



Meeting title:	John Ferneley College Parent Forum
Date and time:	21st November 2023 at 5pm
Location:	Meeting at the school
In attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Matt King, Assistant Headteacher: Progress and outcomes* Matt Parrott: Executive Lead for Stakeholder and Partnerships* Hollie Haines Melton Community Committee* Anna Duval, ClerkParents:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Jenny Cotee* Mihiri Thennakoon* Rachel Owen* Rebecca Woolley* Jennifer Norwood* Rachel Barker-Evans* Laura Sanders* Nicola Evans* Paula Eaves* Suza Stoobe

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 a child that attends the school.

Mr Parrott 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 into an executive leadership role in the trust across a range of roles

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 anonymous feedback and raise questions to the parent forum. There were 27 responses on this occasion and these were used to shape discussions.

Feedback from Parents: What is Working Well.

Mr King showed the parent forum the responses from parents and noted that some areas appeared on the list of what works wells and on the areas for improvements showing that there were differing views.

- Homework platform, school gate platform, all online forms, consents. Paying for meals by school card. All activity required payment, are paid by online.
- The transition in has been great, my daughter has settled in well.
- The online homework works well.
- Good drama/music clubs.
- Great behaviour reporting daily.
- My children telling me information.
- Able to see things on an app like positive points timetable etc.
- I have no idea what is going on with my child at school. So, I cannot comment here.
- Nothing jumps out as being exceptionally good, but most things are how I would expect them to be.
- Behaviour chart.
- Specific teachers are doing a fantastic job!
- Staff I have spoken with and had email communication with have dealt with everything quickly. (This wasn't the case when I used the contact form - hence this is under the area of improvement))
- Your policy in allowing students to go to the toilet, when they need to, is very good and I hope you keep this kind policy. Also, our daughter reports that her tutor and nearly all the subject teachers are nice and friendly.
- *Teacher* is amazing teacher who are responding to any problems asap and who is always helpful.
- Communication with the parents. School Gateway overall.
- My child in general is making progress and happy.
- There is a good programme of extracurricular activities but other than this I feel that I am unable to answer this question as there is so little interaction with parents that I don't know enough about the school to be able to comment.
- As my son is new to school, I see a progress in my son. So glad and proud of this school.
- Food and nutrition lessons - every recipe made has been absolutely lovely!
- Behaviour and Achievement points - this is the only communication we get about how our child's is behaving/trying in lessons so is very important.
- The year 7 school trip.
- Communication from *teacher* was the head of year was good. It is such a shame she left. I have heard nothing from the new year 8 head of year, in fact I don't even remember who it is.
- Good information every morning on app.

Feedback from Parents: In your opinion, what could be improved?

- Blazers worn in corridors during hot weather, trousers during hot weather, PE outside while raining. Attendance is important but post lesson in cold environment is easy to get at least cold. While student

is excluded from PE lesson from any reason why still needs to change in PE kit? School is overloaded, not everyone feels safe on corridors during breaks etc.

- Communication about after school clubs.
- Communication with SEN. Knowledge on cyber bullying.
- Communication from school regarding homework set on sparks or Seneca. I am often told by both my children they did not know they had homework set and only seem to know when I check my emails and it says that it is due in 3 days' time.
- My child complains about disruptive pupils in lessons, could there be more support for these students?
- My child says that they are regularly taught by subs or non-specialists, are more staff being employed?
- Compared to *another secondary school*, children's achievements are not rewarded or celebrated as much. I think a more public celebration of the achievement of the students that are always trying their best, despite distractions, would help with student moral.
- More info on what homework has been issued and when. Timetables seem very sporadic.
- Communication from staff.
- More communication, be nice to see more on social media. Promote the school's achievements more.
- Have less apps. Be good to have homework and everything on just one app.
- The communication specific to my child and the homework and information regarding my child's progress in school.
- Communication staff to staff, is poor and parent to staff practically non-existent, not being able to contact staff directly is unhelpful and tends to make us think staff are unwilling to help keep communication between home and school open and transparent.
- Parents app. No information re homework on class charts.
- The toilet facilities need regular cleaning throughout the day if you're having unisex toilets. Removing the mirrors is utterly ridiculous.
- Assigning the right skilled teacher to teach the class, so many times hearing that the children are getting a teacher from a discipline.
- Communication with parents - regarding all aspects of school e.g. No notification to change in Year 7 language structure, SEND or 'Watchlist' - not communicated - I had to ask the question directly, otherwise I would have assumed correctly.
- Contact form not fit for purpose - as has lots of limitations.
- It would be nice if the head of year or the pastoral lead would check in with students that have joined mid-term, have a friendly conversation to get to know the student and find out how they are getting on and settling in.
- Bullying and Seneca.
- Being able to print off the timetable. More consistent homework, too sporadic!
- Communication, especially with accidents or incidents within the school.
- Communication.
- Could the time of the parent's forum please be moved to a later time as a lot of people, myself included, are unable to attend due to not getting back from work in time. This is something that has

been brought up at previous forums, but the time has not been moved and no feedback has been given for why it can't be held later. More sports teams please, e.g. rugby and cricket. We were told there was a rugby team and that was one of the reasons my son chose Ferneley but there does not seem to be a rugby team at all or any form of rugby practise which is a shame. Please do not start using WEDUC. I have had to use it as a parent, and it is not user friendly and does not work like it should. I could write reams about the problems WEDUC has caused and the negative impact it has had. Meet the tutor evenings for other year groups and not just year 7s especially when they get a new tutor. This happened for year 8 last academic year but not for the current year 8s and would have been great as my son's year 7 tutor left and he now has a brand-new tutor.

- Parents communication. Letting me know every time something goes wrong.

Feedback from Parents: Anything else you would like to discuss.

- New school for our neighbourhood. New home estates grown every year.
- Bus availability is a slight concern. Not being able to bulk buy tickets is an extra expense, I'm not sure of the rationale for this.
- It has been noticed that students are going on to FB and are downloading photos of parents FB accounts and sharing these in WhatsApp groups that are then used against the child. Children's knowledge on cyber bullying is very bad and this needs to be addressed.
- We understand there are lots of challenging students but just feel that the quiet, well-behaved students need to feel that staff are proud of them. It can be very hard for them to concentrate in lessons.
- I don't know what is going on with my child at school. We are new to the country and need to find out how things work.
- Is intervention class available for year 10.
- I have contacted the school several times about participating in the new governance structure- on the various committees/panels. But no one has contacted me about it. I'd like to know what independent body (if you're not implementing a board of governors) is monitoring/scrutinising what is currently being delivered. Many thanks.
- Plans for future.
- Why are children not placed into core subject classes depending on ability? Surely "setting" children would help those who are struggling as much as those who excel academically.
- Please let me know every time you have any issues. I'll try to sort it out. Thanks.

Parent apps

Parents said the class chart app provides information to parents for year 7 students each day which means they can speak to their child about their school day each evening. Gateway is the parent app for year 9 students and the data takes longer to be put on, so they are unable to speak to child in the evening of what happened during that school day.

Parents said another parent app is used at primary schools in the trust called WEDUC and they did not like it.

One parent said they have 10 apps across 3 children that all need checking and asked if there could be one app for everything.

The forum discussed the various apps that are being used and that if each is not checked daily, they may miss items and often there are no notifications.

Parents said they would like a map of what apps are available for which year groups.

Mr King agreed to look to see if the class chart app can be used across the years and to see if the number of apps can be streamlined.

Homework

Parents said there are inconsistencies in homework of it being paper based or online.

Mr King said it is the choice of the teacher the way they set the homework and children should write their homework set in their homework diary. Parents said that homework dairies are not checked.

A parent said their child did not receive any homework in year 9 and this has been raised several times, but they are now receiving homework in year 10.

A parent of year 7 student said they get optional homework and felt it should either be homework or not.

Parents said in primary school they an overview of what the students are learning so they can support and help direct their child's learning and be signposted to proactively support them.

Mr King said the learning journey for subjects is on the website and feels it would be good to provide some learning links. Parents said that topic headers for each year group would be useful. Parents suggested that students could have an a5 sheet added to their homework diaries where at the beginning of a subject they complete the learning objectives for the topic so that parents can see what they will be studying.

Uniform

Mr King said that parents raised having a warm weather uniform.

Parents said children that aren't wearing blazers are not being challenged.

Parents said that when a school is strict about uniform a message is sent to children that teachers are concerned about trivial things like uniform rather than if they are happy in school.

Mr Parrott described the challenges schools have with uniform and having support from parents.

Mr King said the school's view is that they want to encourage students to wear uniform and their lanyards.

Parents discussed the cost of the school blazer of £35 and is left crunched in their bag unworn.

Parents said if a blazer is necessary, they would prefer a plain blazer with a sew on badge that can be purchased at a lower cost.

Mr Parrott said there should be a choice of suppliers as good practice.

Mr Parrott agreed to investigate having a plain blazer with a sew on badge as an option at JFC.

Flight Checks

Parents said too much time is spent doing flight checks where students uniform is checked. Mr King said flight checks are more a preparation for learning and includes getting equipment ready and students ready for learning.

Parents said that the school had not communicated with parents that flight checks have been introduced.

School contact form

Parents said they there is a lack of space on the contact form.

Mr Parrott said they are looking at the contact form and the school ask email. He said there are a volume of requests coming via these methods that need managing and it may be preferred to have face to face conversations. He said parents should ring the school.

Governance

One parent asked about the trust's governance and said there is a lack of information on the website. They said they are interested in joining a governance committee. The Clerk took the parents details to pass to the governance manager to get in touch regarding recruitment to a governance committee.

Mr Parrot said the trust's website changed providers a couple of weeks ago and the website information was transferred. He has checked the website, and it appears some information has not transferred correctly, and he will address this. Mr Parrott described the trust's governance structure and its committees.

Staffing

Parents asked about the staffing situation and use of supply and non-specialist teaching staff. Mr King and Mr Parrot said both secondary schools are short in science and that there is a national staffing shortage in recruiting staff and in staff leaving the profession. The trust has an executive lead in people and development who has made good success in recruiting and developing staff.

Parents asked if the school would consider employing unqualified teachers. Yes, they would if needed, and they would support them to get their qualifications if appropriate.

New Schools

Mr Parrott said there has been a lot of talk of the need for new schools in the area to meet the needs of the housing growth. He said both secondary schools in the town are nearly full or full.

Pedestrian Crossing

Mr Parrott said he is already looking at the need for a pedestrian crossing opposite the school and down Scalford road near the crescent.

Bus availability

Mr King said the bus often reaches capacity especially when the weather is poor.

School Trips

The forum discussed school trips. Mr Parrott said there are several trips and residential available.

Parents said they would like a plan of what trips are available and coming up. Mr King said the trips are dependent on availability/skills/ and interests of staff.

School teams and groups

Parents said it would be good if school sport teams and music groups could happen in the school to help foster team spirit. Parents suggested that parents could volunteer to run some of these clubs.

Parents said that often school clubs are cancelled, and parents are not informed. Mr Parrott said children may wait in the school until parents were expecting to collect them after the planned clubs.

Toilets

Parents raised concerns over the cleanliness of the toilets and that there were unisex. Mr King explained how the toilets are separated to male/female and offered parents to look at a block following the meeting. The meeting discussed usage of school toilets, use/removal of mirrors and damage to the facilities in previous years.

Mr King thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

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

The meeting closed at 6.55pm.