

Minutes for Parent Forum at Longlands Primary School

on 9th May 2017 at 6.30pm- 8.30pm

Attendees

Miss Owen (Headteacher)	Ragnhild Bolton (Kandinsky)
Mr King (Deputy Headteacher)	Lucy Lawrence (Lichtenstein)
Mark Brian (Vice-Chair of Governors)	Emma Osborne-Powell (Lichtenstein)
Katrina Suèr (Parent Governor)	Suzanne Mildwater (Matisse)
Cheryl Stone (Blake)	Katie Parsons (Miro)
Mary Buckley (Da Vinci)	Gillian Heasman (Monet)
Anita Earley (Goldsworthy)	Brad Baylis (Picasso)
	Francesca Pompei (Picasso)

Absentees

Alexa Cobb (Matisse)
Michelle Short (

Distribution

To all Attendees and Absentees

Forum

Forum members were introduced in this meeting.

Katrina Suèr was nominated as Chair by Mark Brian and seconded by Gillian Heasman. Katrina Suèr was confirmed as Chair.

Emma Osborne-Powell was nominated as Secretary by Mark Brian and seconded by Katrina Suèr. Emma Osborne-Powell was confirmed as Secretary. It was decided that the appointment of Secretary would be on a rolling basis for each Forum meeting.

The purpose of the Forum and the expected level of conduct (including use of social media for communication purposes) was also established at this meeting by reference to the circulated handout (copy attached).

Agenda items

- Apologies

Apologies were made on behalf of Alexa Cobb and Michelle Short.

- Communication of Agenda Items

Going forward, all items wishing to be added to the Agenda are to be emailed to the Secretary no later than 2 weeks before the date of a Forum meeting. Proposed Agenda will be circulated to Forum members no later than 1 week before a Forum meeting.

- Homework

Da Vinci- with reading being the main focus of homework in Early Years, there were some concerns expressed that there should be additional homework tasks (for example phonics) in order to familiarise children with the routine of homework prior to entering KS1.

There were further parental concerns regarding the lack of information as to what their children are routinely doing at school especially in Early Years where children are not forthcoming with such information, and with there often being significant periods between Parent Evenings.

Miro and Picasso - There were additional parental concerns regarding the consistency of homework being collected and marked and the important message that this inconsistency set to children in terms of meeting deadlines. It was also felt that children had often put significant effort into homework and it was demoralising if their effort was not acknowledged.

Lichtenstein- Parental concerns expressed that there was a significant jump between Early Years and KS1 regarding volume and content of homework. There were additional concerns that there was a lack of parental understanding of the context in which the homework was being set and whether the children themselves understood what they had been set for homework. Such an understanding would encourage parents to build on topic areas outside of school.

Miss Owen and Mr King commented that the issue of setting homework at the perfect level was notoriously difficult. In considering the levels set in the various stages, consideration was given to schools in the local area and a benchmark level was decided upon which was commensurate with the level of achievement that the school wanted to attain.

Miss Owen responded that it was important to achieve the correct balance in Early Years and that Early Years and KS1 contemplated entirely different curriculums. However, it was noted that phonic homework is introduced in the latter part of Early Years. Miss Owen further advised that there were transition meetings for the children prior to entry in to KS1 which brought some benefit.

- Going forward

Mr King commented that constructive parental feedback by way of a note or comment on completed homework was a very helpful tool for teachers and parents will always be encouraged to speak to class teachers with any concerns regarding homework and that this should continue.

Miss Owen agreed that it was not an unreasonable expectation for parents to know in advance what their children would be doing in the school year and that there were some staff discussions in hand regarding holding further Parent Workshops comparable to the Maths Evening that had been previously held.

There was a suggestion by a Parent Rep that there should more use of the School's website to set out the contemplated curriculum for each year so that it could be used as a continuous reference tool for parents without constant recourse to teaching staff. To be considered by Miss Owen and Mr King.

Miss Owen advised that she would take back to all staff her expectations of consistency regarding homework marking and collection.

Miss Owen and Mr King advised that the suggestion of a Homework Club was already in discussion and whilst would not materialise in the current academic year, was a committed venture to be ready from September with further details to follow.

- School trips

Matisse- concerns were raised regarding the inherent problems associated with using disposable bags for containing lunch on day trips with the suggestion that children should be able to use a small rucksack for this purpose.

Mr King expressed counter concerns that the use of ruck sacks brought its own problems, namely that although teaching staff would do their most to ensure that children did not lose them, there remained a significant risk that children would not remain accountable for them.

Goldsworthy- concerns raised that there was not enough advance notice where amendments are made to details of planned trips

Da Vinci- raised the issue of the cost of day trips for low income families and management of late payment- is there a way in which a payment plan could be set up where appropriate to facilitate discreet part payment?

Blake – asked whether it would be possible for electronic payment means be used for school trips.

Generally the feeling expressed was that there was not sufficient notice of day trips.

Going forward

Children being allowed to use a rucksack on school trips to be further considered by Miss Owen and Mr King, but would have to be entirely on the basis that both parents and children alike were acutely aware that it was at their own risk and that they would need to be responsible for their own rucksack for the duration of the trip. It would also depend on the nature of the trip, as on some trips a rucksack would be difficult to take and, unnecessary as, for example, lunch was eaten as soon as arriving at the venue.

Class teachers to give as much notice as possible in announcing trips and amending details.

Payment plans are already in place for residential school trips and Miss Owen could see no reason why the principle could not be extended to day trips. To be considered further by Miss Owen and Mr King. Timely announcement of school trips will also assist in giving parents more time to save for payment.

Non-agenda items

- Voluntary School fund

A discussion began as to the current success of the voluntary school fund collection. Miss Owen gave evidence that only circa. £250.00 had been collected as a result of the last contribution request. It was suggested that the existence of the fund needs greater and more consistent promotion. There were further suggestions that the contribution be increased from £5.00 to £10.00 and that an on-line

payment option may encourage a greater level of contribution although this would incur additional setting up and running costs. To be further considered by Mr King and Miss Owen. However, Miss Owen informed the Parent Forum that, unfortunately, the collection of money electronically was expensive and the system that is place at the moment is only available for collection of school dinner money.

- Pupil Premium and Matched Giving Schemes

It was noted that where it applied, because of the provision in school of free school meals for all KS1 children, parents were often not aware of their entitlement to Pupil Premium funding. It was noted that the Pupil Premium funding does not only provide money for free school meals but also other funding that the school can use to support children and, therefore, it would be of great benefit if this entitlement was highlighted to class parents by Forum members.

Mr King stated that there are various online resources available for checking if you are entitled to Pupil Premium.

Mr King further noted that many companies offered Matched Giving Schemes or grants as part of their Corporate Responsibility Policy and Forum members were asked to enquire of class parents if their employers offer such grants.

- School Fete 1st July 2017

Volunteers are required for the School Fete and Forum members were asked to circulate this request to class parents. Katrina Suèr is the point of contact for the volunteers.

Forum members were also asked to ask class parents if their company or their employer could provide prize contributions for the Summer Grand Draw. Sue Mildwater or Leigh Ciftdal to be the point of contact for this.

- Date and time of next meeting

Forum members were thanked for attending the meeting and the next meeting was scheduled for 20th June at 6.30 pm at the same location.