

S4 Learning Group

October 2014 - Minutes

Pupils were offered a series of discussion points and asked to comment on them:

- Describe the year so far in terms of learning and teaching?
- Have your subjects had a smooth transition from S3 to S4?
- Have the subjects or the style of learning and teaching differed greatly from S3?
- What aspects are you finding particularly stressful and what do you think might help alleviate this for you this year and for future years?
- Is there anything that has improved this year within the classroom environment?

Pupils all agree that this year is more difficult than S3. They feel that the pressure is immense this year and that they are certainly feeling the pressure of the National Qualification courses.

They feel it would help if all Added Value Units, especially National 4 AVU, be completed in S3 as to try to complete these in S4 alongside all other course requirements is extremely stressful. Pupils stress that they wish more pressure had been applied in S3 to prepare them for the demands of S4.

A discussion took place on the Broad General Education being a National S1-3 course however although pupils understand this external stipulation, they feel that the pressure this has resulted in, in S4, is extremely high.

They note concerns over the amount of homework issued before the prelims which at times has made it exceptionally difficult to find time to study. They understand this is due to unit assignments however they feel that the timing of some unit assignments may be best moved, if possible, so that these do not have to be handed in just prior to prelims. Pupils enjoyed the lesson styles of the BGE however they want less peer evaluation and group work now they are in S4.

Some pupils state that they feel overwhelmed and that they would rather study less National Qualifications.

- Do teachers share your levels with you?
- Do you have discussions about your progression?
- Do you understand the difference between National 4 and 5 and how assessment works for both?

All pupils agree that teachers talk regularly about levels with them and what they have to do to progress. Teachers discuss the difference between certain courses at National 4 & 5 levels however some pupils were not aware of the grading system.

A lengthy discussion took place on the S4 prelims and feelings towards these.

- Do you know how staff make sure they are all marking at the same standard?
- Do you know how staff ensure the same work is being covered in all classes?

Pupils did not know about Moderation or Verification processes and so these were explained to them. They find these procedures and policies reassuring.

Pupil Requests: More time needed for assessments
More initial discussion on the structure/format of assignments to help simplify the process.