

Curriculum Related Extracts from the Minutes of Student Voice Meeting
held on 6th February, 13th March & 1st May 2019

6th February 2019

Present:

Mrs Chapman, Mrs French, Mrs Mulgrew, Ines Wilcox, Helen King, Jess Steadman, Anna Champion
23 students from Years 7 to 11

Matters Arising:

Feedback on availability of resources for lessons

- It was suggested that emailing powerpoints would be very helpful for GCSE revision. Folders could be created on the R: drive with all resources grouped together inside to make them easily accessible.
- Websites such as 'Padlet' are preferred as emailing out resources can get confusing and clog up students' inboxes.

Developing confidence

- Feedback on the usefulness of form assemblies for developing confidence has been very positive.
- Year 7 are invited to watch House Debate to learn from their elder peers before they participate from year 8 onwards.

Useful Learning Tools

- Students really like maths revision sheets for end of topic tests and would like these for other subjects too, sciences in particular. However, students should be aware that in the run up to GCSEs they are likely to be given summary/end of unit questions in these subjects too.
- Pens for the mini whiteboards in the Languages block are running out. Will be followed up.
- Students have mentioned that sometimes they are given short notice for tests. Mrs French reminded us that sometimes this is done deliberately to avoid over-preparation and unnecessary stress for a small exam.
- Staff are aware that the firewall is blocking too many sites. Mr Cable is monitoring it and receiving feedback. However, students are reminded that this wall is up to protect them from nasty emails etc., so be patient!
- It would be helpful for students to collate frequently used sites that are blocked into a list, which they can then send to Mrs Mulgrew to be unblocked.

Any Other Business

- If teachers run into lesson changeover time, students are encouraged to remind them politely of the time.
- Year leaders try their best to allocate the seats to older years in assembly, but if forms are late sometimes it is not possible to hold them as it causes congestion.
- Girls seem to enjoy mindfulness sessions in form time (colouring etc), especially as form time can get quite busy with assemblies etc.

Continued

13th March 2019

Register:

Mrs French, Mrs Mulgrew, Anna Champion, Jess Steadman plus 21 students from Years 7 to 11

Apologies for absence:

Mrs Chapman emailed Jess Steadman with her apologies for her absence

Senior Leadership Team Matters:

- Feedback on the plans for the school's expansion
 - Overall, the students were impressed by the planning and designs for the new developments, showing enthusiasm for the new space for work and activities.
 - Some girls were concerned about the lack of locker space and bag racks once Bancroft is removed, as these are important spaces for girls to keep their books and PE bags. Girls were reassured that this was in hand and that SLT were making provision for lockers.

Teaching and Learning:

- Impact of 'Speak Out' for developing public speaking skills
 - Some older girls said that presenting assemblies in form time are not as effective in developing confidence as they are often not taken seriously. Instead, some forms have changed to have form discussions and debates which involve the whole class.
 - Many girls found that opportunities to develop confidence were often competitive, such as Bar Mock, which leads to only selecting girls who are already confident. Less confident girls should be encouraged and challenged to participate in non-competitive opportunities. Girls were advised to challenge themselves and put themselves forwards.
 - The Anne Frank exhibition was used as an example of an effective way of developing public speaking skills, without the intimidation of a large audience.
 - Involvement in clubs encourages growth of confidence, so should be advocated more, especially debating clubs for younger year groups. Girls who are involved in clubs, such as language clubs, expressed how helpful and rewarding they have been.
 - The idea of students conducting parts of the lesson themselves was received well, and teachers should be encouraged to do this as and when it is deemed appropriate..
- Availability of revision resources and guidance on the revision process
 - Year 11s suggested that revision lessons could be more open as each person has a different style of revision.
 - Students said that maths revision sheets were helpful, and would like to see similar summary sheets for other subjects.
 - However, some answers on maths revision sheets were often incorrect - maths teachers and prefects to change these answers.
 - Problems arose with accessing online revision resources, and students reminded to see IT staff or teachers should these occur. Some use padlet, some the VLE and others email.

Any Other Business:

- Issues concerning cover lessons
 - Students said PE cover work is often repetitive and they preferred to merge two classes to do an activity altogether, though there is a question over the health and safety of this method.
 - One student had made a list of all the cover she had and asked others to look at this which was presented to the Chair right at the beginning of the meeting. Mrs French advised that with the best will in the world, sometimes staff are poorly or have issues in their personal lives and that the School is managing the situation very well.
 - Students would like to see extra resources available on the VLE as students often complete the set work.
 - Students reminded to find another subject teacher to explain cover work if necessary.

1st May 2019

Register: 22 students from Years 7 to 11

Teaching and Learning:

- Feedback on the guidance and resources offered for revision
 - Year 8s mentioned that the use of quizlets made by the staff in German was very useful and wondered whether this could be implemented across all languages. Jess suggested that students could share their own quizlets to other girls in their class to spread the workload amongst themselves.
 - A student in year 7 asked whether it would be possible to have more revision lessons across subjects, as they had noted that the science ones were very helpful. Anna reminded her that this isn't always possible due to the time constraints of the curriculum but suggested that they encouraged students to attend the available revision clubs and clinics, or speak to their teacher if they are really struggling.
 - A student in year 8 was concerned about the amount of tests being set in close proximity and asked about the plausibility of spreading them over the term. Jess reminded her that this is not often possible due to many modules finishing at similar times over the school year but suggested that she spoke to her teachers privately if she was really concerned.
 - Students in the lower school praised the abundance of useful resources made available to them in German as it made the revision process easier. They raised concerns that in some subjects the resources offered were not as extensive. Jess reminded them of the need to be proactive with note taking and also to make use of all the resources available such as websites or library books. Anna also suggested that they might want to talk to their subject teachers about extension resources privately.
 - A student in year 8 raised concerns about vocabulary tests being given at short notice without the weekend to revise. Anna reminded her that vocabulary tests should be viewed as a constructive method of learning for large amounts of vocabulary over a longer period of time without becoming overwhelming; therefore they should not be overly anxious about the results, and take a growth mindset approach to any false answers.
- The use of form time
 - Students in year 7 enjoyed activities that make them think outside of their curriculum in a relaxing and fun way, such as riddles, thoughts of the day, quotes of the week and chair yoga. They also suggested the use of quizlet live and kahoot in form time to test their knowledge in an enjoyable way. Jess and Anna to follow up on the possibility of this with Mrs Adams.
 - Year 8s have enjoyed interactions with the other form groups during form time, through activities such as 'Move it Monday'. This is particularly effective as everyone is involved, allowing mingling amongst form groups, and energises the students in the morning.
 - Year 9s agreed that activities involving whole form groups were preferred over form assemblies.
 - 7G proposed the idea of a suggestions box for form time activities. 7S had tried this and found that it was worthwhile, as it gave girls the opportunity to give ideas, even if they would not normally speak up in front of the class.
- Enrichment Days
 - Year 9s praised culturally enhancing enrichment days such as watching plays, but said that the enrichment day at Chatham Green was not as enjoyable or engaging. Anna highlighted that enrichment days must cover a wide range of interests, so not every enrichment day will suit every person, but it is important to make the most out of the experience as they are highly valuable within this school.
 - A girl from year 8 suggested a career day to explore possible future interests and pathways. Jess informed her that as she progressed through the year groups, more exposure to career information will be given in events such as the career's evening.
 - Year 7s proposed the idea of having more active, outdoor enrichment days, as the days off timetable are a good opportunity to get out of the classroom and try new activities.
 - A student from year 8 showed her appreciation for the STEM related enrichment day, as it was useful exposure to this field, especially now some of the STEM subjects are no longer offered. She suggested that enrichment days with a similar focus would be helpful.

‘Find your voice’:

- Many girls, particularly in year 8, praised ‘take over lessons’ whereby groups of students would be given a topic and resources by a teacher to research in depth, and present a lesson to the rest of the class for an hour. Examples of subjects which had employed this method included English and Science. A year 8 student highlighted the fact that teaching is one of the most effective methods of learning, and a year 7 indicated that girls who would not normally speak up in class had found this useful in developing their confidence.

Premises and Canteen:

- The ‘learning environment’
- Year 9s expressed the effectiveness of the display boards in the languages centre, noting that the large text size and minimal words were much more useful whilst completing work in lessons. A year 7 added that often displays are not legible when the font is too small, so are not as helpful unless reading up close.
- Some students also praised the mathematics department’s use of puns and funny maths-related posters, which helped them to remember key information.

Any other business:

- Year 10s had noticed that their printer credits from the previous year has not been carried over. Jess and Anna to feedback to Mr Cable. They suggested that each student should be given an allowance. Jess suggested to her that if printing was unaffordable, then students could ask teachers to print for them privately or visit reprographics, as an allowance may not be possible with school funding.
- Year 10s showed their appreciation for the range of PE choices during the autumn and spring term, as it enabled them to relax and have fun. However, they would like to have alternative options during the summer term, as athletics does not appeal to everyone. Anna reminded them that options may be limited due to staffing, but agreed to feedback to the PE department.