

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PARTNER NOTES FROM VISIT

School	Wadebridge School
Headteacher	Tina Yardley
SIP	Sandra Critchley
Date of visit	22 June 2015

Purpose of visit

1. Review of Effectiveness of the Sixth Form Bursary Schemes

Summary of SIP activities during visit:

1. Meeting with head of Sixth Form and Sixth Form Administrator to review Sixth Form Bursary scheme processes, procedures and outcomes; Y12/Y13 Bursary Student Voice meeting.
2. Preliminary findings shared with two members of SLT (LB, DT) at end of day.

Summary of outcomes

The 2014/15 **Sixth Form Bursary scheme** is funded by the national scheme (£19100) and from the school budget (£13350). Students who were entitled to Free school Meals and those whose parents can demonstrate an income below £31,000 are entitled to claim from the fund (33 students). The policy for the bursary scheme has been evolving as the funding streams have changed, and now the scheme is tailored to individual need, to ensure that disadvantaged learners are able to access the curriculum. Eligible students are able to make individual claims for items such as trips, resources, travel and lunches. The Sixth form HLTA is increasingly working with bursary students mirroring Pupil Premium interventions in KS4 and will be using data tracking information in the next academic year as her role develops. School benchmarking analysis has changed over recent years in line with shifting national data, however analysis of outcomes presented from 2013 and 2014 show that Wadebridge bursary students outperform national attainment. 2015 data will be measured against Wadebridge non-bursary students.

The **Student Voice** session was with eight students (7 x Y12 and 1xY13). They described Wadebridge Sixth form as “friendly” and “like a big family”, explaining that they had chosen to stay on as the Sixth Form offered the courses that they wanted delivered by teachers who knew them, with peers who they knew and saved a lot of travelling time. The bursary scheme had not influenced their decision, as all bar one (who knew from a friend), they had not heard about the scheme until the enrolment day in August when they were given a letter of explanation. They thought that other students in their Y11 cohort may have chosen to stay on had they known about the scheme.

The items claimed for included computer software (MS Office); revision materials, textbooks, and trip funding, and one student mentioned that the HLTA held various stationery items to support bursary students. Two of the students described the support they had been given by the HLTA in organising their work as “very helpful” and all agreed that they felt they could approach the HLTA if needed. The students described the Form Tutor support they experienced as very beneficial, valuing the 1:1 and personal advice offered, acting as a conduit for concerns.

The students all agreed that there was no stigma at all in being on the bursary scheme, stating that there were sufficient students for it to be accepted, and they did not feel embarrassed in any way when asking for refund of relevant expenditure. However all agreed that other students do become annoyed when they have to pay for a trip when bursary students do not, quoting the £290 for the Geography trip as a bone of contention. In addition there was some uncertainty about the types of items that could be funded, and students voiced some reluctance to keep asking whether a particular item or activity would be acceptable within the scheme. For example, the Y13 student thought it might be helpful if curriculum trips could be funded, and was then told by Y12 that they had received funding for trips. Some students thought that they could claim funding towards a school lunch whilst others did not think this was possible.

All the students had visited Exeter University and the HE convention on Penryn Campus, but getting to other Open Days was problematic. Attending University Open Days was cited as a logistical and financial problem for those students whose parents were not able to drive them around the country. Of these all were either choosing a local university or, in one case deciding not to go to university.

Overall the students were very satisfied with the scheme and agreed that funding to meet learners curriculum needs was a better use of the funding than making blanket payments. They felt that informing Y11 of the scheme would be helpful so that students and parents could take it into account when making Post-16 choices. They also felt that did not know exactly what they could claim for, sometimes finding out later that something could have been funded so more regular information would be useful.

Recommendations:

Overall, the school has made good and effective use of the Sixth Form Bursary funding. I would suggest the following points be considered for the future:

1. Advise Y11 of the scheme (I believe that this has been done during 2015)
2. From the experience of this year, draw up a list of fundable items and develop mechanisms to periodically inform bursary students of these items through information sheets, meetings etc.
3. Consider how the bursary scheme may help fund attendance at HE Open Days, and whether the Sixth Form can assist with some of the logistics for example by running small group trips to more popular and/or ivy league universities.
4. Ensure Sixth Form subject teachers and curriculum leaders are informed about the bursary scheme so that they can consider relevant items to support their learners.