



George Stephenson High School Parents' Forum Meeting

Monday 8 October 2019

Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions

Lynn Simpson, Assistant Headteacher, welcomed parents and carers, including new members of the group. She also introduced Leon Allen, Curriculum Leader of Business Studies and Careers.

2. Update on Key Issues and Events

Lynn Simpson shared photographs and information on various trips, visits and events that have been happening since the previous meeting including Sports Day(July 2019), Year 6-7 Transition, Year 10 Work Experience (July 2019) , The Year 11 Prom (June 2019), GCSE and A Level Results Days (Aug 2019), The Girls' Network and Pretty Muddy (July 2019) Celebration of Achievement Evenings (Sept 2019), Year 9-13 Paris Trip ((Oct 2019), The GSHS Behaviour Blueprint, LORIC Rewards points and cards, the new website and display photographs around the school. She also shared the names of new staff:

Fiona Barclay - Teacher of Science (Maternity Cover)

Lauren Bell - Post 16 Achievement Support Co-Ordinator

Jane Cunliffe - Cover Supervisor

Christopher Higgins - Teacher of Music/Performing Arts (Maternity Cover)

Michael Kearns - Teacher of Maths

Georgia Kerrison - TA/Cover Supervisor

Lois Smith - Ta/Cover Supervisor

Amy Thornton - TA/Cover Supervisor

Kyle Wardle - Attendance Clerk

Ann Watson - Broughton- Teacher of RE (Maternity Cover)

Jennifer Wood -TA/Cover Supervisor

She also updated parents on the new Sims App:

the majority of students and parents now signed up to SIMs app; further email invites sent to those who have not yet done so;

SIMs app for Home learning still be rolled out: from the start of the next half term, all staff training and technical issues will be completed and all HL will be set through the app. In the meantime, teachers, students and parents using planners alongside app.

Parents tell us that having access to the tasks and any resources needed is really helping them to support their children in completing HL tasks on time; students are telling us that they like how they can follow the links that we provide them, print off spare sheets and check due dates.

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 the areas for improvement that we have been working on since the last Ofsted Inspection in November 2017:

1. Improve the quality of **teaching** so that it is consistently good or better in the main school to enable all groups of pupils to make at least good progress.
2. Increase the effectiveness of **leadership and governance**.

There has also been a significant improvement in terms of progress since 2016 – we have a three year rising trends on all progress measures, especially for Maths and Disadvantaged Students:

- all groups of students now make good progress;
- rapidly improved attendance.

Ian other highlighted other achievements and successes that we are very proud of:

- we are still a popular, inclusive and oversubscribed school that is central to our community;
- the roll has grown from 850 in 2010 to over 1200 today;
- we have a very healthy and well-managed budget;
- destination data at post 16 and post 18 is very strong;
- strong support from parents, primary schools, the Governing Body and the LA and other schools;
- our very committed staff;
- our wonderful students.

He also shared successes at A Level:

- 99% pass rate at A-Level over the last three years;
- 44% grades at A*-B and 73% at A*- C;

- 86% of students who applied to UCAS secured their first choice University;
- 23% of students securing places at Russell Group universities such as Oxford University, Newcastle University and University of York;
- 70% Students continuing into higher or further education. A rise in students opting for apprenticeships or full time employment, along with some students opting to take a gap year;
- several students have secured apprenticeships in highly sought after companies such as NHS, North Tyneside Council, Ernst & Young, Owen Pugh, Aviva and Audi.

Finally, Ian Wilkinson shared successes at GCSE:

- GCSE results this year – 70% Grade 4 and above in all subjects; 66% Grade 4 and above in Maths, 80% Grade 4 and above English with 60% passing both English and Maths;
- Attainment 8 Score of 4.66 – above national and above North Tyneside average;
- there will be a positive Progress 8 score;
- significantly improved Progress 8 score since 2016 – three year rising trends on all progress measures, especially for Maths and Disadvantaged students;
- all groups of students make good progress;
- rapidly improved attendance;
- 99% of Year 11 leavers in education, employment and training over the last three years.

4. Parental Issues

Parents gave the following positive feedback:

- Unifrog is a “Fantastic facility”- all students and parents now have access;
- Parentmail is an “amazing system”;
- KS2 -3 Transition has been “very smooth”;
- Work Experience - the booklet in particular was very useful.

Parents also very positive about the introduction of a cashless system in the future.

Parents also raised the following questions/issues:

- **Emblematic - problems with orders even when items were ordered well before the Summer holidays and huge queues. The school has been very helpful and supportive, however. Parents asked if it would be possible for school to sell uniform items direct to students on a sale or return basis.**

Response

As a school, we have selling uniform this in the past but it was not very successful because we lack storage facilities as a school.

We have raised the concerns regarding Emblematic with the company and they have assured us that they are working to avoid similar problems in the future.

- **Sixth Form Buses between GSHS and LBH sometimes calling at Forest Hall shops at a lunchtime time; in addition, there only one bus in operation, whereas there used to be two.**

Response

We used to have two buses but this when we worked with Seaton Burn as well as Longbenton. Now have one bus but it is larger - 21 seats- and we pay for it to run back and forth until all students are where they need to be. There are very few instances where the first bus is full and has to make a second trip but if it is, the students just need to wait 10-15 minutes for it to come back and get them on the next run.

The Head of Sixth Form has not had any more reports of the bus stopping at the shops but will call GMT and ask them not to do this in future.

- **Does anyone ever go through lost property and try to labelled items to students?**

Response

Office staff always check lost property items for names and return labelled items to students asap. Staff are regularly emailed too if a student reports a lost item of some value or importance to ask if they know where it may be located. A lost property box is located in the main office.

At the end of every term, all lost property items are on display in the student reception area so that students can check through and collect anything that they have lost earlier in the term.

- **Concern over “bad behaviour” of some young people in the Killingworth area expressed. How much are we doing as a school to support families, especially those who have experienced trauma.**

Response

The school works very closely with the local police and gives them as much information as possible to try to stop any anti social behaviour in the community.

In school, we have two Family Liaison Workers and EWOs; we feel that we are doing a lot to support families but would like to do more if we had the funds available.

- ***It is unclear on the SIMs App what LORIC points have been awarded for and students are sometimes unclear what LORIC means.***

Response

*All Year 7 students are directly taught about LORIC in ilearn lessons and assemblies are planned for the whole school in November to explain what LORIC means. There is also a new display in the library explaining LORIC and the key words - **Leadership, Organisation, Resilience, Initiative and Communication** - are displayed in large font in Middle C Block Corridor, probably the busiest part of school.*

We will also ask teachers to make it explicit to students what the LORIC points are being awarded for.

- ***The Sims app is “fantastic” but it needs to be used consistently by all staff.***

Response

The school aims to get all staff to set home learning on the App after half term; this first half term is a transitional phase. Additional training sessions for staff are planned before half term for those staff who are still unsure of how to use it.

5. Discussion Item: How can parents/Carers support Careers Development?

Leon Allen updated parents on our aim for “word class carers guidance” via The Gatsby Benchmarks and explained the following:

- unlike most schools, Year 7 and 8 still have dedicated Careers lessons;
- students have personalised Careers Pathways from year 7;
- all Students are registered with Unifrog;
- there are careers events in each year group e.g. Careers Speed Dating in Year 8, Year 9 Careers Zone, which is allowed students more choice and opportunity to find out more about particular careers which are of interest, Work Experience in Year 10, during which students are required to keep a work experience journal, Apprenticeship workshops and mock interviews with Connections in Year 11;

- Year 10 and 11 have a Careers' Portfolio – similar to the old Record of Achievement - to help to prepare them for the world of work.

Suggestions from parents on how they can help to support careers development included:

- speed dating: parents share job histories;
- develop awareness of local opportunities e.g Quorum and Cobalt;
- CV Clinic;
- encourage and support Scouting/ Guiding opportunities;
- promote volunteering and coaching opportunities;
- sharing Job adverts;
- resilience – helping students understand about the importance failure and how to deal with it;
- promoting individuality;
- sharing own experiences;
- developing life skills at home;
- giving more responsibilities at home;
- develop decision making / choices;
- talking to students about own strengths and weaknesses, and how as adults we overcome them;
- talk about future prospects at home;
- not dismissing their ideas;
- parents sharing their jobs and what they entail;
- encouraging students to take more responsibilities at home;
- presentations by parents to stimulate ideas;
- offering telephone interviews;
- use connections in work environment to facilitate work experiences.

6. Date of next meeting: **Wednesday 29 January 6.00 -7.30pm**

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

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.

