



Imberhorne School Parents' Forum
Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th November 2019

Present

Martin Brown, Headteacher, Helen Vince, Rachel Clark, Kate Scott, Debbie Hainsworth, Martin Haynes, Sandra Haynes, Kim Comber, Richard Goff, Sally Tottman (Secretary).

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Sue Smeaton, Liz Allard, Sally Cullen, and Beverley Webber.

Minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2019

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Coasting Students

Mr Brown spoke on the issue of 'coasting' students. He explained that teaching staff are asked to comment on students' attitude to learning, applying the rankings within the Attitude to Learning Matrix. He explained that, as part of the School Improvement planning process, it has been decided to investigate what actions can be taken to improve the performance and motivation of those students judged to be coasting. The aim being to make coasting unacceptable.

From analysing year group data for 2018/19, it was apparent that the numbers of coasting students increased noticeably by Year 9, although as a proportion of the whole year group, it was not a large number. The students who were of concern were those who were judged to be coasting in all or nearly all subjects.

In the course of discussion, it was suggested that the introduction of more 'fun' extra-curricular activities might improve motivation and reduce disaffection for some students. It was also observed that the knowledge that students would be dropping certain subjects at the end of Year 9 might affect their attitude to learning.

In reply to a question from Mrs Clark, Mr Brown said that there appeared to be no correlation between SATS results and those seen to be coasting. There were instances of coasting students across all ability levels.

The level of student participation in the various Challenge fortnights was discussed. Mr Brown noted that challenge fortnight activities were in some cases aimed at Key Stage 3 primarily. Mrs Scott observed that some students do not wish to appear too keen and consider participation in such activities to be 'un-cool'. There might be benefits therefore in terms of coasting students if the Challenge Fortnight activities were made compulsory.

Mr Brown outlined some measures taken to address the problem of coasting:

- the use of seating plans to ensure the maximum level of effort and application from students by avoiding unsuitable pairings in class.

- the school's emphasis on character education as a means of challenging students and broadening their experiences and hopefully ultimately changing the way they think.
- sending one-off letters to parents -these sometimes proved to be more of a motivational spur to students than the feedback provided through the reporting process. Mrs Vince referred to the letters sent to parents regarding Progress Ladders and suggested that these might be helpful at Key Stage 3 also. Mr Brown agreed that these had made a considerable impact.
- having conversations with students about progress.

Finally, there was discussion as to the best time to issue progress data. Mrs Hainsworth felt that receiving progress data just before Year 11 Mock exams was not ideal. Mr Brown agreed but explained that the intention was to provide the most robust data possible – hence the delay. He, noted Mrs Clarks' suggestion that it would be useful to receive progress data more than once during Year 10.

Parental Enquiries

i) Timing of Assessments

Mrs Vince noted that the timing of the Year 10 summer exams late in the term, meant that there had not been time for teaching staff in some subject areas to provide sufficient feedback to students. Mr Brown agreed that due to the timing of the GCSE and A level exams, the timetable for Year 10 is very tight at the end of the year. Whilst feedback on the assessments could be provided at the start of year 11 he said he would look at ways to address this concern.

Mrs Vince also raised a concern over the number of assessments being set for year 11 students, for which there was sometimes little notice given. Mr Brown explained that apart from some whole year additional mock exams in English and Maths, most other assessments were subject specific class tests.

ii) Reports on SIMS

Mrs Haynes referred to an occasion when reports had been uploaded to SIMS on the last day before half term. This meant that any queries could not be raised until after the return to school. Mr Brown noted this concern. He said that it should be possible to manage the scheduling of reports so that they were not published at such a late stage in future.

iii) Higher Project Qualification and Extended Project Qualification

Mr Brown confirmed that sixth form students are able to study for an HPQ (Higher Project Qualification). This is the equivalent of half an A level in terms of UCAS points and requires independent study. It has proved a great success.

Furthermore, the Higher Project Qualification is offered to KS4 students as a twilight option.

iv) Uniform

Mr Brown noted Mrs Scott's concern over the irregular sizing of PE shorts for boys. He would raise this with the Uniform Manager.

v) Mental Health training

Mr Goff asked if staff received training in dealing with mental health issues.

Mr Brown confirmed that certain members of the support staff had received training over the past year. However, the school no longer had a counsellor in post – this was partly down to finances.

He went onto say that discussions had taken place that day within the Senior Leadership Team on how students with differing needs can be supported and how provision for these students can be enhanced.

Mr Brown confirmed that Form Tutors do play a part in identifying mental health issues. Hopefully, he said, very few students slip through the net. Mrs Haynes added that it is helpful that students kept the same Head of Year throughout the school.

It was noted that the transition from Primary to Secondary school was sometimes difficult for students, particularly those who came from a smaller school and who do not join a form group with any of their cohort.

vi) Recycling

In response to a question from Mrs Clark, Mr Brown confirmed that there were recycling bins available for students to recycle most packaging from the canteen.

v)) After School Clubs

Mrs Clark drew attention to the lack of after school clubs run for Year 10 students, and in particular sports clubs/activities. Mr Brown would discuss this concern with the PE department.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.40pm