



Date: Wednesday 6th December 2023 | 16:45 – 18:00 (Onsite)

Attendees:

F Corcoran (Principal)	J Arda (Assistant Principal)
Aidan Keightley (Hannah Y9)	Marcin Jagodzinski (Maia Y8 & Roger Y10)
Giulia Mastroianni (Gaia Y7)	Samantha James (Elisabeth Y7)
Simona Bartocci (Leila Y9)	Erika Collins (Shae Y7 & Alana Y9)
Dorota Barczak (Nicole Y9)	Macrui Dostourian-Moppett (Andrea Y9 & Nico Y10)
Benedicte Gercke (Lilly Y8)	Venetia Tyler (D'Mari Y9)
Alexander Asewando (Rahelyn Y11)	

Apologies: Rachael Souter (George Y7), Maebh Glemser (Caspar Y12)

Absent: Hannutu Maikano (Aliannah Y8), Dean Jacobs (Jeremiah Y7), Kerry-Ann Long (Kalum Y7), Tsega Fessehaye (Abiel Y7), Vincentia Odirichukwu (Chidinma Y9), Funka Jenfa (David Y13)

Introduction

- This forum involves collecting a sample of views on college priorities and topics. The college makes decisions whether points arising from the Parent Focus Group are in the best of interests of the whole parent body.
- Any individual concerns for children should be referred to the relevant Leader of Learning

1. Minutes and matters arising

- Ms Corcoran wrote to parents about St Michael's joining St Benedict's multi-academy trust. Parents are to be a working party to provide feedback.
- A parent asked if it was possible for match funding as an association as a next step with connections from big firms for matched funding. Mr Arda said that the group has met once and the priority was to first understand its purpose and that the financial aspects are a significant commitment that will take time to resolve for the group to develop into foundation and to avail of Gift Aid or other contributions.
- The Friends of St Michael's are keen to develop future events with the Christmas Concert as the first event on 18th December. The financial arrangements were agreed to create a bank account separate from the college with relevant signatories. The Friends of St Michael's would then be asked to make donations towards school projects.

2. Updates from the Principal (inc. Multi-Academy Trust developments)

- Ms Corcoran shared St Michael's excellent outcomes with parents. Results are well above average. The college is in the Top 4% for EBacc entry (English, Maths, Science, History/Geography and a language), Top 5% for progress and Top 6% for attainment.
- Given the college is in the top quintile for deprivation all students achieve outcomes that are well above average.
- Our A' level results are significantly above average. Highest ever sixth form on roll at 110 students, which has grown.
- Attendance in 2022-23 was 95.4% which was well above national average.
- The college Fully staffed with all subject specialists, minimal staff cover and approximately 1000 visitors on main Open Day and 500 visitors for sixth form open evening.
- Ms Corcoran explained the challenges of falling rolls in primary schools, external agencies and services and running as an individual academy in a post-pandemic world.
- The college has moved forward with work to be part of the St Benedict's multi academy trust with Bonus Pastor, Our Lady and St Philip Neri, St Anthony's and St Michael's.



- There is a place for Catholic education in the coming years as a flagship example.
- Outcomes from a consultation was released to parents last week. Legal processes and information sharing between schools are to take place.
- While St Michael's is joining the trust, the student experience and Salesian ethos remains the same.
- In terms of economies of scale there are clear financial benefits to the college. The planning of the multi academy trust uses learning from other implementations of other trusts. There is a network of staff, for example, sharing information between finance and special educational needs (SEN) expertise.
- St Michael's continues to work in partnership with other schools.
- Ms Corcoran recommended parents to read the consultation.
- Question about timescale for the Trust. Ms Corcoran responded that the financial year determines this. In schools it runs from September to September. April is the earliest possible time that the Trust could be formed, but there are still contractual obligations to be met. Another secondary school may come on board in future and could be geographically wider. Other schools are showing an interest, but growth is being managed. Question about a CEO being appointed. Jonathan Ronan is fulfilling this capacity for the moment while Ms Corcoran is concentrating on inspection preparation for St Michael's. A Chief Financial Officer is being appointed.
- No money has been spent so far. Capacity has been gained from internal expertise within the founding school staffing. £15,000 is a loan to the Trust to help legal fees.
- Question about how big the school can grow. Schools receive a certain grant to cover the legal work.
- St Michael's has 961 students and Bonus Pastor has similar.
- Quotes for catering and utilities outweigh that of individual schools.

3. Parent communications at St Michael's

- Parents were asked to consider three key forms of communication used by St Michael's: the website, EduLink (parent app) and the newsletter.
- Website
 - Variation between parents who found it difficult to read and search for items. Others found what they generally needed.
 - Outdated and not great on a PC, iPad, difficult to find out information such as student fixtures.
 - Would benefit from calendars and links to events.
- EduLink
 - Highly regarded to see achievement, food, money, behaviour points, push emails.
 - Great for accessing information about progress, lunch, reminders.
 - Could benefit from effective headlines/subject lines for parents to sift through relevant messages. E.g. Permission letters.
 - Notifications about achievement and behaviour points are welcome. Parents already receive messages when their child may have two behaviour points to indicate a detention.
 - "I rely on it." Detentions notification via behaviour points helpful. Could there be more context in terms of information? It was explained that a balance was needed between the speed of delivery of the notifications and how much information could be shared. Additionally, certain notifications can produce an additional cost for the college.
 - ParentPay – there were different experiences upon finding the leftover balance for lunch money. One parent did not know about finding the balance on EduLink, while another did.
 - EduLink is used all the time. There are too many messages, but communication is good.
 - Query about SchoolCloud which is separate from EduLink. The college has used SchoolCloud because the system has more flexibility than the current EduLink offering.



- Newsletter – The Link
 - Quite complex and too much text.
 - Could it link to social media? Use intriguing photos and links for further information.
 - Like that children write the articles – having greater involvement?
 - There needs to be more pictures and less writing.
 - Question about the frequency of the newsletter and updates on Instagram and X. Social media needs to link and requires careful management due to public responses which can be potentially adverse.
- **Action:** Mr Arda to review the website for improvements.
- Other points
 - Homework on Google Classroom has been reportedly set on the night before a hand-in for students. The college position is that sufficient time should be given. No homework timetable is used because lessons do not always align with the days it could be set.
 - Reports – finding out about them as some parents knew when they were released, others did not. Seeing red in relation to progress, parents are keen to know what has happened and how far students are from their target grade. A key that explains the autumn term, spring term and summer term would be helpful.
 - The assessment calendar on the college website and will be shared with parents along with other changes.
- Parents praised the college for communication. They shared their experiences and said that St Michael's provides extensive contact. For example, a parent friend with a child at another school said, "I don't get half [as much] of the communication."
- In 2019, the Parent Focus Group in 2019 looked at the development of the college website. Systems and technology have changed and it is apparent that the needs of visitors has too.
- **Action:** Mr Arda to review the college website information by publicising key dates for reports, parent evening events, and college events.
- **Action:** Mr Arda to arrange for EduLink message to parents about upcoming events and dates.

4. Friends of St Michael's

- Mr Arda stated that the next key community event is the Christmas Concert on Monday 18th December 2023.
- A raffle was suggested. However, the previous experience in the summer Parent Showcase suggests that more time is needed to market the sale of tickets to maximise fundraising.
- Given time constraints, the initial idea is to keep the first parent group event as simple as possible by selling few items such as mince pies, hot chocolate and coffee.
- A query arose about upcoming dates for college events. A raffle could lead up to forthcoming events in 2024 such as an International Day in February or Easter Community Tea in April.
- Another popular method of fundraising is non-uniform days. Students pay £1 to participate and there will be a Christmas Jumper event on the final day of term.
- **Action:** Mr Arda to collate dates for upcoming events to share with parents via the website.
- A virtual meeting was proposed to discuss the planning of the Christmas Concert.
- **Action:** Mr Arda to invite parents to a Zoom meeting on Monday 11th December.
- **Action:** The Friends of St Michael's will meet to publicise decide upon information to share about the college from the perspectives of parents.

Minutes to be sent via EduLink