**MINUTES OF THE STUDENT VOICE MEETING**

**3rd February 2012**

**PRESENT:** Zak Hall, Laurie Stevens, Suzie Taylor, Antonia Pullen-Clarke, Christina Israel, Laura Hounsell, Flora Phillips, Harry Coward, Joshua Taylor, Tara Chittenden, Sophie Colley, Alastair Mair, Chris Elliott, Charlie Wilson, Nick Handley, Penelope Lloyd, Isabel Macartney-Parker, Laura Cannon, Jasmine Cottrell, Kyle Reynolds, Annabel Green, Hannah Doherty, Alex Wilson, Tom Easterbrook, Sam Ricketts, Joe Brindley, Ed Uden, Mr Foley, Mrs Chittenden, Mrs Bird.

1. **Apologies** – Jack Woodrow, Lucy Beer, Eloise Mitchell, Bryony Johnson-Newell.
2. **Minutes of the last meeting** – many items discussed last time are ogoing and will be discussed later in the meeting. With regard to black jumpers, Joe and Alex had been to see Mr Foley after the last meeting. He had said that he didn’t know enough to give his full opinion but thought that it might be possible. He agreed to take it to a meeting that he was having that evening. A student said that she was wearing a black jumper and some teachers had said it was OK but then someone had sent her to the Year Office. Mrs Chittenden clarified the position by saying that the Uniform Policy is still the same and that the grey jumpers are the correct ones to be worn. This may be changed in the future but, at present, black jumpers/cardigans are not allowed.
3. **Olympic Torch Relay** – Mrs Chittenden asked all the students who had visited other schools to give **feedback**. Some photos had still not been given to Mr Scott, so Mrs Chittenden urged students to do this as soon as possible. Students were asked to describe the various ways that the torch relay had been organised around the DASP schools they had visited – these included using an old London double-decker bus, a limousine, a tractor, making torches, forming the Olympic rings (with a helicopter taking photos from above!). Mrs Chittenden said that the feedback from all the schools has been fantastic and thanked students on their behalf. Mr Scott has footage to put on the website and this can be viewed on the DASP website. A **celebration event** would be held with a final presentation in the Theatre here at School showing the footage.

With regard to **Olympic Dreams** Rory talked about the World in Dorset Day where Year 9 students learn about different cultures with the Geography Department. Media Studies students would be making a film, and then the Doon School would also become involved. Update on **‘Get Set’** – we are guaranteed a minimum of six tickets for the Olympics, but might get more. Mrs Chittenden suggested that SV should think about how best we allocate these when we have got more information.

1. **Teaching and Learning** – Mrs Chittenden reported that the feedback forms had been given to teaching staff and, at a recent Staff Day, they had looked at the results. These had been compared with the Ofsted criteria and were very similar. A sheet showing feedback from departments/areas for development was circulated and, at the Staff Day on Friday 10th February, they would find out if the recommendations had been actioned yet. If they had not, they would spend some time looking at how they can address these areas. Two to three SV members would link to Departments to see how these are happening. It was agreed that this would have to be handled carefully and Mrs Chittenden agreed to speak to staff. Names of which students would be linked to departments were agreed. They are: MFL – Jaz & Kyle; Humanities – Annie, Chris & Tom; Design – Ed, Sam & Charlie; English – Flora & Laura; Maths – Jessie & Christine; Science – Zak & Alex; Drama/Dance – Hannah & Izzy; Music – Joe, Laurie & Alistair; PE – Ant, Tara, Laura & Sophie.
2. **THS Restructure** – Mr Foley said that his first term at THS had been great and he had spoken to lots of people around the School during break, lunch and at the beginning/end of the school day. Several points had been raised – dislike of Wednesdays, mobile ‘phone policy out of date, jumpers/cardigans, etc. He commented that he liked coming to Student Voice meetings because of the numbers but that some students felt it hard to have their say because of the large number of students in the School. Most students really like the School – sport, drama, music, etc, but would like more responsibility. Mr Foley felt that the School faced four big challenges:-
3. Money is getting much tighter in schools – there is less and less money coming in.
4. THS is incredibly successful but some students still don’t feel part of it. For 80% of students we do meet their needs but this does need looking at.
5. How we get better and better, in all areas not just exam results.
6. Size – lots of people want to come here. The School Office have constant ‘phone calls from parents wanting to get their children in here. We are full but large numbers mean we have lots of opportunities. The issue is that as we get bigger and bigger we still care for individuals. We want all the advantages of being big and the benefits of being small. Universities have this problem – they benefit from this effect of being big. They break down their students into ‘colleges’ which means a smaller community.

Mr Foley showed a slide explaining the proposed restructure of THS into four ‘colleges’. Students would stay in the same tutor groups but in each college there would be five Year 9, five Year 10 and five Year 11 tutor groups. Sometimes you would still do things with your year group, eg options. At present Year 9 enter the School en masse (475+) making it difficult for the year team to get to know all of the students. With the proposed new system there would be five tutor groups per college meaning that it would be easier to get to know them. It was planned to have a learning mentor linked to each college – this person would not be a teacher, but would be someone like Rachel Besien (Student Support Advisor). They would not have a teaching timetable and would be available throughout the day to pick up students that have problems. Certain subject areas would be attached to each college. In time most of the tutors in that college would come from one or two departments. With regard to students having more responsibility, Mr Foley hoped that Year 10 and 11 students would take responsibility for the Year 9s, eg Year 10 students helping Year 9s with choosing their options. They could help with running assemblies, CCF, DoE, etc, and could choose their own charity or cause, having non-uniform days or other events to raise funds. They could have their own college magazine/news-sheet, have quizzes, sports opportunities to compete against the other colleges. Mr Foley assured students that they would not have to change tutor group or timetable and that they would still see all their friends at breaktime/lunchtime but would also get to know some Years 10 and 11 better than now. It will take two to three years before it is complete and it is planned for start in September this year. He asked for feedback and questions.

* How would the Sixth Form be affected? **A.** Good question! In due course we could attach or place sixth formers to colleges. At present they could work to help tutors to work with young people. The Sixth Form would remain as it is at present but encourage them to get involved in the colleges.
* Tom asked whether it was planned to have a Head Boy and/or a Head Girl for the colleges? **A.** Mr Foley replied that he would like to see how students feel. Tara thought that it might result in someone being chosen on the grounds of popularity and Mr Foley said students would have to think about how they do it – whether it would be a vote or the head of college might decide.
* How would you define colleges? **A.** Iain Cornell is looking at how we group different subject areas together. Say English and Modern Foreign Languages might be grouped together. The Year Heads would become Pastoral Leaders. Who your tutor is at present will decide which college you go into. If you have a brother or sister, they would go into the same college.
* Chris worried whether it might damage the community we have now? **A.** Mr Foley said we would have to work hard to prevent this. Also consistency across a particular Year (say Year 9) across the colleges would be needed. There could be a Student Voice for each college which would then come together as one large body.
* Would the Year halves remain the same? **A.** Yes. Also there would be no change in your timetable.
* Ed asked if the proposed system was the same as a house system? **A.** It is a vertical system which gives the opportunity for competitive activities such as sport. Sports Day would take on a different culture altogether. Each college would have to be good otherwise no-one would want to go into a bad one. There would have to be a mix of abilities, sports, middle schools, etc – a good spread of people.

Mr Foley envisaged that Sixth Formers would come to him and ask if they could be attached to a particular college. The colleges would be set up first and then students could be linked when they wanted to be. The development of the colleges will take three years at least to see if we have the structure right. Over the years this will be developing and it was hoped that sixth formers would be integrated into the system.

Mrs Chittenden said that, as students obviously had lots of questions and would want to talk to their friends about it, another meeting would be arranged after half-term.

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