

## **Parent Forum Meeting - Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

### **MINUTES**

Present: Mrs H F Jeys (HJ), Mrs A Goddard (APG), Ms J Hodson (JLH), four senior school parents.

#### **1. Introductions**

HJ introduced the members of staff present and their roles and areas of responsibility within the School.

#### **2. Matters arising from the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020.**

There were no issues arising from the previous meeting, held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020, that were not on the agenda and, therefore, not being discussed during this meeting.

#### **3. Feedback on on-line events (HJ)**

HJ asked parents for any feedback on the online events that had taken place over the course of this year. We had put concerts, parents' evenings, Insight Into Careers talks, In Conversation With talks, Open Events, our Founders' Talk online and the School was requesting feedback so that we could consider how to build on the digital solutions that had been offered to events this academic year.

Parents present at the meeting felt that parents' evenings, in particular, had gone well. The organisation of them, the time limits and the fact that journeys into school were eliminated meant that these were – in some ways – preferable to the in-house events. It was felt that they should be kept as an option for parents. There was always the concern that the problem with putting such events online was that pupils and parents lost out on potential opportunities to come to school and to link with other members of the community. Parents agreed with this but there were, perhaps, other opportunities where such links could be created and parents' evening were not, necessarily, needed for this.

#### **Actions:**

- **A broader survey should be sent to all parents to ask whether online parents' evenings were preferable in future years.**

#### 4. Relationships and Sex Education Policy (APG)

A revised RSE policy was being introduced from September 2020; this had been distributed for parents to consider in advance of the meeting. Part of the process of introducing the new curriculum (delayed from September 2020 because of the pandemic) was to ensure that there had been an opportunity for parental consultation.

APG stressed that the proposed policy summarised a curriculum, much of which had been taught for a very long time. However, there were additions in the light of government recommendations. It was felt that pupils needed educating on these issues from an objective source. There was the important aim of ensuring that pupils knew that they had a right to healthy and positive relationships.

Parents were in support of the proposals.

One parent commented that the pupils – particularly since bus changes – needed real world interaction with boys (from MGS for instance). It was important that relationships with boys were ‘normalised’. This was agreed. APG would be – post-COVID – working on joint forums and more extra-curricular opportunities with the boys’ school.

One parent noted that they welcomed topics such as FGM and Forced Marriage. However, they were interested in knowing whether drugs education was also part of our programme. APG reassured parents that drugs education was taught as part of the unit on living in a wider world. Other topics such as tolerance, understanding and diversity were also important aspects of the programme.

Questions were asked about the opting out process. It was not always easy to work out which lesson to opt out of if a parent did not want their daughter involved in certain aspects of the programme. This was because so many topics blended into each other. We encouraged our pupils to be fully informed. However, parents could opt out of aspects of the curriculum if this was their wish for their daughter. However, discussions would always take place in advance of such decisions being taken so that full information could be given on what was being taught.

Parents asked about issues surrounding diversity. We talked about how issues surrounding diversity had been considered to date, including the work of the Head Girl team, the Young Activist group, Black History Month, Diversity Day etc. Some parents asked if there could be broader issues celebrated as part of our diversity provision – for instance celebrations surrounding food and people of other backgrounds. This suggestion was welcomed.

#### **Action:**

- **Broader issues surrounding diversity to be introduced into the life of the School.**

#### 5. Design Technology Curriculum (JLH)

There was a question posed about the importance of design and problem-solving careers in the workplace and whether the MHS curriculum could address such areas. Such areas

were becoming more important in terms of career opportunities. JLH noted that we offer, currently, subjects such as Graphics, Computer Science and Food / Textiles. In the Sixth Form, there are engineering opportunities also. However, at the moment, there were no plans to offer a resistant material aspect to the curriculum. Nevertheless, we are always thinking of opportunities we can offer to the pupils and will discuss this with relevant teachers. It would also be good to offer an 'Insight Into' careers talk in this area for our pupils.

**Action:**

- **Consider future Insight Into Careers talk in this area for MHSG students.**

**6. Academic competitions (JLH)**

A further question was posed about whether we offered academic competitions to our pupils as parents had seen the benefit they had brought to the lives of their children in other schools. JLH reassured parents that we already do this – we offer academic competitions such as the UK Maths Challenge, essay writing competitions, Science Olympiads, practical Chemistry competitions, Young Enterprise, public speaking competitions in English and Modern Foreign Languages, Creative writing competitions, computing competitions (Cyber First), cryptography, Spirited Arts, Articulation competitions etc. We also have internal competitions too – the photography competition in Biology, the rebel girl writing competition, house events, singing competitions etc. Pupils were alerted to such competitions by teachers or by email and, perhaps, emails were not being checked sufficiently frequently for girls to be aware of the full range of opportunities. Parents were reassured by the opportunities on offer.

**7. AOB**

There were no matters of any other business. HJ thanked parents for their support and involvement.

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