

# Kettering Science Academy

## Parents' Forum

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019

6 – 7pm held in The Library

**Present:** Tony Segalini (Principal) [TSE]; Steve Barton (Chair of Governors) [SBA];  
Josie Tomkins [JTS] (note taker)

The Principal thanked everyone for attending advising that he has put items on the agenda which he felt were topical as we didn't receive any from parents. He advised that from September the Ofsted framework will change, and as a result what we have been judged on in the past is changing. As a school and Trust we need to embrace those changes and there are lots of things we are doing to get ready for them. We are currently in the Ofsted window now so they could visit any time. The largest change is curriculum planning and what we do in and outside the classroom. Intent – why do we do what we do and how does it benefit students in our school will be a key focus. The Principal is happy with what we are currently doing, particular changes will be with co-curricular offerings. Item 1 is the basis of this process.

Item	Action
<p><b>1. Proposed New School Day</b></p> <p>The Principal addressed the reason we are changing the school day adding that unfortunately there was negative press about some of the Corby schools, suggesting the Trust was in financial difficulty. This is not the case.</p> <p>The reason we are changing the day is to redeploy staff in an effective way, but also provide a work/life balance as Ofsted, as are we, keen that staff welfare is considered too. We need to keep rigour but look after the staff as well, and provide that balance. This is to ensure that teachers remain in the profession, and there is rigour for your children/ our students.</p> <p>The Chair of Governors noted that the timing is good for the Academy. Previously Ofsted were only interested in 5 A* - C, now they are more interested in a balance. Now our basics are good, and we are in a place to be able to look at the co-curricular too. The Principal added that this helps create a more rounded individual. Careers is now a major focus of our curriculum, our website has been updated with much careers information, Vice Principal Mrs Farrar is leading on that. Our aim is to provide a character curriculum – where students don't just learn to be mathematicians, but good citizens with a team spirit.</p> <p>We had to design a day to incorporate all of this whilst also managing staff welfare. We have produced this model which we are now putting in place from September. By taking off 5 minutes from each lesson, school officially finishes at 3pm, but between 3 – 4pm staff are directed to provide co-curricular activities. The model where staff need to be here until 5pm has gone. We can provide this across the school and still finish at 4pm. We have 72 teachers, providing many activities, they are not losing that time, focus in higher years will still be boosters, but they will be more targeted and all involved. The Principal was keen to explain this so that it is understood school time is not being cut. For Year 11 students we are asking parents if it's ok to keep their child behind until 4pm if we feel there would be a benefit to them. We obtain that parental engagement so that students can attend and better their achievements in their GCSEs.</p> <p>More will be available to KS3 students too, based around Academic, Sport, Creativity, STEAM and Character. Staff will be involved in developing those projects. The Principal believes students will get a good deal out of that, students can buy into those 3 – 4pm activities.</p> <p><u>Parent – will they have a choice?</u> TSE – yes they will, students who won't get such a choice are those in the exam years, which will be dictated by their individual needs, which we have done before, but we are now formalising.</p>	

Parent – my son enjoys scholars club

TSE – that is good to hear, as it was a model for this larger offering. Tues – Thurs will be the activity evenings, we wish to formalise, draw up the plans and have a catalogue of activities to select from.

Parent – it will be good to have something that isn't a normal lesson for the students to benefit from.

TSE – boosters will be in addition to lessons but **not** just an extension. One member of staff is looking at creating an archaeology group, I wish to do a Year 9 Rugby group. The message that I'm keen to impart is that we are not taking 20 minutes away, we are re-distributing, you should notice a better offer overall and better organised school day.

Parent – what about Friday Lego club?

TSE - it might be on a different night but if the staff are happy to put these on a Friday night they can do so. We will hopefully have an on-line booking system, so that we can see what's popular, and evaluate the impact termly. This is a huge project, but our job now is to ensure that we have that in place for September. Staff are happy with that model and that's what's going on for September.

All Parents present were in agreement with these discussion and the new school day.

**The New Academic Year**

**Staffing**

The Principal advised that we are fully staffed for September, we only have a few members of staff moving on, all for valid reasons. We are extending the leadership team, with a new VP joining to look after behaviour and attendance, currently at Malcolm Arnold. Staffing is a national problem and I feel passionate that we recruit the right teachers so that the team retains its ethos and all are committed. Teachers have embraced the new school day which goes to show the calibre of the staff that we have.

An outdoor space for students was introduced in response to student council feedback – parents felt this was of benefit as it was also brought up at open evening. The Principal advised that CEO, Dr Campbell listened to student voice and agreed this. Chair noted that in the past there has been a debate from parents about whether this should be used as they wish their children to be safe, but this is controlled and in a confined area. Principal noted that from a safeguarding perspective Senior and middle leaders are performing the duties to ensure that this can happen.

Parent – it's good to give the students the choice and to trust them by giving them that choice. TSE – I agree, they still have the option to remain in their wing if they don't want to go outside.

**Uniform Expectations**

The Principal advised that we have a new uniform supplier, based in Kettering which makes it much easier for parents and if there are any issues, they can be resolved quickly. We are constantly in touch with the supplier to develop what he can supply for us, skirts are a disproportionate problem, and the interpretation of what a sensible /knee length skirt is varies greatly. We are encouraging parents towards our uniform supplier for an acceptable skirt, if skirt is acceptable now, fine. However, when replacing we are directing parents to the uniform supplier for an academy acceptable skirt.

Parent – I have found the supplier useful to go and try on for size.

**Any Other Business**

Parent - You mention we are in the Ofsted window – how are you placed?

TSE - early indications are that the results that we got last year, we should mirror those this year which will be a solid trajectory.

SBA - previously what we were doing was good but our outcomes were not quite good enough, whereas now they are better.

TSE - what is important, as has been raised at this group before, is we still need the community to understand the great things that happen here. The minute you get that Good label, my job is then to ensure we keep Good and push for even better than Good, we will still work to being the best we can be. It will be great to celebrate that, but we must never sit still, it's about progression, need to get to that stage. Our leadership teams and staff are on that trajectory as they want it too.

SBA – as governors, we will challenge the leadership team for a plan to work with them on and improve.  
TSE – we can see it now, the new Ofsted framework should help because of the context. The emphasis on what we are doing in the school, the things we do to give the students a better learning environment. Listening to the students is important.

Parent – that’s something you need to push and ensure people know about.

TSE – I agree, the whole school curriculum, complete package of what we offer is to be celebrated.

Parent – the outcome of competitions with other schools are all very positive.

TSE – working with NCOP, we have a co-ordinator within school, students have benefited from so many trips due to this. Car crash careers, University trips etc.

SBA – as a governing body didn’t want to do any flash in the pan idea, we could have used tactical ways to give a better results, but that didn’t benefit the students so we went for the basics, you need strong foundations which is what we have done so that we can build on it and grow. We have never gamed the system. Our issue now is getting to grips with the new framework and everything we need to support the school on. We are looking for a governor, our Vice Chair moved down to Southampton which is a regrettable loss as she was a great governor, supportive but challenging.

Parent – Are you changing any holidays?

TSE – no. We are not, our holiday system mimics most of the south east, we have the most popular system of holidays. I certainly haven’t discussed that, because that has an impact on staff if they have children on a different system. Our current holidays work for us as we co-operate with the Kettering schools, if we changed it wouldn’t be helpful.

Parent – my daughter has gone through her GCSEs – what was the decision process regarding study leave? She would have preferred to be at home for study leave.

TSE – Government gave guidance that we do as little study leave as possible so that students are not ‘let loose’ in May. As a school we wish to give as much support to those students as we can, exams are becoming more difficult. If we said goodbye in May for study leave, that’s a long time to not see the students. It’s important, I saw the stress, being at home I appreciate for some that might work, but for others they need the stability of school.

Parent – could we offer a choice?

TSE – the issue with that is whether the student will make that decision for the right reasons.

Parent – my daughter found it frustrating, and couldn’t concentrate well in the classroom, she went to the library instead. TSE – we did give that as an option. There are a lot of exams, I understand the argument both ways. Schools in this Trust do not operate study leave, it’s something to discuss with Year 11s. **TSE agreed to discuss this with Year 11s, and to consider this process.** Parent suggested a parent/school contract for it.

TSE - a process we have run for the past 2 years, where we offer a free breakfast and an hour with teachers prior to exams to give a useful reminder of key points has worked well.

Parent – how do the exams work now? In the past English we would have 2 papers same day.

TSE – it is similar but the exam period is longer. English have 4 papers, 2 language, 2 literature plus speaking in a controlled environment. Maths have 3 papers and Science have many papers. The exams run from mid-May to 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> week of June with half-term in the middle. We use that half-term for additional revision. Sometimes 2 exams a day, sometimes 1 exam a day. Core subjects are threaded throughout and not loaded at the front as they used to be. We do 2 sets of mocks, to give students practice and the drill of the exam. Students have said they were glad to know what to expect, it is a well-planned operation, and they benefit from having that practice.

Parent – good way of them knowing what they do and don’t know.

**Meeting ended at 1850**

TSE