

Parents' Forum Minutes 1st February 2018

1. OFSTED Inspection Report

Following on from the OFSTED Inspection on 21st/22nd November, Mr Whalley invited any questions or feedback regarding the report.

- (i) Was the downgrading from 'Outstanding' to do with the results last year?

The Chief Inspector told us that we wouldn't have got 'Outstanding' in the 2010 inspection under the new framework. Although the results were graded '3', the inspectors looked for evidence that learning in the school was good. They spoke to a lot of students over the 2 days and were very pleased with how the students were engaged.

- (ii) Did your data suggest that there was going to be a dip in results?

Yes, we were expecting it. There had been a few staffing issues which didn't help. However, we are confident that the students in school are now making strong progress.

All schools were in the same boat last year with the new exams and we retained our place in the Wigan league table.

- (iii) All the exams this year are under the new system, how confident are you with this?

We are very confident. The Faculties have known this is coming for a long time and have had more time to prepare, unlike when it happened in English and Maths.

Mrs Garretts added that she was very pleased with the wording of the report, a copy of which is on the website, and encouraged parents to read it if not already done so.

2. Change to the Interim Awards Certificates Criteria

The school feel that the Silver and Gold awards are too hard to achieve and that there are good, hard working students who are not receiving awards. Some parents have raised this as an issue. To address this, the criteria for receiving Silver and Gold awards has been tweaked slightly.

Questions:-

- (i) How do students get awards?

Points are awarded for 'G's' and 'X's' on the interim reports and then a formula is applied.

- (ii) What about Special Needs students – is there a different system?

It's the same system. Points are awarded for attitude to learning and behaviour, not academic achievement.

3. SIMS App

There was a long debate on the functionality of the SIMs App at the last Parents' Forum. Mr Davies explained that the App is not rolling out as well as first planned and there have

Parents' Forum Minutes **1st February 2018**

been a few issues. Also, due to technical issues we have not been able to roll out the SIMS Student App. For this reason, staff have not been trained how to use the App to set Homework, so therefore, this section of the App is nowhere near where we'd hoped it would be at this stage.

Parents are asked to bear with us whilst 'it's work in progress', but also to be assured that if the App doesn't function like we'd hoped it would we may have to consider an alternative option.

4. SIMS InTouch

Mr Whalley explained how SIMs InTouch works. This is an email communication to parents to send out letters, messages, certificates etc. Mr Whalley asked for any feedback so far:-

A parent expressed concern that they had received a message during Period 2 to say that their child wasn't in school. The child was in school and was with their Head of Year. Mr Whalley apologised and explained that the child should have been registered, and it was a mistake that they weren't. It is all down to the registers being accurate and is something the school is consistently working on.

5. Letters of praise/rewards to students

Over the next couple of weeks Heads of Year will be sending out praise letters to students who are working hard consistently.

Extra Rewards have been allocated to 'invisible' students for sustained hard work. This will be now be done on a termly basis.

6. Target Setting at KS4

Mr Davies asked for any feedback/opinions on the new target setting process at KS4 and explained that there had been mixed feedback from the students.

- (i) I'm not sure what the targets mean – what is working at?

'Working at' explains where the student is currently at. 'Projected' is the grade they should achieve.

- (ii) Could you explain the new GCSE grades?

Grade 4 is a pass and Grade 5 is a strong pass. Grade 9 is a higher grade than the old A. Any student who does not achieve a Grade 4 in English and Maths will have to re-sit the exams. Students are being prepared earlier now for exams and are answering GCSE style questions in Y7 and Y8.*

- (iii) My child is in Y7 and has done some exams. I wasn't aware of this. When do they get the results?

Students are given the results back in class. The results inform the grades for the next interim reports.

Parents' Forum Minutes
1st February 2018

- (iv) I believe that there have been some Parent/Student sessions for Y11 students. I never had an invite and I believe that my child would benefit from something like this.

The sessions were held for a targeted group of students. However, more sessions are going to be planned.

- (v) The KS4 targets are aspirational are they still realistic?

Yes, we believed they are. There are mixed views from the students but it's all about knowing the individual children.

- (vi) Are the targets reviewed?

Yes, the targets are reviewed annually.

- (vii) I was wary about the choosing of Options in Y8, but this seems to have worked for my daughter.

The students seem quite settled. As you know we ran a dual process last year with Y8 and Y9. Y8 were a lot more switched on.

- (viii) In Y9 is there movement between sets?

Students can move up and down sets in the Core subjects but Option subjects are taught in mixed ability classes.

- (ix) Is it possible for students to change options half way through Y9?

It is possible but we do try to avoid this happening as the student will then have missed half a year of the subject they're changing to.

7. AOB

- (i) Is it true that the school won't be running revision sessions for Y11 students during the Easter holidays?

Easter is too early this year to run any sessions. The emphasis will be on students working at home and revision tasks will be set as Homework. However, there will be some voluntary sessions over May half term and some targeted revision for certain students.

- (ii) Mr Whalley asked for any feedback on the Monday Week B early closure.

The feedback was positive, with no concerns.

The next meeting is scheduled to take place at 6pm on Thursday 24th May 2018.