

Parent Forum Meeting Minutes – Friday 11 March 2016

Apologies

Nicola Castle, Miranda Seldon, Katie Bett, Henny Salinger

Present

Tracy Harris, Jane Joshi, Shelley Williams-Farr, Jo Copestake, Katherine Higgins, Simon Barnard, Andrew Morris, Samantha Packer, Verity Roberts, Tandy Titmus

Approval of Minutes

Approved via e-mail following last meeting.

Matters Arising

School lunches waste/seconds

Andrew Morris (AM) spoke to Alison in the kitchen. It seems there are times which work better than others in terms of portion size. AM stated that vegetables often seem to be available but that the demand is for extra meat servings. Curry seems to create the most wastage. AM questioned years 5 and 6 and they have said they are happy. AM will monitor from time to time.

Access Purple Mash/learning software from home

AM has a quote from Education City which includes computing, English, French, Maths and Science. It is likely to be 'sponsored' by Friends of the School. The teachers will be able to select games that can be accessed from home to reinforce learning. It is also possible that specific children could be targeted with particular activities if required.

Fruit for Class R

This has been promoted and is available every afternoon.

Buddy System

Year 4 now get an early lunch with their buddies and read for 15 minutes with them before going out to play. Year 4 have offered feedback that they are enjoying this arrangement. AM wanted comments from Miranda Seldon to be noted:

I was struck by how very caring and pro-active the Year 4 children are with Class R children at playtime. This goes beyond the allocated buddie system. The atmosphere of looking out for and playing with Class R children is fantastic, giving the younger children the opportunity to engage with a wider age range, and also develop good social skills. The younger children looked delighted to see their Class 4 friends come to play with them and greatly benefit from their social interaction. From what I've seen, we don't need to change a thing!

Shelley Williams-Farr (SWF) queried if outside games were being organised for Class R. AM stated that due to the current building works, space was tight and so at the moment it was not possible.

Ashlyns Admissions Criteria

The changes that AM had requested to go back into the Admissions Criteria have been actioned and confirmed.

Scooter Park

Katherine Higgins (KM) asked whether the scooter park was ready to be used. AM stated that it is but the school handyman is ill at present and needs to do a sign for it. It is ready for use.

Agenda

Children's Reading Scheme – Class R

AM stated that he has spoken to Class R reps about this issue. He has spoken to Mrs Hall and there is a reading rota for groups 1-5 one week, then 5-1 the next week (so that the same children aren't always the last to read every week). Guided reading will be pushed, reading books changed twice a week plus a box of books put out for another change if required. AM did state that the hardest books will never be sent home with the children to read as the aim is that they enjoy home reading and do not struggle with it. Simon Barnard (SB) also pointed out that if the children aren't enjoying books they shouldn't be pushed to finish them. KH did state that the children are encouraged to put books back.

AM stated that in the past five years, KS1 reading levels have been above average. Last year 97% were above average compared to the Hertfordshire average of 79%. AM said that reading has been a strength. Tandy Titmus (TT) praised Mrs Barber and Mrs Bailey for their great work.

SWF asked if parent volunteers were needed as several Class R parents have said they would help in class. The system of parent helpers was explained and both SWF and VR will advise parents of the system.

Poor Quality of School Uniform

A Year 6 parent has complained about the quality of school jumpers. SWF, VR and KH agreed that the sizing has been unpredictable, the polo shirt fabric is now thinner and that bigger sizes have been required. TT suggested looking in the FOS secondhand uniform which is available to buy. AM will check with Jean in the office and could contact the supplier to make further enquiries.

Teaching

A Year 6 parent has queried the teaching arrangements for Friday in Year 6 as several teachers taught them the previous week. AM said that Mrs Stroud was not in school in that instance but after Easter, Mrs Laurier will be joining the school. Mrs Hall is doing a science project with AM but the latter may not always be present.

Sam stepping down

Sam Packer (SP) advised that as her son would be leaving Year 6 in July, she will be leaving the Parent Forum and a replacement will be needed to take the minutes from the Autumn 2016 term.

SIAMS report

SB stated that the report of the recent SIAMS inspection can be read on the school website. It was very complimentary and positive about the school with some of the areas of improvement needed as a result in the schooling changes brought about by the conversion to a primary school. SB noted that the Ofsted inspection is imminent.

A Member of Staff to supervise children for early drop-off

A parent has requested whether a member of staff would be available in the playground from 8.30am to supervise children with working parents until the school doors are opened. AM stated that he could not employ someone to fulfil this role and Health and Safety guidelines would need to be implemented in this instance. He is happy to write a letter to parents to facilitate a private arrangement between parents, such as a volunteer rota of people willing to watch other parents' children, but could not be involved in the organisation of it. Several members of the Forum voiced concerns at the implementation such as the ability of the volunteer to watch and contain all the children that might be under their care, what would happen if an accident occurred or a child left school grounds, what would happen if the designated parent or their children were ill on the day and other issues. AM said that the parents could be consulted to find a list of willing volunteers and if any working parent who wished to take advantage of this was interested, they could be given the list and contact the volunteers themselves.

Any Other Business

Year 3 clubs

KH stated that Year 3 mums are asking about after-school clubs other than Press Gang and Football and to be run on days other than Tuesdays. She stated that there was a Year 3 Recorder Club last year which is now only on offer to Year 4. AM said he would have a look. He is talking to Herts Music about a possible school music club.

Deep Clean

VR asked about deep cleaning of classrooms as there is a lot of illness going round the school at the moment. AM said that when there is a high incidence of illness, door handles are disinfected and tables are cleaned daily as a matter of course. Deep Cleans are done in the school holidays. VR said that some parents had suggested a team of volunteers to do deep cleans. AM is happy for volunteers to do this but Sharon is in charge and all helpers would need to follow her instructions, be stringent about the approved cleaning products to

be used and cleaning procedures to be followed. AM did state that the children are all taught handwashing and good hygiene at school.

SB said that sometimes classrooms look 'tired' and that can be mistaken for not looking clean. He suggested that a group of volunteers to paint classrooms might be a good way to lift the appearance of some of the school areas.

Volume of e-mails from school office

TT said that there were a high volume of emails coming from the school office that were not related to school. Would it be possible to send them in bulk as attachments alongside the weekly bulletin as Ashlyns do? SP suggested that putting detail in the subject line might help parents to work out which mails are school business.

School Bus to Ashlyns from Potten End

Tracy Harris (TH) reported that the Council are looking at getting rid of the bus from Potten End to Ashlyns. SB stated that David Lloyd, the Herts County Councillor was insistent that if they make the junction at Gravel Path 'safe' they would consider it a safe route and remove the transport in place. KH expressed concern at the narrow pavements, low kerb and darkness in winter as well as the distance for pupils to walk to school. SP advised that only half the village are eligible for the bus as along Hempstead Lane, Cavendish is the nearest Herts school and anyone in that situation is not allowed to use the bus or pay to use it. SB suggested that the Parish Council are contacted on nettledenwithpottenendpc@yahoo.co.uk.

SB also stated that Dacorum have agreed to put a footpath from the school crossing to Rambling Way at School Gardens.

Next meeting 6 May 2016 @ 2pm.