

## GTS Parent's Forum

2nd March 2015

Present: Jacqui Whiteman, Tracey Amos, Helen Whiterod, , Gill May, Ruth Moss, Penny Stowell, Sue Bates, Jo Luxton, Miriam McCurdy, Patrick Hogan, Paul Jarrett, Paula Gray, Brooke Giuzman, Madeline Sargent

Apologies: Sharon Lambert, Sue Kavanagh, Suzie Holt, Celia Busby

1. 100-minute lessons. Some parents expressed worries that their children were struggling with the longer lessons. Tracey Amos said staff feedback had been generally supportive – better relationships with pupils, deeper learning, less transition time, time for DIRT (Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time), longer stretch of PPA time for teachers, longer lessons help to train pupils for longer exams. Negative aspects – harder for cover teachers, pupils miss a large chunk of learning if the teacher is absent, a need for variety and movement in lessons which does not always happen. Tracey Amos said that continuing staff development was addressing some of these issues, teachers being encouraged to write PowerPoints for covered lessons, timetable to be reviewed, some pupils who really struggle with longer lessons have been identified and support put in place.
2. PFA has had to cease functioning because of a lack of members . This needs to be addressed as PFA provides a valuable source of extra funding for specific equipment needs, as well as being a valuable part of the school's community. Plea for more members. Current PFA delayed handing over funds to the school in the hopes that a new committee will be formed.
3. Helen Whiterod explained her new role. She will be working with primary schools on transition and assessment from years 5 to 8.
4. Teachers leaving. Staff changes raised as an issue for parents because of the effect on pupils sense of stability and continuity. Tracey Amos said this should not be a matter for concern and that newly appointed staff were suitably qualified and would undertake, along with the rest of the staff, appropriate CPD.
5. New GCSEs. These will begin to be taught next academic year to current Year 9s – English and maths initially. Query raised about IGCSEs being taken this year by Year 10 pupils in English literature and whether the pupils will be able to retake next year. Parents were assured that we only enter pupils for the iGCSE English Literature if we believe they will reach their target grade or, in our professional judgement, it is in the best interest of the pupil. Any retakes would be considered on an individual basis and based on our professional judgement.
6. Items for next meeting's agenda. Year 11 tutor support during exams, catering contract up for tender and careers advice.