



**Parent Council Meeting
Wednesday 16th January 2019**

Hosted by: Mr Rimmer – Head of Secondary

What I Heard	What We're Doing
<p>PSHE</p> <p>Beth and I are very grateful for the Parent Council making us aware of the level of concern from some members of the parent community about the new DfE draft guidance which is due to come into effect from September 2020.</p> <p>There were some helpful thoughts shared in the meeting as to how more communication could occur ahead of each half-term to reassure parents about the content.</p>	<p>Letters have gone out to each primary year group with a brief summary of the content that will be covered.</p> <p>Beth will be speaking about PSHE further at the coffee morning this week (where some resources will be available to look at) and all the resources will be available on request ahead of each PSHE day (parents should be directed to the senior leader in each playground at pick-up time).</p>

We didn't discuss secondary PSHE in great depth, but I have also shared our discussion with the secondary heads of year and they will similarly be ready to share an overview of the content with any parent who is concerned or interested – they can be contacted via email.

Crucially, it is useful for parents to know that there are no significant changes to our PSHE curriculum at KSA – we'll be teaching very similar content (and in many cases, almost exactly the same content) as in previous years.

Redesigning the pupil toilets

Again, a really useful discussion (which had already begun at coffee morning last week) about the possible concerns about the plans for self-contained toilet rooms accessed through an open-to-the-corridor handwashing area, rather than separate boys and girls toilets.

Our discussion around the possible issues helpfully narrowed our thinking down to two considerations around ablutions and the role of mirrors, as well as other items that may be more or less appropriate for each gender.

This is still a long way into the future, but what I will share with those leading the design works is that having some toilets which have washing facilities inside of them (like the existing staff toilets) would be a preference, as would mirroring the practice staff and parents have seen in other schools and businesses whereby some of the rooms are marked as being for specific genders, with some others not specifically labelled. This would allow for particular provisions such as sanitary towel bins, mirrors and so forth to present within some toilets.

<p>Catering</p> <p>There was some recognition that the new caterers were starting not in ideal circumstances (no dishwasher, no mixer and so forth), and I appreciate your recognition that we all need to be patient while the new team settle.</p> <p>We all agreed that the offering on Monday wasn't up to standard and that has already been fed back, as have some other concerns around portion size.</p>	<p>Tomorrow marks the end of the first cycle through the menu. I will be doing some work with pupils on gathering their feedback about the menu in addition to the feedback I have gathered from staff and from parents and sharing this with kitchen.</p> <p>Steps are being taken to repair the dishwasher and mixer as soon as possible and there will be new, better-functioning equipment installed.</p> <p>The new catering team have asked if they can attend a parent council meeting in the future to meet you all in-person. I'll be sharing the date of our next meeting with asap.</p>
<p>Year 6 Outcomes</p> <p>We returned to the topic of the results from last summer and our collective desire to securing stronger outcomes in reading, writing and maths. The information shared by Beth with all primary parents about the KSA outcomes compared to both the national and local authority figures was seen to be helpful and it was exciting hear a range of ideas from parents as to how to support the school improve, including by using parents, volunteers and older pupils to help.</p>	<p>We know that the biggest changes to pupils' progress happens through great teaching in their lessons but we also know pupils can benefit from the focus that comes from working in smaller groups on targeting specific skills. We also think it is important to remember that the learning which pupils do in Year 6 is no more or less important than the learning they do in Year 5 or Year 7.</p>

It was also helpful to continue our discussion from previous meetings about the relative value and importance of SATs exams and it felt like we were moving towards a genuinely shared consensus.

This also led us into an important topic of support and intervention for pupils in secondary school, especially for those studying ahead of GCSE exams.

Sometimes, we will ask parents for children to come into school earlier or stay later to benefit from small group tutorials but we are also very aware that we already run an extended school day and we should be able to utilise the time we already have between 8.30 and 4pm to achieve success.

It's exciting to remember how many parents, sixth formers and local volunteers would be willing to come into school to support the learning of our pupils. As discussed, it is really important that when such initiatives take place, suitable training is provided to make sure it is effective. While at the moment our focus in the primary school must remain on supporting our teachers to have the greatest possible impact with their classes, genuine consideration will be taken in the future as to how and when to involve other volunteers.

We will be sharing a schedule of revision lessons and extra classes for Year 11 pupils next week. We will also be asking each subject area to share in more detail what additional studying pupils in all year groups could be completing outside of school.

As ever, I would strongly encourage any parent who is worried about their progress in school, in any year group, to contact their class teacher or head of year as soon as possible to request a meeting.

Removing French from Year 3

We're pleased that parents and pupils are enjoying learning languages so much in key stage two and it was good to discuss the extent to which it was not an easy decision for the school to end the year three lessons. However, as discussed, this will create more time for English and maths in Year 3 and it will be more pedagogically sound – as we'll be able to return to the teaching of French when pupils are at an age when they can genuinely develop their learning over time.

There was a really useful suggestion around bringing back the languages clubs for pupils in younger year groups so that they still get the exposure and the enjoyment. I'll be taking this forward with our languages team and making some plans in the coming weeks.

This also opened up a broader conversation about other subjects such as music and art, and the decision about what will be taught at both the youngers site and the older years site, and what may be reserved just for the older years. I will make sure that there is a plan for communicating this to parents that I can share with this group the next time that we meet.

Ark Paddington Green OFSTED report

We were proud to share the report which judged APG to a good school and which recognised the outstanding leadership which had led to such rapid improvement in recent years. While there was some concern that the school was only judged to be good rather than outstanding, on the whole there was recognition that it suggested an upward trajectory which added positive momentum ahead of the expansion and merger.

I recognise that the report was only shared with primary parents – I will make sure that a link is added to the expansion and merger section of the KSA website so that interested parents from all age groups can find it.

Music

General consensus was that the secondary concert was a success and that this success was a result of the full and planned participation of all pupils from each year group. As previously discussed, there was some frustration that the Juniors concert was not setup to be inclusive as we would have all wanted it to be and that last minute changes felt rushed and made the concert less enjoyable.

The topic of individual or small group instrument tuition as an extra-curricular offer was rightly raised again.

I have shared all of the feedback from each of the concerts with the music team – both the strengths and the areas for development.

In reference to the tuition, as said before, it is difficult to provide while our music team remain stretched, however there are a number of solutions to this which are being considered.

I have pencilled in our music curriculum leaders to present at the first coffee morning of next half-term and to within that time, present plans for the summer concerts as well as plans for future extra-curricular music provision.

Parent Payments

Similarly to the issue regarding PSHE, it was helpful to hear about the level of concern which exists amongst some members of the parent community about the expense of trip payments and of school meal payments.

As discussed, we will consider ways of making the extent to which the school subsidises costs for all parents as clear as possible to all parents at the point at which we are asking for payments. I will also look into ways in which we can break down the costs for parents further over-time, including the use of deposits and payment plans.

I am pleased that parents have been able to make use of the direct debit systems and the new functions on Parent Pay which allows parents more control over the scheduling of their payments.

I would also appreciate the parent council continuing to share with all parents that the school never wants concerns about cost to be a barrier to any pupil enjoying and participating in school events. Any parent with a concern around how to pay what is required should reach out to a senior leader who will be willing and able to support families in creating payment plans which break down the costs over time.