

Abbey Grange C of E Academy

Parent Council (PC) Meeting – 16th November 2015

Present: Jon Norden (Principal), Janet Bove, Susan Field, Emma Hawker, , Marion Kemp, Mike Kemp, Catherine Kershaw-Guy, Tim Jacobs

1. **Chair's opening remarks**

Mike extended a warm welcome to Tim as new member and to Jon Norden for attending in Paul's absence. He thanked members for all their contributions, stating it was a privilege to be chairing Abbey Grange's first Parent Council and support the school in this way. On behalf of all parents, PC recognises that the success of the school in improving not only its results but also its rankings is due to the hard work of all staff – and would like to thank all staff accordingly. He thanked Paul Cooper and the leadership team to for supporting PC and its wish in working collaboratively with the school on its journey from 'good' to 'outstanding'. He reminded members again that we encourage positive proposals and recommendations. Jon Norden thanked PC for their regular commitment and values that things are done better in partnership.

2. **Apologies:** Paul Cooper, Stephanie Cassidy, Lucy Song

3. **Minutes and actions from last meeting**

Jenny Thornton was unable to attend this meeting to talk about IMYC and curriculum and PC would like to invite her when able. **Action – Jon Norden / Paul** to ask her on her return and invite to January meeting if able.

Communication – PC extended their thanks to Alistair Marshall for changes already made (e.g. colour coded calendar now on website). He is aware of all other issues and waiting for subject leaders to update P.E. information.

Signing of planners – Paul had send a reminder to form tutors and planners are now getting signed, thank you.

Dan Whielden unable to attend tonight. **Action – Paul / Jon Norden** to invite him to a future meeting (February meeting if Jenny able to attend January)

4. **Matter arising**

Portrait of teachers – Portrait information on Achievement Directors are now on the website. Members suggested it would be useful to have further information on all teachers (such as possible subject interests, involvement in running school clubs...). The possibility of having photographs attached to names was discussed as some members felt it was useful in helping them identify their child's teachers. Confidentiality and privacy was thought to be an issue. It was noted that not all teachers would wish to have their photograph published in this way, and so that the website would continue looking professional and not patchy, it was thought that photos could only be included if all teachers of a particular group (for example leadership team or Achievement Directors) would agree for their photo to be published. **Action – Jon Norden** to bring forward at leadership meeting.

Homework planners – Jon Norden explained that someone in school has been identified to look at home work planners and asked for PC members' views. The following points were raised:

- Parents would like consistency in the amount of homework set.
- Information on the amount of homework that is expected for each subject is useful for parents as it can act as a prompt when their child forgets.
- Some PC members felt it would be useful to have all homework set electronically added to the website or learning platform. School encourages parent involvement and engagement in children's work and homework timetabling may aid this especially if the child has not completed details of homework in their planner. However, some felt that it would take away the child's independence.
- All agreed that they would like information on the general amount of work that is expected to be done outside of school time.

School staffing updates – reminder not to minute staff names in this section.
Amendment made to October minutes.

5. **Constitution – review revised version**

To remove section on 'Finance and Treasurer' as it had been decided that Parent Council will not require a budget and therefore no Treasurer needed.

Objectives – add a fourth objective "To develop positive constructive recommendations for improvements to policies and communications".

Above changes voted on and agreed by all.

Action – Marion to make changes and send copy to Paul. Discuss at next meeting whether to add this to the website.

Membership term – This was discussed. First AGM date set for 21st March 2016. **Action – Mike** to add item to January agenda to discuss process of planning for AGM and how to invite new parents to membership.

6. **School and staffing updates**

Overview of MAT functions and Trust Board – Jon Norden gave a brief overview of the MAT (our Multi Academy Trust includes Abbey Grange Academy, Lightcliffe Academy in Calderdale and St. Chad's primary school), its functions and set up. Lightcliffe are currently having termly Ofsted reviews, which are positive. There are local governing bodies for each school who cover teaching and learning, standards etc. and report to the Abbey Directors. Representatives of the Diocese sit above the Trust Board and have overall control of us as a church school.

Children in Need – School got involved in this by having a non-uniform day, students organised stalls and the conservative MP for Pudsey was invited and visited the school.

'Safer Schools' – the current PC officer (Jamie Wilkinson) is on maternity leave but cover for him has been provided (Paul Hayes). They are the key person working with schools in the area and looking at restorative justice. They work closely with Abbey Managers.

Danish visitors – Thirty Danish teaching staff will be visiting Abbey Grange to see how our school system functions.

Department Profiles – Jon Norden explained to PC members that the School has a 3 yearly intensive review of each subject area. This includes formal observation of each teacher in

that area, collecting student views and looking at the way exercise books are marked and feedback given. Jon Norden as Principal then also looks at achievement data, the improvement plan, schemes of work and evidence of self-evaluation and discusses outcomes of each review with the subject leader. A final report is also presented to the governing body. The subject area currently being reviewed is Maths.

PC members commented that they find it reassuring that Abbey Grange regularly reviews its standards and is particularly interested in the self-evaluation. **Action – all PC members** to have a look at the most recent self-evaluation (found under 'About us' and then 'SEF' on the school website) for discussion at a future meeting.

To support the school – parents to be encouraged to complete the questionnaires survey on the school website.

Applications for new year 7 – Jon Norden mentioned that there has been a huge spike in applications for 2016 which demonstrates that Abbey Grange Academy is popular and has a good reputation!

7. **Any other business**

PTA website – **Action – Marion** to liaise with Alistair re adding contact information for parent council onto our website page.

Parent Council information for students – Susan suggested that Abbey Grange students would find it interesting and useful to receive information on Parent Council. One suggestion was to include students in e-mails. Marion mentioned that PTA (Parent Teacher Association) had looked at the possibility of a display cabinet in school (positioned in the hall) in which both PTA and PC could display up to date information. This would be visible for both students and parents during parent's evenings. **Action – Jon Norden** mentioned that there may be a spare cabinet available and to look into this and let PC know for next meeting.

Behaviour tracker – Feedback received from a year 7 parent who was concerned that year 7 students may find the change in discipline across schools difficult and would have difficulty complying with the behaviour policy. PC members generally agreed that although it is a big change for students in year 7, they would wish all students to be treated the same and that setting of expectations and 'rules of the school' need to be stressed early on. However, they felt that some initial leeway for new year 7 students in the first few weeks would enable students to settle into school better without fear of reprimand. Jon Norden suggested that teachers are aware of this and take this into consideration anyway.

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8. **Date of next meeting**

18th January 2016 6.15pm at Chapter House

AGM 21st March 2016