



Imberhorne School Parents' Forum
Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th November 2018

Present

Martin Brown, Headteacher, Bob Darvill, Chair of Governors, Helen Vince, Kim Comber, Rachel Clark, , Kate Moore, Liz Allard, Carole Lane, Sharna Holmwood, Debbie Hainsworth, Sandra Haynes, Martin Haynes, Beverly Webber, Lucy Doyle, Sally Tottman (Secretary).

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence received from Karen Betchley, Sue Smeaton and Louise Walker.

Minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2018

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Student Wellbeing

Mr Brown noted that there is a growing debate in the media on the issue of young people's mental health and wellbeing. Increasing numbers of students are presenting with a range of different issues. The next Governors meeting will focus solely on the subject of student wellbeing.

Currently student wellbeing is addressed primarily by the pastoral teams, supported by our Learning Mentors who work one-to-one with students, often over a period of time. Behaviour issues or the vulnerability of students may trigger intervention by a Learning Mentor. The school also employs a counsellor 2 days per week and is considering providing some low level counselling training for staff. Referrals to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) are not easy to make, although Mr Haynes advised that self-referrals are possible.

Mr Brown added that students have opportunities for mindfulness training and meditation in response to wellbeing concerns.

Currently the school operates the Talk Sense scheme, run by Sixth Form students who visit the Lower School site at lunchtime and provide support and advice to the younger students. Also at Key Stage 3, Peer mentors provide another level of support to younger students.

In the course of discussion, the following initiatives were suggested:

- the establishment of child led chat groups as an additional means of supporting student wellbeing
- the establishment of a 'safe place' for students to meet where conversation could be 'steered by someone (not necessarily a teacher)
- the provision of Meditation and Mindfulness training for Key Stage 3 students

Mr Brown said he would reflect on these comments and thanked parents for their suggestions.

Student Voice

Mr Brown reported that a review was ongoing of the systems that allow students to engage with school and feedback ideas (Student voice) with a view to improving the effectiveness of the Student Council amongst other things. A new member of staff has taken on responsibility for Student Voice. The intention is to create a culture and a better structure, which allows students to voice their thoughts. Some areas that students may be asked to consider are: Teaching and learning, fundraising, health & lifestyle and working with the community.

Mr Brown added that the Leadership Team would discuss how members of the Council should be selected in the future.

Mrs Doyle observed that the Student Council should aim for specific outcomes, rather than just be a forum for discussion. Mrs Webber proposed that students be invited to email topics for discussion; she added that this would facilitate contributions from quieter students. She also suggested the idea of a blog, which would enable dialogue between students and staff on specific issues.

Mr Brown thanked parents for their comments and reaffirmed his intention to create an improved framework for Student Voice.

Student Attendance

Mr Brown advised that levels of student attendance are reducing across all year groups and this is a concern, given its impact on student outcomes. However, the school takes a firm line on student absence and good attendance is celebrated.

Mrs Doyle commented that it is important that parents are supportive of the drive to raise attendance levels. She said that the attendance chart shown to parents at briefing evenings clearly highlighted the impact of absence on achievement.

Mrs Clark noted that not all missed lessons are the result of absence from school. Other school activities or trips meant that important lessons are sometimes missed despite good attendance.

Mr Brown reported that it is intended to share lesson planning information with students in the future so that students may access material from lessons missed.

Parents then referred to occasions when absences are incorrectly recorded. Mr Brown agreed that this should not happen and would follow up on concerns.

Parental Enquiries

1) Homework Setting

Parents, relating to the setting of homework, raised a number of concerns. These were primarily relating to inconsistency and lack of clarity in homework setting. Mr Brown undertook to follow up a number of specific issues and encouraged parents to contact the school if they have further concerns.

In discussion with staff following the meeting, Mr Brown established that some departments set longer-term homework assignments, (in particular, English and Maths), of which parents might not be aware. Mr Brown asked for these tasks to be better publicised to parents.

2) SIMS Parent

Discussion took place on issues with the Learning Gateway and SIMS Parent.

Mr Brown said he would check what is appearing in SIMS Parent and noted that parents might need guidance on how to interpret some of the data. He acknowledged that it is not possible to show the subject for which achievement points have been awarded and this issue has been referred to Capita to resolve. However, Mr Brown has asked staff to make it clear to students what they are being rewarded for.

3) Behaviour points

In response to a query from Mrs Webber concerning behaviour points, Mr Brown explained that most behaviour points are issued following lesson send-outs or exclusions. He referred to the 'Attitude to Learning' matrix on the website, which indicates how attitude to learning correlates with rewards and behaviour points. He added that there is a staged process in response to poor behaviour; low-level behaviour is logged, tracked and interventions may take place, but no points are accrued for low-level behaviour.

It appears that some confusion has been caused by the way low-level behaviour points are displayed on SIMS parent. Mr Brown will investigate.

4) School Trips

In the course of discussion on the allocation of places on school trips, a parent asked for more warning of forthcoming trips and/or a longer period in which to pay deposits. Mr Brown accepted that there can be more than one trip to pay for at one time and said that if parents contact the school, it is possible to pay in instalments if this would help.

Parents supported Mrs Holmwood's suggestion that students be invited to give feedback following school trips and this was noted by Mr Brown.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 8.00pm