

Parental Focus Group Minutes



Date of Meeting: Wednesday, 12th January and Thursday, 20th January 2022

Present: **Morning session:** Mrs King, Mrs Weakley, Mrs Moore, Mrs Sutton, Mrs McGinnes, Mrs Tompsett, Mrs Forte

Evening session: Philippa Read, Isabel Button, Jewel Cole, Caroline Pepper, Jacqueline Young, Erica Fogarty-Stevens, Sophie Carnell

Apologies: Natalie Evans, Leanne Carey, Ann Corbin, Justine Towns, Tracy Hindmarsh, Joseph Di Mascio, Caroline Griffin

1. Welcome and Introductions

Miss Cronin welcomed parents/carers and wished them a happy new year. She also welcomed Kay Parkin, a Foundation Governor. A Governor will try to attend all meetings to listen to and answer any queries.

2. Matters arising from the minutes of 21st/24th November 2021

- Some items had been placed on the agenda for follow up e.g. Social Media Parent Ambassadors.
- Parents' Evening continues via SchoolCloud. We have a licence for the academic year but can organise some 'live' events if Covid rates decline to a very safe level. Advent Service took place 'live' - successful. All parents/carers had to LFD test before attending.
- Mr Fegan will include some advice on social media sites as part of his presentation.
- Staff have been reminded to use the rewards system to motivate pupils and affirm their efforts.
- Option choices to be discussed later in meeting.

3. School Update

- Lots of families participated in the PCR/LFD testing before term began. Covid cases range from 8-20 in any given week with a number self-isolating due to holidays/operations and whole households having Covid. Staff-wise - numbers are low so to date pupils have seen and been taught by most of their teachers. We still await a delivery of LFD tests but will distribute as soon as they arrive. Update - all pupils sent home with a pack of LFD tests Friday, 14th January. Update 22nd January – Covid cases have risen dramatically.
- Pupils have returned to school in positive spirits. A notable rise in anxiety in one year group.
- Fundraising at the end of term was excellent, with visitors to the Advent Service contributing £500 to Surviving Christmas.
- Big focus this term on ensuring all pupils are stretched; OFSTED area for development is addressed; feedback is being highlighted and pupils are receiving more advice on how to respond to feedback; pupil presentation in books needs to improve in some cases and we want to see all pupils using their maths/English apps effectively and reading regularly.

- Extra-curricular activities have begun. We understand the disappointment over the ski trip but unfortunately there is no insurance for residential trips at this stage due to Covid.

4. **KS4 Curriculum Model**

- A copy of the model was given to parents/carers. Parents to note the greater offer of BTECs in option C of Pathway 2.
- Subjects such as GCSE Dance and Geology GCSE are not on the model as they are offered after school.
- GCSE Statistics is not on the model as the GCSE is offered in Year 9.
- Curriculum Evening will be 'live' on 09/02/22 with the opening speeches going online so that parents and pupils do not have to meet as one large group. Parents/carers agreed to new timing of 6.00 to 7.30pm - request for no earlier as it is difficult for Eastbourne parents/carers. Parents/carers to LFD test before coming and to wear a mask. Subjects to be scattered across the school to ensure safety of all.

5. **Pupil Profiles**

- Sample sheets for Year 8 were distributed to the morning group.
- Requests - place all codes on one sheet to save referring back to the letter.
- Miss Cronin explained overall progress and how the assessments worked. She will ask Mr Tadros to present at next meeting and to be available to answer any questions.

6. **SEND and the support package on offer (Mr Smith)**

SENCO, Mr Smith, came to the meeting to talk through the support on offer and the lack of resourcing and capacity at times due to long waiting lists.

All parents/carers were issued with a sheet outlining routes for internal support including use of The Hive, ELSAs, brought in support, Prep Club support etc. He also spoke about the role of our Assessor, Mrs Tadros, and explained the time limited support available through Access Arrangements. It was really emphasised to parents/carers that for Access Arrangements to be confirmed that it needed to be regular practice. If a child refused to take extra time, for instance, then they would not be allowed it in the GCSEs.

One parent mentioned that KS3 pupils often did not want to take the extra time as it interfered with breaks. Mr Smith will look into this.

16 EHCPs in the school.

Pastoral model is linked with SEN and we have TAs/TA Co-ordinators.

ELSA - Emotional Literacy Support Assistant.

Three Mental Health support workers in the school.

Prep Club Plus - safe space - staffed by at least two TAs.

Post mock interviews held with pupils with SEN.

Tailored support offered to lots of SEN learners.

EAL service attends weekly, for example. High level of EAL speakers (16%).

Andrew Wright - a great asset.

Alternative events offered for Sports Days.

7. **OFSTED Follow up**

[Not covered in either meeting]

8. Supporting your child with Information Technology/e-Safety

(Mr Fegan, Subject Leader of Computing/ICT)

Mr Fegan talked about ways parents/carers can help pupils with their work, particularly at KS3.

He advertised two useful support booklets which he felt were really useful to back up classroom learning and to support revision (see links below). He felt the books help to build confidence. School can order for £5 instead of £10; second book is £22, available on Amazon. All Computing work is on Google Classroom and the curriculum is designed around the two books.

Book 1:

<https://www.cgpbooks.co.uk/secondary-books/ks3/computing/cos31-ks3-computing-complete-revision>

Book 2:

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Progress-Computing-Key-Stage-3/dp/1398323454>

Homework at KS3 tend to be drawing summaries which the pupils can use at a later stage for revision. They create a sketch / doodle that represents their learning from a particular topic. The approach is very new to Year 7 but they are adapting. Such activities become their revision in KS4.

Specially designed curriculum specific to our context and community.

All topics in the book covered but some are not in depth.

Life skills such as creating an Excel sheet are covered.

Lockdown caused issues as some topics got dropped.

One homework per term due to one lesson a week in KS3 - this then provides a drawing summary.

'Do it now' exercise every lesson via 'Test and Track' website - lots of retrieval practice. Parent asked how do they know if the result is good enough?

Progress is difficult to measure at KS3. Baseline test completed at beginning of Year 7, end of Year 7 and then re-set in Year 8.

Concerns about telephone usage by pupils - parents feel out of control with Instagram etc. Survey parents/carers to get a flavour of practice - parents need support.

For all subjects, parents/carers want to know where pupils are e.g. they have done a test but parents/carers don't know if the result is good enough. Profile is too long to wait.

E-Safety - MF sends out alerts if there is a sudden trend - so resources can be shared.

2/3 emails sent out termly - called 'Safer Internet for all' e.g. setting up parental controls; what you need to know about PlayStation 5; what you need to know about TikTok - sent on a Friday via Edulink. Aim is to support parents navigate the world of the internet.

Need an internet that we can trust.

How do you make contact with teachers who don't teach your child? You can't on Edulink, you need to send an email. Mr Hollingsworth said that he will make a request of Edulink that this is available.

EduLink noticeboard - Mr Hollingsworth asked what parents/carers would like on it.
 Mrs Carnell asked for timetable of exams - mocks/year 8 exams.
 Mrs Cole - reminders about events taking place. Mr Hollingsworth said he could send 'push' notifications.
 Last page of newsletter on EduLink would be helpful.
 Reminders - weekly/monthly - key events.
 ParentPay - could there be a place for the PTFA and Governors' Fund.
 Could there be a donation section so you can add donations.
 Emails home by pupils at end of day – can pupils email parents/carers to advise them of finish times / when clubs finish.

9. **WWW/EBI Autumn Term**

[Not covered in either meeting]

One parent did, however, emailed in the following ...

WWW – The communication is excellent and there is an open door policy so thank you.

EBI – Could the termly letter be condensed to approximately 20 pages as 50 pages is too much to read. Perhaps departments could alternate and not have to write every term?

10. **Any Other Business**

- Promotion of the excess Christmas gifts donations to the PTFA for future raffles/tombolas.
- Could Andrew Wright lead a session on screen addiction? Online gaming etc. Any parents/carers with ideas to share on how to cope with this addiction - please share.
- Some children are self-diagnosing conditions due to Covid/lockdown/easy access to the internet.
- Add to next meeting Pupil Profiles/House Rewards.
- Year 10 profile was demotivating - looked like transition from KS3 was harsh.
- Border between effort and homework is unclear.

Miss Cronin thanked everyone for attending.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS –

09:15 – 10:30 Wednesday, 9th March 2022

18:00 – 19:15 Thursday, 17th March 2022