

Minutes of the Parents Council Meeting

Held on Thursday 4th February 2010

At 7.00pm in the LRC Longfield Academy

Present: Alaric Bonthron (AB) – Neil Willis (NW) – Principal, Sue Crocker (SC) – Academy Business Director, Bob Webb (BW) – Parent Governor, Melanie Tomkins (MT) – Secretary, Jane Archer (JA), Stephanie Turner (ST), Sue Lawday (SL), Dave Lawday (DL)

1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December were agreed.

2. Update on Actions set

Complaints procedure to be placed on the school website

SC said that can be done.

Staff list to be placed on the school website

NW said that has been done and is on there.

Building Update

See minutes.

3. Neil Willis – Principal Update

Building Update

They meet every fortnight and hold monthly update meetings. NW visited the site and saw the progress made, the foundations have been laid in all the colleges, main build and Spectrum Centre, the frames are starting to go up in the middle of February. They are still on target and he is really pleased with the progress.

NW and SC then showed the PC a slide show of the new build. He explained that they have been looking at the colours and internal schemes and layouts. It has been decided that the Science block will be Yellow, the Arts block will be Mauve and Sports block Blue. They have also discussed security and everything will be fenced off so there will be restricted access to the playing fields, everyone who visits the school will come in through one entrance. There will also be internal and external CCTV and all windows will have sensors fitted.

NW showed the PC the main entrance and explained that there will be turnstiles alongside the Reception area and all students and staff will

swipe in and out. They will be able to tell at a glance which staff and students are in, which will be particularly useful in case of emergency. DL asked if this will be supervised and NW said yes and explained there are 8 cameras on the Reception area alone. DL asked where the cameras are monitored from, whether it is on Reception or in a separate room and NW explained that they will be in the Caretakers room which will be backed up and can be seen at any time.

NW then went on to explain that at the front of each college wall will have its signature colour and also the wall running down the side which will make recognition easier for students with ASD, as with all students and parents because the reference to colours of houses is made often. One wall in each college will also have the colour corresponding to that college and the rest of the walls will be white, they are looking at the signage etc not only for the Spectrum Centre but to run throughout the school which will also make it easier for the ASD students. The PC agreed this is a good idea. All ceilings will have acoustic batons in them so there will not be a great deal of sound. There will also be a cloakroom, AB asked how it was going to be managed and SC said that they are going to get someone who will man the cloakroom at peak times but when it is quiet will go round the school on cleaning duties etc but they understand that there will have to be additional support at the end of the day because of the number that will come through. The logistics of whether it will be a token or a ticket has not been decided yet. SL said that there will be a lot of students coming through at the end of each day and SC replied they are looking at it being used mainly for PE kits.

JA asked what is proposed in case of a fire in the new Academy and NW explained that all the doors open automatically and because it is only on two levels it is very easy to get out. Everyone will congregate on the top field. The Spectrum area has its own garden. There is also a sprinkler system for additional fire safety.

NW explained that they are running some training sessions for staff to be able to go on site on the 8th March and if any of the PC would like to go on the course then please let the school know. Overall the build is going very well and is on course.

There was then a discussion regarding the longer school day and the holidays NW passed round a copy of the letter that was going to be sent out to parents and asked the PC if they had any questions regarding this, the PC said there was not.

NW went on to explain the college implementation and stated that the applications for a place at the Academy for September 2010 were in the region of 700 for 180 places, which is really good. Since September they have taken 16 students into Year 8 alone. JA asked if the students that have come into Year 8 are local and NW said yes they were and they have had 50 new applicants across the Years 7, 8 and 9. What they intend to do is rank the students according to their ability and assign them to a college, they want to put them with their siblings as they feel from a parents point of view, it is easier to deal with one Principal, but if they are separate at the moment they will leave them as such. They are happy with the vertical tutoring and intend to keep that. The college names were then discussed and if anyone has any ideas then please contact the school via the e-mail, the deadline being the 1st March because of the signage for the new build.

With regards to uniform, the School Council have suggested that a questionnaire be made available on the computer – so when students go on the computer they have to answer it before they move on – they do have a programme where they can log their answers on a spread sheet. They have compiled a questionnaire, basic things like: should girls wear ties yes/no, just to give a start to the team. AB asked if the new uniform will come into force in September and NW said yes it would.

School Blazers were discussed and the PC said they would still want the students to wear these SC replied personally she cannot see them moving away from this. NW said that they aim to still make the cost of these reasonable and easy to buy. SC said at the moment the school supply the tie and the school badge and that there are very few items that have to be bought through the school and she would like to see it stay like that the PC agreed with this point.

SC then said she is looking at different suppliers at the moment with the Leigh as they also have to go through Longfield Wools to purchase the uniform. To denote different colleges the Leigh have an academy badge with a flash at the top for the colour of the college. In addition to that all the shirts have a crest on them, a college badge, as do all the PE shirts and track suits. The girls do not wear ties and their blouses are fitted which also have to be bought with the logo on, the boys have a summer shirt, which again has the badge on it which does not need to be tucked in, all of these items are bespoke. All this has been done to maintain a certain standard and JA said that we have proved that we do not have to have all this to maintain a standard and what we have at the moment does look smart.

SC then went through some items she has sourced through a supplier she has found called Brigade who do offer an Internet purchase system, which when you log on and enter the college you are in an order form comes up and you order it from there, if you buy a certain amount of stock the purchase is free, if not there is a £2.95 fee. In addition to that they will help run a uniform shop in school. AB said this all comes back to budget and it is far easier to go to places like George at Asda and buy it there, everyone agreed with this point. BW asked how expensive these items were and SC said that the girls blouse with the emblem on it would cost £7.50 each the PC all agreed this was expensive. AB said there has to be a balance here and suggested that the blazer, shirt and trousers can be purchased anywhere but maybe have a specialist jumper with an emblem on it. NW suggested maybe a tank top would be a good idea as they go under blazers well and are not too hot.

Further discussions ensued and it was agreed by the PC that the uniform should still be easy and affordable to purchase and consist of blue blazers, black trousers/skirts, white plain shirts – all available at a variety of stores including the current supplier, ties for all pupils and these to be available from the school with house colours on them. The school tie to be the existing tie with the house colours picked out in the logo and the school badge should be the existing logo with a coloured flash above in the house colours. PE kit to be purchased via the school - due to design and house colours, blue shorts/skirts to be available widely.

The overall view of the PC was that costs should be kept as low as possible and that the general kit is available across a range of stores, much of it on special offer at school times rather than the bespoke approach that has been taken at the Leigh. This is felt will meet the majority of need of the parents.

SC said that she does not have to make it affordable but has to make it value for money and has to prove that they have gone out and sourced the best value for money option, which they have done. AB replied the more affordable they make it without going to specialist shops would be the better option and SC agreed. NW said they want something that looks smart and agreed that it does not cost too much.

SC added there is another uniform check taking place after the half term and the uniform cards are being re-introduced.

4. AOB

As there was no other business the meeting finished at 8.30pm.

Date of next meeting

**Thursday 25th March 2010
In the House
Longfield Academy**