

# Parent Advisory Council (PAC)

**Thursday 13 June 2024**

**7.00pm – 8.30pm**

Chair: Mrs McAuley-Eccles  
Principal: Dr C Cusick  
Vice Principal: Mr Corcoran

Agenda:

- 1) Behaviour policy
- 2) Ofsted judgement and next steps
- 3) Student wellbeing and mental health support.

Members introduced themselves.

Dr Cusick first addressed item 2) Ofsted judgement and next steps.

Ofsted report:

Dr Cusick said that whilst it was heartening to get a 'good' Ofsted outcome, it wasn't a resounding report for the school. She explained that preparations for Ofsted are immense; and that 10-12 key Longsands staff were taken out for inspection conversations. Therefore, the Academy was grateful to the Trust for their essential support to continue to run the school with 1700 students during the inspection, which Ofsted were aware of.

She then spoke about the three areas for improvement (AFIs) from the report:

**Communication:** Dr Cusick acknowledged the disapproval from parent voice and gave her commitment to addressing clear and effective communications, and continuing to answer the 'whys'.

**Impact of Behaviour:** This focus was on a small but significant group of students who are not getting it right.

Q: What measure did they use to make that judgement?

A: Dr Cusick advised it was triangulated – Inspectors went to reset, spoke to students, staff, and walked around site. Very few incidents of poor behaviour were seen by Inspectors, but students spoke of some students who keep getting it wrong. Inspectors saw data on exclusions and reset; showing a small number of students in a cycle (with a high number of exclusions), and observed the cycle was not being broken.

Q: Are most in higher year groups; therefore not used to the new policy?

A: Mr Corcoran confirmed Years 7 and 8 exclusions are consistently lower; with Dr Cusick explaining that comparisons were made against last year's Years 7 and 8 cohort, which showed 7s and 8s coming through are improved on other year groups. It was therefore fair to say that it is mainly Years 9, 10 and 11. Ofsted do not take account of older years groups being in lockdown during primary years.

Q: How many are special needs?

A: Dr Cusick confirmed there is a decline for SEN students, with Mr Corcoran adding that there is a significant reduction of suspensions for EHCP students – and that support is improving for those students.

Dr Cusick reassured the PAC that SEN, E, K, M data is tracked, including re-set, removals, detentions, and suspensions. She advised that fortnightly BASI meetings take place with key staff, including the SENDCo – now one hour per year group, increased from the previous one whole-school 25minute meetings. Students are supported behaviourally, educationally, and to be happy in school.

Mrs McAuley Eccles proposed a separate meeting about SEND.

Q: Regarding staff training, what support is in place for teachers to manage lower-level poor classroom behaviour?

A: Dr Cusick explained training systems around strategies to use: warm/strict approach, clear expectations, from a position of care, with micro scripts to support staff. Longsands has highly-experienced staff, and some new to their career, so it's a universal offer of training.

Dr Cusick acknowledged that unfortunately not all teachers follow the behaviour policy. Some are leaving, some don't agree but follow it. Equally, new teachers joining in September will be supported to ensure behaviour is purposeful. Dr Cusick also recognised that former staff have spoken to the media, and that there is poor media in the community.

A discussion took place regarding the need for consistency implementing the behaviour policy, and communicating to parents/carers, including a balance of celebrations as well. Dr Cusick agreed it is not the severity of the sanction, but the certainty of the sanction/consequence. She agreed the valid point made about a good balance in communications and assured PAC that the Academy is working to move this forward. Mr Corcoran added that students need to know not to cross the boundary and that they are in a safe place.

**Curriculum areas:** Dr Cusick explained the Ofsted deep dive looked for consistency in all lessons. She acknowledged that unfortunately students were not as secure in a couple of subject areas as they were in others, due to either new leaders not being as embedded, or some staff being less committed. Comment was made that new teachers are being well received by students, that Year 9 classes are more engaging, and that praise-type communications have improved – emails home, praise cards home.

Dr Cusick confirmed that Ofsted recognised the work done around strategies and engagement in their report.

Mr Corcoran spoke about work being undertaken by the pastoral team to re-engage struggling Year 9, 10 and 11 students, and to encourage pride for Longsands, explaining that the Student Voice meet weekly to look at cultivating student voice.

EBacc was then raised for students not engaged. Dr Cusick affirmed the importance of learning a language and the need for a balanced curriculum. She advised that there will be Spanish teachers from Year 7 in September, and also Year 9 students going into Year 10. She shared the upset that Latin may not run if a suitable recruitment is not made.

It was agreed that the curriculum could be added for future discussion.

### **Academy Improvement Plan (AIP)**

PAC members agreed to read the draft and feed back at the next meeting, with Dr Cusick requesting the Plan not be photographed or added to social media.

PAC to consider: consistency; behaviour and attitudes; interventions; attendance; punctuality; It Stops Now; trips and visits for the wider curriculum. Members were advised of the mental health strategy being designed to teach resilience, confidence and robustness.

The lack of sixth Form trips was raised, and that students are voting with their feet, which Dr Cusick acknowledged. She advised that previously the AIP had a separate strand for sixth form but that opportunities and enrichment had been discussed at a visioning session today,

Staff development and training was also discussed, with Dr Cusick confirming that instructional coaching opportunities are available for development, including for support staff.

It was agreed that mental health would be discussed at another meeting, to allow time to discuss the Behaviour Policy, and Dr Cusick shared copies of the Policy.

Members discussed the policy in five groups and considered key areas to improve. Points raised:

- Character cards: if other issues are not addressed then self-esteem may be impacted.

Dr Cusick assured PAC that questions are asked when patterns are recognised. Mr Corcoran also advised personal development, diversity, as well as behaviour, is taught in PHSE. He took on board reference to the term 'citizenship' being considered, rather than 'behaviour'.

- The document was considered lengthy.

Dr Cusick advised PAC that a 'light' policy is being considered .

- Rewards have increased and improved, like the badges. Perhaps they should be harder to gain; more celebrations with parents; and consideration to reinstating Prefects.

Dr Cusick agreed with more social media positivity, although felt given current loud rhetoric it may have been insensitive to push the Ofsted outcome.

- Sanctions, element of understanding individual needs and family circumstances. Lenience with individual circumstances, including late gate.

Dr Cusick reassured members that all factors are considered. There are clear expectations about arriving though - on day one 250 students arrived late; on day 2 15 arrived late. She went on to say that Longsands is a universal offer and unfortunately cannot offer a bespoke education.

### **Student wellbeing and mental health support**

Moved to next meeting.

Mrs McAuley-Eccles sought agreement for the next meeting date and 11 July was confirmed.

Proposed agenda:

- Improvement priorities
- Student wellbeing and mental health
- Sixth Form vision
- SEND (general)

**Any other business:**

MS form to be sent out to PAC members to gauge the effectiveness of the sessions.

Meeting closed at 8.40pm