



Friends of Warden Park: Headteacher Forum

Monday 14 May 2018

Since joining Warden Park, Mr Kenrick was asked what 3 things had impressed him the most and 3 things he would want to change.

Mr Kenrick’s response:

Good things:

- Students - they are compliant, good, polite children who enjoy being here and love their school
- Staff - they are very supportive and professional. Some staff have been at the school a long time and are the backbone of the school
- Willingness in the school to accept that we are not yet the finished article and there is scope for improvement

Challenges:

- People - to become truly excellent, people need to change practices and habits, which can be daunting
- Developing greater levels of independence in our students
- Finances - there is never enough money

If given £50,000 what would your priorities be?

Mr Kenrick’s response:

- £50,000 would not go far, but could spend it on:
 - One teacher, including on-costs
 - Staff training
 - Building something that would make a difference for a team of people or have something fun that would make an impact
 - Refurbish the Science Department
 - Give some to the students

Would the school consider sixth form provision again?

Mr Kenrick’s response:

- The Trust would love to be part of the solution and it was still on the agenda.

What have we done to make our children too compliant and not hungry?

Mr Kenrick's response:

- Parents' had not necessarily done anything wrong
- Teaching processes had an impact. Teaching needed to be structured in such a way so that the responsibility was removed from the teacher, allowing the child to learn more independently. Exam results were important but students needed to be taught to plan their time effectively, to prepare them for a university education with perhaps only 9 hours of taught education a week.

General comments from parents:

- One parent commented on her son who had left Warden Park and was studying A Levels. He has struggled because he has gone from an environment where he was fed information, to one where he had to find the information out for himself
- One parent felt that students were being taught how to pass exams, not to be resourceful
- One parent felt that conversations needed to be had with children before option choices were made as some later had regrets. Also, it needed to be made clear how option choices could impact on courses available at A Level
- It would be interesting to ask Year 9s if their option choices would have been different, a year on....

Go for Schools

Parents' comments

- Some teachers embraced it but some were not assessing homework
- Some tasks were shown as incomplete when the child had completed the work
- Parents would like to know what their children needed to work on when below target
- Discussed the fact that children are in charge of their learning and to be encouraged to ask for help when they needed it.

Mr Kenrick's response:

- It was a good platform for staff to share information, be more open and transparent with live key assessments but this could be workload heavy;
- Whilst feeding back to parents is good, it is less important than communicating with the child.

iPads - Do you have recommendations for using iPads for studying and exam preparation, without becoming distracted?

One parent's response:-

- One parent found that when her child did Year 10 mocks they were distracted, but by Year 11, they knuckled down.

Mr Kenrick's response:-

- The challenge was to produce students who could self-regulate.

Another parent asked if it was possible to ascertain how much time was spent on apps. Mr Kenrick promised to look into it and this is what he found out:**Students playing games on iPads:**

The current configuration of the iPads means that students have access to download games through the app store. This freedom is useful in allowing students to download apps under instruction from teachers, or in relation to other aspects of their work e.g. revision timetable planner. The school does periodically block individual games but does not have the facility to block all games. We also do not have the means to identify how much time an individual student is spending on particular apps e.g. a game.

Where a parent is concerned about their child's use of the iPad in any way, Digital Services are available to help. For example, by installing a block on downloading apps that would require parental override in order for their child to access apps. Please contact Digital Services if you have any concerns or feel that this might be useful.

A chat room 'Grouvi' was identified as a possible problem. We will investigate this further with a view to blocking it if it appears to be troublesome.

The school is exploring ways in which improvements in the technology may provide more control over use of the iPad that might alleviate some of the concerns raised.

Too many tests - one parent felt that there were too many tests and certain kinds of test made her dyspraxic child extremely anxious**Mr Kenrick's response:**

- The tests were not designed to be impossible but rather to gauge how well the students were learning. He appreciated that this had been brought to the teachers' attention but it was not something that could be dealt with easily.

School closure - was it possible to send texts instead of e-mails? After the meeting, Mr Kenrick found out the following:

Use of texts in addition to emails to communicate with parents/carers regarding events such as a sudden school closure:

There is a cost to this which is why we don't currently use texts.

How could we encourage a larger numbers of parents to attend Meet the Headteacher Forums?

- More numbers may be attracted if there was a particular theme, or 20 minutes spent on a particular theme with time afterwards for other questions.

Selecting students for fixtures:

One parent was concerned that her child attends an after school sports club every week and towards the end of term there were try-outs for a competition. On the day, students turned up who had never before attended the club, and were chosen for the competition to represent the school, and not those that had loyally attended all term. There was an understanding that the school wanted to field the best athletes, but this seemed unfair to those who were loyal to the club. Is there provision to perhaps run 2 teams? Many children would love to represent the school, but are not the top performers.

Since the meeting, Mr Kenrick has stated that this issue is being followed up with the PE department. If concerns continue do please get back in touch with the school.

STEM Club

Discussed a potential STEM club. One had taken place this year and would give more choice. Mr Kenrick was keen to engage students in pursuits that would equip them with skills for Key Stage 4 e.g. business ventures, charity work etc.

Conclusion

Mr Kenrick ended the Forum by thanking everyone for attending.

He encouraged parents to give him feedback, both positive and negative as it was good to know what was being done well. He also asked parents to pass any ideas for future Headteacher Forums to the Friends of Warden Park.