

Parent & Carer Forum Update

The following parents are actively involved, here are a list of their names:

| Parent / carer name | Child in Year group |
|--|---------------------|
| Tracey Bournier | 9 |
| Judy Cambell | 10 |
| David Cambell | 10 |
| Heather Mason | 7 |
| Donna Duignan | 8 |
| Maggie Servante | 12 |
| Tony Hopper | 7 |
| | |
| Unable to attend but comments sent in | |
| Lesley Everson | 11 |

The three topics discussed were:

Communication

School reports

Parents Evenings

Communication:

Overall it was felt that communication has improved, this has been assisted by staff responding more consistently to messages that are in the planners and with the use of text messages to remind families of upcoming events or appointments. It was generally felt that relying on the students to bring home information was not the best way to ensure families receive letters.

It was noted that on occasions letters are dated as being written some time ago but are sent out later, often with very little opportunity for parents and carers to read them and respond before a return date. Therefore it was felt that on occasions there was not enough notice of events.

Generally, it was felt that the way to get the message across to families is to "go overboard" with the ways in which it can be accessed. There was discussion re putting all letters and more information on the website, although it was universally said that the website was difficult to navigate and confusing. All present said that they would like information such as term dates to be more easily accessible. Additionally, it was requested that a glossary of abbreviations used, such as EHCP, PTA, PSHCE was added to either the website or in the planners.

Those present believed that parents and carers needed to share with the academy any relevant information about themselves. This may enable us improve communication by finding an alternate method, when it is difficult for them to communicate with us in the current form. Emma spoke about the work involved in transition - so should families be highlighted to us by the previous school as needing additional support then this would be put into place, the use of dictaphones, yellow paper and comic sans where it is known that a parent or carer has difficulty with reading and writing. It was felt by parents and carers present that the Academy "staff could only work with what is shared with us".

School Reports

Everyone was happy with the reports that are sent home and the detail contained in them. Those present stated that they would like to know what their child needs help with so that they can support them. It was mentioned then that they used to receive information about what would be studied that term in each subject but this is no longer the case and again this had been helpful.

It was highlighted that jargon and abbreviations should not be used as this could confuse parents and carers.

The only item on the report that parents and carers did not understand were the levels. Those present felt that this was not too important, as long as they felt that their child was happy and the comments in the report reflected progress.

Parents Evening

Discussion was had re how to encourage more parents to attend Parents Evening. Those present considered the obstacles that parents and carers need to overcome to come in:

Lack of transport

Cost of travel

Having a crèche facility

There was a request to have parents evenings earlier in the year, families felt that finding out about difficulties at the end of the year was not particularly useful to them, some also shared that they wait to share concerns with staff until that time. They like the phone calls home but they would be more useful if staff could tell them of any concerns in school, rather than just checking how things are at home - this is because the students tell their families very little about their day.

Those present felt that whatever Bradfields do we are only going to get families in who are keen to support their children and "some people will never be interested".

AOB

One suggestion of engaging with other families was to use skype to interact and possibly have this as a method of accessing the parent forum.

Parents felt very isolated as they don't come into school often because the majority of children are transported in. This was identified as one reason why parents and carers may not attend some events. The reasons that those present attended was because they wanted to get to know other parents and to be involved with the school.

Time and day of events are important

A possibility of Emma travelling to other locations to engage with families, e.g. if there is a big cohort of families in Chatham to use a community hall there so they do not have to travel but can still access support groups etc.

Positives about Bradfields

Coffee mornings and afternoon tea were liked, particularly as this is a chance to see students books and to put faces to names of staff who pop in and introduce themselves. It was felt that yellow zone afternoon tea was better supported by staff than red and green.

The children all go home happy and look forward to coming into school, they even want to come when they are unwell - if the children are happy the parents and carers are.

Good home / school support

Extra support is put in place for the students as it is needed.

If you have any queries, please get in touch with Emma McGregor -Davies.

24 March 2016