

# Parent Council Meeting

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017

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**6:30pm – 7:15pm**

Discussion of topics raised by parent council

## **Staff retention**

A middle leader is leaving the school shortly and this was raised. It was explained that in response to this a member of the senior leadership team is going to oversee maths and additional support is being arranged by Ark one day a week to help teachers plan their maths teaching. It was acknowledged by all those present that it is undesirable to lose teachers mid-year.

Some members of the Parent Council feel that the school is not the same as it used to be. The fact that leadership changes can have an effect on school culture was discussed. Also, that last year and it was disappointing that not all of the new recruits had stayed resulting in a lack of continuity particularly in leadership roles. There was a feeling that the way staffing changes were communicated didn't perhaps leave parents feeling confident of the reasons given - more transparency might have helped. It was acknowledged that there were pockets of the school where staff turnover was greater but that it wasn't an issue across the whole academy. KSA has high standards and high levels of responsibility therefore the ambition of the school can work against retention to some extent. The fact that there is stability in the senior school suggests that high demands on teachers do work. The matter of teachers moving up the school quickly was raised.

## **Parent Communication**

Ideas for communication with parents were invited. Infant School teachers were now given separate briefing in order to focus on one thing at a time to establish a theme for the next week. The parent council felt that perhaps too much teacher's time spent on unproductive tasks and as such they were not feeling supported.

The subject of pupil absences came up and the fact that teachers have to spend a portion of time contacting parents to chase up absences that have not been called in. It was therefore acknowledged that there was a need to notify parents of absence.

## **Trips payments**

Trip payments can now be done in instalments of £10-20 a month. A reminder was made that the cost had been announced last year though it potentially got lost amongst other news and changes that were going on at the time. Parents questioned whether parents should pay for trips they do not go on and so it was pointed out that trips have to be booked early. Parents are also reminded that there is a difference between children not attending trips due to parental choice and pupils not attending trips due to not earning it on their payslip.

## **Daily timetables for pupils**

The parent council raised the issue of daily timetables being made available. Parents were reassured that this would be an easy fix and that curriculum documents will be provided at the beginning of the year.

## **Clicking**

Some members of the Parent Council were puzzled by the culture of clicking. It was explained that this historically works very well in practice after the initial bedding-in process.

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**7:15pm – 8:00pm**

Collation of parent council and wider community views on KSA expansion

## **How can we best reach most parents?**

- The Q & A sessions were well attended and there was good feedback. These will work well again in future. There was good feedback on the Principal's management of the announcement.
- For future Q & A sessions parents could be offered the opportunity to ask anonymous questions in advance.
- It would be nice if written feedback could be provided with regard to specific concern.
- Some members of the parent council suggested there being an FAQ section on website and it was agreed that this was a good idea.
- Members of the parent council said that the emailed newsletters each week was working well.
- Small, group drop-in sessions could also work well.

## **Which areas are parents most concerned about?**

- What can be done to ease the transition from a parental perspective?
- With regard to pupils moving between sites would we need to have walking helpers or a walk on bus to go between schools. Opinion is currently divided on this.
- Will there be staggered start and finish times
- Can breakfast club be extended
- When will parents be able to meet Ark Paddington Green staff
- Could we have a board where post it notes could be added by parents?
- There was discussion as to whether KSA still was a leading school in this area. It was highlighted that a priority of primary school parents was for their children to be happy.
- There was a discussion about the school behavioural policy and strictness vs. discipline.

## **What would parents like to see on each site?**

- Admissions
- Uniform
- Parent council
- Forming a strong community
- Catchment areas could be centred on individual schools and not merged. That way it might attract more community supports.