

Parent Forum Meeting Minutes 27 February 2015

Present

Katie Bett, Verity Roberts, Nicola Castle, Miranda Seldon, Katherine Higgins, Tandy Titmus, Tracy Harris, Jane Joshi, Simon Barnard, Andrew Morris

Apologies

Louise Cutler, Sarah Williams

Minutes from Last Meeting

To follow on from Internet Safety brought up in the last meeting, AM stated that the Internet Safety talk at Westfield on 3 March has had very poor uptake from Potten End parents and expressed his disappointment at this. Most people at the meeting admitted to not having seen it or registered it. AM stated that he would be bringing back the information to implement at school and communicate with parents but that it would be nice to have a better response from them. AM is particularly concerned with 'chat' facilities offered by much social media, particularly those which are used by the children despite being under the age limit.

It was confirmed that there is a procedure for the older children bringing mobile phones to school and leaving them in a drawer for the day.

Guided reading in school is taking place and the method of assessment has been changed with stamps in the children's reading records reflecting this.

Minutes approved.

1 & 2 Bad Parent/Carer Parking and Road Safety

TT raised this point that relates to mostly the older children being dropped off in the road in the morning and having to run across the road to get to school. TT noted that it was frequently happening opposite the fence in front of the school gate and therefore was even more of a danger with children having then to run around it to get into school.

This issue is both an issue of parent supervision (letting children out of the car or use scooters without proper supervision) and of parents/carers parking badly and dangerously at school drop off and collection times. SB stated that the Parish Council has tried to get traffic wardens to monitor the parking situation and this is a problem shared by all schools. He also advised the the Parish Council had initially objected to the school planning proposals on the basis of parking and traffic issues. David Lloyd at HCC had promised double yellow lines and further parking facilities. It has now been almost a year since the changes were made to the school, and no such measures have been taken. AM stated that the children are taught the dangers of being dropped off in the road. Some schools take photos of badly parked cars and send them to the Highways Agency. He also stated that Mr Durrant has qualified as a relief traffic patrol person. TT suggested finding a way of using the older pupils to reinforce the issue of safety on the roads and has offered to talk to Alison Elderfield, a Traffic Police Officer and mum to a child in year 3, and will try and come up with some ideas on how to promote traffic safety at the school.

3 Topics to be covered during the term

TT raised this point but has found the curriculum on the school website for all years. This information was praised for being useful and informative. It was also noted that Miss Prestige writes a letter to parents at the start of each term to advise them of what will be learned. It was suggested that it would be a good idea to roll this out for other years.

4 Before/After School Clubs

KH raised the point about having more variety of clubs for the children, such as chess club. This was echoed by other parents who would like to see more clubs for younger children. They feel that the children go on to do other activities outside school anyway, so if it was at school, more the better.

TH advised that this matter has been discussed previously and issues such as the cleaning taking place after school hours (which creates a space issue), the fact that teachers would be required to volunteer their time, and it has previously been felt that the younger children are tired enough at the end of the day, have all contributed to the lack of clubs offered for them.

AM said that some clubs are very well subscribed and others aren't. Any outdoor clubs create a supervision issue (such as being accompanied to the cricket club field) and quality and supervision have to be the paramount concern. Also the issue of opening out a club to younger children if it is not fully taken up could create problems with pitching a club to the correct age group.

SB suggested that if parents look into the issue and find the need, requirement and people to run a club, then the school would probably look at doing it. VR stated that all outside organisations must be quality controlled.

NC suggested that the School Council have lots of good ideas. The children could decide what clubs they would like to have and the feasibility of them then explored.

It was agreed that a questionnaire be done for all ages and interests and the results discussed.

5 Class R children playing on the big playground

VR and KB advised that some of the smaller children are being bumped around and older children getting fed up with them at playtime.

AM has talked to the lunch team and they are not aware of any problems. He stated that there was relevance to bringing all the year groups together, but the possibility of having some days where they were separate could be explored. KB felt that with a Year 6 group being present next year, this is relevant.

6 Class Specific Communication if a teacher is ill

KB advised that Mrs Hall was ill, and Mrs Birch has also been off sick previously for longer than a few days, which can be unsettling for the children if their routine is upset. It was asked that if a teacher was going to be ill for an extended period, that the parents be advised of what the teaching plans

will be to cater for this. AM stated that this school is lucky that there are very few supply teachers used and the cover is usually arranged with staff with whom the children are familiar with. AM stated that any parent worried about an issue of this can always come to the office and arrange to talk to someone.

7 Spelling Tests – teacher communication

Some Class R children are having spellings homework and some aren't and parents would like to know the distinction and reasoning as to why this is. AM stated that communication of this issue needs to be treated sensitively as some children may not be ready for extra work. He suggested having times where the parents of each class were invited in to see their work and talk to the teacher, and then the parents can discuss this directly to find out the situation with their own child. Class R parents have been invited on 5 March.

8 How are reps collecting issues from parents and reporting back

NC asked how this is being done. Several reps are emailing parents in their year and sending back agenda items. It is more common with the parents of older children as many walk to school now and parents don't meet up and chat in the playground. AM offered to have a dedicated email address offered to parents so they could email their agenda items directly. It was agreed that TH would administer as she currently prepares the agenda items.

Some parents have requested that the minutes be approved quicker and more easily available (minutes are currently only available in a file in the office). It was agreed that after the meeting, SP would write the minutes up as soon as possible. When circulated, a time limit would be given. If reps have not responded by this date, it will be assumed that they approve the minutes. Once this time has passed, the minutes will be passed onto the office as approved and Janette can put on the school website.

Reps can feedback to parents verbally what has been discussed but not circulate minutes until they are approved.

9 Read for My School

This is a reading program designed to encourage children in years 3-8 to read more and has an online library that the children can access. MS passed this information to AM as there was no time to discuss. Some older children at other local schools are currently involved in this scheme.

10 Residential Trips for Older Pupils

AM stated that in line with other Berkhamsted Schools, there will be a Year 4 trip to Hudnall and Year 6 will go on an activities-based trip.

Next Meeting – 8 May 2015 @ 2pm

Items to be followed up from this meeting:

- 1 Action taken on school clubs – questionnaire and School Council
- 2 Smaller children playing on big playground – some days they will be kept apart from the bigger children