

Parent Forum- Wednesday 29th November

Staff Present

Deborah Howard- Headteacher

Ellie Linton- Communications & Marketing Manager

Format

We asked parents to write their answers to the following questions on pieces of paper at the start of the forum:

1. What's Working Well?
2. What's Not Working Well?
3. Highlights of the Year?
4. Questions?

The answers that parents submitted were then used to structure the discussion at the forum.

Minutes

(actions have been typed up in red)

1. The first thing that was highlighted as working well is that the children in school are happy and that there is a positive environment and atmosphere.
2. The teaching staff have a good rapport and relationship with children and parents.
3. New ways to communicate with teachers (messages@ email address) is working well.
4. Weekly Update received positive feedback.
5. Highlights of the year were the KS1 Stay & Learn and the Autumn Showcase event. Parents said that it was a great idea, very helpful to see what is happening in the classroom.
6. One thing that is working well is having earlier slots available at parents evening.
7. One parent said that she'd booked an early slot for parents evening, but that her class was running very behind schedule.
 - Deborah Howard to speak to teachers about the importance of keeping to 10 minute timeslots to avoid this happening again in future (and will advise that having an alarm clock at the meetings is a good way of sticking to this). Teachers will be asked to advise parents to make an additional appointment through the office if they require additional time to discuss a specific issue. Particularly new teachers that may not have as much confidence in telling parents when the end of the appointment is.
8. One parent said that perhaps parents and teachers should be made aware of the expectations on what will be discussed at parents evening, and what should be discussed at another time.
 - Deborah to speak to teachers about expectations of what should and should not be discussed at parents evening. Ellie to make parents aware on letters for next parents evening.

9. It was noted that parents evening felt quite late in the term this time, which meant that there was not the opportunity to build a rapport with the teacher before this. The 'meet the teacher' event was good for this in the past. Deborah explained that this event would need improving upon if we were to hold it again. Could possibly look into holding a drop-in open classroom event after school one day in the first half term of the academic year.
10. One parent was concerned that a message she'd asked to be passed on to her child's class teacher had been sent to the Phase Leader first, and that she didn't know who the Phase Leader was.
 - Ellie Linton said that she would ask staff if they would be happy to have their photos on the website so that parents could put faces to names.
11. One thing that has worked very well is the work that was done to sort long-term cover in 4MQ, in terms of speed and communication.
12. It was noted by Deborah that having a parent rep had been very useful throughout the process of staffing changes in 4MQ as it meant that all parents could feed back through their Parental Engagement Person (PEP), Sharon Robinson, to give all thoughts in one communication to the headteacher. A former PEP that was at the forum suggested that the role could be developed further so that PEPs not only encourage parents to attend school events, but also collate feedback/concerns and pass on to school on behalf of the class.
 - Ellie to discuss with PEPs at their next meeting to see if they would be happy to do this. If not, we could look into the possibility of having two PEPs per class to cover both roles.
13. One parent suggested that school emails and social media posts could be more informal and colourful.
 - Ellie to bear this in mind for future communications.
14. One parent noted that school input into parent Facebook groups was useful in answering quick questions about school.
15. Parents fed back that having The Hoot for all yeargroups was working really well. One parent mentioned that it was inconvenient to have 'see separate spellings sheet' on The Hoot, so could they be put directly on to The Hoot to save parents having to look for the sheet.
 - Ellie to ask teachers to send their spellings for the week when they email their Hoot to her.
16. Parents fed back that there was often a lot of confusion with homework and spellings (Year 1 and Year 3 in particular). Needs to be clearer when spellings are tested, when homework is set etc.
 - Ellie/Deborah to speak to teachers make sure this is made clearer on The Hoot.
17. One parent said she'd never been told when her child's book changing day is.
 - Ellie to find out from all teachers and put on The Hoot.
18. One parent had collated all of the queries mentioned over the past couple of weeks in the Year 1 parents' Facebook group. The first issue is that the doors are often being opened late at the start and end of the school day.
 - Deborah has spoken to the Year 1 teachers about this last week.
19. Another issue raised by multiple Year 1 parents was that sweets were being handed out on birthdays, which caused problems particularly with younger siblings.
 - Deborah to remind staff of the rules, which are that we are a healthy eating school and so sweets are not to be given out on birthdays. Small toys or healthy snacks can

be handed out instead if desired. This information will be added to the new staff induction packs. Ellie to send out letter to parents to remind them of the rules.

20. Some parents concerned about the amount of sweets/sugary drinks sold and consumed at discos.
 - The PTA are already in discussions to see if they are able to make money selling something else, such as temporary tattoos, at school discos.
21. One parent concerned about the amount of letters that she's throwing away each week, and asked if there was an option to opt out of receiving paper letters entirely.
 - Ellie to trial a system with one class in which we send a letter home to parents giving them the choice to go completely paperless if they'd like to. If this works well and is feasible we will roll out this system across the whole school. We would still keep copies of letters at reception in the letter racks so that parents can return reply slips using these if not paying online.
22. It was noted that there had been a visible improvement in the variety of work being celebrated on Facebook, as in the past it had mostly been just creative art type projects. Now more of a focus on both academic and creative work, although there is still room for improvement in this area. Could still be more of a focus on child-led work as opposed to homework that's had a lot of parent input/help.
23. A few children had told parents that they are not getting a breaktime at all in the afternoon since the changes were put in place after half term.
 - Deborah to speak to the teachers to remind them that it is imperative that there is distinctive relaxation time for 15 minutes every afternoon that is separate to class work.
 - Ellie to enquire to see if we are able to put in place a tannoy alert to go off every day at 2:15pm to signify the start of relaxation time.
 - Year 3 teachers have been asked to discuss the changes with their classes before the Christmas holidays so that they can decide as a class how they'd like to spend their relaxation time.
24. One parent said they would have liked more notice of this change in the school day so that they could discuss it in advance with their children. In future they'd like more notice of the change, followed by a drop-in session so that they could ask any questions in person before the changes came in to effect. Deborah reminded parents that there will be a parent forum at 9:00am on Thursday 7th December specifically so that we can discuss how we can improve the way we work with parents and carers on matters such as this.
25. One parent, who was new to the school this term, asked why uniform is not compulsory. A brief background of the history was given. As a compromise a standard set of clothes was introduced so that parents have the option to dress their child in school branded clothes if they would like to.
26. One parent shared their concerns over the government funding cuts, particularly its impact on pastoral care, staffing levels and the PTA funding the new PSHE curriculum. Deborah explained that the budgetary constraints this academic year meant that the PTA were called upon to fund the new PHSE curriculum, which comes highly recommended so will have a hugely positive impact on children of all ages in school. Deborah reassured parents that although TAs are not being replaced if they leave, there is no way in which the safety of the children would be compromised. For example, if the adult to child ratios were not able to be

met, a trip would not go ahead. Deborah also outlined the roles of the staff in the pastoral and inclusion teams and explained that there are drop-in sessions available for parents to meet with them on a one-to-one basis if required.

27. One parent asked whether the school could take on volunteer teaching assistants. Deborah explained that we can take on volunteers, but we do not do work placements at present. If anyone would like to volunteer they should contact Helen Wright in the school office.
28. There was a question about the possibility of making money by renting out the school hall at weekends. Deborah explained that we are considering the possibility of a sports coach, which would mean that they may be able to lock up the school if external companies wanted to rent out the hall during the holidays.
29. One parent said she'd like to know her child's class timetable.
 - Ellie to ask for class timetables from all the teachers and put them on the website/email out to parents.
30. One parent was concerned about behaviour expectations (based on being told by their Year 1 child that they are expected to work in silence).
 - Deborah explained that the staff training on Weds 6th December is on Kagan strategies, which are designed to promote cooperation and communication in the classroom. Deborah will use this opportunity to reinforce what learning should look like in our school.
31. One parent asked how school will be managing its data following the introduction of the new data protection regulations. The parent wanted to know which third parties we share data with.
 - Ellie to get this information from our School Business Manager, Sarah Nicholls, and communicate with parents.
32. Parents asked if all parents pay for trips, or if the cost is increased to cover those that do not pay? Deborah confirmed that not all parents pay for trips, but that parents are not subsidising those that do not pay. Also, Pupil Premium children have their trips paid for by school as we receive extra funding for them.
33. One parent asked if there was a cap on the cost of school trips, as some seem to be very expensive. Deborah explained that there was a £40 maximum set for the cost of trips across the year (apart from Yea 6 due to their residential trip).
 - Deborah to check that all teachers are on track to stick to this spending cap.
34. Very positive comments about the Year 1 'geography walk' trip. It gave the children confidence around the school and rooted them in the locality. Parents said they like trips where the children walk or get the tram to the venue, as it makes the trip low cost or free.
35. One parent asked about the outcome of the recent clubs survey.
 - Ellie to speak to Fiona Walker, who conducted the survey, so that any actions can be communicated with parents.
36. One parent concerned about how easy it is to walk into school at afterschool clubs pick-up time, as she said she was let into the reception area the other day by a member of staff that she did not recognise, so was not confident that member of staff would have known who she was. This parent was also allowed to sit in on an afterschool club when her son attended for a trial, which concerned her as she was not asked to show a DBS. Another parent raised the issue that they were shown all the pick-up passwords for the other children in the club when they signed their child out.

- Deborah to speak to everyone that runs an afterschool club in school to remind them of the importance of security at pick-up times.
 - Fiona Walker (who has been assigned to do a piece to find out how afterschool clubs can be improved) will be carrying out random drop-ins on afterschool clubs to see if pick-up arrangements are working and how they can be improved.
37. There is an issue with clubs during school time in that ProSports did not start on the date it said on the letter. Parents unhappy about this as they had paid for the club so expected the lessons to be on when they said they would.
- Deborah to speak to external providers to ensure this does not happen again.
38. Issue with guitar lessons at the start of term- children were missing their lessons as they forgot to go.
- Ellie to ensure in future that the letter about music lessons states clearly that children are required to remember to go to lessons themselves, so that parents can be made aware of this before making the payment.
39. One parent asked if 'dojo' system could be explained on The Hoot for Year 1, as there is some confusion.
- Ellie to ask Year 1 teachers to do this on their next Hoot.
40. Feedback about the tree in the Chill Zone being damaged by the children playing on it.
- Deborah to speak to Phil (caretaker) to see if a small fence can be put up around the tree to stop children swinging off it.