



Thorpe St Andrew School

Visit our Website: www.thorpe-st-andrewhigh.co.uk

Newsletter

Issue No 251

May 2005

Parent Briefing Letter No2

The Student Voice

One of the key nine 'gateways' (DFeS language!) to raise standards through following an agenda of Personalised Learning for All is that of the Student Voice. By listening to what students have to say about their learning we can aim to improve the quality of our teaching and thus improve students' learning.

So, what does the student voice look like at Thorpe St Andrew? The School Council is a major part of listening to the student view. Form Councils feed the House and Sixth Form Councils and these in turn report to the School Senate. In addition to students, the Senate includes support staff, teachers, The Principal, parents and Governors. By including these groups, the views of students are shared directly with all groups within school. The Senate and the Sixth Form Council each have a budget provided by the school in order that they can make positive decisions about facilities within the school. Mr Fish oversees the School Council structure and we are starting to use members of the sixth form to support House Council meetings.

As Principal, I also try to work with council members and other students undertaking what I call 'Learning Walks'. During these, I am taken by a group of two or three students around an area of the school, frequently accompanied by the school's Director of Finance. Students are free to point out what life at school is like in that area and we can discuss anything raised by the group. Key changes to the school have come about as a result of these walks.

The views of students are also gathered in two other ways. In form groups, a regular representative sample of students are given the opportunity to complete a questionnaire about general issues about school. Secondly, this year, as part of the annual departmental review undertaken by senior staff, we now include a subject specific questionnaire asking student opinions about the teaching and their learning in the subject.

Whilst talking about questionnaires, the Parental Questionnaire issued at every parents evening is analysed and shared with senior staff and Governors. We also, through Mrs Sherwin - Parent Liaison Officer, try to contact any parent who identifies a concern.

The Student Voice is also a part of our process for gathering information on candidates when we are appointing teachers to the school. In addition, we set up specific student task groups, such as the group currently looking at the rewards process.

And to the future? We are planning to introduce a number of student committees linked to curriculum areas. Using these, staff will be able to hear student views about their curriculum and improvements students would like to see.

When you stand back and look at all the ways we listen to the student voice, I believe we can be proud of our work. As a school, we want to continue to improve and students, using the right methods, do have a real way of getting their views heard.

