

- **PARENT FORUM MINUTES – Thursday 18th October 2018**

Attendees:

Cate Gregory – Head of Infant School
 Susan Kinch – FOSIS Co-Chair
 Jo James – FOSIS Co-Chair
 Jo Blondin – FOSIS Secretary
 Hannah Henderson – Class rep for Badgers
 Helen Scott – Class rep for Rabbits
 Davina Diallo – Class rep for Squirrels
 Fiona Brown – Class rep for Hedgehogs
 Victoria Molho – Class rep for Otters
 Claire Jerrim – Class rep for Owls
 Jo Craig – Class rep for Moles
 Laura Honan – Class rep for Fox's

Apologies from Elissa Collins, class rep for Woodpeckers and Kelly Winter, class rep for Badgers.

Thank you's/Positive Feedback

- Thanks to (last years) year 1 team for the fantastic Ugly Bug ball.
- **Marvellous Me** - Positive feedback – parents really liking it and could see how it would help their children.

It was launched in juniors the weekend before infants. There have been issues with Year R staff log-ins which are hopefully being resolved.

- There was positive feedback for Miss Dunne, new to Year R, who was said to be 'very warm and lovely with the children and parents (as is Miss Howard)'. Another parent said she is 'lovely and friendly' and they felt had helped their child to settle in well.

Mrs Gregory (CG) will note this on Miss Dunne's NQT file.

Discussion points

Drinking

Some year R parents raised concerns over the amount their children are drinking. It was felt that children were forgetting and a parent wondered if it would be helpful for reminders to be given at certain times, for example, before break time etc.

- *This is already embedded in the children's routine and they are given regular reminders.*
- *Children who have hot dinners take their water bottles with them to the hall.*
- *If bottles are emptied, staff will re-fill them. If bottles are forgotten, cups are available.*
- *Bottles and replacement lids can also be purchased at reception (bottles for £1.50.).*

Year R yellow gate

Please could some clarification be provided in relation to not entering the year R playground until the yellow gate has been opened as it has been noticed that some parents are still entering via the big gates which are usually open earlier.

- *The big gates need to be open to allow access to the scooter shed.*
- *Parents have been reminded in emails and newsletter and the school rely on parent goodwill.*

Action:

CG will put another reminder in the newsletter and send a text to parents. It was also suggested that FOSIS could put another reminder on the Facebook groups.

Wellies

Are the children required to bring wellie boots to school for winter?

- *No. The school would love it but unfortunately there isn't the storage space.*

Celebration assembly

If children receive an award in school, are parents able to attend an assembly to celebrate their success with them?

- *Unfortunately this is not possible due to space and timetabling. The year groups have their celebration assemblies on different days in the music room as the hall is used for P.E.*
- *Celebration assemblies were taken out of usual assemblies as they can last for 45 minutes.*
- *Children can also bring in trophies etc. from external activities, e.g. dance.*
- *Another reason Marvellous Me has been brought in is so the school can celebrate and share with parents/carers.*

Hedgehogs' entrance

This point has been raised at previous parent forums but there remains concern about the congestion outside Hedgehog class, especially from buggies – there are reports that children are becoming separated from their parents. Perhaps a reminder could be sent out about this area being a through-way and the need for it to be kept clear?

- *This is an ongoing struggle. School have tried using the other door before and getting parents to stand back but still had parents running across if they were slightly late. They are open to ideas.*
- *A number of suggestions were put forward including painting yellow cross marks on the pavement in the area down from the slope (like a box junction,) and asking parents to wait down the slope and the teacher further round (this could cause visibility problems). Also the possibility of placing cones on the top of the wooden wall.*

- *Discussions were had about the possibility of using both entrances and splitting the class in half by surname. CG said they haven't always got a TA in the classroom but that on the rare occasions where this might happen, there would just be a longer wait. There would still be a problem if not all parents are there at pick up. It was suggested that perhaps parents could be asked to leave buggies somewhere (as some are already doing.)*
- *CG said the school know it isn't ideal and to leave it with her - they could try a few different scenarios. She explained the problem is that it is such an old building, year R was added on, then the playground so the entrance was never thought about.*

Washable pens

Please could the school consider the use of washable pens to avoid clothes becoming stained? (This was a point raised at a previous parent forum.)

- *The school thought the current pens were washable and will go back to the supplier and check again. The problem is that the other pens dry out and school then go through them quicker.*

Equality and Diversity

Please can the school ensure they are doing everything to promote gender equality and diversity? A parent felt it would be good to see an equal number of books with leading female and male characters being studied and read aloud in class and also an effort to include books with BAME characters and same sex parents. Confirmation was also sought that stereotypes are challenged as they arise (the parent appreciated that this may well already be the case.) An example was given of a child telling another that she was wearing boy's clothes when she was wearing trousers.

- *CG said she felt this seemed like an individual parent issue and parent forum is about general issues so maybe the parent should have approached the school personally.*
- *The school is challenging society about this issue. If comments were made to staff, they would be challenged with reference to different stereotypes, cartoon characters known to the children etc.*
- *A point was raised last year about group names - staff have changed to using colours etc. The use of paw patrol characters in year R was brought up last year – the lettering has been changed to make it more explicit that it is not just about Ryder and Chase.*
- *Within PSHE, it is embedded in the curriculum that all families are different. In R.E, children learn about different festivals and talk about what they and other children do*
- *In year 2, in PSHE sex and relationships, boy babies are deliberately dressed in pink and girls in blue to challenge stereotypes. For the year R 'Once upon a time' topic, school have been trying to find books where the prince doesn't always marry the princess.*
- *Promoting gender equality and diversity is embedded in the curriculum.*

Year R staggered start

There was positive feedback in relation to the staggered start for Year R – that it worked well and promoted a lovely, welcoming calm atmosphere on the first day, meaning teachers had time to spend with each child. It was, however noted that it was a number of weeks before the yellow and red groups came together and perhaps an earlier joint session would have been good?

- *It was 2 weeks before yellow and red groups came together. The problem is trying to give all the groups equal weighting – it was felt that the summer born children may need more time in on their own and trying to balance this.*
- *CG will take this on board and look at some slight tweaks for next year.*

Light Up

Parents reported being pleased about the school supporting the 'Light Up' session on the recent inset day. It was noted that although not the school's fault, organisation could have been better as some parents didn't get notification of places until last Wednesday.

- *Light Up is a separate company and was used as a trial to try and support parents who couldn't make the inset day date change.*
- *A parent noted that it wasn't clear that the places were offered on a first come, first served basis.*
- *CG said that 8 applicants were turned away. She will provide feedback to the company.*

Year 1 Doors

It was reported that on the first day of term, there wasn't a teacher on one of the year 1 doors, which meant some parents/children were unsure of what they needed to do, leaving them feeling anxious/clingy to parents. It was noted that on the 2nd day, there was and it was much better. Perhaps this is something to be mindful of for next year?

- *CG was quite surprised as she would expect teachers to be on the door.*
- *This feedback had been in relation to Owls class door. However it was confirmed by Claire Jerrim that Miss Prior was there so perhaps there were just a few minutes when she could not be seen.*

Red notes

Play times – this has been raised at previous parent forums but there remains concerns that there are inconsistencies in relation to red notes.

- *CG said they are trying to improve their systems and are constantly reviewing them.*
- *It is difficult with red notes as when an injury is first seen, it may not look bad and then, 2 hours later, especially if rubbed or scratched, it could look a lot worse so the red note may not seem to reflect the actual injury.*

- *It could also be that a child hasn't told a teacher that they have been hurt. Sometimes they fall and say they are fine and don't want help but of course, if a child were severely hurt, a parent/carer would be called.*
- *CG asked if the feedback was in relation to inconsistencies with red notes or about the injury looking different. Jo Blondin (JB) said she thought it related to when red notes were given. CG asked whether this was at break or lunch times so they can look into which area of staff training this is. JB will make enquiries.*

Play time supervision

Concern was raised by a number of parents over the supervision of children at lunch times and that the wrong information has been given to them from incidents. For example, a parent being told their child had fallen over, when there was information to suggest they were hurt during a bit of rough play.

- *This depends on what the child tells the person who is administering the first aid.*
- *If a child later goes home and says it was rough play, please can the parents tell the school and they will look into it again.*

Shoebox appeal

Will the school be supporting a Christmas shoe box appeal this year?

- *The school can't commit to office storage for this and as explained at the AGM, are very aware of asking parents for too many things.*
- *FOSIS could organise this if they wished, through collecting in the playground on certain days. Jo Craig said if this is done, can FOSIS consider which company to use as last year, one received bad press.*

Action Point:

FOSIS to consider running a Christmas shoebox appeal.

Milk Bottles

Please could the school ask the milk company whether they are looking at alternatives to their plastic bottles?

- *It was discussed and accepted that cartons would be the only alternative and they are probably slightly worse.*
- *The milk bottles are re-used in school for junk modelling, capacity activities in maths, sensory activities (making musical instruments) etc. Cartons could not be used like this and would end up straight in landfill.*

Points from previous parent forum

Parenting Course

The school had previously confirmed that Karen Allen could run a parenting class. FOSIS had conducted a poll and there were an insufficient number of parents who could attend on the day set. It was suggested this could be 'shelved' until the new academic year. Could this now be re-visited?

- *Yes - Karen Allen spent a lot of time putting a course together.*
- *It would need 12 parents and with enough notice, could run on any of Karen's working days - Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday.*

Action Point:

FOSIS to run a poll for the proposed parenting class.

AOB

Marvellous Me

A year R parent was wondering when it would be active and whether it will include overall class observations as well as individual ones (they felt it might give some more insight into what the children do each day.)

- *There have been issues with Year R passwords and teachers have been locked out. This is being resolved.*
- *There will be individual observations linked to the learning puppets that will be sent home. If a class gets a head teachers award, this will be fed back – if they earn 5 they get an extra playtime with Team Spirit.*
- *Twice a week, a notification will be sent home about what the whole class is learning about generally. There will be extra messages for significant additional achievements.*
- *JC felt it would be helpful to re-emphasise to parents that Marvellous Me is not the same as Tapestry. CG felt this would be a good idea.*
- *CG said there would be no photos or videos sent home due to GDPR and she thought that the juniors may be reviewing this.*

Photos

Feedback from a few parents who were unfortunately not keen. One felt they were old-fashioned.

- *There seemed to be inconsistencies in the quality.*
- *CG will provide feedback to the company.*

Parking

Ongoing issues with parking/waiting at the end of the zigzags, by the bollards and on double yellows on neighbouring roads, e.g. on Wilton Road.

- Did Mrs Fay and Sarah Horsfall have a steering group about this and can they help?
 - It is noted that the school already puts reminders in emails/letters – can this be done again as the problem seems to have worsened recently (Mrs Kennedy has been spoken to about this in her transport role).
 - Could a polite leaflet be created to put on parked cars in such areas reminding them of the risks to children crossing roads and the statistics etc. – possibly suggesting parking at the Range? A parent has offered to put leaflets out if it is thought this would help.
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- *Sarah Horsfall is leading a steering group.*
 - *There was a discussion about the possible use of leaflets and Jo James (JJ) noted that the school have keen to avoid parental conflict. CG said that blocking off the bus lane has helped but parking is an ongoing issue.*
 - *The PCSO's have been involved previously and CG will contact them again.*
 - *JJ said that FOSIS could reiterate the message on the Facebook groups, including a reminder about being able to park at the Range. JC asked that parents/carers are pointed towards the Facebook travel group – there should be a link it from the year group pages.*
 - *CG pointed out that walking from the Range would count for the children's walk to school initiative.*
 - *Leaflets - CG suggested speaking to Sarah Horsfall. If it is getting bad again, it could be worth a try. We need to try to be careful and conscious of possible complaints from neighbours. There are issues caused by lack of hospital parking and it is important to try and keep the two communities together. JJ felt that the zigzags and Bellemoor road double yellow lines were the two main problem areas.*
 - *As part of her work with the eco-council, Mrs Kennedy is picking up some parts of this issue.*
 - *The crossing patrol vacancy is ongoing.*

Action points:

CG will remind parents about parking in the newsletter.

FOSIS to reiterate the message on Facebook groups – and direct parents/carers to the Facebook travel group?

Contact to be made with Sarah Horsfall, parent governor about parking issues/possible use of leaflets.

Stickers

A class rep present at the meeting asked about the purpose of the blue stickers children get and what they are.

- *CG said an explanation of the main stickers will be provided in the newsletter which is about to come out.*

Mrs Gregory's Comments

CG did not have anything else to add but thanked parents/carers for the good AGM turn out. She said "we are excited to all be working together and continuing the strong work with FOSIS."