

HGSS Parent Partnership Meeting

10 September 2015

Mr Jones welcomed parents to the school and introduced members of our Senior Leadership Team (SLT), including new Deputy Headteacher, Mr Tang. The SLT were accompanied by Mr Greenwood, the Chair of the Governing Body

Mr Jones invited questions from the floor:

End of Year Reports

Q – Why were there no End of Year reports last year?

A – Mr Jones apologised to parents for this and explained this was due to capacity in the Senior Leadership of the school following the departure of the previous Deputy Headteacher at Easter. He confirmed that end of year reports will be created for the end of this academic year and the school will feed back on the format for these at the Parent Partnership meeting in the Spring Term.

Q – Parents would like reports before the last day of term.

Q – Parents would like to see comments from teachers if results were not as expected.

A – Mr Tang agreed and said that he would be looking into this.

Q – Parents had been promised a developed narrative on the report.

A – Mr Jones reiterated that reports were under review but explained that now the school offered half-termly reports it might be difficult to deliver the summer 'long' report, especially as this would be coupled with teacher workload after the summer exams.

Mrs Jackson informed parents that with the new email communication system 'School Comms', the school would be able to email reports to parents and therefore it was vital that the school had up to date email contacts for all students.

Setting

Q – How many students are there in each set?

A – Top groups will be 30 students moving down to 25 in the lower sets.

Q – What underpins the setting?

A – Mr Jones stated that the school uses the students' Key Stage 2 score for the Year 7 settings. The setting will change each year depending of the development of the child.

Q – Are the middle groups stretched enough?

A – Last summer, 43% of all GCSE grades were A* - B so we can assure parents that all the ability groups are challenged and make exceptional progress from their starting points at the end of Primary school. The expectations are rising for all our students. One student achieved 9 A*s last year. He had arrived at the school in Year 7 have barely achieved national average attainment in his English tests. In all, 25% of students achieved 3 or more A*-A grades at GCSE. These results were achieved by students from across all ability sets. Holmer Green Senior is bucking the national trend by achieving in improvement in top grades at GCSE.

Results – English

Q – Many of the top grade students were receiving private tutoring?

A – There were 64 students in the two top sets who achieved top grades – the school does not believe parents need to send their children to tutors to achieve high grades – that is the school's responsibility.

Pastoral System

Q – How do the Tutors follow the student?

A – The aim is always for the tutor to stay with the class. The school has a three house system but in addition we have a Head of Year 7 and 8 and Learning Area Directors who are each responsible for one year group from 9 to 11 and these LADs will move upwards with their year.

Homework

Q – When will parents receive the homework timetable and what do parents do if there are concerns?

A – Mr Wooller stated that the school is monitoring homework very carefully to ensure it is consistent and appropriate. Mr Wooller is developing homework principles for all students to ensure that quality homework is set. This would be instead of a Homework timetable which has previously proved an unsuccessful system

Q – When can Year 7 parents log into the Sims Learning Gateway to see what homework has been set

A – Year 7 logins will be available at the Year 7 evening on 16th September but parents can also contact Mrs Hardie, Data Manager, to obtain these.

Q – What feedback is given regarding homework to students?

A – If the homework is not of a sufficient standard then the student will be expected to repeat the homework

Q – What if the student is struggling and cannot manage their homework eg they have Dyslexia?

A – There is support in the LRC for all students who need help after school. Homework is differentiated and the SEN team has a Dyslexia Specialist Teacher who will support any students with Dyslexia

School Trips

Q Are we running as many school trips?

A – Trips are very valuable but they need to be educational. Mr Jones does not want trips to take students out during the day unless there is a proven educational need for the trip.

ICT

Q – Last year this was delivered during Enterprise Days and then it was added into the timetable?

A – ICT has been put into a carousel with Technology this year so all Year 7 and Year 8 students will have discreet ICT lessons. Mr Jones explained that ICT at GCSE is now Computing Science and during Enterprise Days there will be the opportunity for students to have a taster for Computing Science.

Options

Q – Is a language compulsory?

A – The government wants all students to take the EBAC which involves studying a Humanity and Language subject. However, for some students this may not be appropriate so Mr Jones does not agree that the school should insist that all students take a language or a humanity. He stated that this was a performance measure for schools and not necessarily the right choice for all students.

Q – How many options do students choose?

A – There are currently 4 options and the school is very proud of the breadth of curriculum we are able to offer

GCSE Exam Board

Q - Parents would like information on Exam Boards

A – This will be coming out at the Year 10 Parents Meeting on 15th October

The School Day

Q – What news is there on this?

A - Mr Jones stated that this would be discussed at the next Full Governing Body meeting on 7th October. He also explained that the school is currently staffed for the new model which has allowed us some flexibility to increase staffing in the current model. This year we want to consolidate and embed changes; it is not necessarily a year to make more changes.

Communication

Q – Could there be a parent’s version of the Bulletin without the assemblies. Could school clubs be added to the Bulletin?

A – The school will arrange this.

Q – What clubs are taking place?

A – There is an Enrichment Fayre taking place on Wednesday 23rd September for all Year 7 and 8 students to sign up for clubs. Clubs for other year group are currently being arranged and will be communicated to students.

Results

Mr Jones stated the headline figures:

59% of students achieved 5 or more A* – C grades at GCSE including English and Maths (nationally this was 55%)

This was a 3% drop from 2014 mainly due to some students who achieved English not Maths or Maths not English.

Nationally top grades fell this year but at Holmer Green Senior School they increased.

Rates of progress in English and Maths, which is a key Government measure for any school, were also far higher than the national average.

The average point score, which measures the average grade all students attained across all GCSEs was the highest it has ever been in the school’s history (boosted by the amount of A*-B grades).

The success does not end with Year 11 as Year 10 Science results were also very strong with some excellent Triple and Core Science results. Indeed, the signs are that 2016 will see yet another rise in achievement levels.

Mr Jones stated that our students can achieve the top grades. We have a number of students who come into HGSS who are not ‘secondary ready’ so they have a lot of ground to make up to achieve a ‘C’ grade at GCSE. In effect the selective system highlights the gap that has opened up between our students and those who move onto Grammar schools. Yet HGSS ensures that 5 years later we have closed it and set our students on an equal footing to compete with their peers for higher and further education.

At 6th Form some students performed extremely well in Year 13 but some results were disappointing. The challenge and step up at Year 12 is extremely hard for some students.