

Parent Forum Minutes – Meeting held on Friday 20th October 2017

Present

Andrew Morris, Simon Barnard, Emma Harwood-Jones (N/Y2), Jo Phillips (N/Y1), Shelley Williams-Farr (Y1), Katherine Higgins (Y5), Tandy Titmus (Y6)

Apologies

Jo Copestake (N/Y2), Verity Roberts (Y3), Katie Bett (Y3), Henny Salinger (Y5), Tracy Harris (Y6)

Minutes from last meeting

Approved via email following last meeting

Matters arising from last meeting

None

Agenda

1. Sports Day Medals

A parent has highlighted that a few of the younger children got very upset when they didn't receive a medal at Sports Day, even after trying very hard. They suggest that cheaper medals are given out to all children and the winning three teams receive nicer medals.

Mr. Morris (AM) acknowledged it is hard to make a call on this matter. All children were given stickers. It was planned that KS1 were given first, second and third place stickers and KS2 were given medals. He explained that the KS1 sticker order may not have arrived in time and therefore some medals were used instead. There is a need to achieve a balance around the level of competition during Sports Day.

Katherine Higgins (KH) commented that the system is good as it is. Emma Harwood-Jones (EHJ) added that this year some children in KS1 received medals and those who didn't were very upset. All acknowledged that this is a big event and all children were trying their best.

AM will ensure arrangements are in place for Sports Day 2018. KS1 and FS will receive stickers. KS2 will receive medals. KS2 also take part in House Games and can therefore win as a team, even if they don't win an individual event.

KH expressed concern that during KS2 Sports Day, the rules were not enforced for some events. Therefore, some children who were diligently following the

rules ended up unfairly achieving a lower position. She suggested children who do not participate fairly be disqualified so that the medals are meaningful for those who follow the rules.

2. Adults in classrooms

A parent has asked if clearer information could be given about the teaching staff, TAs, students and parent support in classrooms. They explain that it is not always clear and it would be good to understand who the children are talking about.

AM said this is a valid question. Usually, information is given about staff members but not parent helpers. Currently, there is an NVQ student in Year 1 called Daisy. Students will also be coming into KS2 in the Spring Term.

SB suggested that an email could be sent out with information about trainee teachers. He highlighted that older children will often share information about the extra adults with their parents, but younger children may not.

AM explained that there is sometimes movement of adults between the classes, therefore it can be difficult to give up to date information all the time. He suggested that Mrs. Sudbury and Mrs. Adams send out a termly email with information about students and parent volunteers.

3. Extra photograph session

A parent has asked if there could be an extra session for the class photograph so that any children who were missing on the day could be photographed and edited into the final photo.

AM explained that this would not be possible because of the cost involved. The photographer's time is expensive and unfortunately the extra cost would be passed onto parents in higher prices for the class photos. He added that it is also difficult for staff members who are not available on the day of the photographs.

4. World Book Day 2018

A parent would like confirmation that the school will be taking part in World Book Day 2018.

AM confirmed that this will take place on Thursday 1st March.

5. Road safety and parking

A parent has highlighted that people are continuing to park on Church Road and The Front. They ask if there is a reason that the FS entrance on The Front hasn't got the same road markings as Church Road. They ask if there is anything the school can do to help the safety of the children by addressing this problem. Another parent asks if a working party could approach the Village Hall about parking again.

There was a discussion about the following measures currently being investigated to improve road safety around the school and the parking situation:

- Road markings outside FS entrance: AM and SB explained that Highways and Terry Douris (County Councillor for Bridgewater Division) have confirmed that the road is not wide enough for markings to be painted. (Please see minutes from Parent Forum on 5.5.17 for the first discussion of this issue).
- Extra parking spaces on the Village Green: SB confirmed that this has been approved by Defra. However, they have asked the Parish Council to register another area of the village as 'Green Space' in replacement for the land that will be lost. He said there should be a solution to this but that it will cause a delay to the process. There are no time scales for the work at present.
- Proposed 20mph speed limit around the school: Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have admitted that they did not carry out the full consultation on this. Terry Douris has apologised and is pushing the matter forward. They are looking into various options of traffic calming. HCC will not allow any change in the speed limit going in or out of the village. A reminder was given that speed bumps are unlikely to be approved by the Parish Council as too many street lamps would be required.
- Recent accidents at The Common crossroads: AM, the School Governors and Rev. Penny Nash have written to Mike Penning MP to highlight concerns about the junction. They have also written to Hertfordshire Constabulary under the Freedom of Information Act to request more detail about the nature of the accidents. Mike Penning is due to visit and Terry Douris is also involved. The school will ask for 'Stop' signs to replace the 'Give Way' signs and will highlight the need for repainting the road markings at this junction.

- Parking at the Village Hall: AM felt is not worth approaching the Village Hall again about the use of the car park. Nicola Castle (who was a Year 6 parent last year) met with the Village Hall Council in the Spring to discuss the situation. AM explained that although the Hall is a village asset, it is also an independent charitable trust. When parents parked in the car park before school, it impacted greatly on the hirers and therefore, also on the revenue of the Village Hall. SB explained that in the past it was often assumed that the car park was public, rather than private. AM does not want hopes to be built up that the situation can change now. A further request to park there would probably not be successful. The car park would have to be clear of parent's cars by 8.45am, which could not be achieved without changing the start time of the school day. He explained that there was confusion earlier in the year with Pre-School parents parking there. They would not have received the letters from the school about the time limits on parking.
- New footpath: SB confirmed that the new footpath opposite the Pre-School is still under consideration.

Shelley Williams-Farr (SWF) asked what can be done while waiting for the above measures to ensure the safety of the children around the school. AM explained that Liz Illingworth (Chair of Governors) would like to have parent volunteers in high visibility clothing outside the school in the morning to discourage inappropriate parking. AM will discuss this with her. More signs are going to be ordered that can be placed on corners where parking is a problem. AM highlighted that it is not always the parents that are parking inappropriately; at times it is people using the church or Village Hall.

6. Birthday Treats

A parent has asked for clarification of the rule on bringing in sweets to share with the class on a child's birthday. Recently, some children have been given sweets before leaving the building. The parent asks for a clear and consistent message to ensure that everyone knows what is allowed and so that children have realistic expectations about their birthday.

AM confirmed that sharing sweets on a child's birthday is not allowed. He is aware that this was allowed recently when a child was leaving the school. He will send out a reminder for staff, parents and children.

7. Timing of Assemblies and Productions

A parent has asked if it is possible for parent assemblies (e.g. Harvest Festival, Mother's Day etc.) to take place at 9am (or as near to 9am as possible) to make it easier for working parents to attend. They explain that with two children in different assemblies, they need to allow two half days off work, which is difficult. An earlier performance time would be easier to manage. They stress that it is important to enable as many parents as possible to attend these events as it means the world to the children. Any flexibility would be much appreciated.

AM said that he understands that the earlier time would be easier, but explained that it would be impossible to start at 9am. Nursery starts at 9am and it would be very difficult to get ready for this when taking into account time needed for the register and all children going to the toilet. The current time for the FS/Year 1 assemblies also ties in with Nursery pick up time. Year 6 can manage an earlier start and they do this for the Leaver's Collective Worship in the Summer. Additionally, the afternoon assemblies feel more 'grown up' for Years 3 and above and it was assumed that this was easier for parents. Potentially, the afternoon assemblies could be moved to the morning, but they wouldn't start at 9am. He added that it is important to achieve a workable solution for all.

8. Football slots in the playground

A child in Year 3 has said that the older children are not respecting the younger children's time on the coloured football pitch. He feels they are not getting a fair chance to enjoy football as the older children are getting in the way. The parent asks if the staff on duty can watch out for this behaviour and if a reminder can be given to the older children about the time slots.

AM agreed that some children were silly at times but not often. He will remind the staff and children of the rules around the football time slots.

9. Sports Week

A parent has asked if there will be another Sports Week as the children seemed to really enjoy the recent one.

Tandy Titmus (TT) and KH confirmed that the Year 5 and 6 girls really enjoyed the Sports Week.

AM said there will be a Skip2bFit Week in the Spring Term.

10. Sports Teams

A parent feels that some of our sports teams are at a disadvantage (e.g. tag rugby, rounders).

TT highlighted that there are not enough children on the rounders team. TT also said that the children were at a disadvantage in rugby because they don't know the rules.

AM explained that they can't open rounders up to the younger children because of the use of a hard ball in the game. AM explained that when a whole class attends a sporting event, they split the children into mixed-ability teams so that all children have a chance of winning. He said that mixed-ability teams do get through to the finals of events. He acknowledged that the Year 4 group found it hard and said that coaching should improve things this year.

KH also suggested opening up netball to Year 5. This is for girls only.

11. PGL Cost

A parent has asked what the cost of PGL will be.

AM said that Mrs Sudbury is dealing with the costings at present.

12. Screen time in school

A parent has asked if there is a limit on the amount of TV children watch in Nursery. Some children have a time limit at home, therefore it is helpful to know how much they are watching in school. Another parent has asked about the general school policy on screen time and how much the children have in each year group.

AM explained that there is no policy on this. Regarding Nursery, the children sometimes watch things while waiting to be picked up, ensuring all the children stay in a central place. He can see the practical benefits of this. He is not concerned about the amount of screen time.

AOB

1. Year 2 Video

EJH highlighted that Year 2 have recently watched a video on Florence Nightingale that some of them found upsetting. The video has upset children in previous years too.

AM will look into this.

J. Phillips
29.10.17