

Minutes of Parent/Carer Voice Meeting

Wednesday 24 January 2024

1. Homework – Feedback on how much and how often

Homework is different for different students and getting the balance correct can be a challenge. Feedback was asked as to how much and how often homework is given:

- Some present felt levels were OK for Year 8 and Year 9
- However, there was also feedback that there is only regular maths homework for Year 9, and no other regular homework. This was raised with HoY 9.
- One parent described how when their child started in Year 7 there was an expected amount, but once they returned to a normal timetable after Covid there was not much. Struggling to get a structured revision timetable in place for Y11 child – could this be linked to habits not being created due to lack of homework in year 9?
- Sometimes Year 3 spellings are harder than in Year 7. It could be that they are too hard in Year 3. Homework seems fine for Year 7 and child loves Sparx Maths.
- Comments from some that it feels there is more homework when children are at primary school.

Year 9:

- Not a lot given. Child struggled to motivate himself. Surprised by the lack of homework.
- Mixed view, agree not much though at key stage 3 but more in Year 10. Likes this as GCSE homework is more relevant. Can see educational purpose. Has not dictated weekends. Some schools are setting work that is overwhelming. It is better if relevant/useful - the right balance. Virtually none in Year 9.

Summary:

KS3 does not have a decent balance. Mr Li-Rocchi will share policy expectations with middle leaders. Can do spot checks on Go4Schools to follow up.

- There is a consequence if homework is not done. Could a positive be given if completed rather than a negative if not? Currently no recognition if done.
- Possibility for a sliding scale as students go up the school instead of getting less. If submitted half – no-one goes over what child is unable to do.

Mr Li-Rocchi – Sparx Maths will address students not knowing what to do in this subject if there are challenges. It has videos to show technique, method etc. Sparx Maths can be accessed through pupil zone on the website. Mrs Leggett, Head of Music provides quizzes on Microsoft forms which are self-marked and give an overall view on how classes are working - multiple choice.

Ms Nethersell-Webb, Head of Humanities, asked how a homework book which has been introduced is working.

- No problems, it is going ok.
- Positive feedback on revision based homework in History.

Is the Year 10 book for History and Geography working OK?

- Did not know of homework books – revision-based homework is all that is being given, sheets and online learning. Well-structured but no book.
- Geography have mostly been creating revision cards / flash cards.

Mr Li-Rocchi asked parents/carers to see if there are any noticeable changes over the coming weeks to homework and feedback to Mrs Billington or himself.

2. Online Learning Platforms feedback – Seneca, GCSE Pod, Sparx Maths

Mr Li-Rocchi asked if anyone had heard of Seneca (most had), GCSE Pod (not many had), and Sparx Maths – all knew of this platform.

The website will be updated, and Seneca and Sparx Maths will be added to pupil zone to provide links for students.

How are students finding Seneca?

- One parent fed back – child using in Year 7 as struggles with English. Struggled to start with but has not been given recently.

Mr Li-Rocchi – for Seneca there are multi-choice questions and further questioning based on weaknesses. Teachers can create their own or use what is there. Do students like it?

- My child seems fine with it. Did it off own back. Online platform helps.
- Year 11 work is now done more independently. Younger years liked it. Used Dr Frost before.
- Both children use it for revision.
- One child likes it more than the other. Revised through Seneca. One child finds the text is difficult.
- Quite wordy, some children could struggle with reading aspect.

Mr Li-Rocchi – GCSE Pod is good for revision so students know the content and how to answer a question.

- Is more generic. It may need to be emphasised as a tool for learning and revising.

GCSE Pod – different subjects break down units into lots of pods lasting 3-4 minutes. Check and challenge is used for revision – multiple choice questions. Students can pre-learn before a lesson so there is a starting point. It is very accessible. It would be helpful for students to do two pods a day which adds up to a lot of pods / revision over time.

It tells you which videos have been watched. An Amazon voucher is given for most frequent use in KS4 as an incentive. It can be left on to mount up though!!! This is taken into account. Assemblies have taken place regarding GCSE Pod. A list can be printed of each unit to get students to look at pods they need to watch.

Mr Li-Rocchi suggested that the parents/carers ask their son/daughter to log on so that they can see the usage.

- It is interesting that teachers can make recommendations.
- 3-4 minutes is a good amount of time.

Mr Li-Rocchi – It is good for drip feeding information over time.

Sparx Maths

Likes:

- Infinite number of tries.
- Practice questions.
- Encourage to get more XP points.
- Found videos helpful, talked through well.
- Likes the way it emails parents/carers to let them know how much has been done.

Dislikes:

- Frustrating that the video does not relate to the answer required. One parent / child found the videos confusing and could not see how they relate to the question. Went on to Omni which was helpful.
- Does not allow hand in unless 100% is done correctly so feels like a failure. Shows the lower percent score which stays on the dashboard.
- If asked to do extra work / repeat questions when struggling it makes them feel more of a failure.
- Does not offer help.
- Throws more and more questions at them.
- What does the purple flag mean?
- Prefers Dr Frost.

3. Possible community/Hobart collaboration projects – idea sharing

RLI provided examples - Beauty and the Beast - local homes for the elderly are coming to watch. Art exhibition gets community into the school and food bank collection features students going to the Chet Larder.

Feedback / ideas from those present:

- It is very good for students to see people going to the food bank which gave child a reality check.
- School fetes? 70th Birthday Celebration was the closest to that.

Mr Li-Rocchi – Could use an existing activity to add fete elements for the community. Other ideas suggested were:

- Community barbeque
- Student Newspaper – articles about the community – helpful with work experience placements. Could include community events in Head's Newsletter.
- There could be a potential to get more involved with the primary schools.

Mr Li-Rocchi – We do host primary sports events and Year 10s are involved throughout the year, for example, swimming galas, multi-sports, and more. There is also forensic science day for year 6 which features leaders, and some students are taken to primary schools for transition visits.