

PARENT FORUM – Thursday 24th January 2018 2pm Minutes

Attendees

Cate Gregory – Head of infant school

Hazel Hayter – Executive head

Jen Bleeck – FOSIS chair

Jo James – FOSIS secretary

Helen Heal – Moles class rep

Jen Cook – Foxes class rep

Rachel Holloway – Owls class rep

Laura Martin – Badgers class rep

Mary Capocci – Hedgehogs class rep

Playground and Playtimes

Rough play

This continues in the playground. Children are reporting being knocked over, particularly by boys playing superheroes. Could there be more supervision at playtime regarding this?

We are currently at capacity in terms of supervision. We have the same ratios of staff to children as every school and more in some cases. This rough play happens when a game is started and then goes too far. We manage this by removing the child, who is given the opportunity to calm down by holding a hand until the supervisor senses the child is ready to play again. We then use restorative practise with the child, which all supervisors are trained. This has come up the last few parent forums and the school would like to welcome any parents in to discuss individual cases.

Red Slips

What constitutes getting a red slip? There seems to be inconsistencies as to when a first aider examines a child or doesn't. One parent had one child with a small injury and a red slip and another with bruises and cuts but no red slip.

If this is an individual case then perhaps the parent this involved could come in to discuss with school. A red slip is issued if a child receives any first aid, for example a plaster or a cold compress.

Friendship bench

How is this managed by staff? Children have reported sitting on the bench all break and not been joined by another child. This is possibly a year 2 issue as friendships are more forged. Would a staff member intervene at any point?

*A staff member **always** intervenes if there is a child on the friendship bench. Often when asked if they are ok a child will reply 'fine I'm just watching'. They sometimes need to take time out but are always approached and helped back in to a game if that's what they want to do.*

Dinner winner stickers

It seems a little conflicting to reward those children who clear their plates whilst also promoting healthy eating. For example, only eating until you are full. Could this be reviewed?

Dinner winner stickers are given for a range of reasons. If a child eats a vegetable or tries something new for example. It's not always a clean plate. Children are encouraged to eat if it is felt they are not eating enough to sustain them for the afternoon. If there were issues with a particular child not eating it would be fed back to the teacher and, in turn, to the parent.

Mud Kitchen

Parents are concerned about the use of the mud kitchen, with regards to children getting messy in school uniform. There is also a hygiene concern. Animals could have used the mud kitchen and then children may not wash their hands.

Children are always encouraged to wash hands before they eat lunch or a snack. The new mud pit is covered at night to prevent contamination with animal waste. Aprons are provided to avoid messing their uniform. Creative play with mud kitchens is proven to support development and learning through

play. Staff have witnessed a number of lovely examples for this and feel it is a valuable resource for the school.

Scooter/bike shed

Are there any plans to enlarge or update this? The scooter section often overflows in to the bikes and it gets really jammed.

Unfortunately, there are no plans to change the bike shed. This is due to funds but also space. We would hate to lose playground space.

As discussed at the last meeting FOSIS are to review signs. A possibility is to remove racks in the scooter section to increase space.

School run

Parking

Cars are still regularly being parked on the double yellow lines and in the dead end. One parent has seen a very near miss. This junction is very dangerous with cyclists going full pelt. Can we request PCSO visits or the CCTV van?

As previously discussed the school is at capacity in what it can do. We request visits but it doesn't solve the problem long term and the fact is that it is parents who are causing the issues with parking and unsafe driving. Parents can take photos and they need to send them into the council directly. Unfortunately the school cannot do this for them. However, we do wish to avoid any ill feeling between parents. Jo James to contact Bob Reeve (SCC) and see if he can support in any way.

Crossing patrol

Any news? One parent has seen a report on parents at another school manning the crossings on a rota basis. Is this something the school would support?

Legally it's not possible for the school to support this just as the school cannot be responsible for what happens beyond the school gates. Patrol crossing officers are employed by the council and require training. Unfortunately, the position remains vacant.

Scooters

Scooters and bikes are still being ridden in the playground, by children and adults, with quite a few near misses. Could this be reiterated to parents.

This will be in the newsletter on Friday. FOSIS will reinforce through Facebook pages. It was very effective when children were giving out flyers in the playground. It will be considered if this is something that could be done again, perhaps involving the junior travel ambassadors?

Doors

Parents have asked that if someone is having a discussion with teaching staff before or after school could they ensure they are not blocking the way for other children to enter the classrooms.

This will be discussed with teaching staff. If individuals feel this is an issue then please speak to teacher.

Leaving school

Some parents are concerned that teaching staff do not always ensure that a child is with the correct adult.

The school is concerned about this as they work hard to ensure the child is with the correct grown up. It would be helpful to know which class this came from so that it can be discussed with that teacher.

Curriculum

Sparkle awards

Do these continue in year 1?

No, the sparkle awards are only for year R.

Schedule

As previously asked could we have a brief/rough outline of weekly activities, to help prompt discussion at home? i.e.: Monday – assembly, moot, phonics etc.

Yes. This was provided as requested shortly after the last parent forum meeting and the information is on the website.

Reading

Further to the reading question asked at the previous Parent Forum - if resources were available, would the school like to do more 121 reading rather than guided reading weekly and 121 termly? If so, is there a need for parent/carer volunteers to help make this happen?

The school feels that the ratio of 121 vs guided reading is right. Guided reading is a much better way to monitor children's progress than more 121. Also, its well-researched that children do better in a classroom group rather than 121. If an individual child needs more 121 practice they will get that and will be heard reading more often than once a half term.

Our parent helpers help with many other things than reading such as handwriting, number bonds etc. Parents are always welcome but equally the school are not desperate for more helpers.

Guided reading

How does guided reading work in their groups? Do they read in groups of ability, and how do they match the level appropriate for all of them?

This information is on the website and was also covered in the curriculum meetings, slides of which are available on the website..

Home learning

There has been some concern that the home learning is not uniform across the three classes (year 1). Some parents were asked to do time homework and others not. Some got a DVD to help and some didn't (possibly a task for pupil premium children). Concerns that this was not fair.

The DVD was a piece of homework for pupils that receive pupil premium. Every year the school must prove that the children who qualify for pupil premium get help over and above the other pupils. This needs to be documented and where funds are given we must show where it is spent. We are obliged to do this by the government. There is a report for this on the website where some of the resources are available for all children. Homework is otherwise uniform across the year group.

Reading books

Inconsistency between the teachers about progressing children. Also, is it possible to have feedback on what the child needs to progress from their current level. E.g. tricky words, comprehension etc.

There are stickers stuck in the reading books when the children move up a book band and this should be of help to parents. The school are aware that some of these have been missing and they should be being used now. Staff training just before Christmas picked up that this wasn't being done consistently.

Some parents feeling that the book band their child is on is too easy as children are reading all the words without decoding. Parents realise that comprehension is a focus as well but the concern is that they are not practising decoding and then the child will become de skilled.

This seems like it could be an individual concern. Perhaps this parent could discuss this with the class teacher.

The senior leadership team monitor the progress of children and if a child hasn't progressed it would be brought up with that teacher.

Sea City Trip

There were parents who raised concern about the focus on loss of life on the recent trip to the Sea City museum. Several children returned from the trip very distressed. There is concern that perhaps the content of this trip was not suitable for 6/7-year olds. This could perhaps be fed back to the Sea City museum. These concerns were not over the way the school taught the topic but specifically over the visit to the museum.

The school has dealt with individual parents who expressed concern and the Seacity museum has been made aware of this. The school welcomes any other feedback from parents about this trip.

Staffing

Maternity cover

Is there any news on the maternity cover for Miss Mew. Parents are keen to know what arrangements are being made.

Owls have received letters this week with the information. Miss Mew will start her maternity leave at the end of the spring term.

Misc

Facebook pages

Do the school have any suggestions for stopping inappropriate posts being put on yearbook groups? Perhaps approval for posts.

The school would be happy if FOSIS wanted to make pages admin approval but feels it might destroy the sense of community. Any inappropriate posts are removed if needs be. The class reps feel that the groups should stay as is.

Has consideration been given to having a whole school Facebook group to enable slicker communication to the whole school?

No. The school uses the weekly email to communicate and is happy with that.

Perhaps the school could send a reminder to all parents at the start of each term that they have signed an IT mandate on responsible use and guidance for the Facebook pages.

FOSIS will take responsibility for this.

Attendance certificates

It seems strange to some parents to reward/ exclude children based on something that is very much out of their control. Especially as some in year R are below compulsory school age. If your child has been ill due to the flu epidemic and now a sickness bug that cannot be helped.

A parent received a letter about poor attendance and enquired whether they would have a routine meeting to discuss it and they were told this wasn't the case.

Schools have a range of ways to promote good attendance as we are now accountable for this as part of Ofsted, and Southampton as a city is one of the worst in the country.. This is the way we have chosen to do it as we need to do something. The attendance certificates are not only for 100%. There is a sliding scale down to about 97% so that a few days off is ok. There are 6 chances a year to get a certificate.

Parents are welcome to come in anytime to discuss issues they may have with attendance, but meetings are not arranged routinely..

Communication

The letters sent by the office can sometimes seem curt and/or have the wrong information.

Specific information was asked for but not provided.

Yes, sometimes dates are wrong and the school apologises for this. We make mistakes but do try our best. The school does get lots of people to check them and sometimes they can go through 4 people and we miss it. We are very sorry when this happens and endeavour to try to ensure mistakes are not there. We don't like them any more than parents do.

Parenting class

Could it be noted that there a lot of grandparents that collect from school as the parents are working. As the school staff are not able to accommodate evening courses could someone be brought in to run it? USH use Lorraine Lee who provides training for parents.

Could the parenting session be offered on another day?

Unfortunately, historically when things are run in the evening there is very poor attendance. The school doesn't feel that the amount of organisation involved would generate the interest required. The school were promised that there would be at least 12 interested parents to attend the sessions with Karen on Wednesdays and it didn't materialise.

FOSIS to run a poll for which day of Karen's current working week would best suit the parents to attend these sessions. At least 12 parents would be needed to enable a parenting course to run.

After school clubs

Year R parents are wondering why summer born children can't join after school clubs?

This was covered at the welcome meeting. Unfortunately, due to staff to child ratios the clubs are only available the term the children are 5. The school also feels that the first term is very tough on year R pupils and they need the rest.

Thank you's

Maths week - Children were really engaged and loved the shop idea.

The change of term dates over Christmas making the break longer were very much appreciated.

Lots of thanks you's for the Christmas performance and the amazing effort made by the school leading up to Christmas. It was clear that a lot of hard work had gone into the planning.

Massive thank you to Karen Allen for providing a parenting course that we asked for last year.

AOB

Mrs Gregory filled us in on some items that came out of the parent questionnaire last May. The school has worked on giving more notice for in-school events so that working parents can attend. We all agreed that the dates for the Christmas performances were given with great notice.

PSHE also came up on the questionnaire so the school have focused on SEAL home learning and re looked at the PSHE section on the website. You will find information on restorative practice and respecting awards.

The curriculum newsletters have also become more focused with information about what the children are learning in phonics, maths etc. We hope the parents have noticed the change.

Wet play – as long as it's safe they go out as they need to blow off steam. Unfortunately some days it's just not possible.