

Minutes of Parent Forum 2

13.11.18

Present Mrs Harman, Mrs Winwood, Mrs Lapwood, Mr Smith and Mr Lawes (Governors), Mrs Gurr, Mrs Eggleton, Mrs Brown and Mrs Cato.

Apologies from Mrs Jory.

Mrs Gurr welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the 2 governors and Mrs Lapwood, representative for Emerald Class.

Parent's evening feedback: Parents were very happy with the organisation and the information received and just how much children had done. Other parents at the forum echoed feedback was the same from other year groups.

In addition **the website** is greatly improved and they are impressed with just how much is on there for parents to access or download.

A question was asked as to whether or not there should be a private part of the website that potential parents not to see the forum as it may suggest lots to discuss or may be seen negatively. It was agreed that we should remain transparent but also it shows that there is open communication taken seriously.

It was asked whether or not the **food suppliers** for school dinners had changed - the answer is no.

MG asked how parents felt about pasta being on the salad cart and how difficult it is for the children to manipulate it, she also felt that they eat the pasta but not their dinner. Parents agreed it was best to remove it.

District sports: It was agreed that the children chosen to take part would have a chance to practise in school, as it was felt by a parent that we were a little unprepared on the day. Mrs Gurr also clarified how the children were chosen by the teachers from heats in the school or assessments over the year.

Sports day: Mrs G clarified that parental feedback had led to the organisation of sports day to include competition between the teams on the day and that the points went towards the team points at the end of the day and it was celebrated with the whole school. In the past stickers of taking part was suggested by parents as opposed to the 1st 2nd 3rd traditional stickers to be inclusive of all the children. It was suggested that it was a bit flat and we need to encourage parents to support more enthusiastically. We can discuss this again closer to the time.

A reception parent informed the group that Terling school took part in the Tedylympics for reception children and it was run by great Baddow college. She highly recommended it, so something for us to look into.

Clubs: Last week it was asked if there could be more. MG confirmed we are at full capacity after school and now have 3 before school. In answer to the limit of 12 for badminton it was explained that ratios between staff and children and also the type of activity leads the number.

The new break dancing club is very popular and was very well run. GW was thanked for introducing him to us. The keep fit club has been opened up to more children. Everyone agreed the choice of clubs is great. A question was asked as to why cookery club didn't run anymore. Mrs G explained it was run by the kitchen staff who decided that after some incidents of bad behaviour (last year) that they would no longer do the club and felt maybe the children were too young.

Access to junior field:

The field is timetabled for use by the junior school much of the time. We use it in the spring or summer for PE lessons. We do not use it when the juniors are using it in spring and summer for lunch or playtimes as they are the same as the junior times and so too many children.

Parent helpers: It was explained that it is our policy for parents to work in year groups other than where their child is. Sometimes the child cannot cope, other times there have been incidents where a parent has felt pressurised to talk about the class or individual children.

Homework:

Parents like the optional homework challenges which do not create pressure at home.

A parent asked if perhaps work or worksheets could be put onto website alongside other information. MG said this may be a possibility but it will be a lot of work for teachers to upload it.

A parent mentioned that now she sees how much work is packed into a lesson (as a parent helper) she understands just how much work the teachers do and understand how hard it will be to give even more out, but that she has downloaded and really appreciates everything on the website.

Tapestry: This is an online platform for reporting progress to parents through annotated pictures and parents responding.

The ideal of this is great but there are pros and cons. When trialled previously at this school and also at previous school where MG worked, the parents liked receiving pictures of their children, but staff felt they were spending so much time taking the pictures and annotating them that it took them away from the children and therefore reduced teaching time. If left to later on had to be done in own time, which is already full. MG also explained there is a pitfall and pressure of trying to keep track and ensure that each child is photographed each week, the same number of times, so that parents feel equal time is given to their own child. She also explained the reason it is very popular with nursery or reception classes is that schools have to show that they have evidence of parental input directly to the children's learning. While it can still be trialled and discussed, for the time spent with the reporting instead of teaching and the money spent to introduce and train staff it may not be the best value for money or the most effective way to keep parents informed.

Another suggestion for our deliberation is to have **open classrooms** periodically. This is when the classroom is open for a set time one day a week and parents can look at their child's work and have informal chats with staff. This will be discussed with staff.

Newsletter: it was asked if half termly was enough?

MG explained how much time went into producing it fortnightly and how she has asked random parents on the playground for feedback. Parents felt that it was long and they did not always read it except the dates and stars of the week. Some said a lot of it did not involve their child. The parents at the forum did not necessarily hold these views. However, after discussion it was agreed that now

that the website is updated regularly , the ISA have their newsletter, the annual dates leaflet has gone out, curriculum information is outside classrooms, and that stars of the week are reported by parent mail that the newsletter is enough half termly.

ERIC: It was agreed that MG would send out an explanation again about how ERIC works. It was suggested that there be slips to explain what individual ERICs are for in the day but MG said that this would not really be feasible as ERICs may be given out by all staff in the school at any time and recording it will be impractical. The children are always told exactly why they get it and the instant feedback is enough, they are always delighted. Their individual ones go towards the class total which goes toward team reward. Parents would like a little more feedback on which ERICs their child need to be working on.

Parent mail or letter: This discussion led to an agreement that parents do not get these because either the child has put it down after being given it or it is at the bottom of a book bag or in their draw. A suggestion was made to have a summary of what has gone out. This again will be another job for the office to do and is never a quick parent mail, but it is something to consider and discuss with office staff.

MG asked parents what she can add to the tours she does on the school **Open days for new parents**.

Suggestions were as follows: Have some current parents there for informal chat, make a lot of the outside, involve children in the walk around tour, advertise the website, let them see the menu, introduce them to teachers. Parents also said how good our walk around was compared to other schools.

MG thanked the parents

The meeting closed at 3pm.