, would make it easier to identify subject which need support.
- For the first report of a new school year, it would be helpful if the last attainment grade could be provided from the previous year.
- Any concerns indicated on the report should be communicated as soon as they are identified and should not be a surprise to pupil or parent. This can cause anxiety over holiday periods and are too late on a report. Should comments be added if there is a concern – teachers only have to complete one report per pupil a year, addition of comments may have implications for teachers' conditions.
- If a teacher ticks the concern box, this should be an indication that they have communicated with the parent and pupil prior to the report, about the concern. **ACTION: Mr Roll to ensure that all teachers understand the expectations when communicating concerns.**
- Is the 1-9 grading system meaningful? Should Key Stage 3 (KS3) use a different system e.g. exceeded, met, below? Discussion about whether it is demotivating to be given a grade 1. Parents indicated that they did not want to lose the detail that the grades provided. They were not sure what the grades meant with regards to future outcome potential. It was felt that some support would be useful with regards to educating parents what the grades mean. **ACTION: Identify options as to how grade meaning can be effectively communicated to parents.**
- **What is the year 11 grade that the pupil is aiming for?** Some parents would like to know what grade their child is targeted to get as an outcome at GCSE. It should not be seen that their future has been prescribed, but that this is a minimum target. Want to avoid labelling pupils, progress is not linear and pupils develop at different points.
- Pupils should be aware that targets are a minimum and that they can achieve higher.
- School is trying to avoid unrealistic targets being set for pupils, as it can be demotivating.
- Parents would like context to grades received in different year groups, what is the bigger picture, what does a 1H in year 7 actually mean.
- Miss Purewal presented the concept of having a system that allows parents to access live progress and attainment data for their child. Termly reports present old data by the time parents get them.
- Currently two systems are being considered: GoForSchools and SIMS Parents App. Parents would be able to see in real time how their child is progressing, including test results and targets. Parents thought this would be a good idea, they would like education on what the information means so they can support their child at home.
- Parents were keen that systems do not add additional admin burden to teachers.
- Parents are not clear on what the school's achievement expectation of their child is, could there be a parents' evening to explain this? Yes there could be to explain and include the flightpaths – which link current attainment to future predicted outcomes.
- Mr Roll indicated that high and middle ability boys do not have the same motivation as other groups of pupils at WHHS. There was discussion over whether parents are made aware of their child's ability, rather than targets being set lower due to motivation challenges. It was suggested that parents have stated that they don't want to put pressure on their child, when this has been raised at parents' evenings. It was felt that this may be

the case for some parents, but that other parents would want to support their child to meet their full educational potential. The issue of motivation should be tackled rather than lowering expectations.

- **Are targets adjusted?** Yes they are reviewed routinely with a view to increase expectation over time.
- **ACTION: Miss Purewal to assimilate feedback and make agreed changes to report format for the Easter report.**
- **ACTION: Miss Purewal to continue to scope the two live data systems, with a view to launch to parents in September 2019.**
- **ACTION: Miss Purewal to look at providing a parents' event to explain expectations relating to progress and attainment.**

4. AOB

Transitions Arrangements

Parents fed back that the transition for year 7s, week long taster, was really good.

Are there plans for this to be replicated across all transitions e.g. 7 to 8, 8 to 9 etc.? Unfortunately, the logistics don't allow this but new year 7 entry will still receive one week induction.

Three key transition points are year 6 to year 7, year 8 to 9 and year 11 to 12. Year 8s will receive taster lessons in their new subjects. New sixth form pupils will receive induction days at the end and beginning of the year. All other year groups will meet their new tutors.

Will tutor groups remain the same? Yes they will stay the same from this point going forward.

Meeting concluded.

Recommendations for action

Actions	Responsible
To look into why some pupils were unaware of grade prior to report and ensure that the process avoids this	SLT
To consider and communicate how the ACE grading is linked to the process, rather than future career decisions	SLT
To ensure Careers Skill Show information is sent to all parents	Mr Nelson
Letter to be sent to parents identifying how they can support the careers strategy	Mr Nelson
To ensure that all teachers understand the expectations when communicating concerns	SLT
Identify options as to how grade meaning can be effectively communicated to parents	SLT
To assimilate feedback from parents and make agreed changes to report format for the Easter report	Miss Purewal
To continue to scope the two live data systems, with a view to launch to parents in September 2019	Miss Purewal
To look at providing a parents' event to explain expectations relating to progress and attainment	SLT

*Agenda items can be communicated to the Parents' Forum Chair (Kristina Murphy kmurphy@waseleyhills.worcs.sch.uk)