

RECORD of Parent Forum Meeting held on 24th January 2018

Present: Stacey Gibbs (SG); Kate Jarvis [KJ]; Deborah Kaye [DK] (Chair); Jolene Marchant (JM); and Lynda Sullivan-Maw (LSM)

Gemma Irvine [GI] (Headteacher); and Anita Shelton [AKS] (Office Manager)

DK pointed out that the agenda was prepared for a December meeting which needed to be re-scheduled until now; therefore some items may have become redundant.

1. Review of Actions from Last Meeting:

GI prepared and put in a bid for funding from supermarkets. Any other actions will be reviewed at the next meeting.

2. Terms of Reference for the Parent Forum:

The draft terms had been sent out in December, but due to the time lapse it was recommended that **all Parent Forum members** read through them. Any proposed changes are to be brought to the next meeting. Once finalised, the terms will be made available to all parents/carers so they know the purpose of the Parent Form, and how they can contribute. It was acknowledged that some parents/carers may only be able to participate 'virtually'.

The optimum time of day for meetings was considered, and it was **agreed** to rotate between morning, afternoon and evening meetings. Dates will be set for the whole year to ensure that the need for re-scheduling is avoided as far as possible.

3. Clarification regarding Parents listening to children reading:

There has been some confusion over whether or not parents may hear children from their own child's class. GI **clarified** as follows:

- Parents/volunteers will not be based in the classroom whilst hearing a child read; the library or a bay will be used.
- Parents/volunteers will not write in children's reading journals. Stickers will be provided to confirm that a child has read to a parent/volunteer.
- It will be at the teacher's discretion whether or not a parent may hear their own child read.

The stickers were welcomed as a brilliant idea; they ensure that parents/volunteers are not making judgements about a child's reading standard.

GI will be speaking to Mrs Cox about recruiting and training more volunteers, including "honorary grandparents" from the Parish. Once all are in place, parents/carers may be advised of any classes who do not have a volunteer allocated to them.

JM suggested that adults with learning difficulties could be invited to visit and hear children read; she has contacts with a relevant organisation.

4. Parent Forum presence on the school website:

GI assured the meeting that the new website will provide similar prominence to that of the Friends of St Mary's.

5. Update on Outdoor Area and Outdoor Learning:

It was recognised that the Trim Trail is well on its way to completion; GI advised that synthetic 'grass' will be laid around this, and that there will be an official opening by Bishop Richard (although the area will be in use before this). The outdoor area, including the Trim Trail, will be used by all year groups at break times, and KS1 will have timetabled sessions for development of gross motor skills.

Removal of some trees had been considered, but it was decided to leave them in place for Forest School lessons once funding is available.

KS1 will be applying for a grant to pay for the KS1 area to be covered, to further improve and develop this area.

JM advised that, at a meeting today, she had learnt of £1m EU monies which need to be allocated by the end of the month. Applications for equipment grants up to £75k will be considered. **GI will follow up on this.**

6. 'Old-fashioned' Parent Evenings in addition to TLCs:

DK reported that some parents feel the TLCs, being child-led, do not allow parents and teachers to talk openly about any concerns.

GI advised that she had not worked in any school where children were not present at parent consultations. She recommended that concerns should be raised between parent/teacher when they arise – without waiting for a 'formal' occasion.

It was **agreed** that the best time for an 'old-fashioned' parent consultation will be following the issue of the school reports (July).

Timing of TLCs was also considered; GI acknowledged that 'six weeks in' is a good time for a first TLC and advised that, now she has been appointed long-term, all dates will be set at the start of the year. The timing and content of TLCs will continue to be reviewed.

7. Update on new P.E. Kit:

The new kit (purple top with black shorts) has been approved by the governors. The next time an order is required the new kit will be purchased. Introduction will be gradual; there will be no requirement to replace existing kit. Once all the old kit has been sold, parents/carers will be advised that the new kit is available.

8. Clarification on the introduction of the new class names:

DK reported that some parents felt these were a knee-jerk reaction to the S48 being due. Whilst recognising that the Parent Forum members are not decision makers, they would have appreciated being included in a consultation.

GI explained the reasons that the previous names had not been able to stay, and shared that one of her first instructions - from the governors, trustees and Diocese - had been to change the names.

Those present expressed concern that the letter sent out about this had been too lengthy and complex; only on a second or subsequent reading had the full message been clear. They also requested that parents be advised before children of such changes, so that when children mention it the parents are aware of the situation.

GI acknowledged the parents' views, and all agreed that it is now good.

9. Clarification on non-attendance of Parents/Carers at special assemblies:

GI explained that Fire Regulations would not permit the numbers required for parents/carers to be invited. Following a brief discussion it was **suggested** that, from the Summer term, parents/carers be invited to class collective worship at least once each term.

10. Notification to Parents/Carers of Shining Light Awards:

GI explained that a star is placed on the board in the school, and showed an example of a star to notify the parents/carers. Examples of the prizes available were shared with parents/ carers

in a previous letter; the children are able to choose any non-cost prize. It was acknowledged that the selection of the winning stars may be less random than appears – no child should be left out! KJ suggested that young children may find it difficult to keep watching others being rewarded without receiving the reward themselves. GI pointed out that there are other rewards within each class.

11. Review of Prospective Parent Showcasing Sessions:

The dates will be reviewed for next year as no-one attending in January. However, it may be that the decision is made to include a January date for those who have moved into the area (or left it until the last moment).

12. Urgent Matters were raised:

- Parent involvement in the School Improvement Plan: KJ pointed out that parents/carers are keen to be involved in improving their children's outcomes, and suggested that a bullet point could be included in the School Improvement Plan referring to parental involvement. GI assured the meeting that the responses to the Communication Questionnaire had been used to inform the School Improvement Plan, and much has already been put in place. She acknowledged that a **School Improvement Newsletter**, to inform of what has been done together with a request for suggestions re next steps, is due.

However, other than ParentView, Ofsted will not look at parent/carer involvement within the school; this is not part of their inspection.

It was **agreed** that a summary of the School Improvement Plan will be provided for parent/carer information, with an opportunity for parents to respond. This will include uploading to the website.

Also, GI will be re-introducing a **school prospectus** in which a page about parent involvement will be included.

GI reminded those present to encourage all parents/carers to speak to her at the gate – she is out there in all weathers and will welcome the opportunity to respond to parents. KJ pointed out that this is a complete change in culture, which is welcomed.

- LSM queried Tapestry – was it no longer being used? KJ pointed out that it is only used in EYFS. GI advised that there is currently nothing available for other year groups.

13. Dates of Next Meetings:

March 9:30 a.m. at Heene Community Centre Café

Tuesday 23rd

Wednesday 16th May 2:00 p.m. at the school

Tuesday 3rd July 5:30 p.m. at The Richard Cobden