

PARENT FORUM AGENDA – Monday 21st October 2019

Attended by

Cate Gregory
Monica Longhurst
Hannah Deakin
Lucy Lacey
Mel Durman
Mary Hornby
Susan Kinch
Jo James
Victoria Molho
Robert from Chartwells

Thank you's/Positive Feedback

- A number of year R parents feel that, the staggered start and small groups, although quite lengthy has worked well – allowing the children to settle in slowly and gain confidence.
 - A year R parent wanted to say a big thank you to all the year R staff for making her child's transition into school easy, relaxed and enjoyable. Her child was in the purple group and the parent felt the staggered entry was just right for them and worked out really well.
 - Another year R parent wanted to feedback how smoothly her child has settled into school, thanks for the 'super job' done by Miss Dunne and Mrs Farmer and the rest of the Hedgehog team.
 - A year R parent wanted to say how happy they were with the school and provided positive feedback in relation to Mrs Kennedy, describing her as 'lovely'.
 - Thank you to the school for making the transition into Year 1 smooth and easy for the children, enabling them to quickly settle into their new routines.
 - Specific thanks from a Year 1 parent to Miss Prior, Mrs Arnott and Mr Segun. The parent commented that the children they have seen go into class happy and come out happy! Their child has not had any difficulties with swapping teachers half way through the week so the teachers must do that seamlessly.
 - A year 1 parent wanted to provide specific feedback in relation to Mrs Hillier: 'She is such an amazing teacher - I can't really put this into words. She is so positive and encouraging, she has time for each child she is kind and caring and so invested in the kids. I feel lucky that she has taught both my children. She will be missed when on maternity leave.' This is just one specific example but it is clear that the parent's comments are widely supported.
 - There was generally positive feedback from Year 2 parents, who felt the children had had a good start to the year and were settling in well.
 - Year 2 parents were generally pleased with the topics and level of homework. They are pleased that the school is not putting too much focus on SATs and that there is a broader focus on education.
 - A year 2 parent wanted to pass on their thanks to Mrs Smith for sorting out an issue really quickly. Another year 2 parent wanted to thank Mrs Smith for taking the time to help their child settle and work through something that was troubling them.
- A year 2 parent wanted to pass on her thanks to Miss Leggett. She said her daughter seems to really enjoy her classes and has been so enthused about everything that she's learnt. Apparently her daughter particularly loves Miss Leggett's singing!
- Badger parents felt that overall their children have settled in well and had a good start. Big thanks to Miss Innes and Mrs Liddiard.
 - Thank you for the curriculum evening – it was great to meet all the teachers and understand more about the key areas that the children will be focussing on.
 - There was positive feedback in relation to the Year 2 common trip and the map making.

Cate welcomed Robert from Chartwells to the meeting to discuss the school dinners with us.

He is the Food Ambassador and pupil/parent engagement officer. He explained to us that his role is to increase the uptake of school dinners in schools. He checks that the staff are well trained and the food is to a high standard. He explained to us that the food the pupils are served is balanced with all the nutrients that our children need. He asked if we had any issues or anything to discuss. One parent has a child with an allergy to pine nuts and when pesto pasta appeared on the menu she found it hard to obtain a list of ingredients. She managed it but it was hard.

A parent mentioned that it would perhaps be good to mirror the vegetarian menu to the meat menu so a child didn't feel they were eating different foods. It was noted however that it's good to have 2 choices in case the child doesn't like it.

Robert explained to us that all the meals served are balanced and the chocolate brownie contains courgette. We asked about possible tasting sessions later in the year.

We also discussed that as your child moves to juniors the portion size increases.

Discussion points

Spellings

· A year 1 parent asked whether it would be possible for spellings to be sent home weekly as opposed to termly.

These spellings are half termly as they need to be consistently practised. They could be broken [into 4/5 a week](#) by parents into smaller list if required

Year R playground

· Are there any plans for re installing the hanging bridge?

Yes, this is in hand and the school are chasing.

· Is the builder's fence/barrier now a permanent feature or are there plans to remove or replace it?

This is now gone. It was used as a visual divider for children for the playground when they first start year R.

Communications

· Please could extra care be taken to try and avoid typos on letters/documents which are sent home? Usually, communications are very accurate but there have been a few issues recently. For example, 2 spelling lists for different year groups were both labelled Year 1 spellings, causing some confusion.

The spellings referred to were actually not a typo but they were a refresher for year 2 of the year one spellings. However, the school does appreciate that mistakes happen. Everything that goes out is triple checked [and we try so hard in a very busy environment](#).

The number of different ways the school communicates can cause confusion. Sometimes letters go out via Marvellous Me, sometimes in book bags and sometimes there are extra Facebook posts, in addition to the website. It is often hard to know where to look for something and parents are worried they could miss an important communication.

The [aim is to move away from MM](#) for any communication and only [use MM](#) for the childrens curriculum and progress. This was the original intention of this platform. The website will be used as the tool for communication and parents will need to check on a Friday. The school is working hard to improve its communication. Each item will be looked at and its purpose. Any doubled up communication [we will do our absolute best to remove](#).

Marvellous Me

· A parent commented that it is sometimes hard to tell whether Marvellous Me messages are general or targeted at a particular thing their child needs to focus on.

See above

· There was feedback that the app is not very user friendly.

See above

Key word glossary

· At the curriculum evening, it was agreed that for year 1, Mrs Hillier/Miss Prior would put together a glossary of key terms to cover all the curriculum areas. Parents/carers would find this very helpful. Is there any update as to when this might be available please and could similar documents be prepared for the other year groups?

This is in progress and will be done at the start of autumn 2.

Curriculum

· A parent commented that during the year 1 Space topic, they hope the school will discuss the women that made the first moon landing possible or talk about women who went in to space on other flights, as well as the men referred to at the curriculum evening.

Yes they will be discussed

· In relation to the Year 1 curriculum, a parent noted that this is very fantasy based. They felt it would be beneficial if the school could instead introduce topics based on reality – for example wildlife, space travel, great artists, inventors etc. The parent feels that this would provide opportunities for useful learning and could be just as inspiring as castles, pirates or fairy tales. The parent also feels that the

current topics referred to above are largely based on what are, in their view, outdated gender stereotypes and on predominantly white cultural norms. They were concerned by this. (N.B. A similar point was raised and discussed at the forum on 18.10.18)

Mrs Gregory felt that maybe this was referring to the Year R curriculum as all of the suggestions are in the Year 1 curriculum already. The year 1 topic at the moment is a bridging topic from year R. This is to make more advanced learning feel familiar to children. They have been learning story language and construction of stories. Fairy tales are very segmented so are a brilliant tool for building a story scaffold to support children in writing their own stories as they move up through the key stages.

Mrs Gregory has recently been on a workshop which concentrated on stereotypes. Its very hard to find books with girls as the main character nationally and they are limited by what is available. Only 30% of story characters are female and traditionally female roles in history are in caring roles. Eg Florence nightingale. The school are constantly working hard to challenge these stereotypes. They now refer to police officer and fire workers for example. They are constantly trying and is at the forefront of the curriculum.

Payment for school trips

· Would it be possible to pay for school trips online, as junior parents can? Paying by cash or cheque is often tricky and an online option would really help.

This isn't currently something that can be done.

SATs preparation

· Some uneasiness about SATs was reported. Is there anything parents should be doing to help prepare their children?

No. The school work hard to ensure that the SAT's are not a stressful time for the children. No preparation is required. There will be SAT's workshop for parents in spring. This will be how to help support the children. [The best support for children is support their reading skills as these are fundamental skills for all of their learning and practice their spellings.](#)

· Can home learning be more targeted towards preparing the children for SATs? (A parent was not sure how, for example, the map homework would do this.)

[The home learning is to support children in all of the national curriculum, as a school we do not drill into just the core subjects we have an integrated curriculum where all subjects are given the correct coverage.](#) The map homework helps the children to learn proximity and recognise distance. All these things are key in the curriculum for year 2. The home learning is carefully considered to keep the children engaged.

Year 2 drop off

· A number of year 2 parents feel that, being unable to drop their children at the classroom doors has made it difficult to speak to their child's teacher if needed. There is usually only one member of staff on the door so it can also be hard to ask for messages to be passed on. Waiting outside at pick up

Unfortunately, due to the architecture of the school this is not something that can be changed. There isn't enough staff to police the children inside and out. Notes can always be handed to the teacher on duty at the door and teachers are available at pick up and to make appointments with.

· There was some feedback in relation to where parents/carers are standing whilst waiting for the gates to open. Perhaps a reminder could be sent out in the newsletter to wait responsibly, without blocking access for others?

Yes. In school newsletter

Website

· The new website now contains information about the dates, times and locations of school trips etc. Although useful, there is concern that this information is accessible to general members of the public.

The school will investigate. Its very difficult to have a balance of communication. On trips the children are supervised at all times.

Year 1 reading

· A concern was raised that the children only get to do one on one reading with their teacher once every half term, which the parent did not feel would be enough to monitor and assess reading progress. They have heard that this is less than children had in previous year 1 classes?

The guidelines are that a child has 1 to 1 reading once a term. The children do guided reading at least once a week. A teacher is able to assess more than one child at a time during these times. [Children are reading everyday with their teachers in daily phonic lessons where we support their phonic progression through the phases. The two line up together.](#)

Year 2 MOOT

- Parents feel it is a shame that the MOOT sessions have been reduced.

MOOT is progressive across the school and it prepares children as they move through the key stages. Year R have 4 and reduce down to 2. Year 1 start with 2 and reduce down to 1 and Year 2 have 1. Unfortunately, it has to reduce to fit in the curriculum and to help the children to transition to junior school. We are one of the very few schools who continue to plan, do and review (MOOT) outside of Year R.

White board markers

- This has been addressed in a previous forum but parents are still experiencing difficulties with white board markers staining clothes. Mrs Gregory had previously said she understood the markers were supposed to be washable. Please could the school re-visit this point?

We are sorry about this but the school do their best and do order washable markers.

Requests for parental donations

- A parent commented that, particularly recently, there appear to have been quite a few requests for financial contributions from parents – examples were given of school trips, photos, Christmas cards, fireworks tickets and Year 1 donations to make biscuits)

This was discussed at the meeting. Useful to chairs of Fosis as well as school leadership team. It would be a shame to reduce events, however if parents feel that it too much we can look at this next year. We could reduce the cards to once every 3 years for example. Will put this out to the general school population later in the year.

Allergy menu

- Would it be possible for pictures of the meals on the allergy menu to be made available to children to assist them in making their daily meal choices (in the same way as the meat and vegetarian meals are currently shown?)

Can be passed to Chartwells.