

3rd Parent Voice Meeting 13th December 2010

Mascalls parent meetings are organised by the parent governors to receive general comments and as a forum to suggest ideas for school improvement. Views are fed back to the Headteacher and Governing body for consideration.

Attendance

6 parents, 5 parent governors, and the headteacher.

Main debating subject: Advisories

Pupils are allocated to small advisory groups of mixed age, led by a teacher who acts as an advisor for dealing with day to day issues, mentoring of academic progress and who gets to know the child very well. The most important task is to build positive personal pastoral relationships with and between pupils and with their parents in a way that creates a family atmosphere.

Mr Reeves reported that he had recently commissioned a report that found that 60% of advisories were found to be good or outstanding. Advisories if done badly could be seen as time wasted for the pupils therefore Mr Reeves had since set up new governance of advisories aiming to share good practice and help all to embrace the principles of their purpose.

The meeting acknowledged that the principle of advisories was excellent and wanted them to continue. The parents acknowledged different skills were required here to traditional teaching and welcomed the new governance to support good practice.

Behaviour Issues

One parent pointed out that their child was not happy in one or two lessons due to the disruptive behaviour of some pupils. Parents were shocked at the lack of respect some pupils give to their teachers.

Mr Reeves reported that he has had a re-launch of behavioural policy in the school. Some parents said that they had already seen improvements in behaviour which does coincide with the re-launch.

Communication

Parents reported that communications with and from the school were much improved. They felt confident that they knew who to approach and very happy with the e-mail and telephone back system.

Mr Reeves reasserted his position that he would want to know of any area that parents were not satisfied. Parents were encouraged to copy in senior management and if necessary the headteacher if replies were not forthcoming from teaching staff.

The school website was acknowledged by parents to be excellent.

Homework

Mr Reeves explained that this was area of contrasting debate. Even within the meeting there were differing views expressed between parents over the volume they believed appropriate to their child's learning. A full review of the homework policy has already been promised which is likely to be set appropriate to the subject and pupil need rather than a fixed timetable.

Mr Reeves announced that the Visual Learning Environment (VLE) part of the website was being replaced at a cost of £26k. An improved VLE will improve independent learning and allow pupils to hand in work when the school is closed (eg snow) or if they are unable to attend (eg illness). Studies have shown that independent study was better when parents were involved, the VLE will support this.

Mr Reeves was thanked for his attendance particularly at such a busy time of the year and subsequently left the meeting

Private Meeting

Developing "Parent Voice"

1. Parents confirmed they were happy for Mr Reeves to attend any future meeting, as thought appropriate but wanted to retain the format with a private part without teachers present.
2. It was suggested a later start time may be more convenient to more parents (7-30pm). Venues other than the school within communities may also be occasionally used.
3. Parent Voice meetings should be three times a year, mid term .
4. A suggestion was made that there should be an e-mail address for "Parent Voice" as another way that parents could contribute, particularly if they were unable to attend the meetings.
5. Dates and venue should be known in advance.
6. A paragraph would be beneficial explaining how "Parent Voice" works.

General

It was suggested that the school could make better use of The Duke of Edinburgh Awards and that there may be a place for this in advisories.

Future agenda topics were suggested to review progress in areas highlighted for review (advisories and homework). Parents would be interested in how the school disseminates best practice, and supports teachers to improve. Another subject was suggested to be provision of career advice.

Governors present

Tom Coyne, Kate Merrin, David Rutland, Barrie Smith, Paul Tovey