

Parent Forum 5th May 2021
HATFIELD PEVEREL INFANT SCHOOL

Attendees: Mrs Gurr Mrs Winwood
Mrs Sculfor Mrs Eggleton
Mrs Craig Mrs Turley
Mrs Harman

Minutes by Mrs Jennings

Mrs Gurr welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that once we have discussed parent questions she would like the parent forum to consider Annual school reports, book bags and diaries, an issue around unsupervised children and feedback on school lunches.

Reception

Lunch Menu – The new school menu has received a big thumbs up from parents as this has much improved. Some parents also commented that they are happy that the food seems ‘homemade’. Mrs Sculfor asked whether the allergen menu could be sent out alongside the regular menu. Mrs Jennings confirmed that this is sent directly to the parents of children who have allergies; however, she will check that both menus are sent together and published on the website.

Portions were discussed: Mrs Gurr said this was a point that has already been flagged up by staff and will be included in the discussion with the juniors who provide and serve the meals. Some parents had raised concerns that the school lunches had not been sufficient and that some of the children were going home hungry. However, since the new menu has been implemented, the feedback has much improved and parents are generally much happier with what is being offered.

Parents asked if Midday assistants could check that the children were eating well. Mrs Gurr explained that this is done **continually and is the main part of the job for middays** and indeed any other staff on duty. She is usually with the children herself encouraging them to eat and try things and would urge parents to encourage the children to keep trying food they do not like.

Mrs Gurr said there is a lot of waste. Many children can only be encouraged to eat small amounts of salad or vegetables, but many children also clear their plates.

Dessert: A parent asked if there could be no choice of ‘fruit or cake’ as the child will always choose cake. Mrs Gurr said this is not the only choice each day. That was during the limited menu when one of the cooks was not available. The dessert menu is now very varied. She can suggest it, but reminded the forum that children are given fruit at snack time as well.

Swimming pool – Some parents had queried whether the swimming pool will be opened this year and whether swimming lessons will be going ahead. Mrs Gurr confirmed that the pool belongs to the junior school who have decided not to open this this year. They plan to reinstate swimming lessons next year. This was recently mentioned in a parent mail.

Sports Day – We are planning for sports day to go ahead unless we hear different from the government. This is already included in our risk assessment. We are desperate to have parents involved again.

Reading Records *See below

Communication / Parent updates – Reception parents said it would be great if they could be told what the children are learning each week, perhaps just a couple of lines on Tapestry. Mrs Gurr said that this information already goes out via Tapestry fortnightly. Both Mrs Sculfor and Mrs Harman said that they had not received this, however Mrs Eggleton confirmed that the years 1’s had. Mrs Gurr said that she would check this is happening.

Star of the week – During the lockdown, parents had really enjoyed the Zoom celebration assemblies and were able to see why their child had been given the star of the week certificate. Now that the children are in school, it would

be nice to be told what the children have received this for. Mrs Gurr said that she will mention it to teachers but believes that the reason is written on the front, if not she will ask them to write it on the back.

Reception work – Parents are really missing the children coming out with a picture or something that they have made that they can be proud of; would it be possible to do this again? Mrs Gurr said that they can do this, however there may be a reason as to why this is not happening such as the teachers are collecting and keeping what they are doing for evidence due to the time that has been missed in school.

Reception classes – Some parents had asked whether the reception classes be changed at the end of the year. Mrs Gurr said that she cannot confirm this until she has finalised discussions with the teachers. Generally, if the classes are working well they will not be mixed.

Reading - Reception parents would like an update on how their children are doing with their reading. Mrs Gurr said that all the children are doing two sessions of either guided reading or individual reading during the week. Teachers are keeping records of this for their assessments and would let parents know if there are any issues. Parents had targets for reading to work on at the last consultation. Mrs Eggleton confirmed this was the same situation at the school she works in. No diaries are sent back and forth. As a school, we want to put this in place again as soon as we can and likely, after half term.

General - Parents are appreciative of the Zoom assembly that Miss Stimpson did. Also, the feedback from Tapestry has been great both during lockdown and now. Parents really liked the parent consultations that took place during the lockdown and asked if there would be another one.

Mrs Gurr said that there are two, consultations a year ordinarily, which have both happened, one by telephone and one by zoom. She understands that parents have not had 'show and share', a concert or workshops and feels as upset as parents are about this as it is the opposite of how the school usually is. However, with current restrictions we are in the same situation as other schools, again confirmed by Mrs Eggleton.

A point to make since parent forum is that Tapestry has enabled parents a huge amount of interaction that they would not normally have as a channel. Tapestry is not usually supposed to be used for parents to ask questions or request information. We have done that this year to compensate for not having face-to-face opportunities.

Year 1

The outside area: the question was asked 'will forest school be starting again?' Mrs Gurr said we have never had 'forest schools' which is very specific; we have no trees and therefore cannot do the things that forest schools would do. We plan and deliver all teaching ourselves such as digging, planting, bug collecting, den building, fire pit, climbing, performing, bird feeding and more. Mrs Eggleton asked about woodwork as it was mentioned before. Mrs Gurr said children have accessed hand drills but not hammers and nails yet, but it is something for us to do. Mrs Gurr also mentioned that we really need a parent group that could take the outside area on as a project. It was so well driven in the past by Jenni Harvey but was too much for one person. Miss Winwood suggested a couple of grandparents might like to come and garden but Mrs Gurr said it is not just about gardening it is about the whole area as it has so much potential.

PE Kits – Following on from the parentmail regarding PE kits, the year 1 parents appreciate why we have the navy and black and plain PE uniform in school, however it would be appreciated that they can continue to use the clothing that they have purchased during the lockdown when there was limited stock online. Mrs Gurr understands and will consider this. Mrs Gurr assured the group that no child will be taken out of PE due to having labelled items of clothing, but that future PE kit must be the school colours only, and pointed out that 95% of the parents have managed to find plain tracksuits during the limited resources on line. The logo tracksuits have been appearing more recently.

More interaction with teachers – Some parents in year 1 and reception who are 'new' to the school have missed so much interaction with teaching staff. They would like to 'get to know' the teachers and LSAs more as they have not been able to do this due to the pandemic. There were no suggestions from anyone as to how this could be accommodated. Teachers are now with the children for the entire day. Mrs Gurr assured the group that she

completely understood and said that she could not wait to have parents back into school and as soon as she gets the 'ok', this will happen. Over the years, Mrs Gurr has worked hard to always include the parents and bring them into the school where possible. Mrs Gurr has spoken with Mrs Black and is hopeful that we will be able to hold a celebration evening in July when parents can come into the school and see new classrooms and teachers. Mrs Turley reminded the group that we are coming to the 'end' of the pandemic and things are now looking up and hopefully this concern will be alleviated soon.

Spelling test – Parents are really pleased that the children brought home their spelling test score so that the parents knew their actual score.

Productions - Mrs Winwood said that it is a shame that the children in year 1 and reception have not been able to put on any productions this year, even via Zoom. Mrs Gurr agreed, however, it has not been possible due to the pandemic which all understood. Mrs Gurr said that the classes are having celebration of work assemblies this term and is looking forward to the autumn term when we can hopefully get back to normal with this.

Year 2

COVID Restrictions – Year 2 parents had asked whether the one-way system and staggered entry times will cease due to the easing of the restrictions. Mrs Gurr said that this has to continue for now and is waiting for more information from school comms who will give us guidance around relaxing restrictions and new risk assessments. The next meeting for information is Tuesday 11th. Mrs Gurr will let parents know as soon as possible.

Mrs Eggleton said that parents were very appreciative that they were able to drop off their children earlier than their slots due to work commitments and that the school was able to offer this. Mrs Gurr said that she wants to support parents in any way possible and has done this from the beginning of lockdown and has been a help to lots of people.

General - Mrs Eggleton said that some parents are finding word documents difficult to open when they are sent through Tapestry. She asked whether these could be sent as PDF's, so they are easier to open, particularly on smart phones. Mrs Gurr agreed and will follow this up.

Book bags and reading – All year groups brought up about when the children can bring in their book bags and reading records. Mrs Gurr assured the parents that we are thinking about this too and want to get back to this very soon. However, the worry, particularly with the reading journals is that they would be coming in from multiple outside sources and would be touched by the parents, children, and staff and whether this may significantly increase the rate of transmission. Mrs Gurr said that she does not want to have to close a bubble or have any type of closure again due to a member of staff contracting Covid. We are allowing books to be taken home as when they are brought back, we quarantine these. Mrs Gurr has written to Mike Gogarty about this and is waiting for a reply. However, before we can do this, we will need to include it in our risk assessment. Mrs Eggleton said that the children at her school have reading books, but no book bags or diaries for the same reason.

All staff are very keen to have reading records back and if public health confirm that the rate of transmission is low, this can be re-instated.

Hand washing – Mrs Gurr informed the parents that advice from Mike Gogarty regarding the rigorous hand washing and sanitising and whether going forward this needs to continue as it is as many of the children are getting sore hands. He confirmed that although the restrictions are easing, that this needs to continue for the moment. The ISA have offered to purchase hand moisturiser for the children that can be kept in school to help with this. This has been ordered.

Crowding on the playground: It was requested that Mrs Gurr ask the reception parents to stand away from the big wooden gate or to cordon off an area so that Year 1 parents do not have to fight their way through parents, toddlers and buggies to get to the classrooms. Mrs Gurr said she will look into this and that parents should be social distancing still anyway and not grouped together.

End of year reports - Mrs Gurr asked for feedback around the end of year reports; she wanted to gauge how parents felt about the content and whether parents are getting the information that they want. She recognises that there is a lot of information and hard work that goes on to produce the document and wants to make sure that it what is needed. Mrs Harman likes all the information about all the different subjects. Mrs Turley said that for the children that are going up to the junior school, it would be nice to receive a holistic approach and a full report as they approach the transition. All parents agree that they liked how the report was set out with strengths and setting of targets for subjects where they may be struggling. The report provides a general idea of how the children are doing and is well received. Mrs Eggleton and Mrs Winwood said that generally they focus on the two first paragraphs where it is more about their child, how they are in school, attitudes and strengths and then can skim over the rest relating to the other areas of the curriculum. (history geography, art, PE, RE, music, DT)

Reading emails –Mrs Gurr asked the parent forum about any suggestions to ensure parents read parent mail and information on tapestry, as we still get questions despite the information having gone out sometimes more than once. All said that most parents have WhatsApp groups where parents are reminded of events etc. All agreed that the school could not do any more than they are already doing.

Children and toddlers on playground and outside of nursery without supervision. Mrs Gurr brought this up as a big concern for safeguarding. Communication has already been sent regarding this, but there are an increasing number of children arriving through the gate without parents and running around to the infant playground and then running around the playground unsupervised. These are predominantly Year 1 and Reception children and their younger siblings. Mrs Gurr is seriously concerned that a child will get hurt and is considering a hand holding policy on site. Two parents agreed that the school should have a 'hand-holding' policy to avoid this. Miss Winwood suggested sending another communication. Mrs Black has also sent a communication to junior parents about this.

Meeting ended at 8.35pm. Mrs Gurr thanked everyone for their time.