

Kettering Science Academy

Parents' Forum

Thursday 15th November 2018

6 – 7pm held in The Library

Present: Tony Segalini (Principal) [TSE]; Steve Barton (Chair of Governors) [SBA];
Claire Greaves (Vice Principal (PDBW) [CGR]; Josie Tomkins [JTS] (note taker)

Item	Action
<p>Road safety</p> <p><u>This item was raised by a parent who has witnessed students how difficult it is at the end of the day for students to cross the entrance to the school site where cars are trying to enter and leave.</u></p> <p>TSE advised that he has had discussions with the Police regarding this issue, however they have expressly told him that staff of the Academy are not allowed to patrol the road/direct traffic as if there were any problem we would be liable. KSA put a gate at the top of the car park to rectify the matter of the students having to cross the vehicle entrance which worked for some time. However, a nursery was added to the primary provision and parents of those children drive through the car park, rendering the car park unsafe as there is no clear pathway from the gate for students to follow. We are trying to put in an application for planning to include a path along the top so that children have a safe route.</p> <p>TSE noted that the other major issue we have is students themselves, running across the road and not crossing the road safely. Members of the Senior Leadership Team stand on the crossings to try and help reduce this. Heads of Year are constantly badgering students in tutor time and assembly regarding this issue, it's something they need to be reminded about on a regular basis.</p> <p>An assembly is planned for the New Year, together with advice to parents to encourage their assistance with getting the message to their children.</p> <p><u>Parent – is there any other access for cars?</u> TSE advised unfortunately not, it's very much a design fault of the site. SB noted that it is an improvement on the old entrance to the old school, which was blind and narrow, this is a huge improvement on what it was. SB asked TSE if the LA are able to put a road safety person outside school at the peak times. TSE advised that unfortunately this was not possible.</p> <p>TSE added that the length of time for the traffic light crossing is not very long. He and his team are encouraging the students to use the correct crossings, it's an ongoing issue and a major concern and he is hoping that the path will be possible.</p>	
<p>Uniform</p> <p><u>This was raised by a parent as they felt the uniform standards had slipped.</u></p> <p>CGR advised that the behaviour team are continually speaking to students individually and it is something we address in assemblies on expectations. It is a concern of hers and she is looking at how we smarten up, particularly avoiding the wearing of leggings.</p> <p><u>Parent – has a Year 7 child so uniform is very smart. What is the problem with the uniform slipping?</u></p> <p>TSE advised that generally it's not the boys who flout the rules, but there isn't the same range of clothing for boys. Girls trousers are a different matter, we have specified tailored, i.e. pockets and a fly. CGR noted that there may well be an amendment to this moving forward, stating that they have to be ankle length and tailored material. TSE advised that we are currently going through a uniform tender, and it may be that the new supplier will have skirts and trousers that we deem acceptable. Some schools dictate that they can only buy the trousers and skirts from their supplier, but TSE does not feel that's a fair way to go as it can be very expensive, which is why we are specific with our guidelines.</p> <p><u>Parent – different styles are needed for different people/body types.</u></p>	

TSE agreed noting that the aim is to get the uniform right for all parents. Black footwear is stated rather than black leather shoes so that this is affordable for all families. In general our students are smart, but there are the odd student who try and flout the rules.

Parent – I think they look a lot smarter than last year, the trousers are longer.

TSE noted that staff have made a concerted effort on monitoring uniform, members of staff are also expected to dress to a professional standard.

Parent – has a child in another school, looking at students in general thinks KSA look quite smart generally and hasn't seen untidy students in comparison. I think you're doing really well.

TSE thanked the parent, noting that the students don't mind wearing uniform, the culture has changed. CGR noted that we aim for a balance between individuality, therefore we don't stipulate about hair, nails or make-up which other schools do. Here it's more the minor things, rolling up blazer sleeves, length of skirts or trousers. TSE added that our CEO decided they should be individual which is why we don't stipulate on the hair, make-up nails etc., with CGR adding that we would rather have a conversation about learning than their hair/make-up.

SBA added that he had noticed an improvement to a few years ago, and it was evident to him that it is being monitored as when he walks round occasionally he feels students are generally fairly smart.

Parent – is there any opportunity to recycle uniform? I have some in good condition.

Yes, please just drop them off as these can be used as spares for other students.

ACTION JTS to add to parent bulletin

Parent – what's the sixth form uniform?

TSE advised that this was smart business dress and reported that at our recent remembrance assemblies an external person was present to perform the trumpet solo. He was pleasantly surprised at how smart our sixth form dressed. TSE noted that he is proud of how well they turn themselves out. Our Head of Sixth form has worked with the students to produce a dress code which was acceptable to them and the school.

Parent – suggested that teachers have a mufti day and then ask students how they respond/feel about them being dressed in that way?

TSE noted that this would be a tactic to use if students didn't understand why they had to wear uniform. SBA added that wearing uniform is also about preventing bullying, if students are allowed to wear branded clothing it sets them apart, whereas uniform prevents this from happening.

JTS

Homework / Printing

A parent raised this issue as they had struggled to print their child's homework at home and were unaware that students were able to print within school by emailing to their student email account. The parent asked for this to be raised so that all parents were aware of this facility but also asked if there could be a greener way to handle homework, maybe putting it out as a project for older year groups to consider.

Parent – could students email the teachers

TSE – it's something that we are looking at as we have to address the amount of printing, some teachers are able to do that. Show my Homework can be utilised in this way although we have been experiencing some issue with the functionality this year.

Parent – why is homework not done in exercise books, why don't the books come home?

TSE advised that there's a fear that the books won't come back again.

Parent – my child's maths teacher is going to trial sending books home from next week, it's a good link to the school as this is the way it worked at Primary.

TSE hoped that this worked well as he feels it's a positive solution. He noted that Mrs Farrar is looking at homework and Show my Homework to ensure that it works as well as it can.

Parent – how does printing work?

TSE advised that students have an allowance on their card, and can send to their email addresses. Form tutors will be able to supply you with the email addresses.

Parent –do they know where the printers are?

CGR advised that they do as they are very visible in each wing.

Parent – can they print directly from computer at school?

TSE advised that they can but he is discouraging printing as far as he can, unless it's absolutely necessary, due to the environmental cost and price.

Parent – you wouldn't look to promote that as I didn't know?

TSE advised that all students are aware of this, students are often asked to print their work in their lessons.

Parent – is there a way of moving away from printing it at all?

JTS referred to the original parent's email suggesting a student inspired project for a more progressive way to address homework. TSE agreed that this could be something to look at, and that the IT department are working along these lines too.

Availability of Water throughout the day

Parent of Year 7 requested this to be added to the agenda as their child had misinterpreted the guidelines as to what drinks could be consumed and where within the school day.

TSE explained that students are never without water. We have drinks fountains in all wings, with the facility for them to fill reusable bottles. Water may be consumed in class but no other drinks are allowed in class. Other hot and cold drinks can only be consumed in the restaurant during breakfast and lunch breaks.

Parent – is drinking promoted water promoted? My son is terrible at remembering.

CGR explained that this is covered in PSHE when discussing and learning about keeping healthy. TSE advised that we did look at the possibility of introducing branded re-usable bottles but the cost was prohibitive.

AOB

Litter

TSE raised this item adding that this is a big push that we wish to improve upon so that we can instil respect in the students. We need to change their mind-set. All present agreed this is about respect.

Parent – communication. This year we seem to have been contacted for good behaviour for our child which is really quite nice to receive. TSE advised that this is something we are encouraging our Heads of Year and Heads of Department to do. He's very conscious that positive praise is important. On our EPraise system, we don't award students for things which are expected, we award for going above and beyond.

Parent – EPraise and Year 10 - lots of students have been deducted EPraise points because they have been given too many.

TSE advised that points haven't been deducted they've been brought into line. We have brought in consistency amongst staff. We have introduced goals and educated the staff with tariffs for different issues. Head of Year Mr Feely monitors this so that he can ensure that teachers are being consistent and that all teachers are awarding the points.

Parent – Homework - some seems to appear on MyEd and some on SMHW

TSE advised he will investigate further. **ACTION TSE to investigate/speak to IT**

Parent – Epraise is great for behaviour, there seems to be a lot of competition with regard to academic success

TSE

TSE advised that this is something we have created with Year 11 as our data management system can tell us the progress made by forms, so that we can have competition between forms. The form who has made the best progress by Progress Check 3 have been advised that I will pay for a trip. This takes into account all abilities. It appeals to boys as well and helps encourage them. CGR advised that the younger year groups are having form of the week, based on remembering equipment/ ties etc – targeting the issues that are relevant to those year groups/

Parent – what happens with students on a high expected level e.g 8 they can't make progress?

CGR advised that it's about the progress they make across timeframe, even if at an 8, we would expect progress within that 8.

Parent – reports, my son has an 8 for maths and achieved a 7, but it's red on the report which is upsetting for students to see

TSE advised that it doesn't mean it's not good but is reflecting there is still some work to do in order to achieve his MEG of 8.

CGR understood the comments made regarding red being shown in these circumstances and advised that the targets are set to be aspirational. TSE also recognised that this was an area of concern for parents and students and advised that we have many discussions about this so he will take it back to the team to discuss how we manage it going forward. He advised that some schools use arrows, there are ways around it. Many discussions have taken place however the MEG we will not change as TSE believes this is a positive move. If we say that's your minimum you can still do better than that, although he does understand that if MEG is 8 it is challenging.

Parents – Are there no rewards if they don't achieve over 8

TSE advised that they will be rewarded if they are matching their MEG because that is great progress.

Parent – I thought the grading system went to 9?

TSE advised that it does, however that is higher than the old A*.

Students do assessments in Year 6, from national data curve they predict from there what they should achieve in Year 11.

Parent – how reliable is the MEG in relation to what they achieve.

TSE advised that they are reliable as they can be based upon national grade profiles but we make our MEGs reasonably high as we want to stretch our students. Our results last summer were great, we made half a grade difference for every student last year. On the performance tables we have moved to Average up from well below average. We are striving to go above the line and are close to national average now. We are doing better than similar schools across the country.

Parent – were there more 6th form students this year?

TSE advised that numbers are the same but we are expanding the sixth form and have increased our suite of offering. We are now offering Law, Sociology, Uniformed services, catering – more vocational courses so sixth form will get stronger. We had great results in sixth form with students going to Russell Group universities and Harvard. Previous years we have had students go to Cambridge.

Careers

TSE advised that his team are putting together careers events and asked if anyone present, or anyone they knew has their own business or in a profession or public service that they would like to talk about with our students? TSE advised he would be grateful as we wish to open the minds of the students to what they may want to do in the future to assist with their aspirations. Please let the Principal's PA know if you know somebody. SBA advised that he had held an assembly on apprenticeships as these are equally as important as degrees resulting in a high value qualification earned along the way. He added that good modern apprenticeships are of high quality and MacDonald's apprenticeship are second to none in the food industry.