



## Godolphin Junior Academy



### Our Strategy to Reduce Staff Workload

#### (Ten 'No Mores')

At Godolphin we use the motto '*Godolphin Grows Success*' in everything that we do, every day, for everybody. Part of this success is knowing that the work we are doing is making a difference and is having a clear impact on our pupils. The leaders of our school made a clear decision regarding workload: anything that we have in place which isn't making a difference can be dropped; anything we have in place but is making a difference needs to become manageable.

We began by listening to our colleagues and asked them which parts of the job were onerous, time-consuming or a 'paper exercise'? The list was fairly extensive: reports to be written for every parents evening, onerous planning expectations, too many evening events, marking and not enough time to complete tasks were just some of the struggles our staff were facing.

Leaders approached each issue in turn and worked alongside colleagues to devise a solution to make our daily jobs manageable yet still have maximum impact on pupil progress. The following was put into action:

#### **1. No more writing reports of targets during parents evening.**

Previously, teachers were expected to complete a written report complete with targets to hand to parents at each parents evening event (two events each year, both over two evenings.) We decided this could be dropped – it was double the workload and had less impact than the crucial dialogue between parent and teacher about each child. Instead, we put our efforts into making sure our parents got the information needed in a personalised conversation. We still included targets, still talked about progress and of course discussed beyond the academic, about each child's personal development and talents and how we can support parents.

During the first evening, several parents fed back that they much preferred this approach rather than reading a report with the teacher. They said they came away feeling listened to, feeling that the teacher really knew their child, they knew the next steps for their child and they got a much better insight into what is happening in the classroom. Much less work for teachers – higher impact with parent engagement.

## **2. No more complicated administrative tasks for parent's evening.**

Previously, to co-ordinate parents evening, teachers used to send an invitation letter home which requested parents to confirm their attendance by completing and returning the reply slip. This would then result in several hours being spent on collecting slips, chasing outstanding slips, organising timetables for each day and essentially becoming a huge administrative task which interfered with the more important tasks that teachers wanted to focus on. To address this, we created a very short and simple electronic booking form. We sent the link out via text message and parents were able to sign up electronically and a timetable was automatically generated for us. Much more accessible for parents, huge time-saver for staff.

## **3. No more late night transition evenings.**

Previously, the annual Year 3 transition evening has been held at 7pm in July and every member of staff has been expected to stay for this. The evening was effective and did have a positive impact but we didn't always have the parent attendance that we hoped for. Therefore, we changed the timing of this to be during the school day, just before home time. This meant that all parents could come for the same impactful transition event at a time that suited everybody. Higher numbers of pupils and parents means higher impact.

## **4. No more onerous planning sheets and templates.**

Many teachers have struggled in their career to meet the demands of planning expectations. To Godolphin, planning is crucial. A well planned lesson designed to meet the needs of the pupils is one of the key components for success. We established our expectations for planning: a learning intention, success criteria, modelling new learning and differentiation were the main components. We then decided that this could all be present in a PowerPoint or Smart Presentation which could replace the lengthy written plans. It made sense – it meant that everything required of that lesson was displayed which reduced planning workload but also supported teachers as their presentation became a useful guide to making their lesson effective.

## **5. No more feeling overwhelmed with planning.**

Planning a unit of work can often seem daunting for new teachers. We had some feedback from our new teachers that they found planning difficult and at times under pressure when the responsibility was left with them to produce planning. Therefore, SLT took a greater ownership of planning lessons and working with teachers to plan collaboratively. The feedback from SLT planning and supporting planning has been very positive. Teachers have now said they feel more confident because they have been given a good model and they know the expectation now.

Teachers who have planned with senior leaders have said they understand what to do in the future. SLT invested their time in making plans so effective that they will only require fine tuning and personalising for future years. This strategy was particularly successful – our colleagues felt supported, teachers gained CPD in planning and our pupils received consistently high-quality lessons.

#### **6. No more low-impact marking**

We recognise that marking is a significant part of a teacher's daily workloads and we know that with sometimes over 90 books to mark each day, it has to be manageable and it has to be effective. We devised a new marking strategy to support this. Our marking now requires one personalised set of feedback for each subject once a week. This is the feedback that takes the most time so we reduced it to once a week. To make marking more manageable we then request a planned next step to challenge our pupils and the remaining two days focus on self and peer assessment so that pupils have more ownership on recognising what they need to do next to be successful. This gave us a good balance – feedback was still effective and still purposeful but the system became manageable.

#### **7. No more pressure to have 'book work' every day in Reading.**

We have invested lots of CPD in how to deliver the most effective comprehension lessons. We recognise and feel confident in the way we teach Reading and we have included much more practical work opportunities. These lessons could be centred around debates, discussion, role play, hot seating, just to name a few. Therefore our expectation is to have two pieces of book in Reading each week. If teachers decide to include more that's fine but that pressure has been removed because we know we are delivering high quality Reading lessons in a variety of ways and at times we record this through photographs or through display. Our teachers have confirmed that this approach has supported their work load and at the same time improved the quality of Reading lessons.

#### **8. No more time lost photocopying**

At Godolphin we have a reprographics assistant. This role was created to support teachers with preparing their resources. Now teachers can hand everything that they need copying such as letters home, flyers, lesson resources and it will all be copied for them to the instructions provided. Further to this, our reprographics assistant also keeps our whole school stationary updated and in stock so that teachers have the resources they need. Our staff have found this a huge support.

## **9. No more time pressures to complete tasks**

We provide extra time to our teachers so that they have more opportunities to meet with the colleagues and complete tasks. Everybody has their entitled PPA time but further to this we offer extra time out of class such as when PE is delivered or singing assemblies. As well as this we provide leadership time for all of our middle leaders so that they feel supported in being able to lead their areas well. Our ethos is that we will always endeavour to provide leaders with extra time when they are working on specific projects.

## **10. No more pressure of subject responsibility**

Previously, we used to assign curriculum subjects to individual subject leaders. Our teachers felt that this was a huge amount of work to do alone as they had their daily class responsibilities on top of being expected to effectively monitor a subject across the whole school. To address this we have now developed subject teams. This means that not only can the work load be shared, but monitoring becomes much more effective as there is a greater displacement of leaders across the school. Further to this, our colleagues who are new to teaching or new to the subject are guided and developed by the more experienced members of the team, providing great CPD. The quality of our curriculum provision is improving, as is our monitoring and improvement strategy, and at the same time, colleagues feel more supported.

At Godolphin, leaders make really thoughtful decisions that are clear and long term. This in itself saves our colleagues time and reduces workload because we are clear, consistent and we clarify our expectations. Reducing workload is a priority in our school and an area that we will continually evaluate and improve upon. As in any school, quality provision for our pupils comes first but we recognise that in order for us to serve our children the best quality of education, we must also prioritise our well-being.