

St Olave's PA Form Reps Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday 29th April 2015 @ 7:45pm

Location: Main School Library

Attendees: Mr Evans (Deputy Head), Catherine Fleet, Sarah Ide, Lin Limbrey, Rinku Chibber, Narinder Gill, Seema Singh, Julie Costard, Francesca Iudicello, Nicky Davies, Pooja Tandon, Sarah Eldridge, Julie Vouillemin, James Ward, Siobhan Gee, Sue Watts, Ravi Savur, Gauri Mehra.

Apologies: Dinta Madlani, Jennifer Holland, Alison Spicer, Helen Patel, Sarah McAleer Kate Cameron

New 11-plus Entrance Exam Update

Parents were keen to know if any more had been decided about the new format 11-plus entrance exam including when it would take place and the format.

*Mr Evans confirmed that the consultation period had finished at the end of March 2015 and that the Governing Body has since approved the new format test for this coming September 2015; i.e. for boys starting secondary school in September 2016. The Stage 1 Entrance Test would be held on Friday September 18th and would involve sitting a one hour paper covering the four key areas of mathematics, English comprehension, verbal and non-verbal reasoning. Those boys who do well in this paper would be invited back to Stage 2 Entrance Test on Friday 13th November. Parents of those sitting the Stage 1 Entrance Test would be notified of the outcome before the CAF deadline in October so that they could make a more informed decision about whether their son would be considered for St. Olave's. Examples of the new tests can be found on the school website: **Admissions > Year 7 > Application Pack.***

End of year exams

Parents were concerned that exams were going on for the various year groups but that they didn't know when or what they involved.

Mr Evans said that the IPM Assessments typically test the boys' knowledge at the end of each module; however, most subjects also have a synoptic exam, covering the work learnt over the course of the year to reflect better what would happen in a real exam situation.

*A timetable detailing the exams for Years 7-9 inclusive can be found on the school website under: **Current Olavians > Examinations Office > Pre Exams > Downloads > KS3 Examinations timetable – Summer 2015.** Year 10 would be sitting all of their end of term exams in Activity Week 1 and Years 11, 12 and 13 would all have external exams going on during the summer term.*

Publicity of school clubs

Parents were keen to know what clubs were offered at the school and when each club ran, so that they could encourage their sons to get more involved.

Mr Evans pointed parents to the school website for details: [Current Olavians > Co-curriculum > Overview](#), although he confirmed that this only has last term's clubs on it at the moment. The new timetable should be available soon but is reliant on the organisers of those clubs to update their details, including some of the boys themselves. He agreed that it would be good for parents to know so that they could encourage their sons to take part.

Parents' evening and staff availability

Parents were concerned that they couldn't always get to see all of their child's teachers and that, in some cases, they only got to see those where there was a problem so felt that little positive feedback was given. One parent was also interested to know if there could be more than one parents' evening per year.

Mr Evans explained that, in most cases, parents could expect to see all of their son's/daughter's teachers unless that teacher taught more than one class. He did not want boys/girls getting discouraged by only seeing those with negative feedback and encouraged parents to contact the school directly if they wanted to discuss their child's performance in a certain subject. Teachers can be contacted via the school website: [Current Olavians > Curriculum > Subject > Overview – Contact](#). This should send a message direct to the Head of that Department but please ensure you get an acknowledgment email to confirm that the school has received your message. Mr Evans said that holding any more parents' evenings would not be possible due to existing commitments.

A Level Options

Parents from Year 10 were interested to know how the move to a two year A level would affect their sons' subject choices.

Mr Evans said that the school hoped to maintain the breadth of choice offered to its Sixth Form students. For example, students could start with four subjects in Year 12 and then nominate one of those four as an AS subject. This AS subject would then be sat that summer and the remaining A level subjects sat the following summer.

He did stress that nothing as yet had been set in stone about the upcoming changes (especially given the election) and that he would be writing to parents in the Autumn Term when there was more clarity to confirm the programme for Sept 2016.

Sports Kit Requirements

A Year 7 parent was keen to know what specialist equipment, if any, she should get her son if he had been chosen to represent the school at a sports fixture. She requested that the P.E. Department notify parents of any special requirements.

Mr Evans said that the normal P.E. kit was perfectly adequate along with personal mouth guard and protective box for cricket. He confirmed that any basic specialist equipment was available via the school but did suggest that cricket whites might be a good idea if the boy played regularly.

Project work and the use of the library

Parents wanted to know where the boys should go to complete joint project work as they understood that the boys were not allowed to do this in the Main Library if it involved any discussion. They also believed that the boys could not go to their Form Rooms.

Mr Evans said that, in these cases, the boys should go direct to the teacher who set the project and ask for permission to do it in their room. Form Rooms cannot be used at break time and the Main Library is a quiet area where silent study is encouraged.

Spanish Exchange

Following a recent Year 9 French exchange, parents were interested to know if any other exchanges were planned for the boys studying any of the other languages taught by the school.

Mr Evans confirmed that there would be some language-based trips in Year 10 but was unable to give exact details at present.

Rugby Tour Communications

Parents of boys going on the school rugby tour were concerned that there hadn't been much formal communication from the P.E. Department about the trip; i.e. there had been a handwritten request from the Department for payment where a note typed on school-headed paper would have been more reassuring.

Mr Evans agreed that it would be better if requests for payments etc. were typed in future and planned to mention this to the P.E. Department. He also said that parents who were concerned about paying the requested money in only two instalments could contact the Finance Department direct and arrange for the balance to be further spread out.

Dress up as a Book Character Day

Parents asked if the boys really did need to dress up as many boys of secondary school age were reluctant to do so anymore. They also suggested that if the main aim of the day was to raise money for charity then the school might get more by offering a home clothes day as the alternative to dressing up.

Mr Evans agreed that this was a good idea and was going to talk to his colleagues to see if it could be changed (this was subsequently done). He did however still fully support the idea of the boys getting dressed up as one of their favourite book characters and said that both sixth formers and teachers would be taking part in the event also.

The Form Rep System

It was asked if the current Form Rep system worked to which all agreed it did. The Chair did put forward a suggestion from a Year 13 parent that possibly the new Year 7s had their own meeting with the school in the first term as there were often questions from them that were not relevant to parents of boys higher up the school. Everyone thought that this was also a good idea and that there should be a 'job description' of what a Form Rep is so that people knew it was about encouraging a sense of community and keeping in touch.

Mr Evans was also amiable to this suggestion and was pleased that, through the Form Rep system, issues such as Kukri had been able to be resolved. He also reminded parents that, in conjunction with the meetings and the issues raised, he had been able to put together a guide which would be available to the new Year 7s this coming September.

Use of computers for homework

Some parents were concerned that their sons did most, if not all, of their homework on computers and wondered what the school felt about this.

Mr Evans firstly warned against the boys cutting and pasting text from the internet as this would be plagiarism. He also pointed out that all school work in school time was handwritten and that the boys still needed to be able to write as exams would also need to be handwritten.

Leave of Absence Requests

Parents wanted to know if most requests were approved and how much notice should be given should there be a request for leave.

Mr Evans was unable to comment on specific requests but did urge parents to fill out the request form and submit it as early as they could.

School Newsletter

There was a request for an even more detailed summary of points to be sent in the email with the weekly newsletter attachment.

Mr Evans pointed out that the summary wasn't designed to cover everything contained in the main body of the newsletter but just some key points. He advised parents to open the attachment and read the newsletter.

Thanks to the school

There were two requests from parents to thank the school. The first related to resolving the issue with sports kit and making it available via Graduates and the second was to do with an issue raised during the last meeting regarding the treatment of boys during games lessons. Parents were very appreciative that Mr Evans had dealt with their concerns.

AOB

The Chair had been asked to get two volunteers to learn how to make candy floss on the day of the Summer Fun Day. Julie Costard and Sarah Eldridge offered to do this if someone else was prepared to man the booze trolley.

Date of next meeting

TBA (but probably in October rather than September to give people a chance to settle back after the summer)