

St Olave's PA Form Reps Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday 19th October 2016 @ 7:30pm

Location: Main School Library

Attendees: Mr Budds (Assistant Head), Charlotte Rutter, Jennifer Franks, Paula McCabe, Nicky Davies, Charlotte Machado, Baoching Liu, Sue Watts, Tiffany Barradell, Bola Ogunwusi, Julie Costard, Sarah Eldridge, Francesca Iudicello, Seema Singh, James Williams-Ward, Shubhra Tripathi, Lakshmi Kandala, Laura Clayden, Stephen Corion, Helen Patel, Lin Limbrey, Zey Kagan, Rachael Peek, Narinder Gill, Rinku Chibber

Apologies: Dinta Madlani, Olga Evans, Catherine Fleet, Kate Cameron, Gauri Grover, Siobhan Gee, Elizabeth Garnham-Jong

Questions for the school

1. Many of the good schools do public speaking LAMDA classes. Could something similar be arranged for our boys too? Even if it's a paid club, I am sure many will join.

Mr Budds thought this was a very good idea and will follow up with Mrs Goodman and Miss Wilkie to see if it can be arranged. It would support the School's Higher Education Preparation Programme and the School Development Plan's focus on articulation well.

2. Co-curricular clubs: There don't seem to be as many clubs running at lunchtime as there were last year, and it seems a bit erratic whether the clubs that are running are on. Could the club list on the website be updated (It still shows Spring 2016)? Could the list be emailed out at the start of each term as the navigation on the website is not obvious?

Mr Budds said the number of societies has not decreased, if anything they are on the increase. He apologised that the list was not up to date but said it takes some time for the information on clubs to filter through as they are organized by many different people. However, the boys are made aware of all the clubs through a great many notices in assembly. If parents or students have a particular suggestion for a club or society, then the request can be passed on to the school's Club & Society Outreach Prefect Team; Mr Budds will pass on such enquiries to this prefect team's Senior Prefect liaison (Alex). *Enquiries are ongoing regarding an updated online listing and this will be published shortly.*

3. Could the list of rugby fixtures with times, locations and teams be emailed at the start of each term and when an update is made? Otherwise changes can be missed.

Mr Kenwood has already responded to this question by sending a SchoolComms email on 18.10.16 clarifying the procedure. The fixture list on the website is very detailed and the best way to keep up to date with any last minute changes is to follow the twitter accounts @saintolaves and @StOlavesRUGBY1.

4. How many pupils did not attain the required 3 B grades in their AS Levels and consequently were asked to leave the school last year? Will this happen in subsequent years now that A Levels are changing?

Mr Budds said around a dozen moved to other schools which is consistent with previous years and roughly as anticipated. Although students now won't be doing AS levels (in their 3 main

subjects) in a highly selective school like St Olave's there are still expectations in terms of academic performance and school engagement; any emerging issues will be well signposted.

5. Why does the school send letters via post to parents regarding student unauthorized absence/underperformance etc.? Could this be done by email to save costs?

Mr Budds clarified that the school has been gradually moving towards email communication and the majority of letters are sent via email. However, for issues of importance, letters are sent by post so they are not missed. Additionally, when a physical letter is sent, the system attaches a record of the letter on the student's file. Currently there is not the same process for emails.

6. A number of year 10 parents want to ask about changes to the RS full course GCSE exam. Why won't the school allow boys to sit the second exam for the full course anymore?

It was explained by Mr Budds that the school has never offered the RS full GCSE but that all pupils sit the short course (half GCSE). Previously, pupils who wished to do the full course could do the work in their own time and then pay to sit the exam privately at the school. However, due to the immense pressure the exam office is under with increasing pupil numbers and increasing demand for re-marks, a decision was taken that the school would no longer administer any entries for courses other than those taught in the school. This means that pupils can no longer sit any external exams at the school, including the RS full course exam.

Mr Budds said it may be possible for the short course that is taken at the school to be linked to a second paper taken at a private exam centre for pupils wishing to take the full RS GCSE. *Mr Budds has spoken with the exams office and confirmed that this is possible; students wishing to pursue this option should speak with Mrs Dixon.*

It was explained to Mr Budds that the parents who raised this issue believe that, with its status as a faith school, it should be possible to take a full RS GCSE at St Olave's. They request that an exception be made for this one subject. *Mr Budds has fed this request back to the school's Senior Leadership Team for discussion; the school's position, however, remains unchanged.*

7. When will the GCSE and A level results table (by subject) be uploaded onto the school website?

Mr Budds explained that the results have been held up by a significant number of re-mark requests. In the week prior to the meeting, the numbers were quoted to the governing body so the results should be available on the website imminently. *The results are now posted on the school website.*

8. Is there a GCSE prize giving where all the boys who progressed to sixth form get presented with their certificates? At the Speech Day and Prize Giving on 14 September prizes were awarded to the 19 boys who got 9A*s or more but nothing for the other 100 boys. At Newstead all the girls who take GCSEs attend a prize giving and receive certificates and then subject prizes and it is a lovely way to recognize everyone's achievements.

Mr Budds said that St Olave's doesn't offer a prize giving for all boys but likes to celebrate exceptional achievements in keeping with the school's aim of encouraging academic excellence. However, at the annual senior prize giving event in September there are many prizes awarded, not just for GCSE and A-Level grades but at subject level, for co-curricular achievements and Form prizes were awarded for a wide range of reasons. Additionally, at the Year 12 induction evening all students are congratulated on achieving the good GCSE results which have enabled them to join the highly competitive sixth form.

9. PE bags: Taking sports kits home after every use is difficult for the boys. Can the PE bags be left in the form room and taken home once a week? Can they be kept in the lockers?

Whilst the school is sympathetic to the problem, this request would not be practicable. Mr Budds explained there is not enough room in the classrooms to store bags and most sports bags

will not fit in the lockers. Boys are encouraged to only bring the kit that is required for that day and to take sports kit home to be washed or at least aired after it has been used.

10. Boys' exposure to violence/graphic content in educational films shown during PSHE lessons or other subjects: There was a particularly emotionally taxing day in a year 7 class where boys were shown a traffic video with graphic content during PSHE as well as a video of a 12-year-old earthquake victim in the course of a Geography lesson. This resulted in many phone calls home from upset children. Though parents appreciate that children will be exposed to certain levels of violence within the syllabus they ask if it is possible to have advance warning of particularly difficult or graphic content to enable them to prepare their children.

Mr Budds expressed his regret at this unfortunate confluence of content which pupils had found upsetting and has asked the Head of Geography for her comments regarding the earthquake video. It seems that it was unlucky coincidence that both videos were on the same day and although it's not possible for classes to co-ordinate lesson plans across subjects, parents were reassured by Mr Budds and other Form Reps that this is not a regular occurrence and that all teachers undertake careful professional judgement to ensure that content is age-appropriate. In addition, Mr Budds agreed that the yearly plan for PSHE topics will be made available on the school website so that parents are aware of when difficult subjects will be discussed.

The Head of Geography has confirmed that the video in question shows a girl trapped in muddy water. The Head of Department and her colleagues feel that the video is neither graphic nor violent and comment that it has been used for the last 8 years in Year 7 teaching without any complaint. One boy in the lesson under discussion commented to the Geography teacher after the video that the form had seen images of a crash in PSHE that morning, that they had not been warned about the content and that the PSHE had upset him, but no boys in the Geography lesson exhibited visible distress or reported any distress to the teacher concerned having seen the earthquake video. The Head of Geography has nonetheless asked all teachers within the department to always give students warnings in class prior to showing any natural hazard clips (irrespective of age group).

11. Number of supply/cover teachers the class has had until now is causing concern with regard to the boys' ability to progress in the relevant subjects. (7L)

Mr Budds looked in to this issue and can confirm that 7L have had a higher than usual number of cover lessons. He apologised for this and explained this is not due to a long-term or systemic problem but rather a short-term run of bad luck in terms of one-day absences of teachers for this class for a wide variety of reasons. The school is mindful of the issue and will continue to monitor the situation.

12. Demerits: Is there scope for different types of demerits depending on the "offence" in question, for instance throwing a bag on the ground/walking in the wrong direction should not carry the same punishment as damaging school/personal property or rude behaviour.

Mr Budds explained that more serious issues trigger stronger sanctions such as detentions. The demerit system is mainly for minor misdemeanours. Demerits are part of a wider process for sanction which is clearly outlined in the school's Behaviour Policy. The reason for each demerit is written in the planner so that both parents and the form tutor can keep an eye on any developing patterns. For example, if a pupil is getting many demerits for forgetting items then the form tutor may suggest some methods to improve the pupil's organizational skills.

13. Some parents would like to know about the procedure of the asbestos removal in the kitchen area.

Since this question was raised there have been a number of School Comms with further information. Mr Budds clarified that the asbestos removal is being undertaken by a specialist

approved contractor who is registered with the Health and Safety executive and that this part of the work will take place during half term so that once the boys return to school there will be no asbestos on the premises. *The removal of all asbestos from the kitchen was successfully completed in the half term break as planned.*

14. The exam boards for each of the subjects and courses aren't all on the website under curriculum. Some still say under review for KS4/ GCSE. Would it be possible for year 9 to be sent a list on School Comms of all subjects and boards/courses they are following and the corresponding revision guides details if applicable? Can the school purchase these in bulk to sell on squid? This happened for science in the past.

As this question was added to the agenda late Mr Budds did not have time to fully investigate. He stated that due to the changes in GCSEs the school is still looking at content for some subjects so the exam boards may change. He will check that the website is up to date and will add details of the cohorts for which the information is relevant.

For revision guides, Mr Budds will pass on the request to Mrs Goodman that details be made available once exam boards are confirmed, and to determine if the school can buy them in bulk for sale via Squid.

Other issues

Year 12 form rep allocation: Charlotte explained that half of the Year 12 classes do not have reps as not enough people volunteered.

The existing reps quickly volunteered to take on an extra class each so that all parents can be kept informed.

Has the Head responded to the letter from the PA about changes to 6th from entry criteria.

Charlotte apologised on behalf of the PA for not sending out an update yet. The Headmaster has provided three substantial clarification emails to all parents. The PA have received replies from two of the school governors who are happy that the Headmaster has fully explained the rationale behind the changes. The PA continues to work closely with the School's Senior Leadership Team and parents will be kept notified regarding any further changes.

AOB

1. How many boys would not have made the required 64 points in the latest GCSE examinations?

Mr Budds said there were about as many as was expected which is around a dozen. Usually the people who leave after Year 12 are found to be those with the lower GCSE results so from next year although there may be more people who don't make it into the Sixth Form there should then be fewer who cannot keep up with the pace of work and are asked to leave at the end of Year 12.

2. The boys have been shown lists of high achievers with 12-14 GCSE A*s. At St Olave's, boys only take 10/11 GCSEs, is this done to encourage boys to take extra external exams?

Mr Budds clarified that the boys are shown details of all the high achievers including boys with 9 or 10 A*s. Some of the Sixth Formers come from other schools where they take more GCSEs and we like to show that we are proud of their achievements at their previous school too. There is no expectation on boys to sit external exams. St Olave's offers 10 GCSEs as standard as they feel it is

the right number to enable enough time to be spent on each subject to maximise the pupils' grades.

3. What is the percentage of Oxbridge bound students that were at Olave's from Year 7?

Mr Budds did not know the exact figure at the time of the meeting as this was a late addition to the agenda, but believed that the percentage of Oxbridge and Medicine/Veterinary courses combined is broadly in line with the proportion of sixth formers who come through from the lower school. He added that the school is very proud of the number of Oxbridge and Medicine offers their pupils get and encourages old Olavians from these universities to keep in contact with the school societies via social media groups to encourage even more pupils to apply.

4. A number of boys have received letters stating they are not doing well enough in a particular GCSE subject and if they don't improve by January mocks they will be asked to drop the subject. Parents were not advised in advance.

Mr Budds explained that the school expects good progress to be made in all subjects. It is sometimes in the best interests of a pupil to drop one subject they are struggling with so they have more time to focus on the remaining 9 GCSE subjects, however this is always a last resort and there are many methods for working with the pupils to improve performance. The letter is meant to motivate boys to ensure they get the best grades that they are able to.

5. Missing high value items: Parents in Year 9 are concerned that a lot of higher value items like phones and calculators have been going missing recently and want to know what more can be done to recover the items.

Mr Budds is not aware of a wider issue within the school at present but will speak to the Head of Year 9 about whether to send an email to parents with details of the missing items. The school takes theft very seriously and anyone caught stealing would face the most serious sanctions. If a potential theft is directly witnessed or has taken place where there is CCTV then it is possible for the school to look into it, but not all areas of the school are covered. Parents must make sure the boys report all missing items to reception. High value items if found will be retained by Reception while lower value items and clothing will be returned if named (and the name is seen) or otherwise taken to the Lost Property cupboard. There are details on the school website of the opening hours for the Lost Property cupboard. Pupils are reminded to keep valuable items in their lockers.

6. It was asked if the new Senior Leadership structure could be explained.

Mr Budds explained that following the departure of the former Deputy Headmaster, Mr Evans, for his new Headship post in Yorkshire an interim structure is in place where his responsibilities have been split between the four Assistant Heads. These are:

Mr Budds – Head of Sixth Form and PA liaison.

Mr Rees – Pastoral Wellbeing Years 7-11, Child Protection, Academic Performance Data Monitoring, Analysis and Management.

Mrs Goodman – Line Management of Heads of Faculty, Initial Teacher Training and Internal Quality Assurance for Teaching and Learning (QATL)

Mr Davis – The School Calendar, Cover and Timetabling.

Date of next meeting Thursday 19th January 2017, 7.30 in the main school library.