

High Achievers Meeting 16/07/2015

What format did the meeting take?

The students who took part were selected because they had successfully achieved in the areas of Speaking, Reading and Writing and their overall progress grade was green. The students were told that the purpose of the meeting was to find out their thoughts as to why they believed they had excelled themselves in English. The meeting lasted for one lesson and students were invited to give honest responses to questions posed by JN.

At the end of the session, JN read the minutes of the meeting to the group and corrected his work in accordance with their requests to ensure that the boys felt they were quoted accurately.

Students in attendance were:

Deelan Chan
Adam Boustani
Javaughan Brown
John Duque Gomez
Diego Huertas
Harrison Melville
Leonardo Diez Suarez

Why do you think you're achieving well in English?

AB: I do writing tasks at home. I do lots of work at home and I read a lot.

HM: my mum does English Literature at Kingston University. She is smart and helps me when she is in the mood.

LDS: reading and creative writing in my spare time.

JD: reading a lot, working hard and writing.

DH: I read a lot and I do extension writing tasks at home. My mum gets them from the Internet. [Does not know site].

DC: I used to read a lot. I write in lessons.

JN: Does that make you learn more?

DC: I sometimes write at home. This develops my vocabulary and language techniques.

AB: maybe he listens a lot and tries his best.

Is there something you really enjoy in English? Why?

AB: Debates are interesting, you get involved and everybody takes part

JB: The help that I get in English from Mr Harris and the class. They support me.

LDS: My favourite topic is debate because you get to state your opinion.

AB: we read Once and Two Weeks with the queen.

HM: I like the essays because I can write as much as I can. It helps me think about English more.

DC: I like comparing poetry because there's always a deeper meaning because it helps to analyse text and compare.

JDG: Reading quietly at the beginning of our lessons.

What are your thoughts on being able to choose your teacher? Why did you choose your teacher?

AB: His option appealed to me and was interesting. I like sports. I just like the way he explained everything.

LDS: I'm interested in sport and competition.

JB: I wanted to learn more about Shakespeare and filming.

AB: We didn't get to do the MOTD AND We've only just made our magazines. They're not finished. I enjoyed the visit that happened last week.

LDS: I agree with Adam

JB: Same.

DC: His course was Mind in Detention. It helps develop your thinking skills.

AB: Mr Harris gives me the help I need. We have to try to work out our problems but we always get help we need.

For those who didn't choose, why didn't you choose?

HM: I thought all of the choices were very good so I didn't pick. I didn't like his teaching at the start, but at the first Parents' Evening and mum promised a treat if I achieved well. I went from 4c to 6c.

JDG: I wasn't bothered to choose. I didn't want to do it.

DH: I didn't know how to choose.

Would you choose your teacher again?

AB: Now he knows me, it would be easier. It wouldn't be like starting afresh.

LDS: yes but he's not teaching next year.

JDG: I didn't choose but maybe I would.

DH: I'm not sure.

DC: Yes. After a year, I'm used to his way of teaching and we have a relationship together.

What problems do you face in English?

DH: People not listening to each other.

AB: Students not respecting each other and the teacher. He has put in hard work and effort to teach.

JB: People speaking over sir.

LDS: People mess about and this is why we weren't able to do MOTD.

JDG: It's always the same people messing about and that distracts us.

AB: I'd like the teacher to remove them earlier if they're not focussed.

DC: People as well. The low level disruption distracts the class.

How do you feel about the Badge system?

JB: My poetry writing badge I was proud of.

DC: My teacher doesn't let us know which badges we have.

AB: They work because you work harder and try to achieve them. I still prefer levels because they say where you are.

JN: Why do levels say where you are?

AB: We've been using them for a long time.

JN: What level were you at the end of KS2?

AB: 4a, but I was a 5a when I joined the school?

JN: What does 5a mean?

AB: It means that I'm above average and that I can continue and get a really good grade.

JN: [to LDS] What level were you at the end of KS2?

LDS: 5b

JN: Can you say what that means?

LDS: I can write more advanced things.

JN: How? [no answer]

DC: In year 8 I was a 7b - it doesn't tell you much. I Prefer badges over levels but the badges need to be used more consistently and with positive reinforcement.

What is the biggest reason for your success?

Reading

Creative Writing

Effort and determination

Concentration

Reading

Focus, concentration, reading and effort

Smartness

Summary of main findings

- Students are happy with the badge system as the success criteria is clear, but older students are still nostalgic for levels (though they are unable to clarify what levels actually mean).
- Students are proud of the badges they have achieved.
- Students in this cohort chose their classes based on the topics covered by their teacher rather than their teacher.
- As well as this, some students in this group chose their English class because they felt they had a good relationship with the teacher and that they would be supported well.
- Students motivate themselves and believe this is a big factor in their achievements.
- Independent reading, debating and poetry analysis/comparison were listed amongst activities that students enjoy.