

**PARENT FORUM**  
**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017 9.10am**

**Attendees**

Jenny Bleeck  
Cate Gregory  
Ryan O’Hearne  
Jo James  
Anna Papanikolaou (Foxes)  
Caroline Watts (Badgers)  
Amy Mayhew (Moles)  
Poonam Pathak (Woodpeckers)  
Mary Hornby (Hedgehogs)  
Rachel Holloway (owls)

**New Items**

**Year 2 feedback**

**Curriculum Updates**

The possibility of using an electronic platform such as Moodle was discussed to keep parents up to date and informed about what their children are learning, which would require weekly/fortnightly updates from teaching staff. A parent felt this was a way to support their child’s learning.

Mrs Gregory: The leadership team feel that the time required by teaching staff to achieve this would detract from the time spent in classrooms. Also, the school feels what is sent home currently is all that is needed in terms of supporting a child’s learning. i.e. Reading books, spelling, home learning, learning targets from parents evenings.

A generic timetable for each class can be published on the school website. This will include library, P.E. etc. This can include the topic and overall learning per half term. The school noted that they are keen to stick to the curriculum timetable to help children master the skills they have learnt.

It was also noted that class teachers are always prepared to discuss individuals by appointment.

**Scooter/ Bike parking**

It has been noted that the bike sheds have become hard to manage in terms of separating bikes and scooters.

Mrs Gregory: FOSIS created signs to separate the bike and scooters last year. The message on this has perhaps become somewhat diluted and could be revisited. FOSIS to check signs are in place and class reps to reiterate message on Facebook groups.

**Jacket potatoes**

Jacket potatoes were provided on a weds for a term last year as the menu choices at that time was not popular with our school. Is it possible these could continue to be offered.

Mrs Gregory: The menu will change after half term, and will hopefully be acceptable to most children. This could be discussed in the future if there are recurrent issues with the menu.

### **After school and breakfast clubs**

Are there plans for a longer after school club or breakfast club to be held on school premises?

Mrs Gregory and Mr O'Hearn: The school are unable to provide this themselves as it needs to be run completely separately with its own Ofsted. Although the school are open to this, to date we have been unable to find a provider that will work as a good match for the school. Two companies have previously been reviewed but were not appropriate. Other problems are that the school has very little storage and all of this and more would be required by an after school club. The other big obstacle is that it would mean the school would no longer be able to run its own after school clubs. If the right provider is found then the school would have to find a way to make the right decision on this.

### **Year 2 entrance.**

The year 2 entrance feels a bit dark and daunting. Is there any way to brighten it up?

Mrs Gregory: We have realised the light has not been being put on in the entrance. This will help immediately. The wedge for the door is also missing so a hook will be put on the keep it open. We would love to have bunting or decoration if FOSIS could help.

### **Mud Kitchen**

Are the year 2's allowed to use the mud kitchen? Or is it just year 1 during MOOT?

Mrs Gregory: At the moment, this is just available for use for year 1's during MOOT. This is because it needs adult supervision. It is not to be used during lunch and play as appropriate supervision cannot be provided to ensure play. Already a lot of the equipment provided was damaged in the first few weeks of term, from activity before and after school. It has been noted that the year 2's would like to use it. There are plans under way to enhance the outside space provision for Year 2.

### **Wish list**

Generally positive feedback for the amazon wish-list. Is it possible to add which gift is appropriate for which year group?

Mrs Gregory: This list was launched very quickly so that it could be set in motion near the beginning of term. A lot is appropriate for all years but the list can be retouched.

### **Year 1 feedback**

#### **Handwriting – cursive script**

With cursive script how do teachers marry the baseline lead in for all letters when certain letters lead out at the top? Is it possible to drop the lead in to stop confusion?

Mrs Gregory:

Unfortunately no this is not possible as they need the lead in to make it easier to join up. The curriculum expectation is that all children at the end of year 2 will write in cursive joined up

handwriting to achieve 'meeting expectation'. There has previously been inconsistency with how handwriting was taught across the school, which may have created confusion for some children particularly at the change of year. As a result a new script for handwriting across the school has been introduced to Year R and proven very successful. The teachers involved are all very enthused. It was launched across the whole school in Autumn 1 with the INSET day we had in September. Parents will be informed about this soon from their year groups now the children are familiar. Year R will have a lead in but no lead out and in year 1 the lead out will be introduced.

A lot of work has been done in the school to find the best way to achieve the curriculum expectation.

### **Handwriting – Kinetic letters**

A parent has heard about Kinetic Letters for handwriting and wondered if this was a scheme the school was aware of? It seems simpler for children to grasp with good results. There is a significant investment which may be untenable in the current climate.

Mrs Gregory: Unfortunately, there is no investment available. The school feel that the new scheme discussed in the last point is an appropriate step forward at present.

### **Curriculum refresher**

Parents are wondering if it is possible to have a refresher as the last evening was a while ago or a newsletter with the material made available.

Mrs Gregory: There is an evening planned in Autumn 2 week 3.

### **Witches in the hocus pocus topic.**

There is uncertainty with some year 1 parents on the emphasis on witches in the hocus pocus topic in year 2. They are wondering if it could be changed to a friendlier magical thing.

Mrs Gregory and Mr O'Hearn: This topic has been run for several years with no significant concerns from parents. The creative flow that comes with this topic is amazing as it really sparks the child's imagination. Discussion will be made about the witch's side of it although that is key as the children come back from their trip fully immersed and enthusiastic about the topic. It was noted that the children are never frightened during this topic. Arrangements can be made if a parent does not want their child to participate, and this has been done for some children currently in Year 2. They can be separated from the main group when Mrs Hearn 'performs' (as a witch) but will still participate in the rest of the trip, which is an excellent geography trip. During dress up day they could be 'pupil teachers' in year R. If there is individual parent concern this should be discussed with the school in advance of the topic to address these concerns.

## **Television**

How often do the children watch television at school, as some children are mentioning it on a daily basis?

Mrs Gregory: Television is often used as a hook or stimulus in lessons or in assemblies.

Children engage quickly with TV so it is often used a way to reinforce a message.

Television is used in wet play and as a choice for golden time. Also a film is watch in sections in the last week of term. Towards the end of this term television may be used more in Year R as due to their age those children get particularly tired.

Year leaders will be informed that this has been discussed. Perhaps it is used too much?

## **Washable whiteboard markers.**

Is it possible for the school to get washable whiteboard markers if they exist, as lots of clothes are getting ruined.

Mrs Gregory: In theory they are!

The whiteboard pens were changed a couple of years ago as this point was raised before, and the current brand was suggested as being particularly washable. It could be that the supplier has changed the pens. The school will look into this.

## **Rough Play**

There is some parental concern about rough play during break/lunch. It doesn't always appear intentional but there seems to be a lot of incidents occurring during breaks.

Mrs Gregory: Rough play is constantly monitored in the playground. It often occurs as a result of their 'superhero' play. The children can become engrossed in the game and it can change in a split second. The staff try to spot it as early as possible to stop the game becoming too rough. One reminder is given and then the game is stopped if the behaviour is ongoing. Children can find it difficult to draw the line. If an incident or injury occurs then both parties are sat down to reflect on what has happened and to take ownership. All lunchtime staff are trained in this method. This message will be reiterated in assemblies.

## **Celebration events**

Celebration events seem to always be on a Thursday. Is it possible for them to be on different days to allow more parents to attend?

Mrs Gregory: The school has tried to address this where possible. Year leaders will be reminded to switch days. A few of the celebration events happen after creative time. Thursday for year 2 and Wednesday for year 1. This is because they create the items for celebration events during this time. For example, fruit kebabs.

## **Books**

Some parents are wondering why books are not being changed more regularly? Others are wondering if the children could be reminded a couple of times a week to change their books.

Mrs Gregory: It will be recommunicated to parents that the children need to change their own books from year 1. Note to parents also that the child can be sent back in if they forget to change their book. Children often forget as they walk through the door.

### **Year R to 1 transition.**

Lots of praise for how this was handled.

Other parents are asking for information on the handover from year R teacher to year 1 teachers in terms of personality and friendship groups.

Mrs Gregory: An extensive part of the transition process is talking about the children. All teaching staff are included in this. There are very lengthy discussions about key children and their needs. All staff meet to discuss the cohort and for the best classes to suit the children. The feedback is constant all year. The process takes a long time and the transition will continue all year, with year 1 teachers asking year R teachers about children's behaviour and performance whilst they were in Year R. If a parent requests something, for example, for their child to be separated from another, the parent's view would always override the child's.

Teaching staff are very open to meeting with parents if required, to discuss these decisions.

### **One to one reading**

Some parents have raised concern about the lack of one to one reading time that children have had, some reporting only reading once or twice since the start of term (not including guided reading). The same parents remember their older children reading much more frequently.

Mrs Gregory: Teachers are expected to read on a one to one basis with every child at least once a term. One to one reading obviously takes up a lot of time and with most children guided reading is far more appropriate. We are practising the children's reading skills daily in phonics and also within small groups.

### **Communications**

The Sunday evening reminders on Facebook are great, thank you. Is it possible for the weekly communications to be posted on Facebook or the attachments to be posted as images?

Mrs Gregory: The attachments are all available to view on the website.

### **Attainment levels**

Parents evening gave more insight into the key stage level and the meaning of 'emerging' skills and 'independent'. Where can parents find out more about this?

Mrs Gregory: Year 1 curriculum evening is coming up in week 2 of autumn 2. The website pages contain lots of information. If this information does not cover this issue please raise it again and we will develop these pages.

## **Socialising**

Moving to the big playground has been a big change for parents too, and it feel less sociable. Would a regular parent's coffee morning provide a good opportunity to get the parents mingling again? What are the options for this regarding school facilities? Could we use the main hall for all year groups, or the community room for year 1?

Mrs Gregory: Year groups are welcome to use the community room for regular coffee mornings and these can be booked through the office.

## **Year R feedback.**

### **Wilton Road junction.**

Are there any plans to improve the crossing? As there is no zebra crossing/lollipop person it can be very difficult to cross.

Mrs Gregory: There is funding from the council for a lollipop person, but hiring for this position has been incredibly difficult. It has taken 2.5 years to date. There has been a person hired for this position, but there are some complications. They may still start work and as such the school is not actively looking to recruit at present.

The idea of a zebra crossing could be suggested to the council, but quite unlikely they would agree as it would make the traffic flow on that junction very slow. It would be a point worth raising with Sarah Horsfall. (Transport safeguarding Governor)

There has been a great deal of backlash from the local community after the road was blocked last year. There are a lot of cars parking on double yellow lines, most probably parents, causing obstructions on the corners and causing backups in traffic flow. The dead end is being used as parking spaces.

There is a facebook page about improving the transport and environment around the school. FOSIS will post a link to this on all pages to encourage parents with an interest in this to get involved.

Children handing out unofficial parking tickets didn't sit right with the school.

All parents are given a traffic pledge which they are encouraged to sign. Perhaps this could be reiterated to year 1 and 2 parents? The newsletter might be a good way to do that.

### **Water bottles.**

Is there a way to encourage children to drink more in the day? Bottles are going home full up.

Mrs Gregory: The children are encouraged to refill their bottles, so it could be that they have done that.

The children are encouraged to drink at snack time, playtime, before lunch, after lunch and at afternoon play.

Some parents felt that their child may drink more from a cup rather than a bottle. This has been tried before in the school but there was a great deal of waste produced. Perhaps for individual children it could be a good solution. Parents to discuss with teacher if there is individual concern.

### **Leadership team feedback**

Mrs Gregory and Mr O'Hearn: Last year it was requested that the school run an 'incredible years' course for parents. Unfortunately, this couldn't happen as the cost was prohibitive.

However, the school have tried something else and Karen Allen our Parent Support Worker has written an 8 week parenting course. There will be a different theme each week. It will be to support parents with children's behaviour, providing parenting techniques and helping to understand emotions. This will need to be supported by another facilitator and would therefore generate a cost. The cost to parents would be approximately £30.

This course will run in the spring term on Wednesday mornings.

The school would need to find 12 parents in order run it and it would be first come first served.

Parents were concerned that this would discount working parents. Is there any way it could be run on an evening to allow for working parents to attend. This will be discussed with Karen although it would generate an increased cost due to it being out of Karen's normal working hours. Parents at the meeting understood this and felt this would be appropriate. Parents also asked if younger children could be brought to these sessions. This is probably not appropriate, but will be clarified with Karen.