

Parents' Forum: Saturday 10th June 2017

10.00 am - 12.00 pm

Mr Morrall (Executive Principal) thanked parent/carers for attending this morning's Parents' Forum in which he will share recent highlights in the schools development and invite parent/carers to share how they would wish to see the school develop over the next five years. Their thoughts will be fed into the Quality Plan that he is currently developing with the Leadership Group, along with comments and suggestions he will be gathering from Governors/Trustees and staff of the school. These will then be amalgamated to ensure that the next reiteration of the plan is truly inclusive and captures how all those connected with the school wish to see it develop and improve provision still further for the students who attend. Mr Morrall said that he thought no school should 'surf' on its popularity which could encourage complacency but should strive for further improvement.

Mr Morrall asked parent/carers to introduce themselves and to say what their children's experience of the school had been like so far. Parent/Carers unanimously confirmed that their children were happy at the school and were pleased that they had selected Chingford Foundation School (CFS). A student who was also amongst those present, who had recently transferred from another school in the Borough, said that he was also happy he had moved to 'one of the best schools in the Borough'.

Mr Morrall then showed a series of slides (attached) and asked parent/carers to interrupt at any point if they wished to make a contribution.

The slides showed that :

- ❖ **Achievement/attainment above the national average with a national average intake.** Mr Morrall explained that recent government changes to the examination system, with the gradual replacement of GCSE grades with numbered scale (9 - 1 (9 being the highest - 1 the lowest)) has created a situation of challenge and potential confusion. Maths and English examinations have moved over to the new 9 - 1 grading system, but all other subjects will retain the grade system for a further year and move to the numbered system in 2018. In response to a parent/carers enquiry - it was confirmed that CFS will require 5s in English and Maths to continue into its Sixth Form.
- ❖ **CFS is increasingly popular 2016/17 = 933 preferences for 240 places** and to respond to this local demand CFS has increased its intake for Year 7s from 240 to 257. It was noted that this is a response to current demands and may or may not continue in future years depending on the management of infrastructure/space etc..
- ❖ **Expansion projects are on-going** - window replacements are currently taking place and plans for an extra four classrooms are underway. It is envisaged that the extra classroom space will become available during the Autumn term. The Education Funding Agency has turned down one expansion bid. Further bids are planned.
- ❖ **The new cohort of teachers who joined CFS in September 2016 are settling in well** and report that they enjoy working at the school. They say that they are well supported though line management structures but they do feel that workload is an issue.

- ❖ **Students are generally working well in lessons and more homework is being completed and set.** The Learning Walks have evidenced this. Mr Morrall reminded parent/carers that homework was an issue that parent/carers had raised in previous Parents' Forum and as a direct result of this strategies such as Show My Homework and Learning Walks focusing on homework were introduced. A parent asked if teachers could be asked to upload homework at the time it is set not a day or later as this gives students less time to complete the assignment. In general parent/carers were very supportive of the amount, quantity and quality of homework being set. There was strong affirmation from the parent/carers for the school's decision to introduce 'Show My Homework'.
- ❖ **Is there a perceived issue of poor student behaviour out of school?** Mr Morrall explained that student behaviour in lessons and in school was generally good, however there has been an increase in the number of reported incidents of poor behaviour from CFS students outside school from neighbours, local shop keepers and representatives of TFL. Mr Morrall asked parent/carers if this was their perception? There was general agreement that this was the case and that the behaviour of girls was especially unacceptable. A minority were being loud and used bad language in public places. Mr Morrall explained some of the strategies that have been discussed by Senior Leaders and will be rolled out between now and the beginning of the Autumn term via assemblies, form time and to individual students who are causing the school's reputation to be tarnished.
- ❖ **Financial resources increasingly strained** - so in effect the school has to do more with less resources. This is a phenomenon that is widespread across all schools and the school's money has to be managed even more efficiently than ever before. The school has managed reductions in its budget of hundreds of thousands of pounds.
- ❖ **Extended school community engagement work is a strength** (e.g. sponsorship, primary sports, Arts Award etc.) . Mr Morrall shared with parent/carers how CFS's engagement with primary schools has increased year on year. We now support over 50+ schools via our Games Organiser (Mrs Gordon) and CFS student sports leaders from Years 10, 11 and 13. This link with primary schools is invaluable in helping the new Year 7 settle into CFS as many will know our staff and students from these links even before they join the school. Parent/carers asked that such activities should appear regularly on the school's website.
- ❖ **CFS Trustees/Governing Body/Leadership Group is revisiting its aims/objectives and future direction (taking account of the changing educational landscape) and will roll these out in the new school Quality Plan 2017 – 2020 under the following 6 Main Objectives**
 - Establish 'outstanding' rates of progress of students' attainment in all subjects, particularly the core
 - Develop the quality of teaching to an 'outstanding' level
 - Develop 'outstanding' student behaviour, attitude, response to learning and to life in the 21st century (including attendance and punctuality)
 - Develop outstanding leadership and management at all levels across the school (including financial management)
 - Develop the school to meet the specification of an outstanding 'Extended School'
 - Develop the learning environment and quality of provision to an outstanding level

Mr Morrall then opened up the discussion to parent/carers for any additional comments they wished to make

Teaching in Maths/Science

- ❖ Year 10 physics a concern ... only five weeks left this term ... what can be done? in the short and medium term before students break for the summer. Mr Morrall agreed to investigate this concern.

Communication

- ❖ Needs to improve ... website not up to date/Parent Forum notes missing?
- ❖ Students/parent/carers need to know what activities are on offer during school time and after school (Year 9 boy who is good at chess didn't know that there was a library lunchtime session - parent didn't know that there were basketball tournaments)
- ❖ Extra tuition sessions to be more widely advertised (e.g. Easter School, Year 11 interventions, Summer School).

Poor Behaviour outside School

- ❖ A number of parent/carers spoke about the poor behaviour of students outside school and Mr Morrall shared some of the strategies that are to be rolled out now and at the beginning of the Autumn term (e.g. use of body cams in 'hot spot' areas such as bus stops and Station Road so students involved in disturbances can be easily identified, greater deployment of the Safer Schools Police officer, 'dispersal orders' and students being informed via assemblies/form time/student newsletters of their ambassadorial role for CFS whilst in school uniform.

Homework

- ❖ Teachers to be requested to upload homework to Show My Homework as soon as it is set, not a day or two later, so students have the optimum time available to complete their assignments.

Extra Curricular Activities

- ❖ There was a feeling that less was available than used to be on offer and parent/carers suggested the school introducing incentive for staff. It was also suggested that clubs such as Cadets (Army, Police etc.) were reintroduced.

Safeguarding

- ❖ Publish measures taken to protect students to parent/carers so they become more aware of provision (e.g. e-safety computer programme, Drp Day sessions, assemblies on current topics such as Radicalisation etc., the school Safer Schools Police Officer link)

Catering

- ❖ Reinstate more regular contact with parent/carers regarding the balance of their children's catering accounts.

Merit Trips

- ❖ Parent/carers felt that they were 'fantastic' and a great incentive for students to behave well and be selected to attend.