

The English Department

Parent & Pupil Voice

Context

The English department has a strong history of using student voice to develop teaching and learning within the department. Making English Better was first implemented into the department in 2006 following an article published in the NCSL Supplement and the TES and has flourished. This has developed in the last six years and student voice currently underpins both teaching and learning and assessment.

Parent & Pupil Engagement

The department currently uses Learning Logs where pupils engage in talk for learning with their teacher by reflecting upon their achievements in the subject over the last two weeks. They note down what new skills, knowledge and understand they have acquired and also tell us what they enjoy and what they would like to do next. Through this pupils can feel their voice is being heard and they are able to shape their lessons in some way.

Pupils are assessed frequently and this is a key way of the department engaging with parents and parents engaging with their child. At the end of every scheme of work, pupils are given an A5 sheet which outlines 'What You Did Well' and 'Even Better if'. A copy is held on file with their assessment and a copy is sent home to be celebrated and shared with parents. Parents are much more aware of how to support their child and topics that are being assessed through this process.

Pupils are also engaged through target sheets, which are in the inner cover of books. These sheets provide pupils with an opportunity to note down what they need to do to improve following their assessment feedback or specific T&L.

The department is very keen to develop parent participation through MEB and assessment feedback and are considering ways in which parents can become more involved; perhaps through open evenings, opportunities to observe lessons and sessions for parents.

Making English Better

Aims

The aims of MEB are to give pupils a voice in English through pupil observations of all teachers within the curriculum area. In recent years a panel of pupils has been included in the interview process and given pupils an opportunity to offer their own feedback on the teaching of a candidate and their teaching persona through a mixture of observation and interview. From observations and interviews pupils and staff can work collaboratively to keep teaching fresh, relevant and engaging whilst addressing the needs of the National Curriculum and GCSE Specifications.

Process

Staff and pupils deliver Making English Better introductory lessons to **all** classes. Pupils are then invited to apply for a position, it is hoped that through this process we will create a group which is

representative of the school's cohort. However, we are aware that pupils can only be encouraged to partake in the team and as it relies on extra curricular meetings not all pupils can commit to this. In previous years pupil involvement has been varied depending on age, ability and other commitments.

Following the application process pupils are invited to attend an interview with current MEB members. They will ask them a series of questions which assesses their commitment and reasons for wishing to be part of the team.

Once allocated a place, pupils undertake training to enable them to be able to observe members of the department and give constructive feedback to help shape teaching and learning. Pupils work throughout the year to gauge strengths within T&L and schemes of work in order to help write a scheme of work to be delivered in Year 8. Last year pupils collectively wrote the department's scheme on The Olympics, which has been successfully delivered to all pupils in this cohort.

The value of this collaboration is highly placed in the department. The scheme has a high profile both in school and the department, with aims to extend and develop into a Making Learning Better initiative in the future.