

## **PARENT FORUM MINUTES – 16 APRIL 2020**

### **Attendance**

**Susan Kinch – Co-Chair**  
**Jo James – Co-Chair**  
**Jo Blondin – Secretary**  
**Mia Caruana – Treasurer**  
**Cate Gregory – Head of School**  
**Laura Watts – Deputy Head**  
**Mary Capocci – Woodpeckers rep**  
**Hannah Henderson – Owls rep**  
**Victoria Molho – Rabbits rep**  
**Jen Pillinger – Foxes rep**  
**Jo Spring – Otters rep**  
**Katy Durston – Squirrels rep**  
**Stacey Sellick – Hedgehogs rep**  
**Lara Webber – Badgers rep**  
**Kelly Winter – Moles rep**

### **Thank you's/Positive Feedback**

There has been so much praise and positive feedback from parents/carers wanting to thank the school for everything it is doing. We thought it would be nice to show how much appreciation there is by including the comments here.

- School has been truly amazing at this tricky time.
- A big thank you to the school for everything they've done, their approach has been excellent and really reassuring to parents.'
- A parent is really appreciating all the efforts the school and teachers are taking to provide regular updates and activities for the children. They wanted to say thank you and they can't wait to see everyone back at school.
- A year 2 parent wanted to pass on their thanks to the teachers for all their hard work making all the adjustments they have had to make. They also have loved Miss Leggett's videos – both their year 2 child and year 5 sibling.
- A year 2 parent said their child has really enjoyed Miss Leggett reading 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.' She feels this is a lovely idea and wonders whether any other teachers would consider doing something similar.
- A parent wanted to pass on their thanks to the school – they feel the teachers and staff have worked so hard during this difficult time. They have appreciated all the timely and thoughtful communications from school and the care from the staff. They felt the year 1 learning was well pitched and about the right amount.

- A key worker parent whose children are not currently at school but may need to be at some point said how much they have appreciated the regular communications from school.
- Another ‘massive thank you’ from a year 1 parent who said that what the school is doing is ‘fab!’
- Thanks for everything the school has done so far.
- A parent said they are finding the marvellous me and website updates really helpful. Thank you to the school and teachers for keeping some sort of continuity going in these strange times!
- A year R parent said they felt the resources were really good so far – plenty of ideas.
- A big thanks to all at the school for sending some work home but not putting any pressure on that it had to be completed. I really appreciate all the work the school are doing during this time.
- Feedback from year 2 parents saying how supportive the school has been and how great the home learning and marvellous me messages are.
- From a year 2 parent – a well done and thanks from me for the way this whole situation was dealt with.
- From a year 2 parent – wanted to pass on love to the school staff and huge thanks for all their hard work.
- The home learning is so appreciated.
- The optional Easter packs were great too.
- From a year 2 parent – thank you to the school for everything they are doing.
- A big thank you to school for not pressuring the children to get through a lot of school work or requiring work to be sent in.
- A huge thank you for the thoughtful and considered way the school has approached this whole situation – from the reassuring and regular updates prior to the closures to the continued communication and provision of excellent home learning resources currently. All the staff are amazing and the children are so lucky.

*Cate Gregory (CG) said all the comments were so lovely to read. It is definitely what we needed at the time they came through. The school has worked so hard the last few weeks and it is great to know what we have provided is the right amount and correct information so parents feel supported and informed. They know how worried parents/carers as they are for the children too and it has been so important to us that we got it as right as we could for everyone. The school is looking forward to sharing these comments with the staff on Monday when they return from the Easter Holidays, even though it does not feel like we have had the Easter holidays. We are so grateful for*

*the support and kind words from the community and our families. It really is a testament to our school community.*

## **Discussion Points**

### **Transition to Juniors/catching up**

- If school remains closed, has there yet been any planning around how to support transition to new year groups and the year 2's transition to junior school? Parents have heard that the transition to year 3 is a big step under normal circumstances and they are concerned how their children would cope without the opportunity to undertake the fun preparatory shared Infant/Junior activities which usually take place in the summer term.
- A year 2 parent raised the concern that, as there will be no new learning, the children may be behind in the curriculum upon entering year 3. This is no doubt an anxiety shared by other parents across the school. Is the school able to provide any reassurances about this?

*CG explained some background from the last few weeks:*

*We wanted to share with you that the schools have found everything out at exactly the same time as parents and the general public have. We want to reassure you that we know absolutely no more than we do. When school closures were announced at 5 p.m. on the Wednesday by Boris Johnson this was the first we knew of it. The schools did not receive any further guidance for another few hours from this announcement and they were then working around the clock to sort provision for key worker children and get the letters out to parents.*

*School is trying not to look too far ahead as no-one knows what will happen. There have been meetings with SLT across both schools with the governors on a regular basis and with HAMWIC and the Local Authority. When we will return and what the impact will be on transition, learning and the children's education is at the forefront of every teacher and head teacher at the moment. We are working with HAMWIC and the Local Authority to guide us through this and at the right times we will then start each next phase of thinking. We know that this will be something everyone wants answered and when it can from the direction from the government we will act swiftly and to the best of our ability for the children.*

*Transition is at the heart of the school's ethos and always has been. It is so important. The current situation will make it even more important to get those steps right. It is in our minds but we have not been able to get to the point of planning transition yet– we have had to prioritise arrangements and the provision for critical worker children and the vast amounts of information and tasks the DFE and the Local Authority have wanted. We have had to arrange lots of provision to support families at very short notice from the government. Everything the parents are thinking about we are thinking about too. However, we have to block these into phases of our thinking. It does not make them any less important, it just has to be prioritised with each piece of information the schools are being given.*

*In terms of transition and attainment the whole country will be in the same situation. All children will have gaps in their curriculum. CG wanted to reassure parents/carers that the teachers are used to planning for children working at different levels. We already know what objectives have been*

*taught in each year groups learning and we know exactly what objectives need to be covered when the children come back. We know children will have gaps in their learning just like they do with the 6 week summer holidays. This is in our skill set to support and teach the children the knowledge and skills they will need to fill the gaps or meet the new objectives for their year group.*

*CG also said that if, in the worse case scenario, schools do not restart until just before the summer break, the focus will be fully on transition. The teachers in year 3 and indeed all the new year groups will still have to teach the parts of the curriculum all children will have missed, as they will need these building blocks before moving on. The children have currently only missed 2 weeks of school. CG said that both her and Mrs Watts have children starting year R this September so share the concerns as a parent and as a teacher. We will plan very carefully for transition as always. When schools return, it will not be 'business as usual.' It will almost be like it is September again. The children will need to be re-settled, there will need to be more circle times and PSHE focus. The school also won't know what some of the children may have been through yet. Everything will have to be thought through and planned thoroughly, sensitively and so very carefully. We can do this and will do this because of the brilliant team we have.*

- With respect to the transition from year 1 into year 2, a parent has suggested that perhaps there could be a more gradual reduction in MOOT sessions than usually happens, which they feel might help in easing the children back into school. Would the school give consideration to this idea?

*CG said that MOOT sessions were reduced after Christmas in both year R and year 1. This happens each year, to support transition into years 1 and 2. If MOOT needs to be increased as part of the children's return to school, it will be.*

### **Home Learning Availability**

- Is there any possibility that the home learning could be uploaded to the website on the Friday, so that the weekend can be used to consider it, print relevant parts and plan etc? This would help significantly, especially for those parents/carers who are also working.

*Laura Watts (LW) said that they will speak to the Junior staff to see if this is possible as we are working so carefully to ensure we are the best of our ability the same as each other. However, as work is not being set for 9-3 p.m. Monday to Friday, LW suggested that they thought there was some flexibility for children to, for example, start the work on a Tuesday or a Monday afternoon.*

### **Format of Home Learning**

- Parents have asked whether the format of the activities could be reviewed? When viewed on phones/tablets, the layout is jumbled. Perhaps word documents could be saved and shared as pdf files to resolve this?

*LW said she understood that Mr Hack had resolved this issue in the first week. However, please let her know it is remains a problem on any particular device.*

### **Identification of year group on home learning**

- Please could the year groups be added to the top of the home learning documents, as when printing for more than one child, it can be confusing working out which is which and this would really help.

*LW said that this will be done from next week.*

### **Home Learning engagement**

- A year 2 parent said that they are struggling to get their child engaged in the home learning – and it feels like the other parents are doing lots without any problems. The parent said they felt comforted by the Facebook message from Mrs Gregory/Mrs Watts but they remain concerned that their child will be behind their peers upon returning to school. It has been suggested that the parent contacts the school directly but is there any general reassurance/suggestions the school can provide? It is very likely that this parent will not be the only one feeling this way.

*LW said that everybody's experience is so unique. She personally finds that bribery works! She suggests parents/carers think about what they can manage based on their own personal situation. It does not have to be what everyone else is doing, as long as the children are engaging their brains and minds.*

*If a parent/carer would like further support or advice, they are still able to contact Karen Allen, the school's family support worker. If it is felt that a little incentive from either Mrs Watts or Mrs Gregory would help, please email the school and a Marvellous Me message could be sent to the child with a learning puppet award.*

*Jo James (JJ) said she was reassured to know that nothing being sent home is new learning. LW confirmed again that it would not be.*

*CG said that the most important thing to keep going with is reading. She said to read with your child, ask them questions about what they have read, get them to draw a front cover for a book etc. If you have to pick your battles, go with the reading. CG said that, even with the skills she has, she is familiar with the battles too. The children are out of routine and this is all new. That is why the school wanted them to have the first week to adjust without parents/carers thinking they had to sit down with them for their learning.*

- A year 2 parent has said that their child would like additional work so has asked whether this would be possible?

*LW said there are lots of online resources on the website and new ones are being added each week. Please could the parent use these as the school thinks they have got a good balance at the moment without wanting to pressurise other parents into feeling they need to do more.*

### **Home learning content**

- A year 1 parent said they appreciate that the teachers are doing their absolute best to find suitable material for the children which they understand is a challenge. However, they would ask if consideration could be given to adding a few more educational worksheets which could be completed by the children independently.

*LW said that another section with work sheets will be added to the home learning part of the website for years 1 and 2 by the end of next week if this supports parents. This will consist of opportunities for over learning. School does not think it would be appropriate to do this for Year R.*

### **Year 1 Oxford Owl tasks**

- A year 1 parent has asked whether an Oxford owl reading activity, for each reading level, could be provided every week as they found it very helpful.

*LW said these activities will continue to be added each week.*

### **Spellings**

- Please could the Spring 2 spellings and those going forwards be uploaded to the website?

*LW has asked for the spellings to be moved to the home learning section of the website by Monday.*

### **Communication with parents of key worker children at school**

- It is noted that most of the marvellous communications are aimed at the children at home. Please could the parents of those children remaining in school also be kept updated – it would be lovely to have some feedback as to what the children are doing (especially as not all children are good at remembering/recounting!)

*LW and CG have discussed this and think it is a lovely idea. Thank you for raising it as it is something they had missed. From Monday, the children still in school will bring slips home saying what they have been doing.*

## **Target Updates**

- A year 2 parent has said how helpful the individual target cards, usually received at parents evening have been. As parents evening was missed, would there be any possibility of these being sent out, as it would help to know any specific areas they should be focussing on with their child at home.

*The school has decided to bring forward the end of year reports so these will now come out mid May. Within those, the children's progress in their objectives up to Spring 2 will be shared. A few weeks after the children return to school, target cards will be sent home to give more specific guidance as to how to support any gaps in learning.*

## **Communication with teachers**

- Please could consideration be given as to whether arrangements could be made for individuals to be able to contact teachers if they have concerns – either now or for example, upon receipt of the end of term reports?

*Parents are able to use the info account email if they have any concerns. Mrs Watts and Mrs Gregory are monitoring these and further support would be sought from the right person. Parents will not be able to contact teachers directly.*

*We are bringing the end of year reports forward and these will be coming out in May. We will then use the target cards to be sent out two weeks after the children return so we can highlight to parents or carers any specific gaps their little one may have due to the situation we are in.*

- Would it be possible for class teachers and/or Mrs Gregory to occasionally send the children a video message, for example, to introduce the home learning or word of the day or even do a small online teaching session? The children miss their teachers and would love to see their faces!

*CG said this is the next phase the school is working on. The first phase was to support the children already in self-isolation, the second was to support the critical key worker children, whilst agreeing a suitable approach between Infant and Juniors and upload the home learning to the website.*

*The next phase is how to get more personal contact between the children and their teachers. At the moment, there are 3 Marvellous Me contacts throughout the week on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday.*

*Mondays' are from the Year Leaders*

*Wednesday's are from the class teacher*

*Friday's are from the Mrs Gregory and Mrs Watts*

*The school is now working on the second phase of how they can get children to see their teachers. There is a meeting on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April where all the thoughts and options we have will be considered. Getting teachers to read a story is a quick move we are considering. The school does,*

*however, have to be careful due to GDPR. Some staff have, for personal reasons, not given permission for photos of them to go on the website etc. It would not be right if some children were able to have zoom chats with their teacher but some were not. Whatever the next phase of this communication is it will be right for all and every class will get the same. If something does not happen it won't be that it was not a good idea it will be because not all classes can have access to it. Everything we do is carefully considered for all the classes and our staff.*

*CG will advise Jo James/Sue Kinch about any updates following Tuesday's meeting so these can be added to the Minutes.*

- *A number of parents have advised that the year 3 children at Shirley Juniors have been asked to send in a piece of work they are the most proud of each week – this has been well received. Could this option be extended to the infants?*

*CG said that when they had a joint meeting with Juniors, they talked about email accounts. It is part of the Junior curriculum for the children to be able to use email and upload documents. It is not part of the infant curriculum.*

*Parents and carers are welcome to send work in via the general infant email address which has been shared on recent letters: [infantinfo@shirleyschools.co.uk](mailto:infantinfo@shirleyschools.co.uk). CG said they would love to see it and it can be passed on to teachers. It was decided in the Infant SLT that we did not want work being emailed in as with the Juniors. We are concerned parents who are trying to balance working from home full-time and supporting their child this would add too much. The Junior children have emails and attachments in their curriculum at it was felt this was more age appropriate to Key Stage 2.*

*CG said that, when the children return, they will be asking the children to bring into school their fabulous work and photos etc. of what they have been doing. It is a surprise but, when school re-opens, the children will be asked to bring in a painted stone from home which will go into the new infant garden. The plan is to celebrate everything the children will have done during their time away from school.*

- *Is there a way that children can send occasional pictures/cards or even a short video message to their teachers?*

*Parents and carers are also welcome to send these in via the general infant email address which has been shared on recent letters: [infantinfo@shirleyschools.co.uk](mailto:infantinfo@shirleyschools.co.uk). Cards etc can also be sent into school. However, please bear in mind that not all staff are in school due to shielding but items can of course be kept safe until their return.*

**Reading levels**

- Please could the school advise what parents/carers should do if they feel their child is ready to move up another reading level. It is hard to know how teachers could assess this but a parent wondered whether they could perhaps send in a video of their child reading?

*CG said this is a lovely idea so please send them in using the general infant email address.*

**Accessibility of passwords etc.**

- Would it be possible for the login information to Oxford Owls and other sites to be stored in the same place, as this would make it much easier to find.

*CG said that unfortunately, due to GDPR, this is not possible. This is because some of the resources, including Education City, are whole school subscriptions which the school usually pays for but which have been extended for use at home during this time. That is why the log-in details had to be sent out via Marvellous Me. The resources for general use have all been listed together on the website. Mr Hack has said no ;0)*

**Web Conferencing offer**

- A parent has provided information about the school being able to have free access to use Cisco's webex conferencing tool during the school closures. If this is something the school would like to consider or have assistance setting up, a parent has very kindly offered their help.

*CG said that if the information can be passed on to her via JJ or SK, her and LW will consider it as an option at the meeting on Tuesday. Jo Blondin (JB) said she would send over more details of the feedback received in relation to this. This was actioned on 17.4.2020.*

**Any Other Business**

*There were no other points that anyone wanted to raise.*

*CG said that the school is so grateful for all the support. This is a first for everyone and nothing we try can be wrong. She also said that it can take up to 3 weeks to change behaviour so if people are struggling, please bear this in mind – the children will push and it may take a little while but it will come. Trust our instincts.*

*CG suggested having another meeting in 3 weeks time to touch base again. Everyone present thought this would be a good idea.*