

Minutes of Longlands Primary School Parent Forum

8th July 2019 at 6pm-6.45pm

Distribution

To all parents and carers via the School website

Forum

*Janice Owen (JO) introduced the meeting and repeated the rules of conduct and status of the Forum as set out on the School website.****Agenda items***

Previous Minutes

The previous Minutes from the Parent Forum held on 5th February 2019 were agreed without any amendment.

Matters arising

Lunchtime Clubs

Tammy Allen (TA) advised that unfortunately no parents/carers had contacted the School about the possibility of starting up any further clubs but hopefully this would change and the school could possibly advertise to reach a further parental audience to this end. TA advised that there was a varied schedule for lunchtime clubs at present.

Accelerated Reader Scheme

TA advised that progress continues with this scheme and thanked the PA for its fund raising efforts which will allow Chrome Books to be purchased to further facilitate the scheme.

Showcases

TA apologised that none had been organised for the EYFS but aimed to do so during the Autumn term.

Forest School

TA thanked the parental contribution for the complete renovation of the Forest School area, in particular Jason Baker. It was noted that the children really enjoyed getting involved in the make-over and were still talking about it in school. EYFS are already enjoying the vast improvements. TA advised that she was working on a way to involve older year groups in Forest School by linking to Maths and Science projects.

Water Bottles

TA- no further issues to note

Letters home and to School

TA advised that teachers had been reminding pupils to check their bags and hand items in to them at the start of the school day. No other issues to note on this point.

School Dinners

JO advised that a new parent had enquired whether there was a sampling menu available. JO advised that she has liaised with the area manager for Harrison's Catering to set up a workshop possibly in the Autumn term for this purpose.

Playground Equipment

TA advised that additional equipment has been purchased and remains an area of continuous purchase. The backend of the playground is to be redeveloped in October to create a sensory space.

Changing exercise books

JO advised that this has been looked into at Senior Leadership level but at present it is not cost effective to replace books across the school.

Other matters arising

Parent Surveys

Andrew King (AK) advised that there was a successful response from the Easter Parent Evening in terms of completed surveys- 193 responses (cf. 89 last year). AK advised that the survey results gave a fairer reflection of the silent majority who would generally otherwise not be inclined to return completed surveys.

All areas on the survey save for one had improved from last year's survey results. There was a 2% drop in positive responses relating to "Child Behaviour"- from 95% to 93% and although this area still scored highly, AK advised that the reduction was being taken seriously by Senior Leadership.

AK advised that the highest scoring areas were:-

"Is your child happy at school?"- 99% agreed with this statement

"Is your child safe at school?"- 99% agreed with this statement

AK advised that the lowest scoring areas were:-

"Does the school deal effectively with bullying?"- 69% agreed with this statement (although 24% had responded that they didn't know which could be interpreted that those parents had not had an issue with bullying and this would therefore skewer the results for this question.

AK also noted that 72% of responses agreed that there was an effective Governing Body at the School, which was an increase of 27% from the last survey.

AK noted that the survey response showed that overall the general satisfaction with the school was very high.

TA noted that one issue to come out of the survey results was how children were advised of new class teachers. This had been addressed as priority and in direct response to parental feedback and therefore how pupils find out their new class teachers for the next academic year will be changed as detailed in the recent letter circulated to parents. The Forum concurred that the proposed way is

a huge improvement. JO noted that it was right to listen to parental concerns on these issues and AK noted that as a matter of record class allocations as a process is taken extremely seriously by teaching staff, taking approximately 3 months to finalise and involving numerous drafts. TA added that this year every child had been asked who their friends were so that at least one friendship per child could be accommodated.

Issues submitted at Forum

Positive feedback

The following positive comments were relayed to the Forum

- Class teachers take the time to address parental concerns
- Sports Day was a great success and pupil engagement was positive
- Summer Fete was an enjoyable day and the children really loved the teacher involvement
- Positive comments from children involved in choir and multi-sports clubs
- Parents Association continue to do a sterling job running events
- The presence of Senior Leadership at the beginning and end of the school day was commented on as a positive element
- A Goldsworthy parent noted the excellent teaching in EYFS- with a general feeling that children had made excellent progress. De Vinci parents also felt that the teaching staff in EYFS had a real sense of familiarity with the children.
- The overhaul and re-establishment of the Forest School was of huge benefit to the children
- The continued family feel to the School was again commented upon.

Accelerated Reader Scheme

AK noted that the scheme has been difficult to progress without technology to support it. A revamp in September to include an upgrade to the WIFI and use of Chrome Books would assist. A Forum member noted that possibly greater exposure regarding ARS login was needed. AK noted that login details had been circulated but maybe another relaunch of the Scheme would be beneficial to parents/carers.

A concern was noted regarding the inconsistency of monitoring children's reading in school. AK emphasised the reading commitment in each individual School Contract and noted that it was very rare that a child was not monitored for their reading although not necessarily in an obvious way as the logistics of hearing every child read on an individual basis was not always possible but that more discreet mechanisms were employed by teaching staff such as reciprocal reading. JO added

that at the planning of the next academic year leadership will look at layering in different activities to ensure that reading is actively monitored.

Lack of Maths and Science Clubs

It was noted that these had been available in previous academic years and had always been a success. TA advised that the School was hoping to offer more in the next academic year but this would very much depend upon teacher availability. AK concurred that this is something that he would be looking at.

Homework and use of internet based resources

It was noted that homework is a worthwhile tool in students' learning and that a decision was made a few years ago to reinstate it at Longlands after looking at the homework policies of other schools in the locality. However TA also noted from submitted comments that the level of homework continues to be a source of disagreement and the inconsistency of homework in different year groups was also a particular concern. Parents felt that on the whole, homework was at a suitable level for EYFS and was used to consolidate what children were learning in school. Parents felt that this was not always the case in older year groups (for example Year 3) where homework was not always used to reinforce a topic but was used a lot of the time to introduce or research a topic that had not been dealt with in class and there was a feeling that this needed to be looked and that if homework was being used to introduce a topic rather than consolidate then parents should be advised.

Parents commented that research homework also added greatly to the length of homework times and raised concerns about the safety of children using on-line resources when they were supposed to undertake homework tasks independently.

It was decided that it would be useful for research homework if teachers could provide a few guided websites which were child friendly so that children could lead their own research in safety. TA agreed that this could be achieved.

Pupil Fitness

It was noted that both the school and parents are responsible for the fitness of the children.

The School has opportunities for fitness through lunchtime clubs and 2 x sessions of PE per week.

Daily Mile initiative to be pursued as a way to improve pupil physical and mental health in an outdoor environment.

Parent Representatives

The role of previous representatives cf. with the new format of the Forum was discussed. It was noted that due to new GDPR restrictions it was difficult to circulate parent details to enable other parents to access Parent Representatives. It was felt that it was necessary for Parent Representatives to obtain great exposure, especially in the Upper KS2 classes as parental cohesiveness naturally lessens. Better access to the Parent Forum would also be positive. WhatsApp groups were discussed as a way to facilitate access to Parent Representatives but it was stressed that this could not create an expectation on any Parent Representative to become involved in wider class politics/issues other than what would be appropriate for Forum consideration.

Holding Forum meetings at a later time or arranging for written comments to be submitted on behalf of parents in order to capture the concerns of parents who could not attend were also mooted.

Forum closed

Attendees were thanked for attending the meeting. Next meeting to be scheduled.