

Parent Forum meeting – 01/10/19

Attendance

Mr Knell (DHT), Ms Forrest and Mrs Robinson – 3JC, Mrs Hussey – 3LN, Mrs Brooks – 4KS, Mrs Johnson – 5BH, Mrs Pink – 6AB.

J Bryant – note taker

Vacancies

4KM, 5RS and 6AH

Introduction

Introductions were made. The Deputy Headteacher (DHT), Mr Knell, explained that within his role he was non-class based, but he endeavoured to see each class every day. He was the Year 5/6 leader and would take on the Year 3/4 role when the current leader left on maternity leave.

The meeting took place in the Reflection Room and the DHT explained this was a positive non-screen/non-technology space for the children to use. It had already been used for reading groups and class debates.

There would be six Parent Forum meetings per year. Each meeting would have a pre-agreed focus and for the November meeting this would be Maths.

Actions from previous meetings

Homework should be more consistent and weekly homework was now uploaded to the website.

Parents responded that recent Y3 Maths homework had been difficult to understand by both children and parents. An example showing working out attached to the questions would have been helpful. Another parent noted that Y6 spelling had seemed particularly hard one week.

A teacher had commented that varying levels of complexity of homework was being set to help assess children's abilities. Parents asked that they be informed when this was being undertaken so they could understand when to support and when to allow independence.

Focus: Reading

Accelerated Reader was fully running and previous problems with technology and a lack of books had been resolved.

There were now age appropriate books in each classroom. Tests were done on-line in school and once a child had achieved 100% four times in each band they moved to the next level.

Parents asked how they would be informed about their children's progression and were told that an update would happen at Parents' Evening.

Parents suggested that a note be put in the child's reading book if the child had progressed. Alternatively, the colour coded levels could be on the website with corresponding colours in the reading books which could be ticked when a child completed a level - ***the Reading Leader will make a reading section on the website to address this.***

Star tests were done termly to gauge a child's reading age. Reading was a priority in the School Development Plan. Reading had a distinct slot in each class every day, working closely within the curriculum. In addition a Reading Club had been established this term.

There was now a BookFlix section where children could note if they had particularly loved a book and they could discuss it with their class. The school had invested in a collection of Scholastic Classic novels, plus black band books for advanced readers.

Parents noted that some books in Year 3 seemed particularly easy compared to books the children had been reading in the infants. **The DHT responded that while children were encouraged to choose their own reading books perhaps there could be more guidance to ensure that children were choosing more challenging books. The DHT will reiterate this at the next staff meeting.**

It was noted that a Year 5 child had come home with a picture book with only one line of text on each page and the following week came home with a book that was too advanced for their age and would take too long to read. **The DHT has checked and all books were re-banded over summer in line with Accelerated Reader, and therefore are correct.**

Children were expected to do two reads per day. Once a child had achieved 300 reads they would be taken to Waterstone's and allowed to choose a book. **Parents were concerned that the number of reads start back at number one at the start of each term – reads are counted from September to February and restart at zero after the February half-term, allowing children two opportunities to achieve 300 reads.**

Parents noted that although there had been progress in Reading for SATs the results were still below the national average. The DHT replied that the school was delighted at the improvement and hoped that it would continue. He reiterated that there was a focus on reading this academic year.

It was anticipated that a children's author could be visiting the school soon to read to the children and talk about being a writer as part of promoting a love of reading.

AOB:

Questions

Would it be possible to pay for school dinners online?

This was currently under review by Caterlink and it was hoped it might be possible early in the new year.

Would it be possible to pay for school trips online?

The school had investigated this via ParentMail but there were additional costs attached to this method. Parents asked if the school could have a Paypal account, though recognised that it might be difficult to identify each payment against the relevant pupil(s).

How was the decision reached that Year 6 would have the same teachers as the previous year?

The DHT confirmed that the school's staffing structure was carefully considered at a number of meetings during the summer term and the decision had been made with the children at the centre of everything we do. There were benefits for the children and the teachers, including "hitting the ground running" at the start of the academic year.

Parents expressed concern that there were behavioural issues in Year 6, that more children were being 'exited' and asked how this was being managed?

The DHT explained that there was a behaviour ladder in each class and that high expectations were reiterated across the school. Staff were enforcing consistent good behaviour. While there currently might be some low-level disruption in Year 6 at present while the children settled, the DHT anticipated that children would adapt and adjust to the behaviour for learning expectations quickly. Learning in class should be calm and quiet, which was fair and productive for everyone.

Parents commented on a lack of information surrounding the 11+ test; that a good luck sentiment would have been a nice support and a breakfast club could have been offered, as it is during SATs week. Some parents felt their children taking the test were an obstacle to the running of the normal week.

The DHT explained that schools had to be extremely careful in their operation of the 11+ test .

Could Meet the Teacher be staggered as it had not been possible to meet the relevant teachers if you had more than one child in school? This would be reviewed at the start of the next academic year.

Could consideration be given when arranging parent consultations as they often ran over time which caused problems when sibling meetings were back to back?
Teachers will ensure a gap between sibling meetings. Teachers will also be reminded to keep to the timings.

Dates of next meetings:

19 November – Maths
21 January
24 March
12 May
16 June