

Shirley Infant School – Parent Forum – Autumn 2

Date: Tuesday 5 November 2024 @ 12noon (Held Virtually)

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 – Megan Cox (MC) / Natalie Steel (NS)

Head/Deputy Head – Cate Gregory (CG)

FOSIS Secretary – Lynsey Powell (LP)

Parent Reps

Attendees	Apologies
Emily Arbery (Hedgehogs)	Gayle Doulton (Badgers)
Annemarie Clayton (Beavers)	Tracey Sandell (Badgers)
Rachel Madgwick (Foxes)	Hilary Pearson (Otters)
Rachel Ayrton (Foxes)	Katie Birts (Otters)
Rose Silva (Squirrels) (RS)	Charlotte Watts (Moles)
Hannah Brown (Moles)	Kirsty Hughes (Squirrels)
Caroline Whitworth (Rabbits)	Tamsyn Langton (Rabbits)
Marie Naish (Owls)	
Sophie Findlay (Hedgehogs)	
Waheedah Ahmed (Owls)	
Lydia Stammers (Beavers)	
Vicky Newland-Jones (Otters)	

Agenda

1. Actions from previous meeting
2. Positive Feedback
3. Marvellous Me
4. Library / Reading
5. Communication
6. Choir
7. Lunches
8. Other

1. Actions from previous meeting

Item No.	Action	Responsible	Comments	Complete
4.2	To check the trip letter that was sent out to parents in relation to the teddy bears picnic.	CG	Resent out and comms	Y
8.4	Investigate the possibility of FOSIS updating their own page on the school website	CG	FOSIS provided with login and pages have been updated.	Y
8.6	Payment for school trips – investigate if card payments are possible Investigate the possibility of sending out overdue reminders re: school trip donations scheduled for the end of the month.	CG CG	CG asked the question – unfortunately not possible to assign a card payment to a specific child. Has been investigated but at this point in time, it's not possible.	Y

2. Positive feedback

- 2.1. Thank you to Miss Spencer and Mrs Macintyre for a great start to year 2.
- 2.2. Thank you for arranging the Y2 trips. My daughter has been looking forward to going out and about on trips.
- 2.3. Paying for the trips has been easy via MCAS
- 2.4. The Marvellous Me curriculum updates have been very useful (Y2)
- 2.5. Y2 curriculum presentation really useful.
- 2.6. Ms. Longman and Mr. Segun are excellent. We as parents feel they genuinely want to get to know the kids and seem to treat them all as individuals/talk to them in ways they each respond best to. Never let them leave.
- 2.7. We're really grateful for all the fun extras yr2 have had/have planned for this year, trips etc. We're sure it enhances their overall school experience and know it takes a lot of effort to organise.
- 2.8. Ms. Longman has been communicative but concise whenever we've needed/wanted to talk to her.
- 2.9. We are loving the new yearly planner for dates, it has definitely helped us so I hope it is useful for other parents and the weekly newsletter is working really well for us.
- 2.10. We wanted to convey to Mrs Gregory, Mrs Baddams and Miss Peach how happy we are with the school, their learning and teaching methods and how they try to instil very important values on our children.
- 2.11. Our son has developed a lot in just these first weeks, becoming more independent, he is very interested in learning and he talks with a lot of affection about his teachers and classmates.
- 2.12. We're really happy with the way that our son has settled into school - the teaching staff are great and Miss Peach has made a good impression in the first half term. My husband attended the curriculum evening and said it was really helpful, well run and the teacher presentations were really strong. So positive feedback all round!
- 2.13. Thank you Ms Longman and Mr Segun for providing such a great start to Yr 2. Ms Longman's attention to detail and thoroughness during the recent parents evening was second to none.

- 2.14. Thank you to Mrs Gregory (in the office) for being such a bright and cheery person whenever I come into the office, nothing is too much trouble for you.
- 2.15. Delighted with how Ms Longman has set up Yr 2 for our son since the start. We really appreciate the thought and compassion she has given to supporting him and he seems to be doing really well as a result.
- 2.16. Ms Longman is lovely! Initially I was confused as to the rationale for parents eve being so early in the year but actually it was great to see that she had already established such a nice relationship with the children and gave an opportunity to ask questions early.
- 2.17. I really love how welcoming staff are to the children in the mornings
- 2.18. Mrs Smith and Miss Mantle have made a real effort to get to know our children. They're just wonderful!
- 2.19. For some reason, our parents evening session was muddled with the previous day. Miss Mantle still took the time to see us and then, off the cuff, provided so much feedback for our daughter – it showed just how much she knows her (and all the others we suspect!).
- 2.20. Thank you for all the lovely activities they do and have coming up – it helps to keep the kids going at the end of each half term and on wobbly days (plus it's just lovely to see/hear all that goes on!)
- 2.21. Our daughter loves Miss Spencer and has adjusted to year two very easily – we're sure that's down to the great teaching team and support staff.
- 2.22. Loved the class celebration songs the kids performed. They looked like they were really enjoying it! The classroom was very hot though! How are they not all falling asleep?!
- 2.23. I've got every confidence Miss Spencer is great with the kids (they all seem so happy) but it would be great for her to have more confidence with the parents – she was quite timid during parents evening.
- 2.24. Both our kids LOVE park run. It's a highlight of their week! Thank you so much to Mrs Lubbock-Smith who really encourages them and welcomes them individually!
- 2.25. I've been really impressed with Miss Peach, and I think she's a fantastic addition to the school.
- 2.26. Loved the dates for year overview very helpful
- 2.27. Great transition process lots of information. Staff great on intro to year R evening.
- 2.28. Office staff continue to be very helpful consistency across infants and juniors is fantastic when you are juggling two children.
- 2.29. Thank you to Miss Orman for helping the kids make a smooth transition and supporting those who have been struggling at drop off.
- 2.30. I appreciate the communication from Miss Orman which is quite specific and regular
- 2.31. Miss Orman looks to have settled really well into SIS and the children really like her, describing her as 'nice' and 'kind'.
- 2.32. The age-old subject of black permanent pens ruining school jumpers came up on the Class Whatsapp group chat at the beginning of the year. It hasn't been mentioned for a while so I'm hoping the children have been told pens are just for writing on the boards and not for anywhere else! Thank you for the school's understanding on this.
- 2.33. Thank you to Miss Moncrieff, Mrs Durman and Mrs Clark for all their hard work and caring nature to the children!
- 2.34. the calendar of events for the year is much appreciated

MC summarised the positive feedback received from parents

3. Marvellous Me

- 3.1. The class reps asked their classes for specific feedback on the Marvellous Me communication tool, the following comments were received:
 - 3.1.1. Marvellous Me doesn't add or take away much for my school experience

- 3.1.2. Like using Marvellous Me and would prefer it to stay
- 3.1.3. I don't think it is necessary to continue using Marvellous Me as the communication is very minimal and can be delivered to parents in other ways.
- 3.1.4. We have received minimal Marvellous Me comms since leaving Yr R (now in Year 2), would be more than happy to see go!
- 3.1.5. If we continue to use Marvellous Me as a communication tool, it would be nice to actually receive praise for the kids rather than just being used for curriculum information.
- 3.1.6. Yr 2 Curriculum updates appreciated from Mrs Lubbock Smith

MC explained that at the request of the school we had asked parents for specific feedback regarding Marvellous Me and we got a mixed response.

CG explained that the school is happy to review it. She added that it was a tool that came into the school about 8 years ago with the purpose of sharing the curriculum elements with parents. At the time it was introduced there weren't other apps/systems that could do similar. She added that FOSIS fund Marvellous Me and whilst most elements of it could be replicated via BromCom/MCAS, the school would need to look at alternatives to share the badges related to learning behaviours and values – some alternatives are already being considered.

CG added that the decision to keep or remove Marvellous Me should be a parent one but that a final decision would be needed by December to ensure that all the appropriate school paperwork is updated.

Post meeting note: FOSIS has created a Google Form which will be shared on Weekly Comms on Friday 8 November, has been sent out via WhatsApp groups and FB groups too to canvas views from parents.

4. **Library / Reading**

- 4.1. A couple of parents noting that because Yr 2 children choose their own reading books they often bring home the wrong level by mistake. Can this be better monitored? CG said that she would remind staff to keep an eye on the books children are choosing, but did explain that giving the children the choice is also intentional to give them a bit more independence. CG suggested that if you notice this, then please raise directly with the teacher at the time.
- 4.2. Is it possible to let parents know in advance if the library day is going to change that week? CG explained that the teachers try their hardest to stick to their library day, but it is one of those parts of the timetable that can be moved last minute to accommodate other learning activities.
- 4.3. Two Year R parents said that it wasn't made clear what they needed to fill in, in the reading diary CG explained this was shared at the curriculum evening and in the reading letter that went out to all parents. CG suggested that these parents speak directly to their class teacher who will be more than happy to explain.
- 4.4. One parent mentioned that they had not been given a reading book when other children have, so just a bit frustrating that we aren't able to do that bit at home – daughter feels like she's missing out. Parent tried to speak to the teacher but they'd gone home. Asked again the following day and was told they're not giving out books this week (last week of half term) but other children did get them (Hedgehogs) CG will speak to Hedgehog teacher and confirm.
- 4.5. Could we have reading challenges, a bit like the park run, to earn special badges? CG explained that we have run things like this before but it's difficult to manage and often fizzles out quickly. The school and Government's focus is for the love of reading to naturally grow and more about reading for purpose and less about rewards.

NS added that the Shirley library runs reading challenges in the school holidays – CG said that she would speak to the library to see if someone could back into school to promote it.

- 4.6. Can parents come into school to read with the children? CG said absolutely, we would parent helpers to come into the school. She added that further info will follow in weekly comms this week and that they are working on a leaflet as suggested at the previous parent forum to help parents understand what is possible. CG explained that there will need to be an application form completed as part of the safeguarding requirements. She added that they don't ask for parent helpers in the first half term as their focus is on settling the children.
- 4.7. One parent asked how the reading books are chosen for each child and if the remarks from parents are monitored? CG explained that reading books are Little Wandle and that it is a prescribed scheme with very strict guidelines. She added that staff do read the remarks in the reading diaries and each half term they review the books the children are reading. Please speak to teachers directly on any specific questions as they come up.

5. Communication

- 5.1. One parent commented that the 3 apps, Marvellous Me, MCAS and the school grid, do not enable active collaboration and don't replace the need for emails. Is it possible to combine into one single point for communication and reference? Another parent added that they feel there are too many apps/websites, none of which seem to be being used to their full potential.
CG explained that the only tool the school is able to review is Marvellous Me (see section 3), the other tools are prescribed by the Academy that the school is part of. CG added that whilst she appreciates that they might not be used to their full potential, they are used for the parts they need.
- 5.2. Can we just have one weekly email, rather than getting multiple per week to remember about? CG explained that there is a weekly email to share weekly comms and the other reminders are sent to support parents who have asked for additional reminders in the past – it's a difficult balance to keep everyone happy.
- 5.3. Some parents commented that they find information difficult to find – examples given were library days and the need to have the reading book in every day.
CG explained that library days are shared on curriculum and reading letters, links to which are shared through weekly comms. She added that reading books need to be in every day as staff / parent helpers also do reading with the children in the class too.
- 5.4. Several parents raising the fact that incorrect information is still being shared which then results in lots of additional communication/emails to correct it and lots of confusion. It gives the impression that communications are not proof read before being sent.

One parent suggested a simple checklist to run through before sending emails such as:

- Do the links work
- Are the correct attachments attached
- Have we double checked the dates
- Is it clear if info is for Infants/Juniors

CG said that she was only aware of one comms issue which was junior related.

NS commented that she had seen a significant improvement in the quality of the communications this term.

RS added that incorrect info regarding the FOSIS committee in the recent newsletter.

6. Choir

- 6.1. A couple of Yr 2 parents concerned their children are having to rush their lunch and arriving late or missing out completely on choir due to the timing of their lunch. Can those in Yr 2 that want to attend choir be allowed to go for early lunch to avoid this? CG explained that Year 2 are already allowed to go in earlier and are called in by staff.

7. Lunches

- 7.1. Several parents concerned about the amount of sugary desserts that the children have access to. There doesn't seem to be any way that you can select desserts on Schoolgrid, as you would the main meals, to choose healthier options – could this be made possible? CG explained that every school catering company has to ensure they follow the government guidance for sugar content in all foods. She added that all desserts meet government recommendations and that children get the choice of fruit, yoghurt or main pudding. She explained that the school don't control the pudding options with School Grid.
- 7.2. Can pudding choices be made with some parental influence? Suggested to be via the app like the main meal selection is. CG explained that this wasn't possible.
- 7.3. Can brown as well as white bread options be offered? CG explained that there is often a mix of bread types available, and children can specify.
- 7.4. One parent mentioned that their child had found the food too spicy recently – could this be reviewed. CG suggests that parents encourage alternatives with their children if they find they don't like a certain meal. CG added that a new menu would be coming out soon and would be shared.

8. Other

- 8.1. **Playtime** - We love the new play paintwork in the playground but feel like time in the playground could be more actively led (games?) by adults. It often seems to be a bit of a free for all without any structure, meaning some kids who are maybe less confident get left out, or super energetic kids can inadvertently go too far. CG explained that whilst it might look like a free for all, there are tight zones where they are allocated and there are staff there supervising. Team Spirit is also on the astro doing football or netball. They have a 15 mins active session – yoga, golden mile etc. We are also mindful that they need to have the time to play as they are learning a lot throughout the rest of the day. CG offered the option for parents to come in and observe.
- 8.2. **Light Up Drama** – are there any plans for Light Up drama to come into school again? CG explained that we have them in as much as possible. However, inset days can be tricky as the staff are in training and the hall is in use. She added that she is liaising with them for the next inset day but that it will come down to what space is needed in the school.
- 8.3. **Ventilation in Classrooms** – one parent noticed that windows are often closed at pick up and was wondering if they could be opened to increase ventilation, particularly this time of year. CG explained that doors and windows are opened throughout the day and that there is a constant flow of fresh air. It's also about making sure there is a balance of the comfort in the classroom.
- 8.4. **School Drop Off** – one parent asked if would make more sense if parents entered through the playground and left through the yellow main gate? To avoid so much crowding with people leaving the playground and people in the queue. CG agreed to look into this request.

- 8.5. **Foxes Maternity Cover** – any update, specifically timings and recruitment on this? CG explained that an update letter would be coming out on Friday to Foxes parents. She added that recruitment in education is extremely difficult at the moment.
- 8.6. **Celebration events** – some children whose parents weren't able to attend were looking particularly sad and left out – could anything be done differently in future to include them? Hedgehogs CG explained that parents do usually appear even if they aren't able to get there straight away. She added that the after school club carers come in to be with children and the teaching staff support them. EA explained that typically children without parents would sit together on the carpet and this time they weren't.

CG explained that this was the first celebration event for the Year R children so they didn't know what to expect, she did want to reassure all parents that the staff are looking out for the children.

- 8.7. **After school clubs** – several year R parents asked for more variety of after school clubs – not just sport. Crafts maybe? CG explained that they have looked at this with Team Spirit and they have run their lego clubs. CG said she would speak to Team Spirit about this again at their review. She added that whilst they would love to have more variety, it's finding an affordable and quality provision that is the challenge.
- 8.8. **PE** – one parent suggested that perhaps children go to school in their PE kit on the days they have PE to avoid the mayhem of getting dressed and losing uniforms? CG explained that they have discussed this and appreciate that some parents will like this approach, and some will not. She added that in Year R, the getting ready for PE is actually part of the curriculum.
- 8.9. **Sitting in class** – Year 1 parent concerned about how much 'sitting' their child is doing in class compared to Year R – can more active tasks be encouraged. CG explained that all Year 1 children have their Directed Physical Activity (DPA) in the afternoon and their play project (MOOT in Year R). We do explain in the Year 1 curriculum session that this is part of the transition from Year R to 1 and we know it can be tricky.
- 8.10. **Reward Systems** - If a reward system is implemented at school can we be advised? Parents referred specifically to dojo points. Parents would appreciate information about what it is, how it's used, what the rewards are etc. Parents report this not being in the Parents Handbook. This will help parents engage with it a bit better and understand what the children are talking about when they come home. CG thanked the reps for raising this and acknowledged that this had been missed out of the parent handbook and they will rectify this.

MC asked if there could some information shared with existing Year 1 parents. CG said she would ask Mrs Smith to do this.

CG asked if MC could review the behaviour policy to check that reward systems are covered within. (Post meeting note: MC reviewed the behaviour policy available on the school website and there is no reference to dojo points)

CG asked if the class reps could promote the completion of the Parent Governor survey.

Actions from November 2024 Meeting

Item No.	Action	Responsible	Comments	Complete
3	Create a Google Form to canvas parents for views on keeping or removing Marvellous Me	LP		
4.4	Speak to Hedgehog teaching staff regarding reading books the week before half term	CG		
4.5	Speak to Shirley library to see if they are able to come into school promote their reading challenges	CG		
8.4	Investigate the possibility of parents entering the playground through the current exit gate and exiting via the yellow gates to avoid the clash of parents leaving and those queuing down Wilton Road towards Bellemoor Road	CG		
8.7	Speak to Team Spirit about offering alternative after school club options other than sport clubs.	CG		
8.10	Add reward systems info to parent handbook / school materials	CG		
	Provide information re: reward systems to existing Year 1 Parents	CG		
	Review Behaviour Policy to see if reward system information is current	MC		