

PARENT FORUM – Monday 16th April 2018 18.30 Minutes

Attendees

Cate Gregory – Head of Infant School
Hazel Hayter – Executive Head
Emma Sisson – Woodpecker class rep
Caroline Watts – Badger class rep
Anna Papanikolaou – Foxes class rep
Rachel Holloway – Owls class rep
Vicky Farrow – Rabbits class rep
Yvette Killick – Squirrels class rep
Rebecca Wright – Hedgehogs class rep

Apologies – Jen Bleeck, Cindy Knight, Jo James, Moles reps, Otters reps

Thank Yous

- Thanks to the school team from year 1 for the amazing trip to Manor Farm. The trip was really well organised and helped the children to learn in a hands-on way.
- Thanks to the admin team for their weekly focus for the website. It has helped us remember that it is there as a resource. The website is great as there is loads of information on there.
- Thanks to the school team for the management of the school on the 'snow days' – in particular the day where the children came into school – it was very well organised and safe, and the extra time allowed to get to school was appreciated.

Discussion points

Year 2 Transition

How will the year 2 be transitioned into junior school?
Will there be any information evenings for parents to help us?

Lots of initiatives are put in place to ensure year 2 become familiar with the Junior school. They have already had visit. There is a whole programme of activities planned – with staff and children, in the classroom, field, playground, story time activities, Junior staff coming into class. Any concerns raised by the children are listened to and addressed. If some children need extra reassurance, they are taken on extra visits to Juniors. In Summer 2 PSHÉ topics are centred around 'change'.

There will be an information evening – the year 3 team will present this. It's like the introduction to Year R, with key information presented. A booklet of the information is also provided.

Children will find out who their new year 3 teacher is in July – this is the same day as those children who are going to a new school visit their new school. On this day all children will go home with a letter for parents with their teacher's name.

Year 3 Curriculum Information

If possible a 'round up' session would be great especially for those parents whose children are moving into year 3. We think we need more than the general overview of what they will be learning and more of a targeted session on maths and English. We know that things will step up a gear in year 3 and want to be prepared.

Curriculum evenings are already put on and the school can look at putting on more of these if required. It was noted, however, that these are often not well attended. The school will look into providing a 'Maths in Year 3' evening.

SATs

There has been a lot of press and awareness about the stress that SATs have on children/teachers/parents. Even the government is starting to acknowledge this and are planning to stop them in 2023 (too late for our children). I've heard of parents keeping their children off for the SATs. What is the schools view of this? As the children move closer to the end of ks1 there is less time for moot, creativity etc as the focus is on the SATs. Would the school ever consider removing themselves from the SAT exams?

The school think very carefully about how to introduce KS1 SATs and their view is that the approach taken does not put pressure on the children. The school are very careful to ensure the children do not feel like they are in a 'test' and the word 'SATs' is not used – they are referred to as 'work booklets'. The children like the booklets that are used, and they get used to practising them, by using booklets from previous years. They are practising these already and get used to the layout and using them without knowing that they are 'SATs'. When they take the official SATs they need to be undertaken in exam type conditions, but the children do not know this, and this is handled sensitively. Booklets are spread out over a number of days, and only one booklet at a time would be undertaken in a day.

The inclusion team work very closely with the year leader and class teachers to plan lots of brain breaks and other supportive activities. Extra staff are provided to give lots of reassurance. KS1 is not completely dependent on the booklet – other work examples can also be provided if any of the children have a wobble on the day. Individual parents would be spoken to about the set up for their little ones. In some very rare occasions children with a severe SEND need can be disallowed but this is becoming more and more difficult to do.

The school has never had a situation where parents/carers have kept their children off for SATs. They are happy that their approach to them works well.

Maths Learning

We would love to have more input into how the kids are learning, especially maths which is taught in a very different way from how we learnt. We don't want our kids to be confused when we try to help them.

As mentioned previously, the school run curriculum evenings but the uptake is often low. These have been tried at different times of the day, but the school is open to new ideas. It was agreed by attendees that the curriculum sessions are really useful, and could perhaps be run in the evening and then on the following morning to provide more options for parents/carers to attend. The school will implement this next year. The presentation material is always put on the school website and it was discussed if this could be supplemented with links to video clips/ website resources.

Parenting Course

A poll of which day would be best to run the parenting course has been done and there has not been enough interest to secure 12 people on any day. Perhaps this could be shelved until the new intake in September?

The course material has all been developed so this will be put on hold until there is enough interest to run it, noting that this can only be run during the day time.

Daily Mile

Parents have read a report in the daily telegraph on childhood obesity. A school in Scotland has trialled something called 'The Daily Mile'. Children come into school as normal but keep their coats on. Immediately after registration the children and teacher go outside (in all weathers) and run, walk or jog for 15 minutes. The outcomes proved that children are more alert after exercise and had used it as a social opportunity and were therefore less inclined to chat. This initiative has now gone global with over 900 schools participating in the UK alone. Is this something Shirley Infant School would consider signing up for.

This is something that the school, and in particular Miss Prior, is keen on implementing and are already looking into the logistics of this. It fits in with one of the goals for the City's Healthy High Five Award. There are already quite a few healthy activities being implemented such as 'wake and shake' before lunch, so this will add to that.

It was discussed that research shows that it works well in the morning. The school will trial it in 'healthy and active' week and see what times of day work best. Staff will take part too.

Year 1 Trips always on a Tuesday

The year 1 trips all seem to be on a Tuesday - could the days be rotated at all.

Tuesdays are often chosen as it works well with planning time and fitting in the debrief work in the rest of the week. Thursdays/Fridays are generally not ideal as they don't provide enough time after the trip for the children to write about it. However, this will be reviewed with a view to trying to provide a variety of days where possible.

Year R Website Photo

It was brought to the school's attention that there was a photo of year R children on the websites holding certificates, and if you zoomed in, you could see the children's names.

The school apologises for this and takes these matters very seriously - the photo will be removed this evening (16/04/18).

Year R – Gender Stereotyping

The curriculum seems to be supported by a high proportion of male role models/ leaders and does not seem to be very balanced in terms of gender diversity and female role models. E.g use of Paw Patrol, group names

The school tries to ensure that the material used is balanced. Gender stereotypes are challenged where the opportunity arises, and language is used carefully – such as police officer, fire fighter. Paw Patrol has been used for the first time this year, and this will be reviewed. The school will look at this issue more generally across the school and look at the balance of male and female role models used in teaching material etc.

AOB

The school thanks you for the positive feedback on the website, and is happy that it is now working better and supporting parents/carers.