



George Stephenson High School Parents' Forum Meeting

Tuesday 29 January 2020

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

Ian Cook, Governor, introduced himself to the group and explained that governors are very keen to capture parents' views and to make sure that they are being represented. He asked parents to contact him if they felt that they had any concerns that they felt were not being dealt with by the school.

2. Update on Key Issues and Events

Lynn Simpson, Assistant Headteacher, reported the school is moving to a new catering provider from 1st April 2020. The tendering process has taken place over the past 6 months is now nearing completion and involved a panel of students in the taste testing. Two organisations bid for the contract and it was eventually awarded to Hutchinson Catering Limited, which provides the catering in several other schools locally. They had some very good ideas for reducing queues in the dinner hall and they are very open to students' ideas and feedback. The current provider, North Tyneside Council, will continue until Tuesday 31st March 2020. They did not bid for the new contract.

Hutchinson's provision will start on Wednesday 1st April 2020. The new system will be cashless, but this will not take effect until Monday 20th April 2020. Parents will be receiving an information pack from the school in March 2020 and Hutchinson Catering will be at the next Parents' Forum meeting in May with samples of food.

Lynn Simpson also reported that there are plans to refurbish three more accessible toilets during February half term and that the student bike shed is to have a new fence to increase the security.

Lynn Simpson went on to share the changes that have been made to the new Behaviour System that was introduced in September following staff feedback:

- after a Duty Support call, students are now be placed in Time Out for the remainder of the day/or the following day depending on the level of behaviour displayed or timing of the incident;
- high level directed swearing at a member of staff will lead to an exclusion. If students refuse to go to Time Out following attempts to resolve the situation, this leads to a form of exclusion;
- whatever lesson the incident happened in, they will miss that member of staff's next lesson and access Curriculum Support;
- students take part in a restorative conversation with the class teacher before they are allowed back into lessons.

- if students refuse Relocation and/or wander off, they spend the entire day in Time Out, not just that lesson. Doing this on multiple occasions could lead to exclusions;
- if students are “relocated” twice within a 2 week period (in the same subject), they will go on report to the Curriculum Leader and parents may be invited in;
- if students are “relocated” more than once within the same day, they attend a RESET period in Time Out the following morning (P1, 2 and break) and have a conversation with their Guidance Manager.

As a result of these changes, there has sharp decrease in numbers of students refusing relocation and fewer 'repeat offenders'. Student Voice is planned soon to find out how students feel about the new system and the recent changes.

Lynn Simpson shared information about other events, including the Year 11 revision breakfast for Health and Beauty students, The Girls' Network Final Celebration for the 2019-20 cohort at The Biscuit Factory and the imminent start of the next Girls' Network Group, which involves 25 Year 9 and 10 students, as well as the upcoming Year 10 Construction bike ride and publication of their own book about the sites they visit. She also drew attention to some upcoming events:

- Sixth Form Open Evening Thursday 30 January
- Year 9 Holocaust Memorial Day: Friday 31 January
- Year 9 Parent and Option Evening: Thursday 27 February
- Year 11 Set for Success Week: Week beginning 2 March, including Set for Success Evening for parents and students, Tuesday 3 March 6-8pm
- Literacy (Week beginning 24 February) and Numeracy Weeks (Week beginning 3 Feb)
- School Show: *We Will Rock You* (Week beginning March 23)

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.

Ian Wilkinson went on to explain the key areas of judgement in the new Ofsted Framework: Quality of Education; Personal Development; Behaviour and Attitudes; Leadership and Management. The school was judged to be “good” in all categories in the recent Ofsted Inspection (Nov 2019), and ultimately “Good” overall.

Ian Wilkinson went on to share some of the verbal as well as written feedback that we received in the Inspection.

Quality of Education: Good

- Ofsted reported that “staff have high expectations for pupils and each other. This is a key ingredient of the school community. During lesson visits, pupils were attentive and respectful. There are strong relationships between teachers and pupils. As a result, pupils have achieved better examination results in a wide range of subjects since the previous inspection”.
- The school currently has a positive value-added figure of 0.01 based on 2019 GCSE results, and statistics show that again, there is a very strong correlation between students who had above 98% attendance and a positive value added score:
above 98% attendance = average progress 8 Score =+ 0.41
95% -98% attendance = +0.08

92%-95% attendance = - 0.39
below 92% attendance = - 0.46

- We are also particularly pleased with our most recent A level results: 98% pass rate; 45% grades at A*-B; average points = 32.9

The verbal feedback also said:

- leaders have high expectations for all pupils and have adopted an ambitious curriculum for all pupils;
- the curriculum is clearly sequenced and well developed;
- all students study a full suite of subjects in KS3 – there is breadth to the curriculum;
- teachers have strong subject knowledge;
- students are attentive and respectful and there are strong relationships and positive attitudes to learning;
- School is aware of and is addressing the DFE target for EBACC;
- Curriculum Leaders and teachers know their subjects well, they have strong subject knowledge and pupils achieve well.

Personal Development: Good

The report states that “pupils access a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Such activities benefit pupils’ personal, social and cultural development.”

The verbal feedback also stated that:

- the curriculum extends well beyond the academic and vocational and provides broader development;
- the rationale for it comes from the 5 keys – with an intent to develop well-rounded individuals, healthy, active and responsible citizens;
- no forms of discrimination are tolerated;
- there is a strong ethos of pastoral support;
- we work effectively to prepare students for life in modern Britain, to keep physically and mentally healthy and we promote diversity and respect;
- we provide high quality careers guidance and good links to local businesses - higher than average % in EET post 16 and post 18.

Ian also shared the following information regarding destination data, of which we are very proud:

Activity Survey Summary as at 1 st November 2019	Gender		Total	Total%
	F	M		
Further Education	40	60	100	51.8%
School Sixth Form	37	20	57	29.5%
Apprenticeships	11	14	25	13%
ESFA funded WBL	3	3	6	3.1%
Full Time Employment with study	0	1	1	0.5%
Seeking Employment, Education or Training	1	3	4	2.1%

At Sixth Form:

University /FE	73% (80%)	Russell Group 32% (16%)
Apprenticeship	9% (13%)	
Employment	12% (5%)	
Year 14	1% (5%)	
Gap	2% (1%)	
Police	1% -	
Army	1% -	
Unknown	1% -	

Apprenticeships in areas such as Software Engineering, British Motors, Building Surveying, Plumbing.

Behaviour and Attendance: Good

The report states that “teachers have good relationships with the pupils in their classes. Pupils said that behaviour has improved, and most staff use school routines and reward fairly” and that “leaders’ strategies to improve attendance and improve behaviour have benefited pupils’ learning”.

The verbal feedback states that:

- current attendance is in line with national average and has improved since last inspection;
- clear systems in place to support pupils and tackle absence;
- the school is doing everything in its power to improve and promote attendance;
- teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour;
- the introduction of the behaviour blueprint has improved behaviour and attitudes further;
- pupils were complimentary about the behaviour blueprint and would like to see it used consistently – they believe behaviour has improved because of it;
- the vast majority know how to behave well in social times but a minority have not demonstrated these attitudes at break and lunchtime.

Leadership and Management: Good

The report states that “George Stephenson High School has improved since the previous inspection. Staff, pupils and parents share this view”.

Verbal feedback included the following comments:

- leaders are ambitious for all pupils and students in school;
- pupils now achieve well and know and remember more;
- school rightly focuses on curriculum development;
- parents, staff and pupils all positive in the questionnaire;
- safeguarding is highly effective and meticulous;
- one of the strongest DSL teams they have seen – the role of DSL team puts safety and safeguarding for all as highest priority;
- staff are positive and believe workload is taken into account and feel supported by leaders around their workload and well-being;
- governors are highly skilled and use their expertise well to hold us to account – they are highly ambitious for all pupils. They have re-aligned their Governor links to good effect. They have an accurate and precise view of the school.

The Sixth Form: Good

The report states that “Students in the sixth form said they feel ‘lucky’ to be part of the school community. They are great ambassadors for the school and act as positive role models to younger pupils. Almost all students progress onto appropriate higher-education courses, training or employment.”

The verbal feedback also stated:

- there are strong productive relationships;
- assessment and feedback activities are strong;
- impressed with the strong subject knowledge of teachers and with the attitudes and work ethic of students;
- the curriculum on offer has real breadth and meets and exceeds the requirements of the programme of study.

Parental Issues

Parents gave the following positive feedback:

- Teachers are always very quick to respond to emails, which is much appreciated.

Parents also raised the following questions/issues:

Q - Why is work experience always in the last week of term?

Response

We have had work experience in the last week of year 10 for many years now in order to minimise disruption to learning because we have held it in the same week for so long, we are now allocated that slot by employers, and it is difficult to change.

We are aware, however, that it does not allow students to formally reflect on their experience on school until the start of Year 11, which is not ideal; our Curriculum Leader of Business and Careers is currently looking into it.

Q - Are students allowed to use aerosol sprays in school?

Response

Students should not be using aerosol sprays in school under any circumstances because of the problems they can cause for people with asthma and other respiratory problems. Lynn Simpson to ask teachers to remind all students about this important rule.

Q – Why aren't all teachers using the SIMS App in a consistent way to set home learning.

Response

The use of the SIMS App is still in its transition phase but Lynn Simpson to remind all teachers of the importance of setting home learning on the App as well as with students in class.

Q - It is still unclear what LORIC cards are being awarded for on the SIMS App.

Response

We are aware of the problem and looking for a solution. In the meantime, Lynn Simpson to remind teachers to make the reason for a LORIC card explicit to students when they award them.

Q - What plans are in place for the 50th Anniversary of the School in September 2020?

Response

We are hoping to have a range of different events and celebrations over several weeks and would welcome ideas and contributions from parents. As a result, we have changed the planned focus for the next Parents' Forum meeting to focus on this.

4. Discussion Item: How can we encourage and support parents/carers to develop literacy, numeracy and oracy skills outside of school?

- Point less game
- Join clubs – reading / MFL
- Listening to news
- Encourage variety of texts/audio books
- Parent workshops
- Trips out
- Quiz of phrases and sayings – not modern/current
- Encourage listening to the radio
- More writing at home
- Watch educational programs
- Inform parents how literacy, numeracy and oracy are developed in school
- Involve in shopping
- Allow sons/daughters to managing own finances
- Encourage more family discussion e.g. at mealtimes
- New word, find meaning and explain – write it down in planner
- Crosswords
- Questions to send home – new words to look up with parent
- Interview parents with probing questions
- YouTube oracy
- Parents evening – top tips
- Audio books
- Podcasts / Facebook

5. Date of next meeting: **Thursday 14 May – 6:00 – 7:30pm**

Discussion Item: How should the school celebrate its 50th anniversary?

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 and carers thanked for their attendance and contribution.

Meeting closed at 7.40pm.