

Parent's Forum Minutes

18/11/08

Apologies were given by Mr Brookes, Nicola Wheatley and Angela Birks

1) Website update

Mr Wilson updated the Parent's Forum on with the latest information on plans for the design of the new school website. An outside organisation have been contracted to build this – examples of their work were shown.

2) Planned activities with Primary schools

Mr Wilson also spoke about the currently planned links with Primary Schools in the area. The AST in Maths has created a Maths and Music programme to be offered to local primaries in the summer of Year 5. There are also plans to invite primary schools to take part in a Jaguar cars racing event in Maths.

The school is taking the national STEM agenda on board and is considering the STEM leader programme which could be used to build links with primaries. This programme has been recognised by EDEXCEL and is a pathway towards BTEC.

Our Maths AST worked with primaries and accompanied their pupils to Cambridge along with a number of 6th Form students. This was well received and we will look to repeat this in 08/09.

Other areas of the school linking to primary schools include a group who are reading with yr6 pupils and the intention to offer assistance in French to some schools.

Specialist music events will also continue. However the school accepts that there is a need to be linking with the Primary Schools more and Mrs Blakett is attending the Transition Group as part of the Wellingborough Educational Partnership.

3) Review of Open Evenings

The Yr 6 and the Sixth Form Open Evenings were discussed and were positively received. The main points were:

Yr 6 Evening – The interactive nature of the tasks were welcomed – science and Maths were particularly mentioned. However it was felt that given the expansion of activities the evening now needed to be longer to allow parents to get round all areas. It was also

felt that the talks in the hall should be at times set in advance, and could be differentiated for new or existing parents. Parents towards the back of the hall found it difficult to hear or see the speaker. Where people went on tours they thought them useful but others could either not find a tour guide or did not realise they existed. Whilst maps were useful the need for clear internal signage was recognised.

6th form evening – the talk was seen as very useful, giving clear guidance on procedures and expectations, however again it was felt that more talks should have been planned and set times published. At the back it was also difficult to hear or see the speaker. It was felt that the presence of existing sixthformers was very helpful to discuss the course, also the interactive nature of some rooms was welcomed.

4) Review of Parent/Tutor day

There were some mixed opinions on how well the day had run however all parents felt that they would like the day to continue. Target setting with the tutors was seen as a good idea, tutors were seen to be very professional in their approach and most people had positive experiences with regard to times of the appointment. There were several positive suggestions for next year:

Reports could be sent home in advance in order for parents to identify issues – however it was felt that this may lead to some parents not then attending.

More information needs to be given to KS3 parents about the likely levels to be achieved in each subject in each year. It was mentioned that the group had been shown such information last year. MD will endeavour to find or re-create this.

Signage was a problem early on as many parents did not know where to go. External and internal signage is being looked at by the school. It was suggested that the pictorial signs for each subject could be made into a house competition. MD to discuss with Mr Brookes.

Another suggestion was to have information evenings relating to the levels achievable at KS3 – either as a curriculum evening (Maths) or as a Year group.

It was suggested that more privacy was required for the conversations and that several people in one room was not appropriate.

There was a request that where siblings were both in the school the timing of appointments was close together. Also the letter to parents stated that work would be set to cover the day and none was.

Some people felt that tutors required more knowledge on the information shared as often they were not able to respond to questions – however many volunteered to find

out answers and answered queries later. It was pointed out that there was a difference between this event and parent's evenings which are based with the subject teachers. (see next item).

Parents felt that there could be a blank page in the planner for the pupil to write down the targets so that parents had recourse to them at home.

One further idea was that this was a good opportunity for the school to market itself and that groups such as the HAS could be around or that presentations could take place centrally on topics such as the schools targets for the year.

5) Parent's Evenings

Mr Galbraith led a discussion on the format of Parents Evening – the majority of responses were very positive. Parents approved of the 5.30-8pm timing but said that it was often difficult to get appointments with some staff.

Again it was felt by some that there were too many people in the room making it noisy and giving a lack of privacy. However other parents felt it was handy being able to see who was where.

Two particular areas of improvement were the provision of refreshments and somewhere for younger children to go. These will be discussed at SLT before the next parents evening.

6) Extended school update

Mrs Forbes gave an update on the extended schools programme and asked for suggestions from parents for events.

Pupil parent curriculum evenings were suggested where parents could take part in and find out about some of the learning that their child would be doing that year. MD to discuss with curriculum leaders.

A run down of after-school activities was given, as well as information on Duke of Edinburgh Award and World Challenge. There was a suggestion that regular after-school clubs could go in the planner and be shown on the website, the tv in reception and put in newsletters.

7) The Leading Parent Partnership Award

An update was given on progress with the LPPA. A request for parents to become involved in a sub-group creating information on school policies for other parents was made and the names taken will be passed on to Mrs Blackett.

The meeting closed at 9pm. Individual issues were then dealt with by Mr Danks and Mr Galbraith

The next meeting is 3rd February 7pm. Any agenda items should be emailed to Danksm@hattonschool.org.uk a week prior to this.