

Shirley Infant School – Parent Forum – Autumn 2

Date: Wednesday 15 November 2023 @ 12noon (Teams)

Purpose: The parent forum is an important and valued (by both school and parents/carers) communication link. It is an opportunity for parents/carers to provide feedback, seek clarity/confirmation, raise general concerns, and make suggestions. It is a two-way partnership, and the school will also utilise this platform for purposes such as to propose new initiatives, changes, or gain feedback on parental engagement. By working together, we can continue to make Shirley Infant School a great place for children to thrive and support the motto of 'Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day'.

Attendees

FOSIS Co-Chair – [Kass Colley \(KC\)](#)
Head/Deputy Head – [Cate Gregory \(CG\)](#)
FOSIS Secretary – [Lynsey Powell \(LP\)](#)

Parent Reps

Attendees	Apologies
Emily Arbery (EA) (Moles)	Jo Baker (Owls)
Katy Durston (Owls) – until 12.30pm	Jen Simpson (Woodpeckers)
Sarah Scott (Foxes)	Annemarie Clayton (Woodpeckers)
Myiah Ahmed (Otters)	Tabytha Greenhalgh (Squirrels)
Natalie Steel (Hedgehogs)	Sarah Lowth (Badgers)
Katrina Crisell (KCr) (Squirrels)	Megan Cox (Co-Chair)
Becky Maclean (Otters)	
Rachel Ayrton (RA) (Rabbits)	
Yasmine Arafa (YA) (Foxes)	
Lydia Stammers (Rabbits)	

Agenda

1. Actions from previous meeting
2. Positive Feedback
3. Reading
4. Marvellous Me
5. Parent Volunteering
6. Parents Evening
7. PE
8. Communication
9. Curriculum Evening/Workshops
10. Other

1. Actions from previous meeting

Item No.	Action	Responsible	Comments	Complete
7.1	Investigate the possibility of allowing parents to pay up front at the start of the year to cover the various school activities	CG/BE	Business team looking into it	Ongoing
7.1	Investigate if a contingency fund / pay it forward option for school trips can be created.	CG/BE	Bree can't do this as it would look as if the school were making money out of trips which is an auditing issue. CG asked if FOSIS could come up with a system with Karen Allen to support vulnerable families with trips.	Ongoing
7.1	Reminder to all parents to check MCAS for outstanding payments	CG		Y
10.1	FOSIS to provide copy to announce the outdoor classroom order.	LP/MC/KC		Y
10.3	Investigate the possibility of tailoring the MarvellousMe email notifications so you know what has been shared	CG	CG asked MM, still waiting to Hear back	Ongoing
10.5	FOSIS to supply posters to remind children/parents to keep the scooter shed tidy	LP/MC/KC	FOSIS to provide a 'Rules on use of the scooter shed'.	Ongoing
10.5	Investigate sloping in scooter shed	CG	Andy moved the pods around so better placed.	TBC

2. Positive feedback

- 2.1. Overall, the children seem to have settled well, so thank you to Miss Channell and Miss Badhams for making them feel so welcome in their class.
- 2.2. Individual Parent Feedback - "Miss Channell has gone above and beyond in ensuring that children feel safe & secure. Her genuine care for the children is so comforting."
- 2.3. Children have really enjoyed 'moot' time and exploring the different classrooms.
- 2.4. The Autumn 'My Targets' that provide personalised goals for children are fantastic. Parents with older children have not seen this in the Junior School so maybe something that can be replicated by SJS.
- 2.5. Firstly, the whole process of little ones starting Shirley Infants has been brilliant. In terms of the staged start, settling in picnics etc, the whole transition seemed a happy, safe and exciting experience for both the children and the parents.
- 2.6. The visibility of the senior leadership, like the head teacher and deputy head is a real positive. Makes them approachable and parents really feel as if the staff get to know the children personally which is great.
- 2.7. The children seem to have already learnt so much in the short time they have been with the school. The phonics structure is very clear and works well. Parents have said this has really helped their children in being able to use what they have learnt to support reading and writing at home.

- 2.8. The dinosaur trip was excellent.
- 2.9. Parents have commented to say when there has been an issue, the teacher has contacted them in an appropriate way and has always been available and approachable to speak to should they have any concerns.
- 2.10. The different forms of communication are very good. Messages seem to come through WhatsApp, Facebook and emails, so you feel comfortable that you have received a message.
- 2.11. The events being held in the school are great. Fireworks and family Christmas etc, really makes the school feel like a little community.
- 2.12. Massive thanks to Mr Lomath. He is a huge asset to the school. His patience, warmth and support with my daughter was hugely appreciated. He has some great techniques for an anxious child and really made a difference in helping my child into school when she was struggling!
- 2.13. Thanks to FOSIS for arranging such great events. They really bring the school community together.
- 2.14. I think I have found the communication a bit easier this year! Maybe I have got my head around it a bit more, I like the new layout of the newsletter, much more simple!
- 2.15. I've finally had a read of the weekly comms again and it is SO much better this term.
- 2.16. Please consider passing on how the length of the weekly comms attachment has been much more accessible and digestible!
- 2.17. I really appreciate the WhatsApp) group, the Year 1 Facebook group and the weekly updates - honestly invaluable!!
- 2.18. Thank you for recording the curriculum evening - great! Maybe could do this every year for those unable to attend/have tech difficulties/would like to re-watch?
- 2.19. Weekly newsletter is much better now and easier to read.
- 2.20. Also wanted to feedback how much they enjoy music and choir time with Miranda.
- 2.21. Teachers and staff very friendly and supportive
- 2.22. Appreciate the new weekly comms layout.
- 2.23. Various comments about how well children have settled into Year 2 and really like the teacher.
- 2.24. Teachers greeting pupils in the morning has been really warm.
- 2.25. Ms Longman has been very approachable and friendly, resolves any issues very quickly and very reassuring. Trips have been fantastic. My child is very excited about topics particularly Titanic.
- 2.26. It was nice to be invited into class to share storytelling and work.
- 2.27. Tour of school for younger siblings starting in September was excellent.
- 2.28. Positive comments about Mrs Lubbock-Smith & Mrs Bailey. Children really like them, and one parent said the transition between their working days is working fine.
- 2.29. Thank you to Mr Ball for providing such a fun and engaging learning environment, my son has settled so well into Year 1. At parents evening I felt like he had really gotten to know my son and what motivated him in class in such a short space of time.

KC shared some of the comments.

3. Reading

- 3.1. Several parents still feel very strongly about the lack of physical books available to come home for reading practise. Parents citing the fact that they try to minimise screen time, so the online provision isn't suitable.

As CG shared at the FOSIS AGM (extract of minutes below):

The Little Wandle scheme works on the basis that the children read in groups in class, three times per week and that same book is then meant to go home with the children in that group so that they can confidently read to their parents/carers.

The problem the school continues to have is that books aren't getting returned which means that unless every child in the group can have a copy of the book they have read in class, then alternative solutions have to be found such as online books.

The books, as they are bought in complete sets where each book costs £6, are extremely expensive with over £5k (£3k from FOSIS / £2k from school budget) spent on the scheme. Since the scheme began, CG estimates that approx. a third of books have gone missing.

CG advised that the school's budget for this year for Little Wandle is assigned to books needed for Year 2 to begin the scheme, so won't stretch to purchasing replacements of existing sets. This means we have had to look at the E-library to enable children to read at home and continue the validity of the phonics scheme. We are not allowed to send home different books and we began to last year because of the problem, hence the electronic books.

CG shared we want children to love and hold and share a book. They are getting this so much more in school now and we have library books to share the E books are currently not a long-term solution, however, should they books continue to be lost we cannot financially year on year continue to just replace them.

CG added in the meeting that there was no change from the school's perspective as outlined above and commented that some schools have moved all reading at home to eBooks, so some books going home is a positive. She added that the book amnesty offered had seen no books returned and that they have exhausted all suggestions, including fining those who don't return the books (with limited success), moving children who haven't returned books on a regular basis to e-books, but still books don't return.

- 3.2. When a child is to read a book online, can there be some kind of communication to let parents know, perhaps in the reading record book? Also confirming which book should be read online, some parents mentioned having several in their online library. CG advised that she would look into this and reassured parents that the children will know the book they have read three times that week so should be able to share with parents which book they need to practice. EA suggested that perhaps a slip of paper in the reading record book would be a good way to communicate. CG also advised that there should only be one book online and will remind the teachers to remove old books.

- 3.3. Some Year 1 parents suggesting fundraising for the purchase of new books, or asking for a deposit?

CG confirmed that donations can be made via cheques to school and allocated to a specific account to show from an auditing purpose that the donation has been used for the books. FOSIS to investigate how online donations could be made, LP to discuss with FOSIS Treasurer.

- 3.4. If there isn't a complete set of books for a group to read, can a similar level book from the previous scheme be used so the child has a physical book to read at home?

CG explained that they have to use only Little Wandle books and are not allowed to amend the scheme in any way, they have been told off for doing this previously.

- 3.5. Can a system be established whereby if a child doesn't return their book, then they are moved onto eBooks?

CG confirmed that this is already happening.

YA asked if the school had a record of who had what book. CG explained that the teachers keep their own records of who has what book and which books haven't been returned.

4. Marvellous Me

- 4.1. Several parent comments around the use of Marvellous Me and the inconsistency between classes / year groups. Year 1 parents mentioning that they used to receive a lot more when their children were in Year R.

CG advised that in Year the teaching staff do support more through MM and that should be expected to tailor off as they go into Year 1.

- 4.2. Specific feedback from Year R parent asking for more MM updates on children settling in during the first half term would have been useful.

CG advised that MM is used by teachers for badges when something particularly extraordinary has happened and by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) when they've seen a child demonstrate one of the learning behaviours.

CG to remind staff about the use of MM to ensure consistency where possible across year groups.

5. Parent Volunteering

5.1. School trips

- 5.1.1. Please can it be possible that when a parent volunteers to help with a school trip, they are given a group with their child? Several Badger parents experienced a trip recently where all their children were in different groups yet other parent volunteers in other classes had their children in their groups. Caused a lot of upset for the children involved.

CG advised that they try as much as possible to enable parents to be with their children on school trips but that sometimes it's necessary to mix people if more volunteers have come from a particular class for example. CG reminded that whilst she appreciates that part of volunteering for parents is to be able to spend time with them, a key reason why they need volunteers in the first place is to ensure the trip can go ahead with the right number of adults to 90 children.

- 5.1.2. Please can more notice be given on dates for help so parents can request time off work to help.

CG to follow to understand if the letter detailing all of the trips for the year has been issued for Year 2.

- 5.2. In school volunteering – a parent recently volunteered to help with reading in school, they received no email reply to their first approach, chased in person and on email and then got a response asking them to complete an application form. This was completed and returned, yet no reply to that.

CG advised that Mrs Prince is usually on top of this but with absence in the office she acknowledged that it has been more difficult to manage and apologised for the experience of this parent. The process for volunteers coming into school has become more extensive in what is required.

CG advised that Mrs Prince has now set up the inductions for all volunteers so if this parent has still not heard back, please send an email into the office marked FAO Mrs Gregory and she will follow up.

6. Parents Evening

6.1. Concerns about parents evening going ahead on Tuesday without Mr Simmonds present. Teacher not able to give useful feedback.

CG advised that they felt with the late notice of cancelling parents evening all together that it was the better decision to go ahead. She added that she wanted to assure parents that as a leadership team we know your children very well. Mr Segun stayed on for the majority for meetings to support with discussions around friendships, in class specifics and Miss Reilly offered to go back to any parent who needed further information after parents evening, with only one parent making content in this regard.

6.2. Whilst waiting to see the teacher, could children's books be left outside so parents can review ahead of the meeting?

CG advised that they are no longer allowed to do this due to GDPR.

7. PE

7.1. Several parents mentioned that PE days frequently change which can be frustrating as they try to dress their children appropriately to help with changing i.e., zips not buttons.

CG commented that unfortunately, there will be times when they have to change the day of PE as the hall is multi-functional and things come up. It isn't always possible to know ahead of time and be able to communicate it. She added that teachers are very used to helping support the children with changing if they are struggling as it's part of the life skills they are teaching.

7.2. Multiple mentions within Foxes that the children have hardly done PE this term.

CG advised that she had checked with the teaching staff, and they felt that they had done plenty of PE and had been outside too, so she wasn't sure what the discrepancy was between the two opinions, she advised that she would monitor closely.

8. Communication

8.1. Weekly comms

8.1.1. A number of parents asking for the subject of the email for weekly comms to include either SJS or SIS so parents can easily identify which version they are looking at. This has been raised several times before, agreed that it would be useful but not actioned.

CG has asked several times of the office to do this, and she will follow up. LP added that it would be useful with other generic messages too.

8.1.2. Can the school letters referenced in the weekly comms also be included as attachments on the email, so everything is in one place?

CG asked for further patience with this whilst the office staffing levels return to full capacity, until such time this isn't possible.

8.1.3. Parents evening dates were different on weekly comms to the sign up dates which caused confusion. CG advised that she would follow up with office as she isn't sure what happened.

8.2. Contacting the teachers

8.2.1. Some children in the class attend breakfast club and afterschool club everyday so those parents have said they would benefit from some form of easy

communication with the teachers, like a messaging facility, when they can't be at the school gate to physically speak to anyone.

CG advised that the method for contacting a teacher is the same for any parent, please email into the office, marking the email FAO of the teacher and ask for a phone call back. CG added that it isn't necessary to provide lots of detail in the email, the teacher will call at a mutually convenient time.

- 8.2.2.** There was no communication that badgers would come out of a different door and at 3.10 during the building works, so a parent panicked when they couldn't see their child. When they asked the teacher, they just said yes it changed as of today – but nothing had been sent informing parents.
CG advised that a message was sent that morning to explain that the scaffolding had been removed and all collection points and times would return to normal so felt they had done everything possible.

8.3. Open days for Junior School – poorly advertised.

CG not able to answer this question. KC said that she would approach juniors about an additional date for this year 2 parents and also about it being advertised better going forward for future years. KC to raise this with Mrs Hixon direct for future years.

8.4. Seacity school trip – information came out very late.

CG to investigate if the letter detailing the school trips for the year has been issued. YA mentioned that the Seacity letter had come out on 31 October for a trip taking place on 9 November.

9. Curriculum Evenings/Workshop

- 9.1. Year R** – Parents who attended, really valued the session and asked that in future could there be the option to join remotely.

CG advised that it isn't possible to manage both online and in person. The decision made to do the Year R Workshop in person was a conscious one due to the length and the first proper meeting together.

9.2. Year 1

- 9.2.1.** Could slides/recordings be shared via MCAS in future, as it's quicker than waiting for the website to be updated. CG to investigate but isn't sure that MCAS can take the size of file.

- 9.2.2.** Frustration from several parents who were unable to attend the session as didn't have their child's Google classroom login details to hand.

CG said that they were still not sure why they had the technical issues they did. The IT team has looked into it and can't identify the source of the problem.

- 9.2.3.** Was there a reason why the link to the session was restricted?
See answer above.

10. Other

- 10.1. Outdoor classroom** - several parents asking when the children are going to be able to use the outdoor classroom, it's been in place now for a couple of months.
KC advised that they are waiting for carpet to be fitted first and then a date will be agreed for the official opening and children will be able to use it after that, hopefully in the next couple of weeks.

- 10.2. Future new starters** – suggest a simple tick list of what needs to be done / received in the build up to starting Year R, in particular what logins should be received.

CG asked if any of the new Year R class reps would help in looking at what goes out currently and where value could be added.

KCr agreed to take this on and mock something up to be shared with CG.

- 10.3. School dinners** – some parents expressed concern around school dinners and their children being given something different to what is ordered – they would like to be made aware. Main concern around allergies but also if the child doesn't like the alternative, then they may go hungry.
CG expressed surprise that this has happened and asked if the class rep could go back to the parent who raised this and ask them to email into the office FAO Mrs Gregory so she can investigate further.
- 10.4. Lost items** – several parents mentioning that items such as jumpers, water bottles, book bags are going missing despite being labelled. Could teachers encourage children to check for their belongings?
CG appreciates the concerns of parents, recommended that people give it a good week to see if it re-appears and then if not, email into to the class teacher as that is considered a learning point for that child. She added that whilst things are labelled, they can fall off.
- 10.5. Messy children** – some parents commenting on the state of children, could some assistance be given when shoes on the wrong feet for example? And also, could PE kits (rather than school spares) be used when a child is so messy that they need to be changed, to ensure they are wearing shoes that fit?
CG advised that if they notice things wrong in how a child is dressed then they would correct it but said that she would remind the teaching staff to keep an eye on children. CG also explained that if the accident happens in the classroom then the teacher will always try to use the PE kit, however, if the accident is elsewhere in the school and it isn't practical to get the PE kit then they take from the spares pile and always try to provide items that fit well. She also added that as we move into the winter months, PE Kits are not always warm enough to be an alternative.
- 10.6. Methods of communication** – why are there so many?
CG advised that we are using the bare minimum we can use now. The only one we could remove would be MM but wouldn't be able to share the learnings/awards and that the SLT and teaching staff believe they are of value for the children and parents. She added that only certain apps do certain things.

RA asked if it could be explained what each app was for. LP added that there is a page on the school website explaining all of the communications channels used by the school and what they are used for – it can be [found here](#).
- 10.7. Celebration events** – is there the possibility of varying the days of the week that they take place on, always seem to be a Wednesday. Also, it would be nice if all class teachers could be present as it's a great opportunity for an informal chat.
CG said that they are doing their absolute best to vary the days, but it does depend on staffing and the element that they are going to celebrate with you.

She reminded that the purpose of these sessions is to celebrate your child and not an opportunity for an informal chat with the teacher.
- 10.8. Children with additional needs** - should parents be having termly or regular meetings with the senco to discuss progress and any concerns?

CG advised that the class teacher is responsible for the children in their class. Senco only involved if the class teacher is not satisfied with progress.

- 10.9. Dress up days** – Year 2 parents have expressed concerns over the number of them and the associated costs.
CG advised that she would discuss with Mrs LBS to see whether it could be possible for the school to provide a list of dress up days over the three school years to see if there is any overlap and so parents know to hold onto outfits.
- CG also added that the school would not be doing a dress up day for World Book Day next year, so one less to have to worry about. The school believes that the love of learning is embedded in all that the school every day.
- LP added that we could have a section of the preloved uniform shop dedicated to school dress up outfits and they could be donated in the same way that preloved uniform is.
- 10.10. School Counsellor Process** - How do children get shortlisted for voting as one child has applied each year and not got to the voting bit and doesn't know why and is upset about this.
CG advised that children nominate themselves, all those names go into a hat and the teaching staff pull out four names and then the children vote on those four names.
- 10.11. Scooter shack** - where is the scooter shack poster? The winners have been announced but nothing seems to have actually happened – do we know when this will be actioned? CG advised that they are waiting for the council to make and bring in the sign.
- 10.12. Birthdays in school holidays** - A request for children with birthdays in the holidays- please can there be a system, so they get a birthday song? Children with birthdays in termtime get sung too but holiday children are sad they miss out.
CG advised that teachers do recognise those birthdays that happen over the holidays and that she would remind teachers of the need to do this.
- 10.13. Year 2 lunch** - Now seems to clash with choir so some children aren't getting to choir until very late. Is there a way around this? Is it right that Team Spirit also came in on a Friday which clashed with choir? Could we have the days and times that Team Spirit are in school so we can talk to our child about what activity they would like to do?
CG advised that timings haven't changed so not sure what has happened here. AG to go back to the parent in Badgers and try to find out some more details.
- 10.14. Toilet** - issues with the children only being allowed to go to toilet at certain times and it leading to issues (Woodpeckers)
CG advised that she would follow up on this with Woodpecker teaching staff.

Ongoing Actions from July 2023 Meeting

Item No.	Action	Responsible	Comments	Complete
7.1	Investigate the possibility of allowing parents to pay up front	CG/BE	Business team looking into it	Ongoing

	at the start of the year to cover the various school activities			
7.1	Investigate if a contingency fund / pay it forward option for school trips can be created.	CG/BE	Bree can't do this as it would look as if the school were making money out of trips which is an auditing issue. CG asked if FOSIS could come up with a system with Karen Allen to support vulnerable families with trips. KC to investigate.	Ongoing
10.3	Investigate the possibility of tailoring the MarvellousMe email notifications so you know what has been shared	CG	CG asked MM, still waiting to hear back	Ongoing
10.5	FOSIS to supply posters to remind children/parents to keep the scooter shed tidy	LP/MC/KC	FOSIS to provide a 'Rules on use of the scooter shed'.	Ongoing
10.5	Investigate sloping in scooter. Shed	CG	Andy moved the pods around so better placed.	TBC

Actions from November 2023 meeting

Item No.	Action	Responsible	Comments	Complete
3.3	FOSIS to investigate accepting online donations for the specific use in purchasing Little Wandle books	KC/LP		
4.2	CG to remind staff about the use of MM to ensure consistency where possible across year groups.	CG		
5.1.2	CG to check if the letter detailing all class trips for Year 2 has been issued.	CG		
8.1.1	CG to ask office to include either SIS or SJS in the subject of the email for weekly comms so parents can easily identify which version they are looking at.	CG		
8.1.3	Parents evening dates were different on weekly comms to the sign up dates which caused confusion - CG to follow up with office as she isn't sure what happened.	CG		
8.3	Open Days for Junior School poorly advertised and poor communication when one session was cancelled and then rescheduled. KC to reach out to Juniors	KC		

9.2.1	Curriculum slides to be shared via MCAS rather than school website	CG		
10.2	Mock up of checklist for new Year R parents to be shared with the CG	KCr		
10.3	Speak to parent re: incorrect school dinner comment so CG can investigate further	AG		
10.9	CG to speak to Mrs LBS regarding Year 2 dress up days	CG		
10.12	CG to remind teachers of the need to celebrate birthdays that take place in school holidays.	CG		
10.13	AG to speak to parent re comment clash with choir and lunch for year 2	AG		
10.14	CG to speak to Woodpecker teaching staff re: toilet comments	CG		