

Parent Forum Meeting: Tuesday 20th January, 6.00pm

Present: Conal Holmes (Headteacher); Agnes Boudes (Eugenie Y5, Gaspard Y3); William Wilson (Max Y3); Ian Johnson (William Y4); Lesley Dewsbury (Grace Y4); Julie Littler (Yasmin Y4, Jake Y3).

Apologies: Tracy Callander, Mel Hinchey

1. Introductions: All members present introduced themselves to the group.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Homework- Parents reported that changes to homework were noticeable in relation to the new guidelines issued. Receiving homework on the same day each week was proving helpful as parents know when to expect it and have a full week and weekend to support their children. Some children have still not received homework diaries. The school was aware of this issue and is taking steps to remedy this as quickly as possible.

Mathletics- All children will receive lessons in Mathletics in school over the next two weeks. All children will be reissued log-ins and passwords and these will be kept in the front of homework diaries. The school are planning an after-school session for parents to attend in order to assist them with how Mathletics works.

3. Issues raised for Discussion by Parents Prior to the Meeting

Letters- One issue raised by parents was the extensive number of letters which the school sends home. Parents agreed that this was the case and a number of options were explored to rectify this. These options included:

1. Adopting an "Oldest Child" Policy, meaning that only one child would bring copies of letters home.
2. Ensuring all information is condensed onto one letter (eg: club letters at the start of each term)
3. Ask parents whether they wish to continue receiving paper copies if they receive all letters electronically.

It was acknowledged that a reduction in paper copies would have environmental and financial benefits. The school will explore these options and take steps to reduce the number of letters that are sent home.

E-Safety

A short discussion took place regarding the issue of online bullying. The school tackles this issue through its curriculum, and will assist in resolving any online bullying issues that it is made aware of. An E-Safety workshop is due to take place later this term and all parents are welcome to attend. There will also be a workshop for Year 5 children.

Performance League Tables- One parent drew attention to the school's current low position in the League Tables. The Headteacher stated that this was a highly complex issue that he was unable to address fully. However, he confirmed that the current position is lower than we would like, and that this was as a result of the performance of a small number of children that struggled to make expected levels of progress last year. Projections for this year show a very different picture. However, the Headteacher also stated that the school does not use the League Tables as a reliable measure for success. He emphasised that, while they are fully committed to raising standards in reading, writing and Maths, stretching children of higher ability and supporting lower ability children using a wealth of interventions and extra resources, the school is equally committed to its moral purpose of providing a broad and balanced curriculum for all children, including children in Year 6. This means that Year 6 children continue to receive an enriched curriculum consisting of the full range of national curriculum subjects, specialist teaching in Modern Foreign Languages and Music, residential trips and termly visits / visitors. The school is keen to ensure that its Year 6 cohort does not experience a final year in Junior school which is uninspiring, unexciting and entirely SATS focused, in order that it achieves a higher position in the rankings.

This stance received substantial support from the parents in attendance, who felt that this viewpoint should be more widely shared.

School Meals

Questions were asked regarding the variety and healthiness of meals provided by the school, and parents wanted assurances that children were receiving a balanced diet. Steps will be taken to gather the views of pupils and parents regarding school meals, and to seek assurances from the meal providers in relation to the healthiness of the provision (including conformance of the plastic dinner trays to recent H and S regulations). Parents requested that the menu be distributed to parents. This issue will be addressed again at our next meeting.

4. Main Focus: Counter Bullying Strategies

A long discussion explored in detail the steps taken by the school to counter bullying. The Headteacher listed many of the actions taken by the school to raise the profile of counter-bullying on the school curriculum (Anti-Bullying Week, SEAL, Philosophy, Assemblies, Bully Buster and E-Safety Workshops), and organisational strategies in place to support and monitor individual children (Worry Club, Pastoral Mentor, Behaviour Logs, Bullying Logs). Parents were given a detailed account of the process the school will follow as soon as bullying is suspected and reported. They were informed that all aspects of behaviour are recorded by the school so that there is an on-going record providing a historical trace if one should be needed. In addition, Bullying logs are kept and updated half-termly to monitor specific situations involving individual situations. Parents were reassured by the clarity of the processes in place and felt that these processes should be widely shared with parents, perhaps through a letter home or at Learning Links Meetings.

Parents felt that the Buddy system introduced recently for Y3 and Y6 children was especially effective and asked whether more opportunities could be found to develop this idea.

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Support for the 11+: Parents wondered whether more could be done by the school to support children through the 11+. The Headteacher pointed out steps taken by the school to offer support (Y4 parents' meeting, Y5 Thinking Club, Familiarisation lessons etc) but pointed out that schools were restricted in terms of the support they were able to offer as a result of Local Authority Guidance. Parents were in favour of revisiting this issue and this will be discussed further at our next meeting.

The meeting finished at 7.30pm

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