

GTS Parent's Forum

8th December 2014

Present: Gill Clayton, John Stanier, Jacqui Whiteman, Sharon Lambert, Sue Kavanagh, Gill May, Ruth Moss, Tracey Herbert, Suzie Holt, Penny Stowell, Sue Bates, Jo Luxton, Miriam McCurdy

Apologies: Rosie South

- Agreed that signs to the meeting need to be in place before next forum for parents unfamiliar with the school.
- Lost property – is kept with the pupil coaches and students can go during break and lunchtime to look for things they have mislaid. JW emphasised the importance of students' clothing being clearly labelled.
- G and T banding – the rationale explained on a hand-out provided by JW. Request that this also be put on the website parents' page. No plans to change the banding. Students are sometimes moved between bands – this is done either for specific social dynamic reasons or to keep numbers balanced between the bands when students leave/enter the school.
- 100 minute lessons - the rationale explained on a hand-out provided by JW. Request that this also be put on the website parents' page. JW explained that longer lessons are particularly beneficial with more practical subjects. They also help to prepare students for 2-3 hour exams, enable them to concentrate for longer periods of time, provide the time for “deeper learning” and prepare them for adult life. The school is helping teachers with strategies for teaching longer lessons. Parent feedback on their children's experience of these lessons was generally positive.
- Discussion about the L Bac for Year 7. Generally positive feedback from parents. Feel it aids transition from primary to secondary.
- Show my homework – JS asked for feedback from parents which was very positive. Next term teachers will also be putting grades for completed homework on the site. GTS endeavours to support those students without computer access at home. JW advised that the website is better than the app at present.
- Mindset – JS explained the theory put forward by Carol Dweck which identifies the way of thinking associated with successful people and how that can be applied to education. In practical terms it means praising effort rather than achievement so that the students have a “growth mindset”. The teachers have been receiving training on putting these ideas into practice in the classroom.
- Buses – concerns raised last term about buses leaving early after school. However it has not been a problem this term. JW re-iterated that the school has no control over the bus service.
- Teachers leaving – JW stated that the number of teachers leaving was not significant or unusual. GTS has a number of more experienced teachers who may either retire or move on to positions of responsibility at other schools. The school is fully staffed.