

Parent Forum – Meeting held 15.11.2023

Attendees: Clare Mendez – Chair
Paula English – Secretariat
Cheri Bartlett
Catherine Bryant
Jo Craig
Tony Dominguez
Rachel Holloway
Sarah Lewis
Vicky Lowry
Sonia Malhotra
Lorrayne Smith
Paul Webber

From USH: Chris Sykes, Headteacher
Sian Cumming, Deputy Headteacher
Nick Russon, Assistant Headteacher

Apologies: Dirk Gorissen
Sarah Gradidge
Lou Fox
Lucia Nastock Proda
Helen Parker
Poonam Pathak
Vicky Watson

Meeting Agenda:

- Student reading – barriers to reading and how we can reduce those barriers. What are the challenges that parents are finding with their child's reading and literacy.
- The USH presence and profile on Social Media, feedback and ideas to improve/maximise/diversify this.

Agenda item one: Student Reading

SC introduced the topic, reporting that research has shown that supporting/developing student reading leads to more successful exam results. Low reading time/skills was linked to higher absence rates/lower performance etc. The school is keen to look at ways of improving support to students with their reading and reduce barriers where possible by discussing the challenges that parents find with their child's reading and literacy.

The Forum broke into groups to discuss whether there were things that parents needed any help with and any ideas of how the school could reduce barriers to student reading.

Feedback/ideas discussed:

- Re-introduction of 'Drop Everything And Read'
- Introduction of compulsory reading homework
- (acknowledging some issues with above suggestions – some student do not have access to material / struggle to read)
- Students from university coming in to help
- Barriers – screentime/use of phone; lack of family support; unable to support
- Older children switching off

- Peer mentors for reading
- Audio books
- Making use of apps/gaming environment (Duolingo style streaks)
- Tutor time reading
- Word millionaire reading scheme
- Library quiz
- Advice from staff – reading lists (genres etc)
- Celebrating reading success as a school (similar to sporting success)

Agenda item two: USH presence on Social Media

Communication had previously been a Parent Forum topic with discussion and ideas for streamlining school comms and improving USH presence on social media. The new e-Bulletin and Newsletter have been implemented and feedback from the group was very positive, with a significant improvement on previous communications seen.

The school also asked for feedback on the USH presence and profile on Social Media, and any ideas to improve/maximise/diversify this. Again, feedback was very positive – there had been a marked increase in social media communications (but not too much); parents thought it was great to see what's happening in the classroom and the school in general. Department groups are being created so that each can share more and the variety in posts was much better. Parents also liked the time drops/reminders of events happening.

Any other Business:

Parent Information Booklet – revised copied for each year distributed to the group for comment. Lots of positive comments received, parents felt this was an excellent document to have at the start of each academic year.

A couple of minor feedback comments:

- Homework – parents may not understand terminology of what is core/foundation; clarify that the times are per subject; contact point if no homework being received.
- Trip calendar – 'residential/overseas' trip calendar implies only those are listed but other trips listed – perhaps could be called 'indicative' trip calendar? Again, contact for any trip queries.
- Calendar specific dates includes 'Assessment point' – clarify if this means testing beforehand? More information on testing had been raised previously.

The booklet will be sent out in due course.

There was a query relating to exam boards for subject areas. It was confirmed that this information is included in separate booklets – Options and Exam booklet.

Ofsted:

- CS reported that this is an Ofsted year for the school.
- In preparation, Forum members were asked if they would fill in an Ofsted parent questionnaire (link sent to members via WhatsApp Group).

Date of next meeting

The next meeting to be 6-7pm, Wednesday 24th January 2024.