

# Parents' Forum - 21 June 2018

15 Parents/Carers present

Mr Millar welcomed Parents/Carers to the meeting. He thanked those attending for their suggestions on discussion themes, some of which were child specific and therefore had been dealt with through the Heads of School.

Mr Millar provided an update on action points from the previous meeting

- **Mobile phones:** This had been brought in earlier than September and had been received exceptionally well by students. Since originally put forward, this idea has been taken up by Governments in France and the UK as well as being endorsed by Ofsted. Instead of being 'glued' to their mobiles, students were having conversations and socialising during breaks and lunchtimes. Across the entire academy only three students have had mobile phones confiscated more than once. Mr Millar thanked parents and carers for their support.
- **Greenwich consultation on DSP provision:** The Academy will be changing its Designated Specialist Provision, to Autistic Spectrum Provision. ASD is a growing need within the authority. Funding is required for changes to the Symphony building which is being provided through Greenwich. The Academy has recruited a specialist ASD teacher and teachers will be upskilled for classroom practices to support ASD students' learning.
- **Supply Teachers:** Mr Millar confirmed that the Academy was fully staffed with permanent teachers for September. There will be two maternity covers in September and teachers have been employed on fixed term contracts to cover leave.
- **IBMYP:** Mr Millar reminded those present that two days at end of summer term had been set aside for training and writing department plans to ensure Year 7 lessons are ready for delivery in September. The Middle Years Programme was very exciting and offers a rebalancing of the curriculum with more time in creative subjects, more rewarding and enriching experience.

### 3. **Humanutopia**

Ms Croft, Associate Principal introduced the audience to Mary Adeykane, Year 9 Ashdown student who gave a presentation about her experience of Humanutopia. She found it to be an inspiring day. The sessions were emotional and reflective and helped students realise what they wanted to achieve and to come out of their comfort zone. Students were encouraged to think about negative comments and things they may have done in the past. This was a very emotional session and resulted in many students apologising for their actions.

Mary nominated herself to be a Hero and helped support Year 7 students in their 'Who Am I' Day. Next year she will support and help other students and will also receive coaching training.

Mary said the main thing she had learnt from the experience was to be successful you have to be happy. She confirmed that there had been a change in attitude in students since the training.

Ms Croft informed the audience that adult training was planned for the Autumn term. Humanutopia was a rolling programme and next academic year new Year 7 and new Year 9 students will go through the process.

Mr Millar explained that the programme was being trialled in Greenwich and LAT Trust schools. Students completed a survey after their first impact day and he would share the statistics with parents through the newsletter.

#### 4. **CCF**

Jeremy Wilson briefed parents/carers on new initiative - the Combined Cadet Force - which officially opens in September. It is financed almost entirely through Ministry of Defence, therefore cost neutral to the school. Royal Navy are the training providers. Two members of staff lead the CCF and the academy is also employing a part-time NCO, which is generously funded through Stationers' Company.

Currently a cadre of 15 students currently undergoing foundation phase training. Every Thursday CCF CCF staff and students wear uniform and train for two hours after school. A further 20 will be recruited, predominantly from Years 10 and 12, to start in September. Aim to have 100 at 5 year point. Each term has a focus for training. Navigation, expeditions and self-reliance, first-aid training, including health & safety at work course, water, military skills - cooking, survival, leadership development, shooting and skill at arms. Mr Wilson reassured parents/carers that the CCF will never store weapons on site. All weapons training takes place at the Army base at Woolwich, where they are stored.

In response to parent/carer questions, Mr Wilson confirmed the following:

- On a Thursday, students could either wear their uniform to and from the Academy or change into it on arrival if they preferred. London District advice is that there is no ban in wearing uniform in Greater London Area but down to individual discretion.
- There is no required level of fitness. The Academy CCF recruitment policy was fully inclusive. The only mandatory physical test students undertake is the Royal Marine swimming test.
- Students in uniform were seen as part of academy community by other students
- One third of current recruits are female. Three of the five students promoted were female
- Discharge of weapons would take place a Woolwich Garrison or Army Centre in Blackheath
- Students in young year groups could apply and applications would be considered on case by case basis.

## 5. Stationers' Company

Stationer Kevin Dewey, who has been Chair of Governors for past 4 years, gave a presentation on the history of the Stationers' Company. The Company became a sponsor of academy seven years ago. Stationer members were involved in supporting the Academy in many ways: governance, mentoring, providing speakers for events and careers, funding for Digital Media Centre, table tennis tables, Humanutopia and CCF. The members bring experience which they share to benefit students. The Company believes in industry supporting education and represent the 6th largest group in industry. Members have a wide range of interests and want to make students education more relevant to the world of work.

Lot of companies offer training and apprenticeships as means to career - the university route is not for everyone. Mr Dewey congratulated Mary who spoke earlier, who, he said, 'was inspirational'.

A parent asked whether Stationers could help develop Apprenticeships? Mr Dewey confirmed that the Stationers' Company had membership who offer apprenticeships and encouraged parents/carers and students to talk to staff here to let them know their areas of interests. The Stationers' are involved in careers fairs and next week are hosting an large apprenticeship fair at Ravensbourne University which students are attending. Additionally, Stationers' have helped students by providing bursaries to university and apprenticeships.

Norman Doyle, Head of Sixth Form spoke about various events held to inform students of further education options, including Apprenticeships. An increasing number of 6th Formers are looking at Apprenticeships, placements were highly competitive. One student had secured an apprenticeship with a firm of solicitors and another was through to the final 5 candidates trying to secure an apprenticeship with Land Rover.

In summary, Mr Dewey said that the Stationers' Company are the 4th leg of the table working in partnership with academy, parents and students to support education.

## 6. Executive Principal Update

Mr Millar sought feedback from the audience on the current system for parents' evening.

Overall parents agreed that the 5 minute appointment system was better than the previous system, however the following observations were raised:

- Not all parents adhered to the appointment system
- Not everyone adhered to 5 minute allocation. *The Academy would consider this point.*
- Many teachers got booked up, especially those who taught more than one class.
- Progress reports in advance of the parents meeting would be helpful to determine which teachers to see
- An 'effort' mark would give parents better indication of how hard their child is trying
- More detailed explanation of grades given in short reports. More detailed reports are preferable in advance of parents' evening.

- Scheduling of the evening across the academic year. Year 7 parents in particular felt June was too late to meet subject teachers (*Year 7 'Meet the Tutor' evening was held early in Autumn term*)

*Mr Millar said the Academy had not communicated the purpose of parents' evening well enough and it would be improved. He stressed that parents should not wait until parents' evening if they had any concerns about their child's education. They should contact the Tutor or subject teacher and make an appointment to meet them. Contact details of staff were on the 'Who's Who' section of the website. Year 11, 12 and 13 parents' evenings were placed strategically around examinations.*

Other observations:

- Parents requested information on what their child was studying in order to support their learning.  
*Curriculum topics are published on the website on the 'Curriculum Content' page. Details of the MYP Curriculum will be uploaded in the coming weeks.*
- Parents requested advance notice of test dates and revision topics.  
*The Academy agreed to action this point*
- Parents requested advance notice of trips.  
*This is already in the process of being actioned and information will be uploaded to the website*
- Books. The Academy confirmed students are allowed to bring their books home each time they have a lesson, unless they are needed for marking.
- ShowMyHomework. Parents reported that this was still inconsistent. It was regularly monitored by the Academy and all homework must be marked and students given feedback. Mr Millar advised Parents to contact their child's tutor, head of school or subject.
- Ms Long recommended that if their child had not been set homework then parents should encourage their child to read as this had the biggest impact on achievement; at least ½ grade higher. The Academy had started to publish reading lists and this would continue for all year groups.

**Staff Recruitment:** Mr Millar confirmed that the Academy was a popular place to work, it remained heavily oversubscribed. The Academy was fully staff with permanent teachers in September.

**Timetable:** This was in the final stages of completion for the next academic year. Consideration had been given to the importance of the small school structure but it was also important that students were taught at the right levels. Adjustments had been made to get a balance. Next year, students in years 7 and 8 would be taught in their Small Schools. The majority of Year 9 lessons would also be in small school. Years 10 & 11 would be grouped across the academy according to ability, subject specialist and topic.

There was a small amount of IT refresh work being carried out over the summer involving upgrading classroom projectors.

## School Week Consultation

Mr Millar reiterated the points made in his letter to parents confirming that the changes would go ahead. The Academy had worked with TfL to clarify queries on bus services. He would be writing to the 21 adults who had raised individual concerns. Students had been informed through WellBeing. Mr Millar re-stated that the Academy was absolutely confident the restaurant was able to provide lunches to all students in one hour. As well as the restaurant, a Street Kitchen is being installed in the Quad. If the work on this is not finalised over the summer then the Academy has an alternative plan in place. Staff will be running enrichment clubs during the lunch hour e.g. choir, 1980s retro gaming club, football on the astroturf. The new lunch hour is being trialled now to get students used to it.

A parent raised concern over travel for her child. Mr Millar spoke with the parent about her circumstances after the meeting.

A parent questioned the consultation process. Mr Millar stated parents were notified of the proposal and had the opportunity to provide feedback within a deadline. Generally within a school, parents who have concerns always made their views known. All feedback had been taken into account.

Mr Millar announced that the next Parents' Forum will take place in October/November period and parents would be notified of the date. He thanked all those attending and closed the meeting.

## Action

Humanutopia	Survey statistics to be shared via newsletter	DMR
Parents' Evenings	Academy to consider extending 5 minute appointment Academy to consider scheduling of Parents' Evenings Academy to consider including an 'effort' grade in reports Academy to clearly communicate purpose of parents' evenings	ELT
Curriculum	Academy to produce guidelines on MYP curriculum topics Academy to provide advance notice of assessment dates and revision topics for all year groups	SJN FRN/CLT
Trips	Academy to upload trip details to the website	CBY/MJ
Reading lists	Academy to publish reading lists for all year groups on website	English Dept/MJ