

Shirley Infant School – Parent Forum – Spring 2

Date: Thursday 2 March 2023 @ 7.30pm (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-Chairs – [Megan Cox \(MC\)](#)

Head/Deputy Head – [Cate Gregory \(CG\)](#)

FOSIS Secretary – [Lynsey Powell \(LP\)](#)

Parent Reps

Attendees	Apologies
Reena Jewell (Badgers)	Becky Evans (Owls)
Tabytha Cunningham (Woodpeckers)	Gemma Thomas (Moles)
Annemarie Clayton (Otters)	Laura Sparks (Foxes)
Vicky Crawford (Foxes) - VC	Becky Maclean (Moles)
Hector Uhalte (Hedgehogs)	Natalie Steel (Woodpeckers)
Chloe Foster (Rabbits) - CF	Sarah Beaven (Badgers)
Claire Shrugue (Owls)	Kathryn Payne (Squirrels)
Tracey Sindall (Squirrels)	Kass Colley (Co-Chair)
Kitty Galpin (Otters)	
Hilary Pearson (Rabbits)	

Agenda

1. Recruitment & Retention across schools
2. Actions from previous meeting
3. Positive feedback
4. Year R PE
5. Home Learning
6. Eating / Drinking
7. Reading / Library
8. Communication
9. Parents evening
10. Playground
11. Other

1. Recruitment & Retention across schools – Mrs Gregory

CG explained that she wanted to be as open and honest about the situation they are facing along with other schools on the retention and recruitment of teaching staff. She said that retention and recruitment is at its worst ever, with the number of university students choosing teaching as a career path at its lowest ever.

CG explained that the school is committed to finding the right people to teach the children which is why they may sometimes have to advertise for a role several times. She added that in the example of the vacancy for a TA in Mole class, that they had made the decision to move some of the teaching staff around due to the challenges in recruiting a replacement.

CF echoed what CG was saying in that this situation was being felt across schools. VC added, thank you for sharing with us.

2. Actions from previous meeting

Item No.	Action	Responsible	Comments	Complete
5.2	BM to contact the photography supplier to ask that they promote the single download option more prominently in future	BM	Supplier confirmed to BM that they would make it clearer that the single download was an option	Y
7.3	CG to check welcome booklet includes an explanation as to what a celebration event entails	CG	CG confirmed that this information wasn't currently in the welcome booklet but it would be added to future versions.	Y
8.1	Promote to all year groups (esp. Year R and Year 1) about the importance of returning reading books on time	All Class Reps	Regular reminders in class WhatsApp groups and on FB groups.	Y
10.1	Come up with a plan / suggestions as to how we (the school, parents, FOSIS) can support all families to feel included in all events/activities.	RJ, VC, SB	All FOSIS events now have the option to buy tickets which Karen Allen can then allocate out.	Ongoing
10.3	CG to investigate as to whether a list of first names of children in the class can be supplied to parents.	CG	Yes, this is possible and can be requested via the school office.	Y

3. Positive feedback

3.1. Many Thanks to Miss Channell and Miss Baddams for another great 1/2 term lots of happy settled children

3.2. Can we note a big thanks for the author visit ... loved by so many children.

3.3. Many Thanks to the Year 1 team for a fabulous trip to manor farm. my daughter had the best time and can't wait for the next trip

3.4. Thank you to Year R Staff for being so caring, children are so happy and loving learning. Thank you for the wonderful experiences provided such as they hospital and teddy days

3.5. We all really loved the singing celebration, it was such a lovely surprise, and the children really enjoyed it.

3.6. A huge thank you to FOSIS and school for the author visit which the children really enjoyed!

3.7. We loved the Celebration Event with the brilliant singing, and it was lovely to go into the classrooms too.

3.8. It's also great to see the scooter shed open and it's really handy to use.

- 3.9. The kids were very excited about the trip and had a wonderful time.
- 3.10. Miss Innes has been great at providing extra resources where appropriate to support learning at home.
- 3.11. We want to thank teachers and school staff for their hard work with children and good cooperation with parents. From our experience, whenever we have asked for some support or feedback from the teachers, they were very open and supportive.

MC gave a summary of all of the positive feedback that has been received.

4. Year R PE

- 4.1. A number of parents asking about whether the Year R children are taking part in PE. PE kits came home folded as when they were put in when they came home at half term. Are they no longer doing PE? If so, why not?

CG explained that they have noticed that the gross motor skills of the Year R children are not as strong as previous years, possibly due to the impact of Covid on their ability to access the same activities of previous year groups. As such they have been working with the children to build up these skills through different schemes to support them. The activities that they have been doing, don't require them to change into their PE kit for the time being. CG emphasised that they still need the PE kits to be in school as they are a useful supply of clothing should a child get particularly dirty at play time or have a toilet accident.

CG added that it's really positive for them to be able to adjust the curriculum to meet the year group needs. In the summer term they will move back to gymnastics and games which does require them to change into their kit. It was suggested that the current sessions should still be referred to as PE, so the children don't feel like they are missing out. CG to speak to staff.

5. Home Learning

- 5.1. Several parents have asked if it's possible for children to receive feedback on their home learning, they make such an effort, and some don't even get a 'great work!' comment.
- 5.2. A couple of examples were cited where in Year 2 (Badgers) they have handed in their clock game home learning and it's been left in the tray, not talked about, or shown/played in the class.
- 5.3. Seems that some teachers give stickers and others don't, can it be consistent?

CG explained that this topic has come up before and is covered in the curriculum meetings that home learning is about exposure at home and sharing about what they have learned with you. The teachers will not give formal feedback on home learning but that there is opportunity to share what they have created in class with their teacher and fellow pupils.

LP added that her Year 2 daughter had recently completely some home learning that had not been discussed or shared in the class. CG explained that there was sickness which had meant this hadn't happened and that she would follow up to make sure time was taken to look at the children's work.

6. Eating / Drinking

- 6.1. A number of parents have asked if it's possible for the teachers to check on how much the children eat and report back to the teacher so they can pass onto the parent? CG explained that it isn't possible for the teachers to report back on how much a child is eating of their lunch. CG said that she appreciated that the jump from nursery to infant school is a big one but as is shared in the welcome meeting there simply isn't the staffing ratios to provide the same level of information about an individual child. She did explain that unless they are concerned it's a 'no news is good news' scenario. CG added that children have access to their water bottles throughout the day and are encouraged to refill them, so a full water bottle doesn't necessarily indicate that they haven't drunk anything all day.

- 6.2.** Parents from Foxes and Rabbits have commented that children have been told they can't go to the toilet when asking which has made the children in question anxious about going to the toilet.

CG explained that the children are reminded at several points during the day to use the toilet and that there might times when children are asked to wait until a teacher has finished a particular activity to minimise the disruption to the rest of the class.

CG added that she was aware of instances in these classes and that they have been resolved by the teachers of those classes.

7. Reading / library

- 7.1.** A couple of parents have expressed they would like reading books over the holidays to continue reading and are surprised that we don't get them.

CG explained that it isn't possible for reading books to go home over the holidays as the school has to audit the books / double check them and make sure sets are complete and ready for the next term. CG recommended that over the holidays that parents share other books with the children, perhaps go to the library to keep the momentum with reading rather than just focusing on the schoolbook.

- 7.2.** Having a theme for World Book Day rather than a character from a book has surprised some parents as children had already started planning their 'book character' as this is the usual dress up for world book day.

CG explained that last year, at the request of parent forum, that the infant and junior school's celebrated World Book Day in the same way to avoid confusion for parents with children in both schools, so this is what they did. The theme was shared in several weekly comms.

- 7.3.** We would like to understand more about library books and how they work as some children haven't had new library books in year 1.

CG apologised and explained that there had been a problem with the library system, and they have had to reset it which was why they asked for all library books to be returned before ½ term. Year 1 is currently trialling going to the library every other week – the school identified that weekly was too frequent as children wanted to keep the books for longer. CG added that the Year R library timetable has had to shift to accommodate the reading needs.

- 7.4.** Unfortunately, there is still a lot of confusion about the new books. Some parents (Moles) are not receiving new books and we're not sure why. I think another succinct, clear outline of how the new scheme works would be appreciated.

CG acknowledged that there have been issues with the reading books, particularly for Year 1 classes as books haven't been returned so sets are incomplete which makes it difficult to pass onto the next group. CG reassured that they are getting there and know which books they need to re-order/replace.

- 7.5.** Could parents be informed of reading interventions etc. just a generic note in book bag would be fine. Children come back talking about it and it's hard to know what exactly is going on.

CG explained that they don't have set reading interventions but added that some children will get extra support if they need it for fluency and this kind of support would be shared with parents at parents evening. CF explained that if information could be shared sooner, parents could help support at home. CG said she would think about how best to communicate this to parents and would consider the reading record books as an option.

- 7.6. We would also appreciate some feedback on comments in the reading record, especially if a child has been struggling. This was described as a communication tool, but this feels very one-way at the moment.

CG explained that the way the reading record is used is covered in Mrs Watts reading letter and that is very much intended to be a way for parents to share with teachers but that teachers would not be writing in this.

8. Communication

- 8.1. A number of parents have mentioned the lack / sporadic nature of the updates on Marvellous Me / Google Classroom. They used to be weekly at the start of the year but seem to have dropped off, is there a reason for this?

CG apologised for forgetting to share for Year R and asked that if it was noticed to be missing in future, to gently remind her when seeing her on the gate. She added that she would check in with the other year leads to make sure they hadn't forgotten

- 8.2. A parent commented that email is really useful when parents aren't at every pickup so such a shame this is being dropped. Again, arranging a phone call doesn't help for those working long hours.

CG said that she appreciated that this is a big change for some parents, but she is keen to shift back to pre-covid. It's felt that emails can be misread / misinterpreted and that it's better and quicker to talk to avoid misinterpretation. Teachers are able to call outside of school hours / lunch time so can call to suit working parents and the hope is that any issues are dealt with quicker and smoother by talking.

9. Parents evening

- 9.1. Several parents asking if it's possible to use an online system to book parents evening slots in future. Similar to what is used in Juniors and has been used in Infants in the past 'You can book me'

CG explained that 'You can book me' is a very expensive system now so is cost prohibitive for the school to use.

- 9.2. Sign-up sheets in the playground / trying to phone the office is difficult for parents who don't do drop off / pick up or can't make phone calls during school office hours.

CG acknowledged that the system of sign-up sheets in the playground didn't work as well as they had hoped, and they are revisiting it. They are looking into the option to use Bromcom for this in the autumn and will share more details once known.

VC mentioned that USH are doing face to face parents evening but have used School Cloud for parents to book. CG to investigate.

10. Playground

- 10.1. There is some dynamics between the children sometimes that might be categorized as bullying. Some children don't want to play with some etc. I know in the classroom teachers are encouraging cooperation and involvement but is feedback from the staff who is looking after children on the playground about the dynamics to the class teachers. (Foxes)

CG advised that rough play in the playground is addressed through the regulation zones. She said that the zones are working really well but having to re-embed them with the children so staff will help to retighten the zones She added that anything that staff notice / children raise on the playground they will offer them help / restorative conversation. Where staff do see something, they feel they need to share, they do so with the class teachers.

CG explained that bullying is defined as "The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online". She added that it is very different when children hurt each other or fall out due to being unkind. Parents can raise and ask for a telephone call with the class teacher if a one off behaviour then becomes increasing.

- 10.2.** Huggy wuggy game has been shown to a Yr. 2 child by another yr. 2 pupil. Are there any tools or aids for parents to assist with awareness and discussion pointers? With huggy wuggy merchandise on sale and visible to young children, hopefully their understanding of playing a huggy wuggy game is limited and not because of online exposure. It would be helpful to know school management of how to respond to children with this topic so we can mirror similar at home for consistency and overall safeguarding. (Badgers)

CG said that this is a difficult topic as different parents have different rules around technology and school can't control that. CG suggested the section in weekly comms around keeping your child safe online is a good resource to look at.

She added that if they identify topics being talked about in the playground that are deemed age inappropriate then raise it as a safeguarding issue. She also said that they reassure the children and say that if something makes them feel uncomfortable then ask for help. She also said they reassure the children that they are not going to get in trouble, and you will sort it out together and suggested mirroring this kind of discussions with children.

11. Other

- 11.1. Singing assembly on a Friday** - are Year R joining this? As it doesn't sound like they are, which seems a real shame for them to miss out with Mrs Clarke who is amazing. maybe seen on screen but doesn't seem the same as in person.

CG advised that Year R children don't go every week as it can be hard for them to sit still for that length of time. She added that they attend for all key events and Mrs Clarke works with them in different ways.

- 11.2. Scooter shed** - We'd love an update on whether there will be any formal 'opening' for the scooter shed'?

CG advised that it is open, but they are hoping to get some additional funding for some more scooter pods and would have another grand opening again.

- 11.3. Celebration events** - It would be great if we could be told if the celebration event will be special in the future so those who are working can make an extra effort to attend.

CG explained that in addition to the celebration events, they are going to be offering the drop-in sessions in the morning to enable parents to see books. She added they are very mindful of working parents and trying to offer options so everyone can see something. CG said they would try to add descriptions of what to expect, when known. But added to please be patient as in trying to share the dates as early as possible, they don't always know exactly what will be shared.

CG asked all class representatives to seek feedback from their classes to see whether they prefer all celebration events to be face to face or 50% face to face and 50% virtual or all virtual – which would help parents be able to attend more?

- 11.4. Wilton Road** – can anything more be done to block Wilton Road?

CG explained that she is unable to make any teaching staff available to facilitate the road closure of Wilton Road and suggested asking for parent volunteers to help close it off. It requires a minimum of three volunteers to operate it safely.

- 11.5. Star of the Week** - Waiting to be Star of the Week is really hard for some kids, not sure of solution but wanted to make teachers aware of huge build up on Fridays and then huge disappointment when it isn't them again (Rabbits).

CG said that whilst she appreciated the comments, part of the build-up was about teaching the children about values and resilience and at the same time giving them reassurance that they are being recognised for other things beyond Star of the Week and that part of the teacher's role is to help prepare the children to be

lifelong learners.

11.6. Parents vs grown-ups - why are some of the teachers calling parents - grown-ups? What's wrong with good old mummies and daddies? If the family is still the main cell of the community, we should use the vocabulary that encourage that. CG explained that we know that our community is very diverse, and we have to recognise that so that's why we use this language. We need to be mindful that we don't always know what is happening at home. The term grown-up covers the most secure and safest way of talking to the children and everyone's family dynamics are different.

11.7. Year 2 - Jack in The Beanstalk performance - how were the children chosen who will be participating?
CG explained that the performance was the idea of a child who had written to her asking if she could put on the performance with a group of friends. So, with the support of her teacher they did. CG added that she was delighted to have been able to support the child and is open to other ideas.

11.8. Year 2 - Girl Power event - some children have been invited to attend an event called girl power at Soton uni - how were the children who have been invited chosen / selected?
CG explained that from time-to-time different opportunities come up. This event is a pilot that has been offered by the University of Southampton who have given very set guidance about what the children will need to be able to do and cope with. Class teachers were asked to identify girls who have a natural interest in science. So, with the input of the teachers and taking into account the way the event will run, a small group has been selected. It's an exciting pilot and CG added that if all goes well then hopefully in future years, they will be able to open the opportunity up to more.

11.9. Irish dancing - some parents have expressed concern over the process of collecting children. Team spirit seem to have a better handle on matching parents to children. Irish dancing, the teacher lets the children leave the hall and doesn't monitor which child goes to which grown up and is pretty chaotic. CG advised that this has been raised with Mrs Hunt and added that the clubs are run separate to the school but that it's extremely important that children that attend these clubs on the school site are kept safe.

Actions from March 2023 Meeting

Item No.	Action	Responsible	Comments	Complete
4.1	CG to speak to Year R teaching staff to refer to gross motor skills session as PE	CG		
7.5	CG to investigate the best way to share with parents if children need additional reading support	CG		
9.2	CG to investigate with USH the use of School Cloud to book parents evening meetings	CG		
11.3	Add descriptions of what will be celebrated at Celebration Events	CG		
11.3	Seek parent opinions on whether they prefer all celebration events to be face to face or 50% face to face and 50% virtual or all virtual	All Class Reps		

