



19th May 2017

Dear Parents and Carers,

Results of parent consultations

Over the past few weeks we have been consulting with students and parents about perceptions of our school. Two parents were selected from each form group to form a parent focus group. They were selected as number 6 and 12 of their child's register. They were invited to attend small group sessions and to feedback what they felt was good, and what needed improving about school. Their feedback is at the bottom of this letter.

Students were also consulted on their perceptions of wellbeing and student voice, and some student groups were also asked about their perceptions of learning at school. Their findings have been shared in assemblies.

As a result of our consultations, we have made the following changes:

Parent-teacher consultations.

Home-school links through a student's form tutor means that there is a consistent person to speak with throughout your child's school career. However, we also appreciate the value parents place on meeting with subject teachers each year. We have prepared a new parent-teacher consultation timetable that will enable parents to meet with both subject teachers and tutors each year. This is being consulted on with staff and will then be published to all parents.

Communication protocol:

We are establishing a communication protocol to ensure that all parents receive timely responses to their emails or calls. The website contains all staff email addresses on <http://chepstowschool.net/about-us> and a 'who to contact' guide is being written. A regular letter will be sent by parent mail and placed on the website to ensure parents are kept informed of upcoming events and news. We have asked the original focus group members to be part of a parent council. This will be both a consultative body and a means to provide feedback to the school. We will extend membership of this once the terms of reference have been agreed. Mrs Crossland, our Business Manager will be leading this part of the school's work.

Behaviour policy:

The behaviour policy was recently reviewed by staff and students. As a result, we have streamlined the processes for sanctions and made our recognition protocol more prominent. Mrs Mellen has written to you about the changes to how we sanction inappropriate behaviour and recognise the positive behaviour of students.

Supply teachers:

We have agreed the following protocol if a teacher is absent for longer than one week.

- A class with a long term supply teacher will have at least 50% of their lessons taught by a member of school staff.
- The Curriculum Leader will ensure that the scheme of work is followed, and marking, assessment and feedback follows school policy.
- Progress of classes with a long term teacher absence will be monitored more frequently.

- Parents will be informed by letter of any changes made to their children's classes due to long term teacher absence.
- Parents will be invited to discuss concerns with the relevant CL, SLT link, or myself, and our details will be on the letter.

We have also reminded staff who are absent on a planned course or for up to a week to set cover work in line with the current scheme of work.

Homework:

We value the benefits of homework to support independent learning. It also helps to embed key subject skills. We are in the process of looking at how homework is set in each subject and how we can make sure that we communicate this with parents. I will update you about this before the end of term. We will monitor homework set in the interim to ensure that students have the opportunity to extend and enhance their learning.

Curriculum Review

In addition to the changes we made as a result of our consultations we have also recently reviewed our curriculum.

We believe our curriculum should provide the following:

- Provide **breadth** through a wide range of experiences and subjects
- Provide the **skills and knowledge** young people will need for the rest of their lives
- Be **challenging and motivating** for all young people, whatever their starting point
- Ensure that all young people are able to follow suitable **progression routes** that match their needs and aspirations at all key stages
- Focus on the **whole child**, and not be limited to academic subjects only
- Be **inclusive and personalised** so that the needs of all young people are met

There have been many changes to qualifications in Wales. This means that at GCSE students study a broader range of up to 9 compulsory subjects, larger than students have had to study before. In order to continue to allow all students to have the broadest possible choices at Key Stage 4 we have changed the length of key stage 4 to 3 years. This allows students to choose 4 GCSE or GCSE equivalent choices to study. The first year 8 options evenings and choices have been completed and parent feedback has been positive. At key stage 3, we have introduced more coding and digital learning in year 8 for all students. At key stage 5 we continue to offer a very broad curriculum of 29 different subjects. You will already be aware that our 6th form results place us in the top 5% of all post 16 providers in the UK.

Timetable rollover

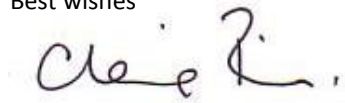
This year, in order to accommodate the changes to the curriculum, we have decided that we will not have curriculum roll over in June, instead, students will start their new timetable in September. This has not been an easy decision to make, as we appreciate the value for students of being able to get to know their new teachers and have continuity in their learning. We will be reviewing this with students, staff and parents in the new school year.

Budget

We are pleased to report that we have set a balanced budget this year. Many of you will know that in January 2012, when I was appointed, the school was projecting a £1.1million deficit by 2014. Despite this, and against a backdrop of reduced government funding, the governors and leadership team have worked hard to ensure the financial security for our school. We have achieved this and continued to raise standards, so that all students are able to make good progress.

Can I take this opportunity to thank you all for your feedback and opinions. If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at claireprice@chepstowschool.net

Best wishes



Claire Price
Headteacher

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Summary of the Parent Focus Groups

Held on 6 and 7 April 2017

Year 7

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very good transition into year 7. • Students settled in very well.
Areas for development	

Year 8

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students feel happy and safe • Pleased with some teaching and learning • Like the new uniform
Areas for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would prefer parents evening • Some confusing about levels and language using in reports • Communication between home and school could be improved • Would like more clubs and information about them on the website • Supply teachers causes disruption to lessons and learning

Year 9

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact home is very good from houses. • Very good open door policy to parents – staff should be praised for that. • Uniform is good/changes to the uniform are good – just need to make sure all students follow the rules. • The level of support for SEN students is excellent; the school is outstanding at understanding individual needs and how to support students. • We think this is an excellent school. • The school creates well rounded / balanced students. • Very good pastoral support – this is a caring school. • It is good that we have the same form tutor that moves through the school with the students. • We know who to contact if we need to speak to somebody. • There is lot of maths homework and is very systematic. • Very impressed with the options evening, the teachers were brilliant and inspiring.
Areas for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little homework given – some tasks are “complete research” and students need more direction. We need to prepare students for GCSEs and we will not do that if we do not give homework. • Not much work done with supply teachers.

Year 10

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication with form tutors and good communication with houses. • Good to have the same tutor all the way through school.
Areas for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to meet subject teachers in Year 10 and not just wait until Year 11. • Low level disruption in class and impact on learning. • Issues around students thinking they are in lower sets. • Supply teachers having a negative impact on learning.