

## Parent Forum Minutes-24.03.22

### In attendance

#### **School**

Mrs Luck-Davies (HT)

Miss Page (DHT)

#### **Governors**

Mrs Newman (CoG)

Mr Halliday (VCoG)

#### **Parents**

Mrs Sartori

Mrs McCarthy

Mrs Heath

Mrs Tagliavini

Mrs Hunt

### Mother's Day assembly

TS passed on her thanks and appreciation for the Mother's Day assembly. Parents were pleased to be able to come back into school again. Discussion around it being poignant that the Mother's Day event was the first cancelled event at the beginning of the pandemic. Parents were appreciative of being able to visit classrooms and share the children's learning. Mrs Luck-Davies said that feedback from the event had been positive and that staff and children were pleased to be able to welcome parents into school again. TS commented and there was agreement from all that having two events (one in the morning and one in the afternoon) had worked well. Parents were keen that other events are held in a similar way.

### School Trips

TS queried about school trips and when they would be resuming. MLD said that some trips had begun to take place again; Y5/6 are visiting the allotment on Friday, squash etc. School trips have been limited up until this point as the school is erring on the side of caution given that transport costs for coaches are non-refundable if trips cannot go ahead. As all COVID restrictions are lifted and things are now returning to a little more normality, school staff will discuss further school trips taking place in the summer term. MLD reminded parents that school trips have developed and changed over time and now need to have a curriculum focus and be linked to the children's learning in school.

### **Homework**

Discussion around homework and how children are rewarded in school. Parents present were happy with the amount and type of homework set. TS queried the system for rewarding completed homework. General discussion highlighted some differences in homework rewards between classes. MLD explained that homework is currently rewarded in-class and that class teachers may mark and reward in slightly different ways. School staff will discuss and agree a system for rewarding homework to ensure consistency across classes.

### **Golden Time**

GH passed on a query regarding golden time. Discussion around the nature of golden time as parents present were unaware of it. MLD confirmed that golden time was an old initiative that has not taken place for the last 3-4 years. It was explained that with the considerable expectations of the new curriculum golden time was not an appropriate use of time in school.

### **Pen Licences**

Discussion was held around pen licences, detailing what they are and why they are rewarded. GH asked whether pen licences can be revoked. MLD said that pen licences are used as an incentive for children to improve their handwriting. They primarily used in upper KS2. Pen licences are not revoked, however, if a teacher feels that handwriting is deteriorating after gaining a pen licence a child may be asked to write in pencil for certain pieces of work. EP gave an example where she had witnessed a class teacher ask children in Y5/6 to write in pencil to remind them of the handwriting expectations.

### **Chairs – Y6**

GH passed on a query as to whether Y6 children were sat on the floor in the Mother's Day performance due to behaviour issues. MLD clarified that the seating arrangements during performances were different to the normal seating in school. Children were specifically arranged so that when they stood up to sing they could all be seen. This meant that younger children may have been sat on benches as they were taller than older children. Parents present said that they were happy to be able to see their child and that the seating arrangements made sense. MLD confirmed that in assemblies during school time Y6 sit on chairs as this is seen as a Y6 privilege and happens in most schools. GH questioned whether Y6 children who misbehave are told they cannot sit on a chair. MLD explained that she has not witnessed this happening in school, however if a child in Y6 was distracting others by sitting on a chair they may be asked to sit on the floor for the remainder of that assembly. EP agreed that this was not something which she had witnessed in school.

### **Play Equipment**

JH asked whether play equipment is available to the children at play and lunchtimes. MLD explained that now the weather is improving and children are able to access the field again play equipment would be available for children to use at lunchtimes. The playground is too crowded for play equipment to be used during the winter months. It

has been lovely that children have been able to use the field again this week and footballs, netballs and skipping ropes have been available to the children. Playtimes are short and so play equipment is not needed for these sessions, children already have access to skipping ropes and the trim trail. JH queried whether children have access to the sports shed. MLD confirmed that the sports shed and play equipment would be available to children but with adult supervision.

### **Structure of Y6**

GH shared feedback she had received from one parent who felt that Y6 should be a separate class rather than mixed with Y5. Are there any plans for this to happen? MLD said that there are no plans for this to happen and that the structure of the school has been the same for many years. Children in all year groups benefit from being given respect and are encouraged to be independent at an age appropriate level. The transition to high school is managed in a very similar way in all schools. Links are formed with Manningtree High School. Due to COVID in the past two years these have been more limited but this has been the same for all schools. EP highlighted examples of responsibilities given to Y6 children, including being buddies to reception children, Head pupil roles, responsibility for counting house points, walking home from school. MLD reminded parents that although Y6 children are given more responsibility there is a limit to these as we are a primary school. Secondary school is a new phase of the children's lives and should be different and new. General discussion around the structure of a small school and the expectations of parents when they join the school that the classes are mixed. TS highlighted that from her own experience of having children in both larger and smaller schools, there are pros and cons to both.

Appreciation was given for the new strategies that Mrs Nugent has introduced within Blenheim class. Y6 children are enjoying homework club each night and Fast Forward club has been beneficial. The Wordle activity is also proving very popular with the children.

### **Reading**

GH queried whether the extra reading children are doing at home and in school is having any benefit. AN confirmed that her Governor monitoring had shown large improvement in children's reading across the school. AN highlighted staff, parents and children's hard work to make this happen. GH thanked school staff for giving her a push to read more regularly at home and added that she was pleased reading was being given such a high focus. She has noticed the difference in her own children and will definitely be continuing. All parents present agreed and were very pleased with the results they were seeing. General discussion on reading where parents were keen to share the importance of reading being the basis of all learning.

### **Lunch Menu**

Parents asked whether there would be a new lunch menu. MLD confirmed that the summer menu would be available in the new term. Parents very positive about the menu this term. TS queried whether any lighter options could be offered such as jacket

potatoes or baguettes. TS appreciated that the menu has to meet certain Essex County Council requirements. MLD said she would speak to Mr Jones as to the possibilities.

### **Class Topics**

GH passed on a concern from a parent who felt that the current topics were too long. MLD explained that the topics are carefully planned by teachers to ensure they cover all the areas of learning which the children are entitled to as well as National Curriculum coverage. It is vital that children cover a wide range of cultures and that the curriculum taught is diverse and varied. The curriculum for all year groups is available on the school website for parents to view.

### **Newsletter**

All parents at the forum were keen to pass on their appreciation for the additions and improvements to the newsletter. They thanked MLD for acting immediately on feedback from the previous parent forum.

### **Cooking**

CM thanked Miss Page for the cooking activities Bramley class have taken part in this term. Children have been really positive about these at home. General discussion around the importance of teaching 'life skills' such as cooking to children. All parents happy that children have access to a wide range of experiences in school.

### **Ukraine appeal**

Discussion around children being upset about Ukraine being spoken about in school. MLD explained that the introduction of the FOBS Ukraine appeal tubs into the KS1 and EYFS classrooms had elicited some questions from the younger children. Class discussions were carefully and professionally conducted with children at age appropriate levels. Each class were spoken to separately to ensure that what was discussed was age appropriate and sensitive to the children's needs.

**Agenda items for next meeting-** Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2022