

## Abbey Grange C/E Academy

### Minutes of the Parent Council (PC) Meeting 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016

**Present:** Paul Cooper, Janet Bove, James Fenton, Emma Hawker, Richard Hamlin, Jayne Hollick, Catherine Kershaw-Guy, Timothy Jacobs, Marion Kemp, Mike Kemp,

1. **Chair's opening remarks:**

Mike welcomed Jenny Thornton (Assistant Principal) to the meeting, and welcomed parents present. PC members introduced themselves to Jenny prior to her presentation.

2. **Apologies:**

Stephanie Cassidy, Susan Field, Martin Lamb (see under A.O.B.)

3. **IMYC:**

Jenny shared the new IMYC booklet which will be available on the school website and offers explanation on the IMYC, dates of launch events, themes, information on support available and expectations for reflective journal expectations. This information is for students as well as parents.

Jenny also provided further background to the IMYC, how and why it was set up. *Its* main aims at present are to:

- develop students' iPad skills,
- develop literacy skills and note-taking, and
- develop reflective learning skills, which will be of benefit throughout their time at school.

She also discussed how IMYC has been adapted over the first two years of its use at Abbey Grange, in response to initial hiccups, and both student and parent feedback. For example, success criteria for completion of reflective journals have become more detailed, enabling students as well as parents to have a better understanding of what is expected. Marking of journals has also become more detailed and teachers are using the online reporting system masterclass. Each teacher has 6-8 students whose reflective journals they mark at the end of each theme.

Paul shared his experience of marking reflective journals and expressed that he enjoyed this one-to-one time with students to go through and discuss their work with them. Students share/present their reflective journal to the allocated teacher, there is time for discussion and questions and work is marked at this time.

**PC members acknowledged and praised the hard work Jenny has put into developing the IMYC at Abbey Grange, and the way teachers have put in a lot of effort to try and incorporate themes into lessons and make it meaningful for students.** Teachers are given templates containing information and ideas on how to incorporate themes and use a 'big idea' slide at the start of a lesson where the current theme will be included.

PC members also offered further feedback and suggestions to make reflective journals even more meaningful and easier for students to understand expectations. They commented that feedback from their own children is that the 'big idea' is not always clear to them in lessons despite a slide being shown. Students need reminders to look out for this.

Suggestions from PC members include:

- more project based journals using apps such as iMovie, that may get students more involved; or
- presenting their journal to their class or form group rather than just one teacher, to make it more challenging and therefore students may put more effort in. (However, Jenny highlighted the difficulty here of the allocated teacher marking the journal, as it may not always be the student's form tutor).

The reflective journal summary analysis for 2015-2016 which Jenny shared with PC indicates that in some themes more students gained higher 'mastering' marks than in others. The analysis suggests that grades have improved as students understanding of reflective journal work, and information on expectations and success criteria, have improved over the two years.

'Exemplars' will be included with the success criteria in the future. Difference in grades achieved by boys and girls has also been noted and future work on IMYC includes monitoring and support for underachieving boys, as well as a further questionnaire on IMYC to be issued to students and parents. PC members request that results of this will be published on the school website – and this was agreed.

For next year there will also be a 'rewards and sanctions' policy for completion or non-completion of reflective journals. PC members questioned whether students value vivos as a reward or whether different reward would be preferred. This required proper discussion separately. **Action – Marion** to add as agenda item to discuss at next meeting.

Jenny and Paul shared information discussed with governors and that a decision has been made for iPads to be made available to year 9 students (current year 8) from September. This will enable students to further consolidate their reflective journal skills learnt over the last 2 years, help reduce paper, printing and the associated costs (which will contribute to the cost of providing iPads), and they may have opportunity to do work such as developing a 'bank' of revision notes.

**Action – Jenny encouraged PC members** to contact her directly with further comments/ suggestions/ ideas and will invite PC members to the 'celebration' event in July.

4. **Minutes and actions from last meeting:**

AGM minutes have been approved. **Action – Marion** to arrange for them to be made available on the school website.

5. **Matters arising:**

Photos for notice board. **Action – PC members** to e-mail a photograph to Paul if they have not already done so.

6. **Prioritising future agenda items:**

Mike went through the Parent Council Plan/ focus for the coming year, as stated in the annual report. It was agreed to discuss the following at the next two meetings:

June meeting – new grading system. **Action – Paul** to present

July meeting – Abbey Grange three year plan. **Action – Paul** to present.

7. **Notice board update:**

Members had the opportunity to view the notice board tonight and were really pleased with the fantastic display that Faye and Tracy have created. Marion had already e-mailed both to extend a massive 'thank you' on behalf of PC members.

This led to a discussion on how **Parent Council** can be better **represented at Parents Evenings**. Members of Parent Council who are also members of PTA, have been helping out with refreshments at parents' evenings, but feel that PC is still not visible enough and there is not a lot of time to talk to parents individually.

A suggestion has been made that two PC members attend each parent evening and stand near the 'signing in' table at the entrance – with a big, bright arrow with "Parent Council" on it. A suggestion box and information board may be of benefit, as well as availability of a small room where parents could come and talk to PC members.

**Action – Marion** to send out dates for next two parents evenings.

**Action – Paul** to sort badges for PC members, ask Tracey / Faye to organise the arrow and look at the possibility of a small room being made available at parents evenings, for Parent Council 'surgeries'.

**PC would also like to thank Jenny for her input on this topic and relaying her experiences of publicising PC previously.**

8. **General school and staffing update:**

This was led by Paul.

Music department – one teacher has left and a new teacher has been employed.

New Head of Design and Technology to be appointed to start in September.

There has also been an appointment of a new drama teacher and an additional science teacher.

Appointment still to be made are for a Head of ICT/Health & Social Care; and two associate principals. The latter will be new roles within the senior leadership team and will be 2 year project based posts.

9. **Any other business:**

Communications/ e-mails from parents – none received. It is hoped that the presence at parents' evenings will offer a more accessible opportunity for parents to share their views with Parent Council.

P.E. showers – A PC member highlighted that showers are never used by students, in particular by girls. It was suggested that this may be a time issue and also the fact that showers are communal. **Action – Paul** to feed back to Head of P.E.

Uniform policy- clarification requested regarding colour of socks for P.E. Paul confirms that white socks are to be worn for indoor P.E. and blue socks for outdoors. Blue tracksuit/ jogging trousers are part of the P.E. kit parents are requested to buy, but only to be worn when requested by P.E. teacher. This will usually only apply to a few very cold weeks per year.

It was proposed and agreed that the period when they could be worn could be identified at the start of the autumn term, so that students would know when they should bring track suits. **Action: Paul** to take forward.

School use for students after 3pm – PC member asked whether there is opportunity for students to use school facilities after 3pm (especially when revising for exams). Paul clarified that although school remains open for a period of time for after school clubs, students are only allowed to remain within school if supervised. There are no specific rooms set aside for such study purpose and no supervision available unless pre-arranged. Students have occasionally used a classroom if a teacher is still present, and this is usually pre-arranged.

**10. Date and time of next meeting:**

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June 6.30pm, Chapter House