

Parent/Carer Curriculum Workshop

Thursday 30th March 2023

6.00pm – 7.00pm via TEAMS

SLT in attendance:

Mike Loveridge – Director of Learning
Terri Chard – Head of Learning
Siobhan Cheadle Head of Learning
Beth Jones – Head of Learning
Sophie Covington – Pupil Services Manager

MLo shared curriculum presentation with all attendees and then opened the floor to questions.

1. How do you manage the transition when a pupil is learning at pre formal in some areas and formal in other areas?

The majority of our learners have very spikey profiles that sit across all three of the curriculum areas. The medium terms plans are significant and crucial as a starting point and the teacher adapts their teaching methods and learning in class depending on each individual student needs. Teachers are given freedom to know and understand the needs of their pupils the best and develop and deliver content differently and adapt for each pupil. The TA's in the class are also very skilled and receive curriculum training and deliver learning in smaller groups.

2. If as a parent we feel that the learning isn't being adapted and there is clear deterioration in the child's education, what are the next steps?

We are always monitoring the development of the pupil and liaising with teachers to identify any pupils that may not be in the right class. If there is a better fit for that pupil, is there the opportunity to move them? Learning can look so different for our pupils, for some it can be found from books and others activities outside the classroom and for others it will look different still. We have to gauge what suits each of our pupils and try to group them accordingly. As the school grows we hope to have more flexibility for pupil movement.

3. With a child that has only recently started in early years it is difficult to see what the future holds for him. Can you talk more about Life skills and how this is incorporated into the curriculum?

A great deal of our curriculum is linked to learning life skills and again this can look different for each of our pupils. DT has been introduced to our primary curriculum and this is developed within our secondary curriculum. We have standalone Life Skills lessons and these build during the school lifetime as the pupils confidence grows. Cooking and Nutrition forms an important part of our curriculum as does PSHE/RSE, healthy eating and PE. We are always looking at preparing our pupils for adulthood

and their next steps beyond Silverwood; we focus on developing their independence recognising what this may look like specifically, for each pupil.

4. Healthy eating in schools is very important to me, what is the vision with regards to school dinners as the majority of the food is disliked by my child?

Our aspiration is to discontinue using Eynon Caterers, which is our caterer at our Chippenham and Trowbridge campus, when this is possible, as they do not meet the needs of our pupils. Our vision is to have a bespoke (within reason) in-house catering service which will offer more flexibility.

5. Phonics, at what age do you stop teaching phonics daily?

All pre-formal and semi-formal and primary aged pupils are taught phonics every day. In our secondary Formal pathway pupils will have phonics three times a week through delivery via their English lessons. We use Twinkl phonics which we extend with systems beyond Twinkl such as Talk For Writing as well as specific work on spelling, punctuation and grammar..

6. Will there ever be an opportunity for parents to contribute towards the curriculum?

Yes, unfortunately due to time constraints and the merge of the three schools we haven't been able to include parent influences, but we hope to change this moving forward and invite parents to contribute.

7. PSHE, sex education and relationships, how do you teach this at the right level for pre-formal and semi-formal?

We work closely and take advice from ASD Society, Down Syndrome Society and PSHE Society and we carry out in depth training for all of our staff to ensure we adapt the curriculum accordingly for different learners.

8. Do you have any residential trips?

Yes, we currently have a Year 8 residential trip to Pencelli and our Duke of Edinburgh learners complete an expedition which is an overnight camp. We recognise that we need to ensure that the residential offer is fair and equitable for all.