

Parent Forum Minutes

Date of Meeting: 7 April 2022

Present: Jo Tearle, Sarah Crookall, Poonam Pathic, Rachel Holloway, Jen Cook, Jen Pillinger, Zoe Konn, Tansy Bailey, Amy Mayhew

Apologies: Heather Barrow, Marle Coetzee, Cath Dixon, Jacqui Westbury-Hogg, Naomi Rogers, Jo Craig, Claire Jerrim, Sarah Scott, Charlotte Webb, Elspeth Fenton, Louise Fox.

	Feedback from Parents	School's initial response	Notes of discussion at meeting (if required)
Inappropriate Language:	<p>Parents would like to know more about how this was structured and what the intended outcome/purpose was.</p> <p>There was particular confusion about the use of the word "gay" as a negative term but when used correctly it is entirely appropriate and positive. There appears to have been some inconsistent messages about using the word gay in context.</p>	<p>We have introduced a strapline of #It'sNotOK and talked with children in whole school assemblies about words that are being used in a derogative way (including 'gay'), how this is not acceptable, and how they can respond if they hear these used as an insult.</p> <p>In their classes, children have thought about words that are not OK to use as an insult.</p>	<p>The school had identified that there seemed to be a lot of children struggling with what was OK to say, particularly the differences between what's OK to say to friends compared with parents, compared with teachers etc. to the extent that it was felt it needed a whole school approach.</p> <p>It is difficult to talk about the proper meaning of the word gay in a whole school assembly due to the age range and understanding from Y3 to Y6 so this was addressed in individual class PSHE.</p> <p>The school is supporting the children to understand that OK words are not OK when used with an unkind intent.</p> <p>It was asked if there was a curriculum guide – there is but it's quite vague around acceptance, different types of relationships and gender. The kids are actually more ahead of it in terms what they are already starting to know.</p>

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New school values, personal skills, logo and branding		<p>The new Personal Skills and Values have been shared through Weekly Communication – do class reps feel these have been sufficiently visible?</p> <p>We would like to launch a rebranding of the schools, with a new logo and rebranded website, office etc – what do reps think of the designs?</p> <p>Share Graphic Designer work with Forum for feedback</p>	<p>Forum Members felt that with no opportunity to be within the school then they hadn't really had a chance to absorb the new messaging.</p> <p>Positive feedback on designs. Ideally new logos will be on uniform eventually but there is no confirmed plans as yet, (certainly not the start of next year). If and when new uniform is introduced there will be no need for parents to replace uniform until old uniform is grown out of or wears out, there will be a number of years where we have multiple uniform designs.</p>
		<p>We would like to provide parent workshops on Zones of Regulation, and on Collaborative Problem Solving – would like to seek Forum views on these</p>	<p>Parents generally like the choice of in-person and virtual workshops – maybe in-person but streamed so virtual attendance is also possible</p> <p>Feedback from Forum Members was to consider age range in terms differences in approach.</p>

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		<p>Proposal to alter the focus of Parent Forum so it becomes forward-looking, convened when school need to run a change past a small group of parents in order to get some initial responses which can then inform how we go forward and communicate the change</p>	<p>Agreed, Forum Members are keen to make the Forum more proactive and to facilitate good communication with parents.</p> <p>Parents would still like the opportunity to give regular feedback. It was suggested that at the end of every term we do a complaints and compliments survey to collect the type of feedback that usually comes to the Forum. This would be more "for noting" rather than issues that need a response. There could also be a form on the website that parents can submit to but with a clear statement that they may not get a response.</p> <p>In most instances the best course of action where there are concerns will always be to speak to your class teacher.</p>

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Reading, Reflections and Planners:	<p>Y3 - How often are children expected to read to an adult in school in order to be assessed to be moved up?</p> <p>How/why were infants able to return to real life reading books in September but this is still not in place in Juniors?</p> <p>What is the weekly reading display and how does it work?</p>	<p>How often each child reads to an adult in school is entirely proportional to need. Children's reading levels are assessed half-termly and on average children will move up a couple of levels per year, when the teacher thinks their fluency, expression, understanding of punctuation etc. makes them ready for the next level.</p> <p>Children have access to 'real life' books in school – a new reading system has been invested in so that they have books in school that mirror the levels in Reading Planet. We did not have a librarian at the start of the year but books can now be borrowed from the library and taken home, thanks to the parents who staff it.</p> <p>School closure and guidelines around Covid affected teachers' ability to focus on reading reflections during the last 2 years, however reading displays (to track children's reading and reflections) and book corners will feature in every classroom again from next year.</p>	

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	<p>Previously children were rewarded according to the number of reflections they did. This seems to have fallen by the wayside, was this a conscious decision or will this be making a comeback?</p> <p>There were several comments about the lack of teacher signatures in the planners. Parent was told that reflections are not read but just totalled up to get an effort star. Artic Lynx, Swifts, Spiders</p> <p>Y5 – how many reflections do the kids have to do to get an effort star, is it 4 or 5?</p>	<p>The expectation is that children read 4 times a week (two of these should be on Reading Planet or Reading Plus), and write two reflections. House points are given for writing two reflections. Effort stars are given for going above and beyond this. See discussion about rewards.</p> <p>Most weeks teachers will aim to cast an eye over the reflections - and may respond verbally or in writing if the child has a particular target. As the planners go home each evening, this can only be done in class – during guided reading if this is timetabled that half term (and if the children have their planners in on the day they are working with the teacher), and during morning work if not. This will obviously be affected by staff illness.</p>	
Reward:	<p>There appears to be limited rewards and incentives compared to other junior schools and feel this impacts on desire to learn. More focus on praise, rewards, badges and certificates please for individual improvements. Not seeing evidence of marking in books.</p> <p>Effort stars have been awarded but they are not stuck in as there is “no time”. Others are invited to help themselves.</p> <p>Other teachers have tried to give effort stars to children but the kids have to tell them that they don't get stars. They also have a marble jar but never get marbles.</p>	<p>We are currently adapting the behaviour policy so classes are trying out different things, based on research around rewards and motivation. Thank you for bearing with us – we will be regrouping and deciding as a whole staff our preferred way forward before the Easter holidays and will communicate this to parents shortly after.</p>	

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	Concern expressed about withdrawing breaktime as a punishment, class were told they would be walking round inside school rather than going outside. Also concern about children staying in if they haven't finished their work.	Staying in to finish a piece of work should only be happening for 5 minutes if the child really hasn't made enough effort in class. Children are expected to walk quietly around school as a class – some classes need reminding of this and a bit more practice – this should not be happening often	
	How are headteachers awards supposed to work? Child has been waiting for one due to having enough effort stars.	The child tells the class teacher, who will arrange a certificate.	
Music:	<p>Disappointed that the music room is having a change of use and so music lessons are moving to the upstairs room next to the library which is full of sports equipment. Child is having piano lessons which will continue on an electric keyboard which is not the same. Also query the risk assessment in terms of carrying larger instruments up the spiral staircase.</p> <p>Concern that this is an indicator of the school's lack of value in the arts.</p>	<p>We are lucky to have many different spaces in our school, and we regularly reflect on whether we are using the spaces we have in the best interests of the highest number of children. In this instance we have made some alterations due to the changing needs of the children in our school and their emotional wellbeing. As we are doing this in response to need, it has had to be done piecemeal. The sports equipment is being moved as part of this. The piano lessons will remain downstairs and use of the room timetabled accordingly.</p> <p>One look at our curriculum will reassure parents that we very much value the arts.</p>	

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Communication:	<p>Continual confusion from all year groups about the lack of consistency with communication methods.</p> <p>Several comments about doing away with MM and use solely MCAS which has more functionality that we are not utilising. Several more preferring MM as the only way for teachers to contact parents directly. Although USH use it in this way.</p> <p>Book bags are an example of poor communication, children were told that rucksacks were banned and would be confiscated before parents had been advised that this policy was being enforced. Office were not aware either.</p>	<p>A Working Group to focus on this issue was postponed pending the appointment of a new Business and Admin Manager who is key to communication. This working group can now go ahead and will focus on these and other identified issues</p> <p>Thank you for the feedback. We do our best and do not always get it right.</p>	
General feedback:	Y3 – unfair distribution of wealth exercise did not land well with several children who were upset. This was raised with the school but some parents do not feel that the response was adequate and questions how child-centric thinking is.	Thank you for the feedback and we apologise for how this event was perceived by some parents. We are sure that a bit more time with us will enable parents to see just how child-centric our thinking is.	
	Could we please have more advance notice of careers day so that working parents can arrange time off to support	This is organised by staff, who have also been stretched very thinly due to frequently covering for absent colleagues due to Covid, so headspace is not at a premium. We are doing the best we can.	

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	How/why has Infants been able to return to in-person parent's evenings, but this was not available to Juniors?	When we surveyed our parents last year there was a 50:50 split between those who wanted in-person and those who wanted remote parents evening. Since we had invested in the remote parents evening software for the year we chose to use that, knowing that parents had already been able to see the learning in children's project books through the 'share my learning' times on the playground.	
	Can the schools please have a coordinated approach to events like world book day. It was celebrated on different days and in different ways which was confusing and caused upset among siblings.	We have also noticed that this co-ordination has slipped, and have taken action to make sure we check more regularly that we are taking a joined-up approach across our two schools	
	Mathmagicians – supposed to be a catch up class but three sessions in a row cancelled, the first at 3.10pm.	Apologies, this was due to staff illness, very last-minute in the first week.	
	Share my learning felt tokenistic and rushed with only one piece of work.	Sorry to hear this – children should have been able to share their project books. There has also been positive feedback around it. We hope to return to in-class Share My Learning soon	

General Questions:

Y3 Pen licence – are the children given any guidance to know what they need to do to achieve this?

A – Yes. This will be included in the upcoming curriculum presentations. Children also have transcription (handwriting) targets.

There is currently no teaching assistant in Spiders, what is being done to support this?

A – Classes are not ‘entitled’ to a teaching assistant in Key Stage 2. We have a limited budget for support staff, and we allocate our teaching assistants flexibly to year groups based on the needs of the children. Some teaching assistants work 1:1 with certain children so will stay in that child’s classroom most of the time, whereas others work across whole year groups or across the school.

Reading Stars – this quizzes don’t seem to work on an iPad, is this a common problem?

A - Rising Stars? – Yes, common problem unfortunately, we have reported it to the company.

Are there any plans to make changes to classes in September, particularly Y5 into Y6?

A - Any plans to make changes to classes will be communicated to parents at the appropriate time.

What is the school doing to support mental health considering the impact of the past two years?

A - The PSHE curriculum has been adapted and we do a lot of thinking as a school around the emotional wellbeing needs of our children. Class circle times are used very flexibly by teachers to address any situations that have arisen, or any difficulties within the class.

Positive Feedback:

- Appreciate the weekly newsletter covering both schools, thank you.
- Thanks for the outside share my learning, it's nice to see their work.
- Thanks for the safeguarding info on the school newsletter about dodgy internet trends and stuff to be aware of.
- Big thank you to Mrs Bell for her amazing home learning for her class during isolations. She has really gone above and beyond any expectation to help her class feel part of learning. Hugely impressed with her effort.
- Mr Tough – massive thanks, general consensus among class parents is that he “really gets my child
- Yr4 – enjoying maths teaching at the moment and generally really enjoying all the different topics.
- Mrs Connelly seems to be getting it right, my girl is a big fan and things run smoothly and happily in her class
- Big thanks to Y5 staff for making the Minstead Trip happen, the kids loved it.
Special thanks to Mrs Roberts who was really supportive of my anxious child.
- Thanks to the Yr5 team for delivering the Climate Conference virtually at short notice.
- Yr5 – Covid learning on google classroom has been well organised.
- Thank you to Y6 teachers for the SAT info evening, study bundles and providing the before/after school sessions, it's much appreciated.