

Parent Forum Minutes



CHILDREN COME FIRST



Meeting title:	John Ferneley College Parent Forum
Date and time:	8th June 2023 at 5pm
Location:	Meeting at the school
In attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Matt King, Assistant Headteacher: KS4 Progress Lead* Matt Parrott: Executive Lead for Stakeholder and Partnerships* Anna Duval, ClerkParents:* Adam Shaw* Barry Precious* Jacqueline Sosa* Nicola Carter* Taneel Watson* Ian Watson* Cal Brown* Nicola Brown* Pia Delucchi* Nicola Evans* Natividad Leach* Jennifer Norwood* Alex Owen* Karen Lambert

Welcome and Introductions

Mr King welcomed everyone to the parent forum and introduced himself. He is an assistant headteacher at the school and key stage 4 progress lead. Mr King said he lives in Melton and has two children that attend the school.

Mr Parratt introduced himself. He is executive lead for stakeholders and partnerships across all schools in Mowbray Education Trust. He was Head of school at JFC ten years ago, after this he was Headteacher of two secondary schools in Shepshed that later became one school – Iveshead. Iveshead joined the Trust last November and he moved to his new role at Easter. The role is to improve things for children in the schools and broader in the community.

The remit of the parent forum is to get feedback from parents and to give opportunities for parents to share ideas where improvements can be made. Parents were reminded that these meetings do not discuss items relating to specific pupils, specific parents, or individual staff.

A MS Forms was sent to all parents in advance of the meeting to give feedback and raise questions to the parent forum. These were used to shape discussions.

Feedback from Parents What is Working Well.

Parents said the following was working well on the MS Forms replies.

- Student personal development.
- Your on-line presence.
- Mental health support has been good in the past.
- School times.
- JFC have the most amazing music and drama department who are incredible with the students.
- Supporting children.
- Good extra-curricular options. Communication from the school is generally very good.

Feedback from Parents: Things to Improve?

Parents said the following things to improve on the MS Forms replies.

- Some behaviours (as reported by my teenager).
- Communication to parents when we have emailed and called in asking a question regarding key dates.
- Mental health support, health education around vaping, arts education.
- Possible segregation of classes to avoid disruption by troublesome students?
- Regular homework for students in all lessons.
- Communication with parents.
- I feel that my child hasn't been given any opportunities outside of the classrooms, such as trips to museums, theatres, residential. I feel that their education needs broadening particularly given the fact these children have missed out on so much during covid.
- Giving more homework.
- Please give the students regular homework, mark it, and allow parents to see the outcome.

Questions.

Parents added the following they would like to discuss on the MS Forms replies.

- Key dates for upcoming new Yr7s.
- SEND student arrangements during exams?
- Lack of homework given.
- I feel like it's important that we try and be as positive as we can be and embrace education in and outside of the classroom.
- Please give the students regular homework, mark it and allow parents to see the outcome.

Discussions lead by Executive Lead for Stakeholder and Partnerships

Mr Parrott explained his role to parents. He said the aim is to support the community against a background of reduced support from external agencies increased demands. Mr Parrott gave an example whereby due to funding restraints and increase in demand referrals to CAMHS (the local child and adolescent mental health services) can take 28 months.

Mr Parrott schools are addressing post Covid. Nationally attendance for secondary is below 90% which is a big shift from three years ago where the aim would have been 95/96%. He said that students are needing more wellbeing support.

Mr Parrott said his role includes supporting both the schools in the Trust and also schools not in the trust but are our local communities. Children may go to other local primary schools that will transition to our secondary schools. He said here is a potential relationship from preschool, through primary to secondary and at Iveshead post 16. He said that the trust is looking at what this means and how they can support and engage with the community and understand families better,

Mr Parrott talked about the post 16 provision in Melton and said some students want to study subjects and courses other than those they offer there. He discussed the issue of a lack of transport/costs/time for students to reach other post 16 provisions locally. He said he is working to see what can be done to support bus routes.

Mr Parrott said that John Ferneley College is the Leicestershire school most effected by rural poverty compared to the other 43 secondary schools in the county.

Parents asked if the Trust should have a post 16 strategy, and could the Trust raise it as a cause for concern?

Mr Parrott said that MV16 was created as a good A level provision and vocational routes were provided elsewhere. Brooksby College is moving its post 16 courses from Melton to Brooksby from the autumn term (except performing arts) and this means students will have to travel to Brooksby and this will incur a cost and time. Bus routes to other local towns have been cut and this again is narrowing opportunities available post 16 for Melton students. Mr Parrott said the government are currently not allowing new post 16 providers therefore post 16 cannot be offered at JFC. Parents said that to get into MV16 they need minimum grades therefore it is not an option for all students.

Mr Parrott said entries for expressive arts GCSEs are down nationally this year. He said it is important to protect the breath of the curriculum studied and then to ensure there are pathways for students to go on and study it further.

Parents said that funding for arts has reduced over recent years and students have less options to study these subjects and asked what the local perspective is?

Mr Parrot said the government was not supporting the arts so much even before Covid.

Mr King said the post covid recovery in many schools nationally was to reduce the number of GCSE options available for students to study from 4 to 3. At JFC there are still 4 options, and it offers the broadest curriculum, but sometimes not enough students apply to study all subjects to make them viable to run.

Mr Parrott gave an example of subjects that only have one specialist teacher in the school, and these can be harder to cover if the specialist teacher is off.

Mr Parrott and Mr King discussed teacher recruitment. It is difficult nationally and locally. Mr King said the 2nd ICT specialist teacher left mid-year and although they advertised the posts, there were no applicants for a period of time. Thankfully the post has been filled with an excellent computer science teacher. Overall, the pool of available teachers is not enough for demand.

Parents asked if this impacts the school's ability to ensure teachers deliver good standards and asked if JFC has enough subjects specialist for each subject.

Mr King said they are short an ICT specialist for 5 lessons across the school but a teacher with skills will deliver these. Science is fully staffed for next year. There are adverts out for modern foreign languages and music. JFC is offering more incentives to attract staff to JFC. Mr Parrott described the role of the

Executive Lead for People and Development who works in recruiting staff into the trust and supporting their career development to help retention.

Parents raised concerns on non-specialist teachers delivering subjects. One said their child was considering what options to take and is concerned there will be a subject specialist delivering the business studies lesson. They then said that the business studies staff had assured them it would be with a specialist teacher.

Parents gave some feedback. Their older children who have already left John Ferneley College used to have to study a language when it was not suitable for them. They have seen some positive changes at the school where students are not pressured to study languages if they do not want to and there is a wider curriculum offered.

Mr Parrott said a strength of the Trust is the collaboration between the two secondary schools that helps with staff development.

Discussions lead by the Assistant Headteacher: KS4 Progress Lead

Progress and outcomes across JFC

Progress information given to parents.

Mr King asked parents about the progress information that is sent to parents and asked if there is any information missing that parents require?

There is information on progress and expected levels of attainment. He asked if the terms secure and developing are meaningful?

Parents said the scores can be subjective and that there is no context to the scoring system. Parents said it doesn't give comparisons to last time and that would be useful. Scores included from new rotations can skew figures and it can be viewed that the child has dipped in attainment when it is only new to that subject area or topic.

Parents asked what data and information teachers use to give the scores? Mr King said tests and assessments are used and each subject has a table of what emerging and secure scores should look like and give best fit with an assessment grid.

Discussions took place around the GCSE grading system and how grade boundaries work.

Homework

Parents said that they are unable to see students work as they do not get homework. Mr King and parents discussed how students had been taking their maths books home this academic year and how that helps to build the link with home, alongside students taking responsibility for bringing their book in. Parents said homework is seen as indicative of how the school is pushing a child to achieve. Mr King explained the impact that different types of homework can have compared to one another, based on research, alongside the need for students to develop their scholarly habits.

Parents suggested the school ask parents in a survey to ask if their children get homework.

A parent said maths is the only homework they get via an online maths package. Although others said there was homework in other subjects too, just that maths is readily communicated via email. Another parent said that when their child had done a piece of homework it was not asked for nor marked. Other parents said they saw positive points being added stating that the homework had been completed.

Parents said homework needs to be a balance and not take too long, be meaningful, purposeful, and be looked at.

Mr Parrot said the homework issue is useful to hear and a takeaway point for him from the forum.

Mr King said he will share the discussion with the teaching and learning teams as it helps establish scholarly routines at year 7 through to year 11.

Parent/teacher feedback meetings

Parents said at primary level they have a good idea of what their children are learning and their progress but at secondary school there is a lack of information. Parents felt that a 3 minute parent feedback session that cut you off are too short to get the information across.

Mr King asked if parents want face to face or online teacher/parent meetings?

Most parents said they preferred face to face. Mr King said he asked the same question at a Year 10 supporting success evening and 70% said they prefer face to face meetings. He did also observe that the fact that those parents had shown up to face-to-face events may mean that is their preference, hence the data showing it.

Parents who wanted online said that if teachers turn up then online meetings work, and it can be beneficial. The online system sometimes fails for seemingly no reason, all parents, including Mr King, had experienced this problem.

Parents requested information about what their child is learning in another format so that the 3 minutes teacher/parent meeting can be more directed and meaningful.

Mr King thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The next Parent Forum meeting will be arranged in the Autumn term.

The meeting closed at 6.40pm.