

Parental Focus Group Minutes



Date of Meeting: Wednesday, 22nd November (am) and Thursday, 30th November (pm)

Present Morning session: L Jones, S King, S McGinnes, Mrs Tompsett, A Masardo, I Button, T Sutton, C Ashdown, H Weakley, Z Magni, R Hale

Present Evening session: S Barrow, J Cole, C Evans, P Read

Presenters: Jo, our Lay Chaplain and Mr Fegan, Subject Leader of Computing

Apologies: S Carnell

1. Welcome and Introductions

Miss Cronin welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their regular attendance and contributions to school life. Your evaluation of aspects of school life and interest in the school are invaluable to the staff in ensuring that we are always getting better.

2. Matters Arising (Minutes of 11th and 12th October)

- Miss Cronin encouraged parents/carers to ask their children about the use of learning levers in the classroom. See [here](#). Are they helping improve their learning and giving them a greater understanding of the progress they are making?
- PTFA Christmas Fayre was a great success. Really well attended. School has raised about £4,500 and craft stallholders did very well too. Parents commented that they really enjoyed its community feel.
- Other items for follow up on agenda.

3. Pupil Progress Reports

Following Mr Jacob's presentation at the last meeting, Miss Cronin sought views on the new style pupil progress reports.

- Generally, parents really liked them and the pupils did too.
- It opened up lots of conversations about progress and where pupils felt they were.
- Handier if targets were explained in the actual report rather than a separate letter as it was hard going between the two documents.
- Liked the idea that eventually subjects will give a subject-specific target.
- Mixed response to use of class averages etc:
 - Percentages upset some children - felt they were under-achieving
 - Tutors need to explain the report to pupils
 - A child said 'I am under average'
 - Target needs to be more specific. Can it be written in so parents/carers can see
 - Are the children where they should be?
 - Make it clearer what the average is based on.

- Should Years 7 and 8 have access to the report or should it just be read by parents/carers?
- Needs to be clearer if a child feels they are not doing OK
- Middle Ability children will struggle with the report.
- Look at language we use as staff.
- Why aren't zero behaviour points celebrated?
- Some tutors never give Attendance points.
- Attitude to learning is the most important.
- Are we rewarding effort / work ethic?
- Form Tutors need to ask every now and again about how pupils are getting on.
- Two different sheets were difficult when you are on a phone.
- Coding was helpful.
- Some of the feedback was too generic.
- Very concise / precise.
- Year 8 English – confused by English assessments – how was English assessed? Parents would like to know. Class average was low.
- “I love it”
- Columns related to Attitude to Learning did not always match the quality of assessment grades.

4. **Computing** (Mr Fegan)

Mr Fegan began by asking parents/carers what were their concerns. He then went through and explained a typical lesson and how pupils' work is assessed using programmes such as BOOST. The parents/carers found this extremely informative and could see the links for life that were being established regardless of whether they choose to study the subject in KS4. Mr Fegan also explained the difference between Computing and iMedia. [Tracking sheet](#).

Average on the Progress reports was 50% - is this typical for Year 8? Difficult to say. KS3 is a three-year programme of study – 50% to 60% is the average for Year 8. Parent mentioned that pupils struggle to understand where they are at and articulate it.

Communication to pupils in an assembly would be helpful.

All Year 7 and 8 have access to Boost – it is accessible from home. Mrs Forster-Simmons is putting together a video to help parent/carers access all Apps pupils will use so they have a good understanding of the back-up materials available.

Lots of low stakes tests (called Quizzes).

Staff train them how to use Boost. It provides a breakdown of how they have done. Quizzes used at the start of the lesson – instant feedback – retrieval – informs them of next steps.

They have an E-book where they go back to areas where they are struggling.

For Years 8 and 9 – it really allows for more independence.

Staff use Boost to inform their teaching.

Homework booklets were shared so parents could see the independent learning.

Drawing summaries were explained. Year 7 are benchmarked in terms of what they can achieve in 30 minutes.

Using Boost, parents/carers can go in and view how their child is progressing – knowledge test average. Parents can also look at all the resources / worksheets / videos used by pupils.

5. **The Chapel and its development**

Our Lay Chaplain, Jo, talked about the blessing of the Chapel by the Bishop and then went through slides on how she planned to extend its use. See slides [here](#). It is a sacred space. Caritas Leaders will have their meetings in the Chapel with the

blessed sacrament removed at these times. A real focus will be on how pupils can take the lead in activities and influence music and prayers. A liturgist in music is planning to run some workshops for pupils on how to create their own songs/hymns from readings.

We now have a Prayer and Liturgy Directory created by the CES. Gives staff a grounding in prayer. Jo will use it as a basis for pupils to access prayers themselves. Guideline document underlines it and are the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Rules for life so we want to share the principles of CST with parents too. A parent asked for the CST principles for a Church display too. Plan is to go through how each subject uses the principles e.g. languages will present the principles in French etc. Now have Caritas Leaders who lead on the 7 Principles. Jo is going to do the Faith in Action Awards with younger pupils.

(Evening): Faith in Action activities. Six hours of reflection time on activities such as SVP; being a Caritas Leader.

Chapel Activities (see slides). Deacon Duncan is going to help prepare pupils for reading of the liturgy of the Word.

Chapel Band – use of scripture to develop hymns / music in service.

Wednesday – adoration / meditation / prayer – to be led by pupils.

Jo is on the ACCE (Association of Catholic Chaplains) – they have made new resources called 'Let us pray'. Pupils are going to be able to use these to develop liturgies for themselves. Will expose pupils to different ways of looking at liturgy – Board game which helps the pupils to plan collective worship.

Jo went through how the game works:

- How are we gathering?
- How are we encountering the Word?
- What is it asking us to do?
- How are you going to respond?

Confirmation:

Can the school do more to ensure that pupils can access Confirmation sessions? Not really as it is church led.

6. The Crest

Sarah Ellis from The Hive came to talk about The Crest and how it needed to be made clearer to the pupils. She also showed the parents how she has created a booklet for pupils with SEN so that they felt it was an inclusive Award. Parents liked what Sarah had done.

The Pastoral TAs are revamping the design and content. Looking for your ideas on change. Mrs Ellis shared an example of how it has been adapted for pupils with SEN. Focus is Year 8-10. All about what a pupil does outside school to show they are well-rounded.

4 letters – bronze

6 letters – silver

8 letters – gold

For every letter completed you earn 5 House points. Pupils complete tasks on the Google Classroom for The Crest. Certain staff sign off completion of a letter. Parents would like to read the information that pupils have so that they can help. Pupils need to get to silver for their Prefect status.

Parents felt:

- Staff need to push The Crest more in terms of its value.
- Revisit some of the criteria to ensure it is accessible to all.
- Pupils need to be given regular examples of how to achieve each letter.
- There is too much writing on the ideas sheet.
- Should pupils be able to present their experience verbally, graphically as well as in written form?
- Can the pupils present photographic evidence?
- Sometimes it takes a long time to get an acknowledgement from the marking teacher.
- Miss Cronin suggested using Prefects/Head Girl/Head Boy to create a video about The Crest and its value.
- Parents suggested using the older pupils to mark some of the work created by letters.
- The Crest instructions are available [here](#). An Accessible Version of The Crest booklet is available [here](#).

7. **Book Covers**

All still happy with the purpose of these. Pupils find them useful.

8. **Middle Ability Children**

Pupils often caught in the middle of high fliers and SEN. Pupils who do nothing wrong but are not in the top 20%.

Miss Cronin mentioned how the analysis of exam results indicated that Middle Attainers made most progress.

Parents were concerned that top achievers for extra rewards often have a significant number of behaviour points too - felt it was unfair that there was no acknowledgement of pupils who achieve no behaviour points. DC agreed to look into this. Update: termly pupils with no behaviour points receive 5 House points.

Clubs are inclusive. Lessons are about teaching to the top so all pupils aspire. Differentiation is always there.

Rewards and comments about how reports are written will be explored with the pastoral care team and assessment team so that we are using positive language at all times for all pupils.

DC to ask staff to keep an eye on middle attainers. It may be that a question can be placed in the next pupil voice interviews so we get a flavour of how children feel.

Supportive - no negative feedback from staff.

9. **Parental Concerns**

Can we be clearer on what to do in adverse weather.

- As far as possible, if safe to do so, bring/send your child in.
- DC made the decision to stay open at 5.30 when buses and trains were running. Trains began a 'delay' timetable at 7.00am.
- As far as possible, school will open - it does not matter if a child arrives late.
- Feel parents/carers have to make the decision if it is snowing as DC cannot predict the conditions in their area.

- Parents asked if we could be more explicit so parents/carers were clear that the work would be provided on Google Classroom - that you must ring in if you are keeping your child at home.
- Miss Cronin emphasised that on train strike days pupils are expected in and should be using buses. Better to be late than not come at all.

10. **Future Agenda Items**

- Please send through to pa@strichardscc.com
- Meetings will run in the same format to begin with.

11. **Any Other Business**

Heartfelt thank you from Doreen to everyone for their positive and enthusiastic contributions over the years and their desire for the school to keep getting better. She will miss you all not only for your invaluable advice but for your friendship, kindness and support at all times.

Dates for next meetings:

9.15 to 10.30am on Wednesday, 17th January 2024 (in person)

6.00 to 7.15pm on Thursday, 18th January 2024 (online)