

Academy Council Meeting Minutes 03/03/20

Present : Kevin Jones (Principal)
Dawud Marsh (Academy Councillor)
Nurul Ismal (Academy Councillor)
Faarhena Nifa (Academy Councillor)
Rita Bashar (Academy Councillor)
Mizanur Rahman (Academy Councillor)
+ approximately 15 parents/carers

Minutes from last meeting (14/01/20)

- Kevin read through the minutes from last meeting:
 - Link Director, Chairman of the Board in attendance
 - Relationships education, sex education and health education engagement process started
 - Paperless newsletter - will be emailed out, hard copies available on request
 - Academy council vacancies (now filled without need for election process)
 - Information on assemblies now in weekly newsletters
 - Reduced assessment points
 - Music instrument tuition - now taking place in addition to regular classes (e.g. 15 pupils in Y4 learning violin, individual piano tuition)

1. School photographs

A question was asked about school photographs and whether siblings could have a photograph taken together. Kevin said that he had spoken to the photography company and they would be happy to accommodate this either first thing in the morning or at lunchtime. Class photographs are to be taken this week, and individual photographs will not be taken again until the new academic year.

Some of the parents said the quality of the photographs this time was not up to the usual standard and some had difficulty getting on the photography company website. Kevin said he would look into this. OFPA have been using the same company for the last 3 years. Kevin spoke to the company and they said that

nothing has changed this year. They are happy for parents to contact them if they have any issues.

2. Year 5/ secondary school banding

Several parents asked how this works. Kevin explained that LBTH send out tests at the end of the year 5 year. These are marked and the results are sent to the local authority for the purposes of putting the pupils into different classes at secondary school. Each secondary school has to take an equal amount of children from each of the four bands. More information is here

<https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Documents/Education-and-skills/Admissions-and-exclusions/FAQ-on-Pupil-Ability-Banding.pdf>

3. Security

We have new security measures in place at school. All staff now have electronic entry cards for gaining access to the school and into the building. Kevin explained that all OFPA staff have a blue lanyard with their identification badge on it. Visitors to the school either have a green lanyard or red lanyard. A question was asked about how parents/carers who visit the school for teacher conferences or parent engagement meetings are checked.

We have thought this through, and from now on all parents/carers who come for a meeting will need to bring their invitation letter with them.

4. Changing for P.E.

A question was asked about which pupil year groups change for physical education separately and which change together. Older children change in separate gender groups, and the rest of the school change together in the classroom under the supervision of staff.

5. Lunch utensils

Some pupils have been going home saying that the lunch plates and cutlery is dirty. Kevin replied that he has been having school dinner every day for the past 7 years and has not noticed this. Occasionally there is a water mark, or a crumb of food left by the dishwasher but this is rare. Kevin said that he would speak to the kitchen and monitor this.

6. Sex and relationships education

There were several questions and points raised regarding SRE:

i) Can the year group information meetings be held at 9.00am in the morning rather than afterschool? Some parents find it difficult to attend afterschool?

We always give plenty of notice for these meetings so that parents/carers can plan in advance and organise childcare. If parents/carers need to, we have an afterschool club which can be used on a one off basis. Kevin said that it is difficult to release staff in the mornings as they are teaching. Year 3, 4 and 6 have had their meetings but we will trial having morning meetings for Year 1, 2, year 5. Going forward, it was suggested that we have meetings for each year group in the mornings and in the afternoons to accommodate more parents.

ii) A question was asked about when the SRE content is taught. Kevin explained that it is taught as part of the curriculum, over several weeks. There are always information meetings held before any content is taught. Kevin attends all year group meetings to answer any questions. At the parents request, these meetings are now longer to give parents more of a chance to look at materials.

iii) One parent said that some pupils are upset by the content and one Y6 pupil went home crying. Kevin stated that he had never known any pupils to be upset by the content taught and teaching is always done in a safe, sensitive way. If any pupil was to become upset, they would be reassured.

iv) Parents requested that we let them know the day before content is taught so they can prepare their children.

v) Councillors made Kevin aware of a group called the 'Tower Hamlets Parents Association.' This group have produced a policy presenting their view on changes to Relationships, sex and health education which are coming in September 2020. Kevin said he had read this material and he was aware that the group is meeting with representatives from LBTH.

vi) A main concern presented by several parents at the meeting was around the age appropriateness of the content. Some felt it should be delivered in year 6, another parent suggested that it was fine, but should be taught a year later (e.g. Year 1 content taught in Year 2), another suggested that Year 5 and Year 6 were the right years to be taught SRE. The school follows guidance from several sources including LBTH, The PSHE Association, the NHS and the Department for Education in ascertaining what should be taught in each year group. The Jigsaw programme itself is based around a stepped approach and a gradual build up of knowledge.

vii) It was asked if it was possible to withdraw children from science class but as this is part of the statutory curriculum parents cannot withdraw their children from science class. Kevin said the science curriculum hasn't changed.

A suggestion was made that as we were an Academy, we didn't have to follow the local authority or government guidance and we could do what we wanted. Kevin said that while this was technically true, we made a commitment when we converted to an academy that we would continue to follow all aspects of the National Curriculum. While we are no longer under local authority control, we are still part of the Tower Hamlets community. Kevin himself is part of the Tower Hamlets 'Stakeholder reference group' which is working on engaging parents across Tower Hamlets with the new RSHE requirements.

7. Car parking around the school

Parents at the meeting expressed concern about the amount of cars picking up and dropping off children at the end of the day. Car Parking - on the far side of the school by the church there is still an issue with parking at the start and end of school. Car engines on and children have to breathe in the fumes. Kevin has since met with Cllr. Rachel Blake - there is a plan in place to put in place restrictions in the area in line with the LBTH 'Livable Streets' initiative. More information will go out this week. https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/News_events/2019/June_2019/15-million-scheme-to-create-Livable-Streets-across-Tower-Hamlets.aspx

8. There was a Discussion about homework and whether it could be paperless. But parents are concerned that the homework is marked and what is their child's progress in the homework. It was suggested using ring binders to keep homework together but to have some feedback about the homework.

Kevin said Homework is not the main thing that drives learning and it can take time and be stressful for parents but what gets sent home is a little easier and a practice and reminder of what the pupils have been learning.

Parents asked about seeing the class books and we can see their progress throughout the year. We will incorporate this more into parent engagement weeks,

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and give parents/carers the opportunity to come in to spend time looking through their children's work