

Parent Forum Minutes – Meeting held on Friday 5th May 2017

Present

Andrew Morris, Simon Barnard, Shelley Williams-Farr (R), Jo Phillips (R), Jo Copestake (Y1), Emma Harwood-Jones (Y1), Verity Roberts (Y2), Henny Salinger (Y4), Tracy Harris (Y5), Tandy Titmus (Y5)

Apologies

Katie Bett (Y2), Katherine Higgins (Y4), Nicola Castle (Y6)

Minutes from last meeting

Approved via email following last meeting

Matters arising from last meeting

1. Reading Diaries

Andrew Morris (AM) thanked Forum members for their feedback on his items in the last meeting. He was pleased to hear the enthusiasm for reading 'real' books rather than reading on electronic devices. The new Reading Diary is currently being developed.

2. Parking feedback

The Governors are following up parking and road safety improvements with the Council. There will be extra parking bays on the village green, however the land needs to be deregulated as part of the green first, which is taking some time. There will also be a new footpath opposite the Pre-School. The work is due to be carried out in August.

AM has met with the Council Travel Plan leader. Most of the suggestions made to improve the parking situation have already been addressed by the school (e.g. Road Safety Week, Bikeability, Police involvement). The idea of removing parking spaces to encourage parents to walk their children to school is obviously not possible due to the location of the school. AM anticipates that the school will be awarded the Bronze Travel Award by the end of the academic year.

AM said it is disappointing that there are no additional suggestions at present to improve the parking situation. Simon Barnard (SB) added that it is positive that Terry Douris has been appointed the County Councillor for the Bridgewater division (covering Potten End).

Agenda

1. Road markings outside the Foundation Stage entrance

A Reception parent has asked if there could be yellow road markings outside the Foundation Stage entrance to improve safety for the younger children. The main school entrance and the Pre-School entrance both have clear yellow road markings.

SB explained that a transport order must be applied for in order for this to happen. The markings outside the Pre-School entrance took quite a while to get established.

Shelley Williams-Farr (SWF) said that the markings would increase awareness of drivers, therefore improving safety for pedestrians outside the Foundation Stage entrance.

Verity Roberts (VR) suggested that a 20mph speed limit is needed in the village. SB explained that a road survey was due to be carried out by the County Council but this hasn't happened yet. He said he will look into this. Tracey Harris (TH) added that the parking bay next to the entrance may make this difficult.

Henny Salinger (HS) asked if a speed camera has been considered. Tandy Titmus (TT) suggested a speed indication display sign near the school. SB explained that there have been efforts to change the speed limits leaving the village for a long time. There was also discussion about other traffic calming measures previously attempted in the village, including speed bumps, chicanes and mini roundabouts.

SB said he will look into the possibility of additional road markings outside the Foundation Stage entrance.

2. Year 2 Class Trip

A parent asked about class trips for Year 2. AM confirmed that they will be visiting the Discovery Centre in Bracknell. Next year's trip to a different venue has also been booked already as it was so busy this year.

AM explained that the school is working towards planning in all visits at the start of the academic year. They are trying to announce dates earlier.

SB added that the recent Year 4 trip to the Verulamium Museum was very good and the children excelled in their behaviour.

AOB

1. Lunchtime Rotas

Children in Years 4, 5, and 6 have been wasting their lunchtime queuing in order to be 'first in line' for dinner. They were not enjoying a healthy lunchtime play and there were problems with behaviour in the line. AM explained that they have started a 'surprise' rota, which the children will be unable to predict. The children must now listen carefully to the MSA when they come outside and line up in a different place each day. This is a fairer system for all. Additionally, the tables under the covered area have been rearranged into a 'chicane' to prevent the children from running through this area.

TT asked if the children having packed lunches are able to sit next to children having dinners. TH explained that it depends on the order they come in and the busyness of the hall, but that they will all still be with other children from their own class.

HS asked if the children are still able to have seconds of dinner. TH explained that they are now having bigger portions instead.

AM said that Mrs. Brazer (Head Cook) has recently attended training at County. She was told that the children should be considered as 'customers' and therefore be allowed to speak as they wish. AM asked the Forum for their views on this. All agreed that this is not acceptable and that the children should be expected to demonstrate good manners to all. Emma Harwood-Jones (EHJ) added that the adults in the kitchen and dinner hall are doing the job of the parent in their absence. SB suggested that a letter be written to County to explain that we do not consider this policy to be acceptable.

2. School Twinning

EHJ asked if the school is twinned with a school in the developing world. AM explained that there was a link with a Romanian school in previous years, however no replies were received to the last letters sent.

EHJ suggested making a link with a school in Malawi. She explained that digital communication would make the link easier and it would help our children

develop an awareness of the difficulties experienced by children in the developing world.

SB said that we would need to find a school with no current sponsorship. He added that it would help our children gain a wider view of the world and provide benefit to the children in the other school. AM agreed that the link should benefit both schools. He will look into the possibility of setting up a new link, perhaps in conjunction with the church. He said it would be good to establish and maintain an ongoing link. EHJ said she will speak to her contact, who has set up a charity in Malawi.

HS suggested that the international water aid charity 'Just a Drop' may provide school links and give a central topic for learning. She also added that the children are likely to enjoy fundraising if they have a proper link to the children in the school. AM added that following a recent discussion in assembly about charities, it was clear that the children are often unaware of the reasons for fundraising events. VR suggested that sometimes parents wish to protect them from some of the reality of a charity's work.

3. New Building

AM gave an update on the new building. This will be used for small group interventions, play therapy and meetings. There have been a number of delays with finance and potential sponsorship. He is still hopeful that the building will be finished by the end of term. (See also minutes of the meeting held on 20.1.17 for further details about the building).

4. Times Tables

TT shared that the new system for learning times tables (two minute sessions at home and at school) is working really well in Year 5. She asked if it might also work well in the younger years. AM will look into this.

5. ICT

AM has recently attended training on Google Classroom, a suite of online resources for schools. He explained some of the features of this and the potential for use in Year 5 and 6. He is looking into the feasibility of this and the possibility of buying a set of Chromebooks.

HS asked if there are plans to prepare Year 5 and 6 for the computer-based homework that they will receive at secondary school. AM confirmed they are looking into this. There was discussion about the need for computer work to

be very focused and the need to teach children how to search the internet properly.

J. Phillips
17.05.17