

Present: Jennifer Adams-Hall, Christine Anson, Karen Blake, Andrea Brownless, Lisa Bryden, Ian Cook, Candy Mellor, Sharon Nisbet, Leanne Stewart, Emma Thompson, Jill Urron, Rachel Westwood, Helen Williams, Ian Wilkinson, Tracey Anderson.

Apologies: Theresa Allen, Helen Tansey, Julie Thompson.

1. Matters arising from previous meeting

Tracey Anderson feedback to the forum on issues raised at the previous meeting in October.

Extracurricular activities

Are they open to students above Y7?

Can students be reminded of these activities again?

Feedback:

The Tuesday Afternoon Clubs are just for Year 7 and for the first term (it has traditionally been more of a transition/settling in activity) however if numbers are small we have opened it up to Year 8 in the past.

Students were asked what clubs they would like to do in a survey and Photography and Arts and Crafts came out top therefore we asked 6th former's to run photography and art & crafts.

Year 7 students were told about Mandarin and Act2Cam in assembly and were reminded for at least two weeks - they were also reminded about the two new clubs and A4 posters are with tutors to put up in their tutor room.

Y7 French pen-pal scheme

Can this be made available to older students?

Feedback:

This is something that Ms Prior (Curriculum Leader for MFL) is looking into. She intends to contact the link she has with Nancy in France to ask if they are interested in a pen pal scheme with older children, otherwise she will contact the British Council and see if they can help. Jill Urron said that she also had a contact that might be useful to us and would pass this on to Tracey Anderson.

We have set up a 9 Club for Y11 French More Able students and it will run every Tuesday break time).

Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme

Could the school signpost children to places where they can take part in this?

Feedback:

Tracey Anderson thanked parents who have provided relevant links and has put together an information pack for GSHS students to signpost them appropriately.

First Aid courses for students

What do we teach and could there be more?

Feedback:

We teach about 4 lessons at the beginning of year 8 and cover:

- Primary knowledge survey (lesson 1)
- Recovery position (lesson 2)
- CPR (with Annie doll) (lesson 3)

Lesson 4 covers the following at an overview level:

- How to identify and help with a heart attack
- How to help during a faint
- How to help during an epileptic fit
- Bleeding
- Burns

- Asthma
- Identifying a stroke

Request for additional clubs/activities if possible in Art & Fashion / sewing.

Feedback:

Extracurricular clubs and activities rely upon staff voluntarily committing their own time after school and at the moment staff cannot commit to any additional time after school.

We did have Art & DT involvement in STEM club activities after school last term that students could access.

Suggestion that the school sets up a Facebook account

Feedback:

We are looking into this with our network manager. There are some concerns about the administration of such an account which would require additional staff time. However, an ex-GSHS student who has just finished her Masters in social media is keen to do some voluntary work for us looking at our use of social media to advertise ourselves so this may be an opportunity for us.

Absence communications

Query about ParentMail – the reporting absence function appears to be ‘live’ on ParentMail and it never has been in the past. Is this supposed to be the case?

Feedback:

This function has been live and used for over year now. Attendance officer uses ParentMail contacts from parents on a daily basis.

School catering experience

One parent had contacted Tracey Anderson prior to the last meeting to express concern about overcrowding and lack of staff supervision in Giorgio’s at lunchtimes.

Feedback:

Tracey Anderson confirmed that additional duty staff have been provided for this area and that we have since relocated the food service area previously housed in Giorgio’s into the main hall and provided additional seating in Giorgio’s which has helped to improve the situation.

Facilities requests

A request was made by one parent (on behalf of her child) for air conditioning/better air circulation in the PE changing rooms and also the installation of Photoshop on the student PCs in the Design Technology block.

Feedback:

Site and IT team responses are as follows:

There is already a ventilation system in the changing rooms, installed in 2013. It is serviced once a year. There is no option to add windows as the area is enclosed by both Gyms; nor to have sky lights due to the nature of ceiling materials.

Unfortunately the main issue with the student PCs in F-Block not having Photoshop installed on them (as well as the cost element of £25 per PC to install) is that these PCs are 10 years old so they would they would massively struggle to run Photoshop well. We are hoping to replace F-block student PCs this year. Photoshop is installed on all Teacher PCs in F Block (which are newer) and also installed on all Sole Room PCs (which is block booked for DT groups whenever possible).

2. School Improvement Update

Ian Wilkinson outlined key school improvement priorities and action following on from the recent Ofsted inspection.

In September 2020 our school will celebrate its 50th Anniversary.

By then we will:

- Be a fully inclusive school where all students make excellent progress and achieve positive outcomes

- Be a school where all students secure their most appropriate progression route and become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens
- Be the school of choice and be full in every year group
- Be a school with a large, vibrant collaborative Sixth Form
- Be a school where students are emotionally resilient and where emotional health and well-being are valued and promoted.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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 by ensuring:

- teachers have **high expectations** of the work produced by pupils
- work set for pupils is **challenging**, especially for middle ability pupils and the most able pupils particularly in key stage 3
- **assessment** is used well to address misconceptions and plan challenging work, particularly in mathematics
- skilful **questioning** is used consistently well to deepen pupils' understanding of what is being learned
- teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length and apply their mathematical skills in a wide range of subjects.

2. Increase the effectiveness of **leadership and governance** by ensuring:

- senior and subject leaders have higher expectations and **check pupils' work** thoroughly to make sure pupils make good progress overall
- the proportion of **disadvantaged pupils regularly absent** from school is reduced
- **plans for improvement** are crystal clear about the main school priorities and how actions taken will improve pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching
- the use of the additional government funding for **disadvantaged pupils** results in these pupils making at least good progress across a wide range of subjects.

Important factors to remember

- We are still a popular, inclusive and oversubscribed school that is central to our community
- The roll has grown from 850 in 2010 to nearly 1250 today and we are full in Year 7, 8 and 9, with a waiting list
- We have a healthy and well-managed budget
- Destination data at post 16 and post 18 is very strong
- Support from parents
- Support from Primary schools
- Support from the Governing Body
- Support from the LA and other schools
- Support from staff and our wonderful students

Next steps

- Governor Committee set up and work started
- Post-Ofsted Action Plan written
- Governance Review – begins 15th January
- Pupil Premium Review – 22nd January
- Support from LA including Raising Achievement Group – first meeting RAG 29th January
- Support from LA including Maths Departmental Review
- Support from other schools/PiXL
- Staff working groups; curriculum mapping; home learning; end of year exams etc.
- Possible HMI visit later this year
- Section 5 inspection by Christmas 2019

3. GSHS Issues and Initiatives

Curriculum initiatives:

- MFL
- Performing Arts
- Health & Social Care
- Sport
- RE
- Coming up – RE Holocaust Memorial Day for all of Year 9, MFL week, Numeracy week, Literacy week.

STEM club

Weekly club, huge numbers, exciting activities & events across the year.

Christmas STEM club: making lip balm, making slime, making spaghetti/marshmallow towers!

Other STEM events since September include:

- *Key stage 4 and 5 Villiers Scholars STEM Scholars Workshops across the year e.g. so far students have had several workshops at external science locations, a Chemistry masterclass & a Forensic Science Masterclass at Northumbria University.*
- *Maths – Senior Maths Challenge 7th Nov. 2017*
- *Weekly STEM bulletin shared with all students*

Plenty of exciting MFL events so far this year!

Spanish trip to Andalucia (October).

Parents into Spanish evening (6th Nov.).

GCSE & A-level languages Study Days at the Tyneside Cinema.

Mandarin Club for Year 7 ran for 13 weeks after school last term and it was very well attended.

Chia Lin is hoping to continue this club in the summer term.

Y11 French and Spanish breakfast study sessions – a new revision club for the Spring Term

Thursday mornings from 8-8.25am

Students can bring their own breakfast and have it while revising with support of MFL teachers.

If they attend 4 sessions they get a free breakfast on the 5th!

Starts the second week of January for 10 weeks

Performing Arts

Y7 choir going from strength to strength.

More music tuition/instruments being played.

Christmas Concert including a drama performance by the Junior Youth Theatre – 'The Nightmare before the Xmas Show'.

Carol Singing at local senior citizens care home & at the senior citizens party.

Grease (March performances).

TICE experience workshops for some of our students - TICE stands for 'This is creative enterprise'.

Health & Social Care

Xmas parties for babies & toddlers organised and run by the students as part of their course.

Girls Sport

We had a rewards trip for anyone that had attended the most extracurricular clubs, they went to a Christmas Clubbercise session!

The netball teams for both years 7 and 8 have been doing really well in the league.

The KS3 rugby team did really well in the tournaments at Kingston Park and Novos.

Gymnastics in lessons have been going really well with students achieving high levels.

Year 7 Health week – 8th – 12th January.

Upcoming events - all of our info/results etc. are on our twitter page - @gshs_pe if they would like to follow us!!

RE – Y8 Sikhism Day

Y8 students went again this year on a visit to the Sikh Temple (the Gurdwara) in Newcastle. The Y8 Sikhism day was Monday 2nd October and students had a half day visit to the Gurdwara, in preparation for them studying Sikhism in RE this term.

Extracurricular activities

Young Person's Question Time

Y10 students took part in the third **NT young person's question time**. The panel was made up of Norma Redfearn, Mayor of NT, local councillors and representatives from the police and NHS. Students grilled the panel with a range of questions written by young people across the borough, including students from our school.

Dimensions Day 1 for Y7

As part of the Year 7 iLearn course, the students were challenged to create a 'pop-up' exhibit for The Discovery Museum. They spent six weeks developing historical skills such as source interpretation and analysis and were given the opportunity to study various aspects of local history (coal mining, urban change, jobs etc.) before then choose what they wanted to investigate further. The Discovery Museum gave some students access to their archive and the students used the internet to gather more information. They worked in large groups (8-10 students) to create their exhibit and each student had a role (e.g. Project Manager, Archive Diarist, Exhibition designer, Researcher). On Wednesday 6th December, the students spent half a day at The Discovery Museum. They displayed their exhibit and spoke to members of the public about what they had been studying. They also critiqued each other's' exhibits. As last year, parents were invited to come and a number of relatives supported the students.

Senior Citizen's Party

Run again by our 6th form students and many of our staff. Even bigger numbers than last year! Entertainment was provided by GSHS students.

Charity events

This year's whole school charity is **St. Oswald's hospice** – so far we have raised just over £2000 towards our target of £10,000. We did some carol singing at SilverLink to raise money for St. Oswald's.

We also took part in the Shoebox appeal - this year the school has again risen to the challenge of helping people who are far worse off than most of us by getting involved in the Link to Hope Shoebox Appeal. The aim is to combat poverty and give humanitarian aid to people struggling to survive in poor villages in Eastern Europe (our boxes are on their way to Romania this year) that lack basic amenities - especially to children who are the most vulnerable.

School Environment Update (autumn term works programme)

- Re-naming of the Performing Arts Studio - in honour of our sadly missed colleague Sheila Hall, the drama studio was named "The Sheila Hall Performing Arts Studio" at an official naming ceremony on Wednesday 20th December at 3.30pm Both her husband and sons were there along with many past and present staff, students & parents.
- Student toilet refurbishment - contemporary look with strong focus on student safety.
- Classroom redecoration/refurbishments.
- Corridors - LED lighting upgrades and redecoration.
- Upgrades to emergency lighting.
- CCTV – 12 new cameras.
- Ground works – new fencing at back of DT block.
- Roofs - extensive repairs to both G Block and PE block roofs (ongoing).

UP AND COMING PROJECTS

- Refurbishments of G11 Business Suite 2018.
- External Doors Replacement (Hall and PE) 2018.
- Students Toilets Refurbishment Middle C 2018.
- Further Decoration/Refurbishment in Humanities Corridor 2018.
- Replacement of G Block Roof 2018.

Parents' issues

Transition

A Y7 parent asked whether it was possible for Y7 student to be taught in their tutor group rather than go off into different groups for lessons to help with the transition process.

Feedback:

Tracey Anderson explained that for logistical reasons this is not necessarily possible for a range of reason:

- We have to have a small SEND class in every year group which is made of up 10 students from different tutor groups.
- The tutor groups are based on friendship choices from the primary schools and the teaching groups are mixed ability.
- We need to have an equal gender balance in teaching groups to allow single sex PE lessons to be timetabled.

The issue will be passed onto Senior Leadership for discussion with regards to planning for next year's transition programme & timetabling.

Communications about student progress

Some members of the forum expressed concerns about the regularity of feedback to parents on student progress, particularly at KS4 (only one parents evening in Y10 and 11 – should/could there be more for example?). Also queries about new GCSE exam grading and what specific marks actually mean.

Feedback:

Parents were advised to always contact the school if they have any questions/concerns about their child's progress or achievement in specific subjects rather than waiting for the parent evening. The issue will be passed onto Senior Leadership for discussion with regards to planning for next year's reporting calendar. SIMs teacher APP (hopefully coming online this year) should provide teachers with more opportunities to communicate with parents.

Home Learning – a variety of issues raised:

- Do parents need to know more about how much home learning is being set and handed in?
- Question of standards & expectations raised – is it consistent enough across the school?
- Deadlines need to be adhered to for fairness to all students – this isn't always happening.
- The move towards more traditional home learning for Y7 and 8 was well received by the forum, however some concerns were expressed about the quality of marking and feedback – some parents said that they see no marking of home learning for Y9 and 10 students at all.
- Too much home learning set for Y11 students in the last week before Xmas and over Xmas – just after their mock exams and the pressure was felt to be too high by some.

ACTION:

These comments will be passed on to the High Expectations working group (set up after Ofsted) to consider (they are looking at home learning as part of their work).

Maths

Some concerns raise about maths teaching – a Y11 student whose levels have deteriorated significantly and a Y7 student who is doing work she has already done in Y6 and finding it all too easy.

ACTION:

These comments will be passed on to senior staff with responsibility for maths at the moment – there is a great deal of support and intervention being put in place in maths at the moment.

Y11 Mock exams

MFL listening exam in the gyms was disturbed by noise if students going in and out of PE changing rooms.

Feedback:

Tracey Anderson assured parents that this is not an issue in the real exams as the area is rigorously supervised by senior staff. This concern will be passed on the exams officer.

Mixed ability teaching

Forum discussion included the following points:

- Y9 mixed ability groups are being referred to as 'sets' by staff – e.g. inference that set 4 is lower ability than set 2 (in students minds). Particularly noticeable in science.
- Y7 mixed ability maths – some students finding work far too easy.
- Some concern about Y9 into Y10 groupings.

Feedback:

Ian Wilkinson said that we are reviewing our systems again this year and will keep parents informed. Y10 Science and English will be mixed ability next year, maths will be set by ability.

Security

Clarification on school policy & procedures for PE changing room security was asked for.

Feedback:

Tracey Anderson confirmed that PE changing rooms should be locked during all PE activities (during and after school) and that no students (or other individuals) should be allowed access during those activities unless accompanied by a member of staff. The relevant staff have been reminded of this again this year.

Accelerated Reader – a number of issues raised:

- Parents asked if was possible for students to complete the Accelerated Reader online tests at the weekend - currently it seems that this is only possible Monday – Friday.
- Parents have asked if information about AR can be sent out again via ParentMail (there was a lot of information about it last year but less so this year apparently).
- Some students have complained that the AR books they are being directed to are too easy for them – is this the case? Can the testing of reading age be incorrect at all?

ACTION:

These comments will be passed on to Mr Wallace (Literacy Coordinator) and Mrs Dickinson (Learning Resource Centre Manager and Accelerated Reader coordinator) for consideration and feedback.

Water in dining hall

A request was made for more drinking water to be provided for students in the dining hall as currently there are just two small jugs of water provided that doesn't always get refilled and some student have been told that they aren't allowed to fill their water bottles from them.

ACTION:

These comments will be passed on to the catering team and Business Manager. We have already been looking in to this.

4. Any other business**Uniform 2018-19**

Forum discussion on uniform issues. There have been significant improvements since September on previous years, however:

- There are still some problems with students not wearing correct uniform.
- Ongoing difficulties in enforcing correct uniform as there are so many alternative versions of uniform on the market.
- The amount of pastoral and senior staff time being used in dealing with uniform issues is detrimental to the improvement of the school.

Tracey Anderson showed parents some uniform samples from Emblematic that we could have the school logo added to and insist on parents buying those items only (skirts and trousers for boys/girls). In addition a patterned skirt was displayed as an alternative (in the school colours) which would need a logo. There was a discussion of the pros and cons of the suggestion. On the whole there was agreement that this might be a solution to ongoing uniform issues, although there would be decision to be made as to how to introduce any such change – either for the new Y7 and phase in or for the whole school at once (but probably not Y11 students with only one year of main school left).

ACTION:

Tracey Anderson to take comments back to Senior Leadership Team and discuss next steps, including Student Voice.

5. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 8th May 2018