

PARENT FORUM MINUTES – Monday 10th February 2020

Apologies

Eve Dyer and Jo Spring – Otters, Monica Longhurst – Foxes, Katy Durston – Squirrels, Mary Copocci and Nina Hickman – Woodpeckers.

Attendance

Cate Gregory – Head of Infant School

Jo James – FOSIS Co-Chair

Susan Kinch – FOSIS Co-Chair

Jo Blondin – FOSIS Secretary

Jen Pillinger – Foxes

Fiona Brown - Owls

Lucy Lacey – Moles

Inna Walker - Squirrels

Laura Martin – Rabbits

Mel Durman – Hedgehogs

Hannah Deakin – Badgers

Thank you's/Positive Feedback

- A year R parent wanted to thank the school and FOSIS for all the opportunities they provide the children. Her and her children love the dress up days and the engagement it helps to bring them in their topic. The parent loved the Christmas card designs and was really pleased with the great pictures her children made in school. This meant she was happy to buy the cards (whilst not feeling that she had to).
- A Year 1 parent provided positive feedback in relation to her child's teacher, describing Miss Ruck as 'very warm and supportive.' and saying her daughter is very fond of both her and Mrs Chadwick.
- A number of year 1 parents provided positive feedback in relation to the current Space topic. One of the parents felt that having a topic based on reality/actual events had really benefitted her child.

Mrs Gregory (CG) said that 'Space' is an existing topic but the school have added new components to refresh it. They have added in learning about the first women in space, etc. The school are pleased that the changes have been well received by parents.

Discussion Points

Doors in the morning

- A parent expressed frustration that the classroom doors are not always open at 8.45 a.m. This is a concern for her and no doubt other parents who are reliant on a prompt

drop off to enable them to get to work/other commitments on time. Please could the school ensure this issue is addressed?

CG said she knows it is really difficult and frustrating. Staff do their absolute best to open the doors on time but occasionally, unforeseen events arise, which have to be dealt with immediately.

CG also said there is an issue with the clocks in school showing slightly different times. School have looked at this issue repeatedly. They will continue to try to resolve it but in the meantime, staff are using the laptop clocks for more accuracy.

CG will remind staff and Senior leaders on the year 2 door about the importance of opening the doors on time.

A parent asked if digital clocks could be used in classrooms as opposed to analogue, to improve accuracy. CG explained that the curriculum requires children to be able to tell the time using an analogue clock.

Website communication

- Parents appreciate the effort the school goes to in making sure that communications are on the website in a timely manner. However, some parents have fed back that it can be hard to search for and find specific communications that they may need.
- Is the school able to categorise the letters to make finding specific communications quicker and easier? Possible categories suggested were year groups, home learning, trips, etc.

CG said that before the letter was sent out with the final decision on communication, the school spent many weeks considering the best approach. The issue was considered through all levels including governors, SLT staff and parent forum where Mr Hack attended. The aim of the website is that a user should be able to find anything they are looking for in no more than 2 clicks.

When making a decision about communication on the website, the possibility of using categories was discussed. However, this was rejected as searching for information that way would take more than 2 clicks. CG appreciates that the system may not be the preferred one for everyone. However, as it has already been the subject of intense thought, it will remain.

In response to a parent's question, CG confirmed that any paper communications should also be on the website. She will look into why the year R toy home learning letter was not.

CG clarified that requests for resources (boxes etc.) would not usually be added to the website. A parent asked that when letters are sent home asking for resources, they are labelled with the relevant year group (to avoid confusion for those parents who have 2 or more children in the school.) Another parent asked whether requests for resources (in this

case boxes) could be sent home with more notice. CG said she would consider this, however in the past parents have asked for not too much notice as this does not work for them but due to different preferences it is hard to please everyone.

Spellings

- Would it be possible for spellings to be put on the website please, as some classes have been receiving paper copies a lot later than others.
- Is the school able to feed back the results of the spelling tests so that parents know how their children are getting on?

Following a discussion, it became clear that there is some inconsistency in approach. Some year 1 children are getting their actual marked spelling tests sent home, or have received a Marvellous Me message while others are not.

CG agreed that a more consistent approach is needed. Spellings will now be added to the website and CG will talk to the year leaders.

Snack time routine

- A number of parents in year 1 have expressed concern that their children are not being prompted to wash their hands or use hand gel before snack time. Please can the school provide reassurances about this?

CG said that hand-washing has always been incorporated into the lunchtime routine but this has not historically been the case at snack time. This issue has never been raised before. CG said that all fruit is washed and the children only touch the piece of fruit they are going to eat. The school understand the concerns but due to the short length of break time, on a practical level, it would be very hard to get 30 children to wash their hands before snack.

Due to the current climate, the school have re-visited the importance of hygiene and reminded children from their PSHE lessons how to wash hands effectively in circle times with the children. The children have been reminded of their lessons, when washing their hands, they should sing the happy birthday' song twice through. Hand-washing has been escalated due to the current concerns.

There was a discussion about whether hand gel could be used instead. CG said she understood that it is not as effective but she agreed that it would be a better option to reassure parents. CG also said that the use of hand gel could be a problem due to potential allergies. She will look into it and ask Hamwick what their policy is. If hand gel is to be used, there would be a financial cost and it would have to be added to the school's COSH (Control of substances hazardous to health) register. A parent commented that there are

hand gel dispensers in the corridors at Juniors. CG said it was her understanding that these are intended for staff use only.

In addition to the wider current concerns, there have also been reported cases of thread worms in year 1. CG will look into the suggestion of a parent, following a discussion with their GP, that when a case of thread worms is reported, the letters sent home should suggest that it is worth treating children, just in case.

Update: This has happened

CG said she understood why this issue had been raised, especially due to the current situation. She subsequently confirmed that the school has increased asking the children to wash their hands.

Update: since the meeting, CG has confirmed that hand gel has been ordered and will be placed in all classrooms and communal areas.

Team Spirit

- It is appreciated that Team Spirit is an external club provider. However, is there any possibility the school would be able to ask them whether consideration can be given to changing the days the clubs run on, to enable more children to be able to try different clubs? This is especially important for children who only have one day free a week, as they currently only ever have one club option. It is of course appreciated that this would be dependant on the availability of club staff etc.

CG said that the days on which clubs run is partly historical and was previously always largely based on the availability of school staff who used to run them. CG will raise the possibilities of changing the days clubs run with Darren at their next meeting. It will of course depend on the availability of the Team Spirit coaches and on the maximum number of clubs the school can run each night inline with the other clubs Team spirit run in other JEP schools.

Update: Unfortunately Team Spirit is unable to change the days that clubs run on.

Yogurts at lunch

- A parent commented that there are very often not enough yogurts to go round. Her daughter does not like many of the puddings so often misses out. Please could sufficient yogurts be made available?

CG is aware that this is an issue and it has repeatedly raised it with the school caterers, Chartwells. She said that, despite numerous requests, Chartwells often only provide a limited amount of yogurts, which have to be shared out between each year group. This is despite their menu stating that yogurts will be available to all children. CG said that the school are in negotiation with Chartwells about the provision of a fridge, to enable surplus yogurts to be stored at school.

Parents are most welcome to write a letter to Chartwells, to support the school on this matter. CG will pass these on to Robert, a representative of Chartwells, who attended the last parent forum. On the day of the meeting, Chartwell had provided frubes, of which there were enough for each child but CG confirmed that this is not always the case.

Nativity

- Parents thought the nativity was great, as always! However, it was a real shame that one of the dates clashed with the Junior's Year 3 show, which was only shown once. As a result, quite a few parents with children in both schools were unable to watch both this year. Perhaps one option would be for both the infant and junior performances to be on the same day but at different times?

CG said they work really carefully with Juniors to avoid clashes but it was not possible on this occasion. There were two infant performances on different days. Having Infants and Juniors performances on the same day would not work as, taking into account many different aspects of school life across two schools, this would not be possible.

Points from the school

- The school wishes to discuss the attendance certificate decision from the pupil voice vote.

CG explained that, following parental feedback, consideration is being given to whether the school should stop awarding pupil certificates for 100% attendance. The school feels that attendance is very important and is understandably proud of the fact that it has the highest attendance results in the city. However, there were concerns that the certificates were not fair on children who had been unable to achieve such high attendance levels through no fault of their own. An attendance group was put together with a number of parents and School staff. In this meeting after long discussions from both points of view it was felt that the children themselves should be asked for their views and the decision put to a vote.

During 'going for goals' sessions, the children considered the learning values of perseverance and independence and how it would feel if they could not meet a goal due to reasons outside of their control. After that, CG conducted a 'treasure seekers' assembly – the trophy which is given out to the class with the highest attendance was in the box. CG told the children that they wanted them to think about whether to keep the attendance certificates.

The issue was discussed by school council members, some of whom felt that certificates were not fair as it is not a child's fault if they are poorly or if they are taken out of school for a family holiday. The council members were split 50:50 on the issue and went back to their classes and discussed the certificates during circle time. All children will now be asked to vote on whether to keep the attendance certificates and the school will follow the views of the majority.

There was some concern over whether the children would be mature enough to consider such an issue and come to a reasoned decision. CG said that in P4C (Philosophy for change) the children are taught to raise their ideas and views and are taught the skills to respectfully challenge each others views and understand that their reasons/views. This has been running in the school for 4 years now and the practice is fully embedded in many elements in our curriculum.

DEFINITION: "P4C improves children's critical, creative and rigorous thinking. It helps to develop higher order thinking skills, improve communication skills and helps children learn to co-operate with others. Children learn to reflect before speaking so that they are accurate in what they really want to say. All this has huge benefits for the National Curriculum."

CG said she was confident the children could make their views known clearly and vote accordingly. She said the school council members were amazing and reflective in their discussions. If the children decide not to keep the individual attendance certificates, the class certificate will remain.

UPDATE: the vote went in the majority to keep the certificates. We would like to thank the people who were involved on the committee for their time and consideration that were raised.

Any Other Business

- **Please could the dates for INSET days be made available?**

CG said that the previous week, the Heads of the JEP schools had agreed the inset days. Parents should receive confirmation of these after half term. CG confirmed that Shirley schools were following Southampton County Council's dates for half term. Parents said it would be helpful if future half term dates could be released earlier (to facilitate booking leave/holidays.) Other parents raised that they receive so much more information from us and there are always limited changes as in other schools they change the days regularly.

- **Year R home learning – Harry and the Dinosaurs**

A piece of home learning referred to reading books by authors who write about dinosaurs. A parent felt it would be helpful if there had been specific mention of 'Harry and the bucketful of dinosaurs.' The parent had not made the connection and had purchased another book before realising. CG will consider this.

- **Year R toy home learning**

A parent asked if the wording of the introduction to the Year R toy home learning could be re-visited as she felt it could be confusing – children may think that it relates to toys that they themselves got for Christmas. CG will feed back to the team.

- **Leaking pipe**

The leaking pipe remains a concern. *CG said this had been sorted when are HAMWIC cover site manager was on site over Christmas and the classes were asked to stop using the sinks until we could fix the drain. There has probably just been a miscommunication or someone who doesn't know has covered in the class. CG said she will remind them not to as this is a long term issue as the pipes are no longer connecting properly. A cherry picker is needed to fix the problem. This would be very expensive and we need to ensure we can get the best use of this resources whilst on site. We have an issue with the gutters around the whole site and the pigeon spikes and we need to ensure we are spending money wisely and therefore it would make sense to get this all fixed at the same time. The issue is on the Safeguarding, Finance and Premises Governors Agenda. It also came up at a leadership and personnel meeting with Budget discussions. CG will keep parents updated with any developments.*

- **Re-name pupil progress drop in?**

Some parents have been confused by the title 'pupil progress drop in' and had not realised these sessions are for parents to attend. There was discussion about whether the name should be changed to make it clearer. CG said the name reflects the fact that it is a time for parents to pop in and see their child's progress by looking at their books. Perhaps on the dates list in brackets it could state that these sessions are for parents to attend.

It was felt that it would be helpful if the parents who write the weekly Facebook reminders for each year group could explain what the sessions are for, when referring to them in the forthcoming dates.

UPDATE: will have brackets next to the sessions

- **Update on curriculum - CG**

Following feedback at a previous parent forum that some parents would welcome reference to more female topic characters, CG confirmed that year 2 are now studying Rosa Parks as an example of a key famous person. This is a new addition to the curriculum.

- **Year 2 Junior School visit**

There was positive feedback in relation to the tour of the Junior school organised for prospective parents across the city who are looking for a Junior place. However, a number of parents felt that communication and organisation could have been better. In particular, parents were unclear as to whether the tour was also intended for their children. When, following some discussion on the Facebook groups, clarification was sought from the office, different parents were given different answers.

During the actual tour, some parents asked staff if they could go and get their child to visit with them. Despite being told this was not possible, later on in the tour, they saw parents accompanied by their year 2 children.

Infant parents also fed back that, on another occasion, year 2 children were invited to look around Juniors after school. However, this invite was only communicated to Junior parents and was not shared with Infant parents.

Please can the school ensure that for future tours, clear information, including where to meet, whether children are able to attend etc. is provided to parents at the outset?

CG gave the following Statement: *We are sorry for the confusion on this day. There were many factors that added to this day for all the teams across both schools. This was also an open session for the Junior School for any perspective parent looking for a Junior place across the city.*

Please can we take this opportunity to remind all parents that as of 25th November 2019 the schools do not communicate over facebook and anything that is put on here does not come directly from the schools. Therefore, if parents are unsure it would be advised to double check on the letter sent from the school.