

Parent voice meeting - 26.03.19

Attendance

Mrs Brooks – 3KS, Mrs Johnson – 4AH, Mrs Ward – 4KC, Mrs Pink – 5AB, Mrs Fisher 5AH, Mrs Cox – 6RP, Mrs Glennon – 6RS

English

Spellings - some parents thought that spellings should be focussed on ability rather than all children being given the same spellings to learn.

There was still some inconsistency across the spellings, eg whether rules of certain spellings were sent home. The headteacher (HT) informed the meeting that the deputy headteacher had recently completed a course on teaching spelling and would be working across the school to draw together teaching practice.

Some parents were under the impression that spelling tests had stopped. This should not be the case and the HT would investigate.

Homework - there had been improvements in the setting of homework. It was noted that homework was sometimes top-heavy towards one subject. It was explained this was done purposefully, ie if maths homework was particularly complex then the English homework would be simpler. There were positive comments regarding marking and personalised feedback in Year 4.

There had been concerns that Year 3 children had been asked to choose a story from a newspaper to bring to school for discussion, because of potential unsuitable content in newspapers. One parent had used a children's newspapers for the project, while another had chosen a suitable story from a newspaper and given it to their child.

Q: How was the analytical side of English taught?

A: The HT explained that the teaching of writing is in three parts, reading, capturing ideas and writing. We also have a separate GPS (grammar, punctuation and spelling) reading session which all have an element of analysis in them.

For reading we have a daily reading lesson which includes echo reading, reading comprehension, analysing the text and specific SATs style questions.

Q: Are reading records being read and recorded correctly?

A: It was believed so but the system of awards was under evaluation to make it clearer and simpler. This would be introduced in September.

Q: What is the definition of a "read"?

A: Children should read for at least 20 minutes each day, which may be at school, and can have a maximum of two reads per day.

Q: Was accelerated reader used across all year groups? Book quizzes appeared to have stopped, so children did not have the opportunity to move up and there seemed to be a limited choice of books in the classroom.

A: Accelerated Reader was used across all year groups. The quizzes were happening but perhaps not consistently. The HT would investigate. The children do use the library but there was a limited number of Accelerated Reader books. Funds from the book fair would help to replenish the books.

The HT was currently assessing the best, cost effective way of moving reading forward. Parents asked that any decision made be in discussion with the infant school as they currently used Accelerated Reader, which meant that children moving up into Year 3 already knew the system.

It was also important to make time to do the accelerated reader. It used to be first thing in the morning. The HT noted that it would be easier to undertake this in class than the ICT suite, but some of the technology needed improving.

Q: Could attendance be monitored in different ways so it was not always the same classes winning the cup each week? Parents felt some classes lost out due to a small number of children being consistently late or absent.

A: The HT said she would review this, perhaps considering doing the cup quarterly or over a year group rather than by class.

Q: How are house points awarded and recorded as there appeared to be possibilities for falsifying the records?

A: The HT would review the system to ensure it was fair and consistent, and would also review Celebration Tea in conjunction with Special Mentions and Celebration Assembly.

TMS collaboration - the HT outlined the informal collaboration the school had with eight other local schools which had been instigated by The Malling School. The HTs of these schools worked together, sharing good practice, training days, science days etc. There were also peer review opportunities for the teaching staff. In addition there was a professional link between the school and Kings Hill School.

The HT had asked the Pupil Leadership Team for ideas to enhance Celebration Assembly and she would report back with their ideas.

It was agreed that the Thursday 'Various' email and the minutes of the Parent Voice meetings would be put on the school website.

Sponsored events - parents had expressed concern over the number of recent events held in the school where parents had been asked to contribute money or might have incurred costs (World Book Day). The HT apologised; some events, once booked a number of months in advance, could not be cancelled but they then coincided with national charity days and events. Parents noted that they would rather put money towards educational visits.

The HT informed the meeting that she had put in a bid for £1,000 via the One-Stop Shop to develop the wildlife garden. She had investigated Forest School but this would need considerable funding to implement.

Medals and certificates for the Inspired Through Sport event had been delivered this week and would be distributed shortly. Some of the money raised would be used to purchase sports equipment, although the exact amount was not yet confirmed.

Lost Property - the contents of the Lost Property box would be displayed in the playground on 3rd and 4th of April. Any items not claimed would be disposed of.

Staffing – the HT recognised that it had been a difficult time for some parents and children due to staff absences and changes but assured them that she constantly looked at what was the best for the children in managing these problems. Currently a permanent Deputy Headteacher post and class teacher post were being advertised, with a start date of September.

Parents asked how it was decided which classes teachers would take which class next year. The HT explained that she first asked staff where they would like to teach, and using that information SLT discussed the options and came to a decision.

Parents asked that special consideration be given to those classes which had experienced a particular amount of disruption this year.

Piano – parents were sorry to note that there would no longer be a member of staff in school who could play the piano, as this was such a positive contribution to assemblies. If any parents were able to play the piano and would like to volunteer to play in school, then please contact the school office.

Clarification: Mathematics was still being used across the school. The White Rose system was a scheme of work used for the teaching of maths.

Focus of next meeting:- Computing and Technology

Date of next meeting: -Tuesday 30th April.

Feedback to be passed to parent representatives by:- Friday 26th April