# Bishop Rawstorne Parent Forum 2023/24

## 21st November 2023 – 1st Forum of the year (1 of 3)

### Focus – Parental Communication

### Tracking reports – Sims – School Cloud Parents evening tool

| *Staff in attendance:* | <ul><li>**Chair** – Mr Duckworth – Assistant Headteacher – Pastoral Care, Attendance, Worship,</li><li>**Lead Speaker** – Mr Wood - Assistant Headteacher</li><li>Andrew Marston - Governor</li><li>Julie Hughes – Governor</li><li>Stephen Gregson – Governor</li><li>Anita Berry - Governor</li></ul> |
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Meeting started at 5:30pm

Mr Duckworth thanked the parents for attending and outlined the format of the meeting. Each meeting will have a focus for at least half an hour on an issue school needs to gather feedback from the parent community about. Mr Duckworth explained that the three focus areas this year would be Worship and RE, Enrichment across the school and tonight's on Parental communication.

Mr Duckworth also noted that this linked to focus areas for SIAMS and the OFSTED framework – and that SIAMS was imminent and we are always mindful of the OFSTED feedback identifying enrichment as a growth area.

Following this, introductions were made and the floor handed to Mr Wood.

Mr Wood gave a thorough presentation (available in the Parents Forum section of the website) explaining how our reporting system runs. Mr Wood clarified the rationale behind how the reports are put together and how we consider what data to put on to the tracking reports – further to this he then talked through how the reports are used by the staff in school and what we hope to communicate to parents in them.

The intention was to discuss each of the three topics separately and then break in to groups to discuss each topic in more detail allowing all to have a say, however on this occasion the floor was opened to a variety of different discussion points, or questions, some of which the responses are noted below:

**The Tracking Reports**

A. How does school review the targets that have been set, at the end of the year, or do we not?

Mr Wood explained that we have a clear procedure after the GCSE results that involves looking at how students have achieved in line with their targets and then the headteacher will then endeavour to spot any patterns that may be cause for concern or that may need to be addressed. Mr Marston also clarified that this is reported to the governors and forms the areas of development for the following years. Mr Wood added that the schools consistent P8 score around 0.5 was one of the indictors that suggests the targets for the whole cohort are pitched fairly well.

B. How does school arrive at its target grades as performance indicators?

Mr Wood clarified that we use the FFT data to allow us to break students in to different groups with regards target grades, and clarified vitally that these grades did not represent a ceiling. He also went on to clarify that the target grades were shared at appropriate times for discussion with parents and young people and that we need to be mindful of sharing these grades too soon to avoid students picking options subjects for the wrong reasons (grades over enthusiasm) and also the validity of sharing grades like this in year 8 3 years prior to GCSE's.

It was also clarified that the tracking target grades, generated from FFT, will then be looked at first by the class teacher / head of department in Year 9 to ensure that they are seen to be accurate and appropriate for the individual, not overly ambitious i.e. – not unreachable.

Following from this several parents expressed real comfort in the grades procedure and did suggest that this information should really be shared with parents in a more formal manner rather than on the tracking report itself. Both Mr Wood and Mr Duckworth agreed that this is an area that may need some focus – as a response we are considering for Year 7 (how parents might interpret and use the tracking to help students) and Year 9 (understanding and interpreting targets and tracking) to have an in-school event allowing us to discuss the report system to ease parents worries.

C.   Why do you share the behaviour information as a percentage? How is this helpful?

A lot of discussion was had about the statement that may suggest you are in the "bottom 5 or bottom 10% of the Year group" It was explained that we make this decision as we feel that our parents need to know that proportionally the vast number of students receive no behaviour incidents and as such having 5 or 6 behaviour or homework issues can place you in the lower behaviour bracket. Being told you have had 6 behaviour issues is not as useful as knowing you've had 6 issue and you are in the bottom 10% of the year group. Again, this seemed to be well received and understood though some parents did feel that the statements were possibly unnecessarily worrying rather than useful.

D.   Does the tracking report make sense, is it clearly explained, and does it inform you of how your child is progressing?

The majority felt that yes, the tracking report was very easy to understand now they had had an explanation given to them as to what everything meant. The different colours highlighting what the report shows were very much appreciated.

E.   Does it provide you with everything you feel you need to know?

Year 11 parents would appreciate more of a narrative in the reports rather than just 'Engaged' to explain what each child needs to do to improve in each subject. Parents' Evenings don't provide enough time to discuss this, so it should be in the reports. Just getting 'engaged' also can be quite demoralising for some students, who feel they work just as hard in those subjects, and it is a subjective judgement which should have a little more context at this stage.

In addition, a few parents wondered whether tracking (or at least the final one of the year) could capture other information in addition to academic and behavioural. Particularly for those students that are struggling academically, and frequently are tracked as passive, could we find some positive elements from other areas to also report (such as involvement in wider school life). We said we would give this some consideration, but one sticking block may be how we capture and collate such information school wide.

## SIMS Application

Mr Wood also did a short presentation on SIMS that led to the following discussion points – although it must be noted that most parents present really like SIMS – more than one saying that its super, when it works.

A. Why do we use the term behaviours for missing equipment etc…?

Mr Wood clarified that everything on SIMS has to be logged as a behaviour or an achievement and as such we are limited from that point of view.

B. SIMS is limited in allowing parents to see an overall points score, and year 10 and 11 students don't get as many points on SIMS.

Mr Wood clarified that SIMS doesn't run a tally system and it is infuriating, but that again is one of it's limitations. There is another potential tool for school to buy in, but research is at an early phase and we don't want teachers to have to use more than 1 tool in the school day. Mr Duckworth also then clarified that he was aware of the disparity of points between Year 10 and 11 and Year 7 and 8. The points thresholds have been lowered for upper school to address this. As well as this discussion was had about disparity amongst class teachers – further clarifying that rewarding sometimes based on points is not fair and equitable.

Mr Duckworth pointed out that because we are aware that the points system alone was not fool-proof, he and his Head of Year team had been looking for, and implemented, alternatives to reward student positive behaviour and impact on the school community, above and beyond teachers recording achievement points.

A parent did also mention points counting to rewards trips. Mr Duckworth explained that these were events of the past and that actually they can be quite divisive with certain children never managing to achieve a place on the trip, but only just missing out thus breeding a quite resentful culture. Also, financially they put a burden onto parents that is not needed.

Mr Duckworth clarified that students are rewarded across the school 6 times a year in different manners using the points system – but that this system is also always evolving.

## School Cloud

Finally, Mr Wood did a brief presentation on School Cloud and how it operates as an online parent evening system.

Feedback about this was very positive – the flexibility it offers against the ease of access, although there was discussion about the need for good internet. The limitations on staff time and limited appointments along with the issue with appointments just ending was brought up. Mr Wood clarified that there should never be a worry if you feel you need more information get in touch. Similarly, if you feel you don't need an appointment because the report is very positive you will not be critiqued for not attending. Mr Duckworth also explained that there is the plan to have each year groups parents invited in to school this year for an event that involves face to face interaction.

The overall message was - if you think school can do more for you regards parents evening appointments don't hesitate to ask.

The formal part of the meeting ran until 6:55pm – such was the quality and use of the discussion. At this point Mr Duckworth did ask the floor for any comments linked to any other issues regarding school life.

- The criteria for different B at Bishops badges was discussed – these will be publicised further on the website and with students.
- One parent asked about the need for the relentless PSHE emails. Mr Duckworth clarified that this was partly a requirement suggested by the DFE that we communicate PSHE content regularly, and also it provides a safeguarding notice to parents as weekly topics change and can be very sensitive, and parents know their children better than we do,

Meeting drew to a close at 7:10.

Thanks all for attendance.