



George Stephenson High School

George Stephenson High School Parents' Forum Meeting

Monday 21 January 2019

Minutes

Present: Christine Anson (Parent), Karen Blake (Parent), Ian Cook (Governor), Sharon Hedley (Parent), Jeanette McGhie (Parent), Wedny Heid (Parent), Sharon Nisbet (Parent), Lynn Simpson (Assistant Headteacher), Leanne Stewart (Parent), Emma Thompson (Parent), Helen Tovey (Parent Governor), Jill Urron, (Parent) Ian Wilkinson (Headteacher), Kath Williams (Deputy Headteacher)

Apologies: Andrea Brownless (Parent), Lisa Bryden (Parent), Julie Thompson (Parent)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Kath Williams, Deputy Headteacher, introduced herself as the new lead on Behaviour, Guidance, Safeguarding and Attendance.

2. Update on Key Issues and Events

Lynn Simpson and Kath Williams shared photographs and information on various trips, visits and events that have been happening since the previous meeting, including WW1 Centenary Event (Nov 2018), Wellbeing Ambassador Training (Nov 2018), Anti Bullying Week (Nov 2018), Year 7 and 8 trip to Alnwick Garden (Dec 2018), Year 11 trip to *Macbeth* at The Theatre Royal (Dec 2018), Senior Citizens' Christmas Party (Dec 2018), Hot Choc Friday, the new "official" school photographs of staff and students, Year 11 Mock Exam Results Assembly, updates to the website, Art/Textiles trips to the Baltic and Bowes Museum, Creative Writing Workshops, Year 7 Heath Week, Year 11 English Literature Lectures, Year 11 Study Group, The Boosting Reading Programme in year 7, Think Bubble, becoming a NECOP School and The Girls' Network.

3. School Improvement Update

Ian Wilkinson shared our school aims and values:

At George Stephenson High School we value the individual differences of our students, encourage them to succeed in everything they do and help them to become caring, confident and responsible young people.

He also highlighted three key areas for improvement:

- Outcomes
- Attendance
- Governance

Outcomes

Ian highlighted the significant improvement that we have made as a school in terms of Progress 8 and that we expect it to be confirmed as -0.06 or higher. (Officially confirmed as -0.04 on 24.1.18, which is second highest in North Tyneside.) This is an improvement of 0.22 of a grade since 2017.

Ian also highlighted the importance of attendance of achievement and progress: at GSHS last year, if a student had an attendance of above 98%, the average attainment was 5.4 and average progress was +0.19; between 95 and 98% attendance resulted in average attainment of 5.1 and average progress of 0.25, between 92 and 95% attendance led to average attainment of 4.4. and -.12 and below 92% attendance led to average attainment of 3.8 and average progress of -0.74.

Ian also shared Destination Data for last year's Year 11, which we are very proud of: 191 students are currently in further education, 19 students are in employment, 5 students are in apprenticeships/training, 1 student has just had a child and data not available for 2 students.

Attendance

Ian shared information regarding improvements in attendance that have taken place so far this academic year compared to 2017-18: overall attendance has improved from 94.3% to 95.6; persistent absence (over 10%) has dropped from 14% to 11.1%; attendance of disadvantaged students has improved from 92.4% to 93.2% and persistent absence of disadvantaged students has dropped from 23.6% to 19%.

Governance

Ian shared that a full review of governance has taken place and that we now have a full complement of governors (17 in total.) This includes 5 parent governors: Kimberley Flynn, Angela Henderson, Joanna Sharp, Helen Tovey, Ruth Valentine.

Lynn drew attention to two upcoming events for Year 11 Parents:

Set for Success: How to Support Your Child through GCSEs, Tuesday 5 March, 6-8pm

NE!2 Sixth Form Open Evening, Longbenton High School, Thursday 31 January, 5-7pm

4. Parental Issues

Parents gave the following positive feedback:

- The transition process from primary to secondary school is "fantastic"- really straightforward and smooth, and encourages students to make friends easily.
- The school has a very "approachable, open door" policy.
- GSHS is now "leading the way" with Maths
- One student felt very anxious about Maths at the start of the year but following a meeting with the new Head of Maths, felt much more confident and is now really enjoying Maths and making very good progress.

- The increased use of Twitter is very positive.
- The Young Leader Course at High Borrans was excellent.

Parents also raised the following questions/issues:

- How does the school track identify any students who have never received an award?

Response

As a school, we are currently in the process of looking again at our reward systems and are making real efforts to reward all of our students who consistently work hard, complete home learning, have a good attendance and punctuality records and show others respect at all times. For example, this year we have sent letters home to parents of students who have received no codes in their planners for missed home learning, poor behaviour or lack of equipment. We have also recently changed our end of year Reward Trips to make them more inclusive – previously, only the top 50 point scorers in a year group could go on the reward trip, which excluded a lot of students who deserved to be rewarded for their efforts throughout the year. In addition, we have recently introduced “Hot Choc Friday” which aims to celebrate students who have done something exceptional that week, and continue to have our half termly reward assemblies, Hero Cards, Golden Ticket Drawers once per term

- Could we offer more affordable residential trips in addition to the ski trip?

Response

Whilst we appreciate that the Ski trip is expensive, there are other residential trips available to students, such as a recent trip to London with the Music Dept and trips to Spain and France with the MFL Dept.; these are usually only offered to KS4 and 5 students at the moment. There are, however, many day and evening trips and visits arranged by a wide range of Curriculum Areas for all year groups.

- Would it be possible to have information about Year Options on the website as soon as possible in year 9?

Response

Information about Option Choices will be available on the school website week beginning 11 February, over two weeks in advance of the Year Parent and Option Evening on 28 February 2019, and three weeks before Options choices are due to be handed in.

- Could we give parents more information about upcoming mock examinations?

Response

The topic was discussed at Senior Leadership Meeting 31.1.19 and Curriculum Leaders to be asked to contact parents in the lead up to mock exams that are in addition to the with information about the date of the exam, what the exam will test and advice on revision.

Parents will continue to be informed in advance of whole year group mock/practice exams. We will also make sure that this information is available on the website.

- Could we give parents more information about new teachers?

Response

Information about new teachers to be shared on the website/in The North Star every September from Sept 2019.

- Could we give more advice about home learning e.g how much parents are allowed to help, how much students should produce, how students have performed.

Response

Teachers asked to be explicit about how much time students should be spending on a particular home learning task, and how much they are expected to write.

- The Holystone Scholars bus is dropping students off at The Lakeside Centre rather than at The Turning Circle.

Response

Adelaide Emmerson, Business Manager contacted the bus company to let them know to drop students off in the turning circle.

5. Discussion Item: How can we support and encourage Parents to continue to improve student attendance?

Response

Suggestions to be shared with GMs and Attendance Officer.

6. Date of next meeting: Monday 13 May 2019 6.00 -7.30pm

Discussion Item: How can we support student wellbeing, especially during exam times?

Lynn Simpson asked parents to think about the discussion item in preparation for the next meeting and to email her directly at lsimpson@gshs.org.uk if anyone needs to contact her about anything in the meantime.

Parents thanked for their attendance and contribution.