

Minutes of the meeting of the Parents' Consultative Group (PCG)

held at Scalby School

on Monday 23 November 2009

1. Welcome

Andy Robson, Vice Chairperson, explained to the meeting that he would be standing in for Graeme Casper, Chairman of the PCG, and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from;

Mr Graeme Casper

3. Presentation by Mr Chris Taylor, Head of Drama

Mr Taylor showed the meeting a video detailing school performances over the last few years. He said that the level of the school's productions was always very high and that they were highly regarded by the community. He told the meeting that taking part in these productions was a wonderful opportunity for pupils at the school to gain confidence, develop friendships and social opportunities and engage in other technical activities such as lighting and back-stage and prop management. Lily Robinson described to the meeting how she felt appearing in the school's productions had contributed to her educational development.

The next school performance to take place at the Steven Joseph theatre in the new year would be "Our House" based on the music of Madness. In recent years the school had produced "We will Rock You", "Honk" and "Rent". These had all generated good publicity for the school and contributed to developing good community relations. "Our House" would be sponsored by Seabird Explorations Ltd and Nathan Jenkins told the meeting about his involvement in securing this sponsorship.

Businesses could also pay for advertising in the production programme and Mr Taylor gave details of costs.

Mr Taylor stated that in order to keep producing school musicals of such a high standard and showcase them at the Steven Joseph Theatre, more funds would have to be raised and members of the meeting were encouraged to come forward if they had any ideas or knew of anyone who may be interested in sponsoring such a venture. They were asked to contact Mr Morgan or Mr Penn, the Business Manager and letters giving further details were made available at the end of the meeting.

Mr Robson told the meeting that the issue of possible sponsors for the school productions had been discussed at the last Steering Group meeting.

4. Ofsted Inspection and School Improvement Plan

Mr Tarn said that although he had received verbal feedback from the recent Ofsted inspection he had not as yet received a written report. He said that once this had been received the school is allowed 24 hours in which to comment and then the report is published.

Mr Tarn told the meeting that although the inspection said that the school's progress on its two year improvement trajectory was generally good, the inspectors had highlighted that one area still needing further work was in relation to the school's area of specialism – Technology. Mr Tarn said that he was in the process of drawing up a plan of action to redress this situation;

- A reflecting telescope had been donated by Scarborough Astronomy Society. It was proposed that the school should build its own telescope. This would cover all specialist subject areas such as Maths, Science and Technology and would help the pupils to understand the link between Science and Technology. Another proposal was that the school should attempt to build and launch its own rocket. He asked anyone who knew of an appropriately large and isolated area of land that could be used for a rocket launch to contact him. He said that this could be developed into a competition for the four continents into which the school is divided. Each continent could raise its own funds and the outcome could be judged on the technical sophistication and aesthetic design of the rocket. The challenge could be, for example, to launch an egg from the ground and bring it back down safely.
- Mr Tarn said that the Food Technology facilities of Scalby School were second to none. Gill Gardiner, the Head of Technology, has £380k to spend on the improvement of the Food Technology rooms. He proposed to instigate a "Master-Chef" competition to engage the children with Food Technology. Sainsbury's had offered to sponsor this competition and provide all the food. Members of the local community could help with tasting and judging.

All the above competitions/challenges would take place in after-school clubs, not during school time.

- Ofsted had also pointed out that the school needed to improve its links with the local community. Initiatives such as the Master-Chef competition detailed above would be one way to involve the community with the school.
- Mr Tarn also proposed organising adult education classes to improve ICT and to learn about the stripping down and rebuilding of computers. Other classes could include use of the Internet and how to ensure child safety and security when using computers and the Internet.
- Mr Tarn said that the school had also received funding from the SSAP (the Specialist School's Achievement Programme) and had bought a high standard video camera. With this the school intended to make several masterclass revision films, each lasting no more than 15 minutes, which would be put onto the VLE.

- The meeting was informed that the East Coast Tigers Cheerleaders had offered to provide a free session in school and, if enough pupils were subsequently interested, to organise paid classes after school.

Mr Tarn informed the meeting that the school had been approached by the Cambridge Centre (a drug and alcohol services centre) for permission to conduct research amongst the schools' pupils. They were requesting that all pupils filled in an anonymous questionnaire relating to drug and alcohol use in Scarborough. This was simply an information gathering exercise – details would not be published. Completion of questionnaires would be carried out in vertical mentor groups. Mr Tarn was of the opinion that this would be a positive action. After discussion, during which some parents expressed concerns that some children were too young to be questioned about alcohol and drugs, it was agreed that the questionnaire would be distributed to Years 9, 10 and 11 only.

5. Recruitment of new Principal.

Mr Tarn said that the timescale for the recruitment of a new Head Teacher had been revised as follows:

16 November 2009	Advert for post agreed
8 January 2010	Post advertised
20 January 2010	Closing date for applications
22 January 2010	Long list agreed

w/c 25 Jan 2010 and 1 Feb 2010 visits to long listed applicants in own schools carried out

8 February 2010	Short listing meeting prior to IEB meeting
23/24 February 2010	Interviews

Since the deadline for resignations for Head Teachers wishing to stay at their present school until the end of the summer term is the end of April, the above timetable would allow time for another recruitment cycle to be undertaken should the need arise.

The IEB also had a back-up plan in case no suitable new Head Teacher was forthcoming. Mr Andy Bayston, a Head Teacher at one of the Outwood Grange family of schools would work at Scalby School for one day per week during the summer term. If no one had been appointed by September Mr Bayston would continue to work with and support the present permanent team at Scalby. He – or one of the team - would support the acting Head Teacher until a permanent Head Teacher had been appointed.

Mr Tarn confirmed that his own contract expired on 31 August 2010. He also confirmed that the position of new Head Teacher would be open to any internal staff who felt that they had the necessary experience.

6. Frequency of meetings

Mr Robson told the meeting that following discussion at the last Steering Group meeting it was proposed to limit the PCG meetings in future to one per term. The Steering Group would continue to meet twice per term. The meeting agreed to this. Mr Robson reminded those present that any items that they would like discussed or issues of concern should be emailed to the PCG chairman Mr Graeme Casper at the email address detailed on the Scalby School website.

7. Any other business

A question was asked about the financial position of the school. Mr Tarn said that the school was well on the way to financial recovery and that by the end of March 2010 the budget should be balanced. Since the major part of a school's budget was spent on staffing, the changes made by the management team to the timetable/staffing arrangements had resulted in a substantial saving. The school now had a 0.79 contact ratio (79% of teachers teaching at any one point during a 7 day period.) Management of costs would be a crucial part of the training of any newly appointed Head Teacher. However the main guarantee of financial stability was the appointment of a new strong governing body who would hold the Head Teacher to account. The present IEB had had financial training from the Outwood Grange team and they would provide training for the new governing body.

In answer to a further question Mr Tarn confirmed that the school had 1 member of staff presently on maternity leave, 1 absent with swine flu and 2 on long term sickness absence.

There being no other business, Mr Robson closed the meeting.