

## Leading Parent Partnership Award

Many thanks to the 96 families who responded to the Parent Engagement questionnaire, giving us honest feedback about the strengths, improvements and changes at Braunton Academy. This year we have set up a number of new initiatives to engage more with parents and the community. The coffee and chat mornings are held once a month which have provided support for parents with topics such as the Emotional Based School Avoidance, family support, drugs and alcohol, online safety and safety in the community. These have been supported by the Inclusion Team, the Police and YSMART and we look forward to the remaining sessions this year for perspective Year 6 parents and the school nurse. We have run half termly Parent Engagement Group meetings, school tours for current student parents, Afghan support meetings, SEND information evenings as well as the new Braunton Youth Network. Unfortunately, some of the responses from the questionnaire noted that the particular days did not suit some people. Next year, with a different timetable, and different times of free lessons for me, perhaps new people may be able to attend some of the events.

Over 70% of the people who responded to the questionnaire had been in to reception during the day since September. 97% of these people found reception easily and 86% felt that it was a welcoming/ very welcoming place. 100% of respondents said that the staff and reception were helpful/very helpful when they attended. One of the main suggestions to improve reception was having a separate area for students. We are trying to find a solution to this issue, but it is proving tricky in such a small area with staff spaces and meeting rooms being needed.

90% of respondents felt supported with their queries on the phone. Improvements to this area included knowing who the receptionists are and so we will get some staff profiles included in future newsletters. We are also aware that getting through to the main office can be challenging at times and are looking at systems that may help with this problem.

74% of respondents said that they had noticed improved communication systems, particularly with the newsletter and a reduction in individual messages. This was raised and these changes came about through the Parent Engagement Group and have continued to evolve. One of the suggestions was that parents would like to be able to search for information on the newsletter but due to the nature of the document being a "read only" document, this function does not seem to be able to be accessed on Parentmail. It was noted that students do not receive the school newsletter, and this was also something that was raised in our principal student interviews last week, so we hope to be able to develop this area through class charts announcements for students.

A number of respondents voiced frustrations around attendance communication. Schools are required by the government to communicate regularly with parents about attendance, so families are informed early and can work with the school to support improvement. This consistent communication is about early help, transparency and partnership, not blame or punishment. Although it is an expectation for students to attend school, for some this is difficult for a variety of reasons. We are trying to recognise good attendance and the systems we use are important for some students more than others but hope that you can ignore recognition emails if it is not needed to support your child, as we need one system for all.

We have acknowledged that parents feel that our 48-hour response policy is not always followed and we are working as a staff body to improve this area. Our new email groups were set up to support this so that someone from a small group of possible respondents could reply but this is an area that we obviously still need to improve further. Within communication we are also aware that issues such as return times from sporting matches and cancelled clubs is not always as accessible as it should be.

82% of respondents have noticed an improved and increased social media presence. Braunton Academy has both Facebook and Instagram accounts where you can follow events, read about student achievements and get signposting for support. Two main themes for improvements on social media were firstly, the request for more student work to be displayed and staff have been asked to send more through to the admin team. The second request was that more non-sporting achievements are publicised through social media. Please can we request that if your child takes part in a significant event, particularly non-sporting activities, please send through a photograph and a short explanation about what they have achieved in order for it to be included on social media. Please send it through to [media@braunton.academy](mailto:media@braunton.academy).

The final area that was raised by some of the respondents was around not being able to see all of their child's teachers at parents evening. A single teacher may teach a couple of classes, and some even teach every child in the year group, which makes meeting every family individually, impossible. Teachers are also limited by directed working hours, which must cover teaching lessons, planning, marking, safeguarding, meetings, training, duties and pastoral responsibilities. When these hours are divided across teaching and core school responsibilities, there is not enough capacity for individual appointments with every parent, so schools prioritise key meetings, parents' evenings and contact where there is a specific concern. The Parent Engagement Group initiated the new system for Parents Evening appointments at Key Stage three, that each parent could have 5 appointments initially allowing everyone to see at least some and then the system would be opened out for further available slots. This has not been used at Key Stage four where this is less of a problem due to option groups.

Unfortunately, I have been unsuccessful in securing support for a PTFA but one respondent in the questionnaire, who didn't leave their details, has voiced interest. If this is you or you would like to help set up a PTFA, please do not hesitate to contact me so that we can do some fundraising for the Academy.

Many thanks, particularly to those that have supported the newly set up groups, for working with us to improve Braunton Academy. We all want the best outcomes and support the wellbeing of our students, and we gain strength in working together.

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