

Parent Voice: How are we improving the life of the school?



Survey results *December 2018*

*The school leadership team is constantly trying to **improve the life of the school**. One way we do this is through **asking parents** what they think could be done better in surveys and focus groups. (We also ask students and staff).*

Each year we do this through:

- **The suggestion box by the school office:** checked regularly
- **One to one meetings or contacts:** as requested by parents eg by email.
- **The Parent council:** each month
- **Questionnaires:** at parents' evenings
- **The learning and teaching survey:** in June
- **Feedback following events:** for example the World of Work evenings

You said...	We did...
<p>The general picture is extremely positive (4.1 out of 5 stars). The vast majority of parents that we surveyed (245 parents in the survey, 160 at parents evenings, 22 at Parent council) were happy or very happy with what we're doing. The parent council also noted that the survey limited how parents could respond, and that it was not always clear what the language meant to parents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We will arrange for discussion of the parent survey at the next parent council meeting on Wednesday 9th January. ✓ The survey is the format used by the school inspectors (HMIe) when they ask parents for their views so we think it's better to stick to this. We will follow up on areas of concern through the Parent council and through parents' evening interviews. We'll clarify the meanings for the next survey.
<p>Key areas to work on may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretching and challenging students, especially in S1-3 • Keeping parents informed of progress. (S4s parents least happy) • Making sure that staff know children well. (S4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ One of our priorities this year was to ensure stretch, challenge and structure in lessons through using clear aims and models of success 'learning intentions and success criteria'. This work will continue. ✓ We acted on concerns about reporting progress by asking further during parents evenings. The results are below. ✓ Our own staff and student interviews suggest that staff do know students exceptionally well. However we are working to improve this by developing Learning logs which

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking for, and taking parents' views into account. 	<p>require a conversation between your child and their teacher at regular intervals, and by developing a monitoring system whereby key students who we want to support get a particular focus from departments. You may see this at home through mentoring discussions or learning logs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We do ask for parents views very regularly. We are not so good at communicating what we do about them. We are going to publish this 'You said... we did' to encourage that communication.
<p>Our parents evening interviews asked about reports and learning logs. Parents were generally positive with well over 80 % of parents saying they have enough information and that it's generally clear. There was a general feeling in comments towards having greater frequency and reduced complexity (ie it's better to have earlier reporting, with fewer comments).</p> <p>Learning logs have a mixed record with more seen in S1-3 and less understanding of them further up the school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reporting and communicating about your child's progress will now be a school priority next year (each year we aim to choose 3-5 key priorities). ✓ Learning logs are a way of getting students to reflect on their learning and plan their own next steps with the support of their teachers. Learning logs have been one of our priorities for the past few years. We rolled them out first with S1-3. In the senior phase students completed a 'Senior phase evaluation' which is another kind of learning logs. ✓ We intend to further develop learning logs into S4-6 and to investigate ways to include parents better in what learning conversations are being had in class.

Specific comments from parents	
What we do well:	Other areas for improvement: (with actions noted)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic results Curriculum varied Celebration of success Cluster working Community involvement Extra-curricular Supporting students with learning difficulties Communication Leadership of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic students coasting: we have a '6 Highers' programme for the most able. We are experimenting with a particular focus on homework in S5 and S6 in several faculties (letting parents know by text that day if students are falling behind). We are improving challenge with our focus on 'Learning intentions and success criteria (see above)'. Celebrating success more widely: we are planning to change the format of our celebrating success evenings as a result. Cover teachers: We are currently one of the very few schools in the borders to be fully staffed. We are working very hard to minimize the impact of staff sickness. Parents' evenings: we have made some changes to parents' evenings to ensure that all parents can have appointments (for example turning off the wizard that automatically books appointments as this meant that some parents didn't get any). We have looked at more radical options but there wasn't a great appetite from parents when they were interviewed. We are continuing to look at how best to run evenings.

<p>students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusivity • Leadership • Pastoral team • Polite young people • Happy young people • Equality focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports: this will be a top priority next year. • Communication: we aim to improve the use of learning logs to communicate pupil progress home. We need to explore other ways to improve communication about the school such as digital methods. We hope to develop these in the next year. • Sports – more variety: we already run a huge variety of sports. This is done mainly through volunteering staff free time. We don't currently have capacity to offer any more. • Food / Lunch queues: we pass food queries on to the canteen management. Lunch queues are being looked at by senior students. Most queues are gone after 15 minutes. • Mental health: This is a priority for us. We have run a programme for staff and parents called 'Growing Confidence' to help support your teenager. We have also run 'See Me' mental health training for all senior phase students. We have given positive relationship training by 'Humanutopia' to all senior phase students and are now developing a 'Cosy Café' with our Humanutopia Hero mentors for younger students to have a safe place. There is a programme of support delivered through Health and Wellbeing and RME. Pupil support continues to work hard with partner agencies to help our young people. • Careers: this has been a priority as part of our 'Developing the Young Workforce' programme led by a dedicated Principal Teacher, David Ferguson. His work has been recognized as amongst the best in Scotland. We continue to develop this. • Uniform: parents and staff agreed a uniform that gives students a common identity and prepares them for high standards in the world of work. We are proud of these high standards and we encourage and support all students to continue to live by them. • Engaging pedagogy: all staff are involved in a programme to develop their teaching based on areas of interest to them. These are called 'pedagogical plans'. We will aim to communicate some of the findings of these plans to parents and carers. • Management team: please contact us if we haven't covered an important issue. • Excursions: we have made some changes to school trips to include a wider range of students. Further changes will be a priority for next year with a particular focus on improving the purpose, timing and range of options that so that our whole community can benefit from learning and discovery outside of classrooms.
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