

Minutes for Parents' Forum Meeting 1 (2015-2016):

Held on 23.9.15 at 9.10am

Attended by: A Jones (AHT KS1), S McMillan, A Walker, S McCartney, M Bashalova, E Burt, P Gregson, R Lockhart, M Haslem, J Moore, R Mahajan

Apologies: C Dodd, S Dunbar

1st Parents' Forum for this year- time was given to introduce themselves to each other and meet current Forum members. Current members explained what impact the forum had on last year's work in school.

Discussion about how Parents' Forum works. This forum is to discuss any initiatives school is currently working on, involvement in parent letters, feedback on workshops, views on school meals etc. Healthy Schools work/ school meals will always be an item on the agenda. There is also time for parents to raise any issues that may be affecting other parents in school.

When do we meet- how can you contribute?

Parents' Forum always meets on the first Wednesday back after half term at 9.05am. You will always receive an agenda via email a couple of days before the meeting to inform you what we will be discussing. If you have any other issues you would like to add to the agenda, please send them via email to ajones@mickleover.derby.sch.uk and I will add them to the agenda. If you are unable to attend a meeting you are always welcome to input your thoughts via email and they will be discussed at the meeting. Alternatively you can write them down and leave them at the office for the meeting. This is an open group, all parents are welcome to attend, if you would like to bring another parent along that would be great, if you can only attend part of a meeting that is absolutely fine, just come and have a coffee and a chat till you need to leave. If you have to miss a meeting, no problem, just pop in to the next meeting that you can make.

Examples of successful changes made because of the Forum's input.

Last year we discussed a huge amount of things, from the new homework format for topic homework in KS2, the new meal system and how parents could be informed if their child doesn't like a meal, ideas for our Healthy Eating week, overview of our new Computing curriculum etc.

If you would like to attend the next meeting... what to do next?

Parents present signed up at the meeting, it was great to see so many new potential members. Thank you! (10 parents attended our meeting today, apologies from 2 further parents).

Items for this meeting:

New School Menu- menu changes three times a year, the next change is due after half term. In the next cycle of meals there will be one day where Mr Goodwin has planned an entirely meat free day- also as part of our work towards a Bronze Catering Award and the Bronze School Award from the Food For Life Partnership, we are working on developing more links with outside agencies/ companies to come in and work with the children on where their food comes from. This term we are going to have a visit from the Quorn Association, an assembly for the infants and cooking workshops for junior classes on what quorn is, how it can be used and how to cook it.

Scopay- how is everyone finding the new online payment system?

AJ apologised for the teething problems with the new system, but hoped everyone has now been able to use it. Feedback from forum is that this is a great idea, they liked the idea of being able to access the account from home, see what their child had chosen for meals, and also the idea that they will be able to use it to pay for trips. Especially popular was the fact that it reduces the risk of pupils having to carry around large amounts of money in their book bags. Question was raised by AW re. the Reception parents- she did not think that they had been given login details- was this something that will be happening soon?

Note: Feedback from Mrs Powell, our School Business Manager is that parents in Reception should have received login details as the rest of the school have and that she will make sure that Reception parents have received a reminder copy of their login details just in case they have lost them.

KS1 Phonics- homework sheets/ timetable for completing homework- realistic or not?

A sample of a phase 4 phonics activity was shared with parents at the meeting, parents who have received homework this week liked the style of the homework, but we discussed the pressure of the current deadline of receiving new

homework on Monday and having to complete it by Friday. Mrs Clennell and Mrs Wildsmith (Year 1 teachers) had suggested that perhaps we should move the deadline, so that parents have a weekend to work on the homework - set on Tuesday and hand in the following Monday. All parents agreed this would be better, especially for working parents . JM added this would also be better for families where children attend clubs after school and have a limited time in the evening to do homework other than reading. This will be fed back to KS1 staff.

MH asked if we could also do more to support parents via the website with crib sheets/ ideas for the terminology we use in school e.g. split digraph, possessive noun etc, as many parents are relying on using sites such as wikipedia to check what words mean or to find out how to teach a certain method in calculation etc.

RL fed back that the literacy workshop held last year was really useful, could we have a maths workshop for parents with the information put on the website?

AJ explained that school is looking at ways to revamp the school website this year- Mrs Powell is responsible for this and she is looking at ways to make it much more useful for parents and children. The Maths co-ordinators are already planning a Maths Workshop for parents and that there will be a Phonics Workshop on the 13th October for KS1 parents to find out more about phonics- we will make sure that staff get the information put on the website to help parents.

Developing our presence on the web- We are also looking at ways in which to develop our presence/ information sharing on the web- would parents like us to think about using twitter or facebook as a method of communication or is the website enough? SM suggested that perhaps we were one of the only schools that haven't already embraced this way of communicating with parents and that it would be a good thing.

EB asked if we might be able to look at the way the website comes across on tablets, as it does not work well on these. The idea of using facebook or twitter was very popular with all parents today, RL asked if it might be better to use these forms of communication rather than spending school budget on texts to parents, as everyone seems to have a smart phone nowadays.

MH suggested that perhaps the website could have a calendar on it so that parents can access the school dates more easily. He also asked if we had thought about using moodle, as they do in universities and businesses, where children could do projects via this- AJ explained that our main electronic homework is set via the Learning Platform, as this is a more friendly and secure method for the children to use.

Mrs Powell has said this response is really helpful. She will work with staff, pupils and parents to develop the website this year and she will also look other methods of communication.

How can we increase parental involvement in FOMPS?

Suggestions from parents were that perhaps a coffee morning could be set up in school at the beginning of each year to welcome parents so that it is a bit less intimidating than going to a pub for the first meeting. Also, could parents be given a bit more information about exactly what support FOMPS need from them- could they sign up for a slot of time to help at events?

Would we be able to have more parent focus/ community style events such as a Music Night or a Barn Dance where families could come to raise money or parents could come to develop links with other parents?

Note: These suggestions will be passed on to FOMPS.

Pupil Voice- EB asked if we might be able to think about making a buddy bench on the playground, especially for pupils who are in reception or Year 1 who haven't got someone to play with. AJ will feed this back to Mr Morris to see if one of the benches can be painted up in the lovely colours that he has used to brighten up the fence on the infant playground. Also the aim is to train some Year 5 pupils as playground buddies (pupil mediators) so that children can talk to someone on the playground if they need help with their friends.

New Reception parents- how did you find the process this term?

Parents liked the shorter transition time of a week of half days- the full days for older pupils was popular, but the younger pupils going home at lunchtime was hard as children wanted to stay in school with their friends. Parents missed the home visits this year, as this was something they were looking forward to. AJ will feed this back to Mrs Whittingham, Early Years Manager as she is planning a questionnaire for parents re this year's induction process for new reception pupils.

Note: Mrs Whittingham thanked forum members for their feedback, the parent questionnaires will be going out to all Reception parents next week.

AOB:

Parents understand the pressure that staff have on them and realise that non-contact time is an essential part of the week for staff, but were concerned where non-contact is scheduled for the first day of the school year and their child's teacher is not in for all or part of the first day- is there any way that staff could stay in class for the first day and be paid back that time later in the week, so that children get a chance to be with their teacher for the first day of the new school year? (This only affects a couple of classes, but is something to bear in mind for next year. There are times where staff cannot change their non-contact time due to other commitments, this is avoided where possible. Most staff usually spend at least part of the day in with their new class to settle them in, it is unusual for them to have the whole day without their class teacher).

Date for next meeting: Wednesday 4th November 2015 9.05am. Thank you for coming today, we hope to see you at the next meeting!