

Parent Ambassador Meeting 23/9/25

Present:

- Louise New (LN) – Executive Principal
- James Garner (JG) - Head of Primary
- Ben Philips (BP) – Head of Secondary
- Lee Hardwick (LH) – Deputy Head of Secondary (for items 1 and 2)
- Parent Ambassadors (PA): Rebecca, Leonie, Hannah, Louise, Becky

1. Start of term reflection

LN reflect that, catering aside (more on that in agenda item 2) , it has felt like a very positive start in school, but she sought feedback from parents about how parents have felt about the transition through and into the school this September.

PA said that overall parents were very positive about pupil transition and how the start of the year had gone, and the clarity of information.

PA raised that the Back-to-school information on website is very helpful for parents. LN reported that this stays on the website all year, as it has proved helpful and a good reference point for parents with much of the information needed collated in one place.

PA raised that some parents had reported confusion with homework and which platform it is set on. BP reassured they should all be on Class Charts; if the homework is on a different platform the link will be listed on Class Charts. **Action: BP to remind staff.**

BP mentioned that the school have already managed to meet with three of the secondary school years since the start of term, positively around 200 parents attended the Year 7 Information evening. JG reports there have been open afternoons for parents of primary children allowing parents to meet their class teachers. PA report that these events have been very well received – it is nice to get into the building and meet teachers face to face.

PA also raised how the addition of the email addresses by staff names on the school website is a positive addition and helps make the process of contacting staff easier for parents.

A PA reported the welcome email they had received from the class tutor was positively received. Other PA reported they had not had similar, so this isn't consistent over all tutors. LH agreed going forward it would be good for all tutors to do this, as it does seem positively received by parents and helps with communication between staff and parents. **Action: All tutors to start the year with welcome contact with parents of their tutees in Secondary.**

PA mentioned that despite school setting a two school day reply for emails this is not always being followed by all staff. LN did raise that there had been problems (as previously communicated) with some external emails getting through, however if there are still outstanding emails parents should follow up with the tutor or member of Senior Leadership Team. LN apologised for any lack of response. **Action: LN to remind staff of two day response commitment, which could include a holding email if more time is needed.**

PA raised that there have been reported concerns with House Points and the variability of these being issued, for example some children are getting significantly higher yet other children working just as hard aren't getting them; this can be demotivating for children. BP reports they have been made aware of this from some Tutors and the internal tracking and this has been raised in two Secondary staff meetings already and will be raised again. He did reassure, however, that our praise system (emails from Mrs New etc) takes into account behaviour points too, so these are certainly not ignored. LN explained how House Points are also given a colour to show how pupils are doing compared to their peers (by class in Primary and by year group in Secondary), so this counters the discrepancies seen between year groups (e.g. Year 7 often receive a lot more House Points than Year 11). However, within a class or year groups this variability should not be seen as raised, so this needs addressing. **Action: JG and LH to remind staff about ensuring hard working pupils are fairly celebrated.**

PA asked how pupil ambassadors are selected in primary, LN/ JG reported there is some element of pupil selection but ultimately the teacher has the overriding say. PA reported that some children felt it was more of a popularity contest. **Action: JG will look at this for primary – we want all children to feel like this is a genuine opportunity for them.**

2. Catering Update

A previous meeting had taken place with Mr Garner, Aspens and some of the Primary Parent Ambassadors because of the initial concerns raised around the new caterers at the start of the year. Due to Aspens' availability, this had been delayed, and so took place the day before the main Parent Ambassador meeting (22nd September). Therefore, reflections on the impact of agreed actions since that meeting was not possible (as had only been one day), but it had meant that the meeting yesterday was far more positive than expected – LN reported that CFS and The Trust had not been happy with how things had gone with Aspens, and the team (especially Mr Hardwick and Mr Garner) had been extremely proactive in feeding this back, which meant that rapid improvements had already been made.

JG summarised the previous day's discussion:

- Positive feedback – lots of positive feedback with some parents feeling that this is now an improvement to the previous service.
- Criticism of speed of service – **Action: school to replace the broken till in secondary.** There has only ever been one in Primary. PA asked if there could be a second till point, however it is unknown if the

catering team could staff a second till. **Action: LH to investigate.** BP reports that during monitoring Secondary dining, they are managing to serve most students withing 15-20 mins.

- Some criticism of the app: JG felt there was a positive response from Aspens, who are going to act on the feedback, raising with the app developers. **Action: LH to monitor this progress.**

Whilst there was a range of other feedback, many concerns have already been addressed.

LN noted that there was a request for pupil voice to also be gathered – it had always been the plan for the first Pupil Ambassadors agenda to focus on catering, with representatives from Aspens in the meeting. **Action: LN to continue as planned with gathering pupils voice in this way.**

PA were grateful of the improvements that have already been made. LH has been working hard with Aspens, meeting regularly to ensure they are fulfilling their commitments with another meeting Friday planned for 26/9/25. LN said they aren't afraid to challenge the suppliers if there are concerns and she was grateful for the feedback. Overall, everyone seems happy with the positive projection of improvement. **Action: The plan is for a further meeting with PA and caterers later in the term, PA will go to parents for updated feedback ahead of this.**

3. Fundraising

Due to ongoing funding challenges in all schools, LN reports there is a need for an increase in the funding raised. Amongst other things, the school really want to increase the number of canopies outside and generally improve the external space. LN is keen to try and help encourage a large movement / push with momentum. Mrs Haylett will be a link for fundraising in the school. JG reports there is a Friends meeting next week.

PA reported some ideas already for the coming term:

- wreath making
- Christmas fair
- Valentines disco.

Looking further ahead there was the discussion of moving summer fair to an evening, to see if there is a bigger uptake of support. JG informed the group that there are staff within school who can help set up during the school day.

LN also felt that the summer fair – whilst a great success last year - didn't have enough interactive stations last year, due to the lack of volunteers. PA asked could the pupil ambassadors / sports leaders be encouraged to help with running activity stalls? LN agreed that is was a great idea. **Action: Pupil Leadership opportunities in Christmas and Summer Fairs.**

PA also fed back the need to check dates so it doesn't clash with other fairs. Currently there is a date of 3rd July Fri pm for the summer fair.

CFS Friends - At present there are limited volunteers. There is a plan for the Friends group to reach out to Reception parents and attend open evenings etc to drum up support. LN/ BP suggested that the Friends could hold a table at future meetings to try and encourage sign-ups. **Action: Friends to be present at Year 7 Open Evening next week.** LN reported from a staff perspective support provided at the fairs is equal between Secondary and Primary.

PA raised the idea of a Volunteers register to enable Friends group to have access to a bank of people of abilities and contact details, allowing people to volunteer for certain activities rather than having to commit to full meetings etc.

LN thanked all those doing so much to support the school.

4. Executive Principal Recruitment

LN asked if the PA have any questions re the recruitment of the Executive Principal. PA all grateful for LN's service to the school and are sad to see her go. LN will have been at the school for 12 years, seven as the Executive Principal. LN feels it is time for her to professionally to take on a new challenge; she is looking forward to her new role but is extremely sad to be saying farewell to CFS.

There is a current advert out for the replacement for LN. The desire from the Trust is to maintain the three-headship structure. Executive Principal at an all through school is an unusual role therefore LN is conducting the tours for the potential applicants to show the school and provide information on the role. However, LN will not be involved in the interviewing process itself. Pupils/Staff/ Governors/Trust all involved in the process. Due to LN giving an extended notice period, there is time for the Trust to do additional rounds of recruitment to ensure they appoint the right person for the role, not just the best from that round of applications. LN reassured PA that the Trust isn't looking for significant change to ethos or approach etc, they want to keep building on what has already been developed. PA were welcome of this.

5. Land Update (Item raised by PA)

The land is still happening. Pre-planning is still in process. LN + Wates have asked for meetings with relevant bodies to gather all the relevant information needed for pre-planning application and to gather support from local councillors etc. LN informed PA that Wates are 1- 1.5 years behind on their original time scale due to a previous problem causing delay – this was around electricity and what the grid could provide. Wates have now altered their plans, so things are progressing again albeit later than scheduled.

LN reports that she is keeping discussions open about other neighbouring land opportunities too. She will update the parent body when any concrete developers occur.

LN is frustrated by the slowness of all of this, and apologies that there has not been more to report at present.

Action: LN to give an update to parents as soon more definite information is available.

6. Secondary Year 7 Intake Clarification (Item raised by PA)

PA noted that drop off feels busier this term, therefore they asked for clarification on the plan moving forward with Year 7s as they wonder if the additional class has caused this; is the plan to increase to five class entry each year? LN admits that this may be the cause of traffic increase, but there are a larger number of siblings than ever before – so is it more having to wait between drop offs rather than an actual increase in cars? LN explained that only Year 7 and Year 9 have an additional class of children; there is no permanent increase committed moving forward, but the school may consider it again each year. The increase in these year groups has a positive impact on funding and the educational opportunities for all pupils (in both phases), for example the ability to provide more GCSE subject options if more children opt for the classes. It is also really great that so many people want to come to the school – all year groups are over numbers with strong waiting lists, and so – as we have the site space to accommodate an extra class without compromising our small school feel – we would love to do it again in principle. However, LN explained that the traffic situation is a consideration, and it is so frustrating that this could hinder this otherwise great opportunity for the school. LN also confirmed that no decision had been made about the next Year 7 cohort – this would be dependent on applications. LN did confirm that we would not want to go to more than five classes in order to maintain our small school ethos.

6a. Drop off (additional item stemming from item 6)

BP stated it is common for drop off to be busier in the earlier part of the term and often it does settle over time.

PA raised - is there a possibility of Activ8 providing a reduced-price session on a morning for secondary sibling children to reduce the waiting? PA also asked about the possibility of a secondary sibling drop off time for primary children like the afternoon. JG explained the difficulty with this is the time school can assign staff to duties. - worktime directive. **Action: JG and LN to explore these suggestions.**

PA reported that staff on the crossing really helps the flow.

PA asked if school could have any influence on the West Sussex transport applications for bus passes. For children who live on the Witterings, their closest secondary by car is CFS. However, West Sussex decide proximity based on the distance the crow flies, therefore assuming the closest school is Selsey Academy. If this could be raised with West Sussex this could help reduce the number of cars as more children may benefit from free transport. **Action: LN to raise with local MP/Council.**

PA asked to provide the Transport link free with more information on this point. **Action: LN to share this link via the bulletin.**