

Parental Focus Group Minutes



Date of Meeting: **Wednesday, 17th January 2018 (am)**
Thursday, 18th January 2018 (pm)

Present: Mr Purvis, Mrs Sandeman, Mrs Towns, Mrs Whiteley, Ms Fegan-Jones, Mr Brown, Mrs Brown, Mrs Corbin, Mrs Davis, Mrs Griffin, Mr Herriott, Mrs King, Mrs O'Hara-Harris, Mr Pawsey, Ms Pepper, Mrs Pickles, Mrs Sandeman, Mrs Young, Mrs Segal

Apologies: Mr Woodall, Mrs O'Neill-McGuinness, Ms Hale, Ms Sanderson-Smith

1. **Welcome and Matters Arising**

Everybody present was thanked for attending the meeting. Mrs Bligh started the morning meeting with a prayer.

2. **Profiles update / Settling-in Report 2018**

Miss Cronin distributed examples of Settling-in Reports. It was explained that the whole process can take 4-5 weeks once the tutor, the Pastoral Leader and the Principal have all added comments. Teachers sometimes feel that they are writing reports after only four lessons but by the time it gets to parents, the pupil has settled in and a long time has passed. New suggestion: Tutor types in comment as well as Subject teachers. Mr Bligh and Miss Cronin do not add comments. Miss Cronin and Mr Bligh (Pastoral Leader for Year 7) to read the reports as part of a tracking exercise but also to proof read before they go out to parents. This should speed up the process and allow reports to reach parents earlier. Miss Cronin asked parents if they would be happy with this new system. Parents said they like handwritten comments from teachers. Miss Cronin said that this would still be kept for Summative reports.

CAT scores: usually everyone's grade is transferred as a numerical grade. Parents said it would be useful if they had an equivalent to show where their child is. Parents suggested putting it in the Newsletter. DC to ask PT.

Miss Cronin asked if Profiles are clear and helpful? Parents confirmed that they are. They asked for the link to the Assessment Policy. [Click here for policy](#)

3. **Curriculum structure**

Miss Cronin distributed option model for 2018-19 so parents could see the structure. Parents were emailed the curriculum booklet in December and they were handed out to pupils in January. Miss Cronin explained that when parents and pupils attend the Curriculum evening, they will be given information on how to choose options and they will have a chance to meet older pupils who can advise on subjects to suit

individuals. Most pupils get their first choice, but if it isn't possible, they are contacted by Miss Machin and they are given their second choice.

St Richard's has tried to put options that go together and complement each other. If a pupil isn't able to do an option due to clashes then they are always welcome to carry it on as a hobby. Most subjects are available at A' level without the need of studying it at GCSE.

Parents can now see the benefits of their child obtaining 8 quality qualifications rather than doing lots of GCSE's and possibly underachieving.

The focus now is on Progress 8. What progress has the pupil made since arriving at St Richard's? Pupils are given targets based on what they achieved when they left primary school.

Miss Cronin supports pupils by doing post-mock interviews. Pupils who didn't do as well as expected in their mocks are asked to see Miss Cronin to go through what happened. Sometimes it results in a subject being dropped if it is too much to cope with. Pupils are also allocated mentors.

A parent asked if pupils can still do the RE GCSE exam early. This will not be happening in the future because the first entry is counted and they may do better if they wait an extra year. It doesn't always pay to do the exam early. However, doing the Astronomy exam in Year 9 is helpful if the pupil decides they would like to do science at A' level.

Parents thought it a good idea to get pupils used to the exam environment. However, a parent spoke of her experience as an invigilator in another secondary school advising we must be very careful not to get them too used to it as pupils can become nonchalant when the real exam comes. A balance needs to be reached where pupils are not frightened about exams and they still have respect for what they are doing. We hope we have the balance right.

4. **Sports Hall development**

Miss Cronin showed the evening group a few of the architect's plans for the sports hall development. There was discussion around equipping the sports hall. Parents felt some of the health grant should be used for equipment.

5. **Health Grant funding:**

Mrs Bligh explained to parents in the morning group what is left in the funding pot (£1,500 and a new £7,000). Parents were asked for ideas on what it could be spent on. Ideas included:

Healthy eating projects such as educating children on healthy eating, cooking lunch themselves, guest cooks, food fayre.

Lower school (Years 7-9) often tell parents that there is no food left when they go and collect lunch during the second half of the lunch break. Miss Cronin and Mrs Bligh confirmed this is not true. There is always plenty of healthy food left in the canteen, but pizza, pasta, paninis, chicken always go first.

Parent asked: could more pasta be provided? It's healthy (with a sauce) and cheap?

Parents are also able to see what their child has bought for lunch via parent pay account.

Miss Cronin said she will organise a day / two days for parents to come in and have lunch in school so that parents can experience the food on offer.

Other ideas for the health grant included looking at **e-safety work** for pupils in PSHE lessons.

Mrs Bligh explained that originally some of the money was going to be spent on building a hut in the school grounds for pupils to have as quiet space. Pupils are more likely to go somewhere where people are less likely to see them. Mrs Bligh confirmed that we already have some mental health services for pupils if they need to talk to someone (counsellor, school nurse, Lay Chaplain, student listeners). Pupils are given a choice of who they would like to speak to. They also have exit cards if needed.

Parents suggested sending a message on schoolcomms to see if any parents could help with building the hut.

Further ideas for the spending of the Health Grant from the evening group:

- Practice net for golf.
- Rollerblading.
- A mile a day track on the lines of the one built at St Mary Magdalene.
- Tram trail - wooden activity.
- Outside gym.
- Traditional games eg. skipping ropes.
- Assault course.
- Turbo trainer - for spinning.
- Forest school.
- Funding for John Muir Award.
- Outdoor table tennis, Jenga, chess.
- Equipment for the new gym.

Email Health Grant ideas to Mrs Segal who will be able to say whether the spending would be acceptable.

6. **English – help at home**

Miss Wood came to speak to parents regarding helping children with revision at home and to explain how English exams are structured.

- No coursework any more.
- Pupils have to do a speech during Year 10/11 for English language – it goes towards their mark for English language exam but is not marked individually. Speech is recorded in a small group.
- English exam is language and literature based.
- Extremely helpful for parents to encourage their child to read as much as possible. Pupils need to read fiction and non-fiction e.g. good quality newspapers, blogs on topics that interest them – this helps them get used to different styles.
- Part of exam is likely to be an article, e.g. non-fiction travel writing (Bill Bryson). Fiction: TV adaptations on older texts – Charles Dickens, 19th Century, if they can watch and get used to how they spoke that would be useful. Doesn't matter if it is a text they're not studying – helps to get them used to language.
- Lots of exam questions are now focused on the writer – what is the writer's message? What is he/she trying to get across? Parents can talk to children about the author. Ask lots of questions. No right or wrong answer – gets children thinking.

- Reading aloud also helps. Any time that parents can spare listening to their children read, correcting punctuation, looking at spellings is useful.
- There is a fiction and non-fiction paper – half the paper is writing and a third is spag (organisation: structure, spelling, punctuation and grammar). This is explained to pupils in Year 7.
- Reinforce to children the importance of checking their work through once they have finished.

7. **Rewards**

There is some confusion between credits, prize points, prefect points, prom points and achievement points. We are currently looking at merging credits, prize points etc and achievement points and putting them towards school houses. These would be given out for effort – not just sport.

Some pupils don't realise how to collect them. Some teachers are giving achievement points instead of credits. **Newsletter will have ideas and something to explain about the achievement point system.** Teachers sometimes need reminding if a pupil has earned a point – but children don't like reminding the teacher. Pastoral Leader and form tutor keep a record of number of points and will know once a pupil has reached 100 points.

Reward ideas: cinema tickets, book tokens, early lunch pass, shopping vouchers, stationery shop. At the moment, Year 11 get money off their prom tickets, Year 10 collect points for prefect status, Year 9 collect for a mixture of certificates. Years 7 and 8 collect for certificates and chocolate prizes.

Postcards and stickers seem to be the most successful rewards to date.

Parents/pupils just want consistency - it is always the same staff issuing rewards.

Parents also felt there was inconsistency in the sanctions system.

Suggestions from parents: film and pizza evening, afternoon tea with Headteacher, so many points get a raffle ticket for a big prize, ice lollies, ice-cream. Put points towards a trip / activity / experience / a charity.

8. **PSHEe: e.g. careers – what would you like in the programme?**

Presentation at next meeting.

9. **Issues you would like to raise**

- Please can GCSE exams timetable be sent to all parents via Schoolcomms.
- Schoolcomms - is a separate log on needed for each child/sibling in the school?

10. **Any Other Business**

- Have a PSHEe presentation at the next meeting
- Parents will be shown where the new sports hall will be.

Miss Cronin thanked everyone for their attendance.

Term 4 dates: 9.15am on Wednesday, 7th March 2018
 6.15pm on Thursday, 22nd March 2018