



Parent Forum Meeting Minutes

Date of meeting: 16th October 2018

Attendees: Helen Castell, Ralph Bray, Joan Gentle, Suzy Newman, Kate Pluck + 5 parents

1. Regarding **parking around the school**, Mrs Castell listed the various measures we have tried to encourage parents to park with respect for pedestrians, drivers and local residents. If there are any other suggestions for alleviating the problem, please contact the school.
2. Positive feedback was given by parents about the **transition from Year 1 to Year 2**. Parents deemed it seamless, with the children having a clear expectation of what to expect in Year 2. Any friendship issues had been identified and dealt with quickly.
3. A parent praised the school for the **strong sense of community** it fosters, with children knowing each other well and making friends in different classes or year groups. This is helped by the **classes being mixed from Year 1 to Year 2**, to enable the children to know others from their year group before the greater transition to the Junior School.
4. Mrs Castell said that the school had joined the **Chelmsford Network**, which enables it to work closely with 28 other schools in the local area, on initiatives such as **promoting a love of reading**, which is one of the objectives set in our School Improvement Plan for this year. We are also trialling a new baseline in Foundation Stage and a Speech & Language Intervention. The revamp of the Foundation Stage garden has been very successful, thanks in large part to the help given by parents. All staff are due to receive Speech and Language training throughout the year as part of our aim to be a **Communication Friendly School**. Staff will all have Tier 2 **Autism training** during one of the non-pupil days in January.
5. A parent had suggested **swimming lessons** for infant school children. This is not possible due to staffing ratios and the time taken to change the children. We do have lots of other active clubs on offer.
6. Children having been told not to "tell tales" was brought up by a parent. **Behaviour management** was discussed at a recent midday meeting and Mrs Castell encouraged parents to speak to her if ever they needed to.
7. Parents raised the lack of formal **spelling tests in Years 1 and 2** this year, saying that it discourages them from working on spellings at home if they are not seeing their child's test results and progress. Children are tested on the spellings that are sent home each week, but this is done by them writing a dictated piece of text featuring those words, or by being encouraged to use the spellings in their writing. Parents can see this work in the children's books at parents evening. Mrs Castell explained that this new approach was a trial and she would pass the parents comments on to the teachers, but that evidence showed that formal testing was not effective, as the children were not retaining the knowledge of how to spell words or using them in context in their writing.
8. Parents asked which day **homework** was expected to be handed in. Mrs Castell said that this would be clarified for all year groups.
9. Mrs Castell talked about the **Happy & Healthy Hub**. We have received a £10,000 grant from the National Lottery for a hub which would not only provide the necessary space to offer mental health support to children in school, but would also be a place for the community to use to promote wellbeing. Ideas for community use include a nurse drop-in centre, a meeting place for The Link Club

and potential for yoga/wellbeing classes for parents. We are awaiting quotes for the building and exploring the necessary planning permission and building regulations. Mrs Castell has applied for a further 3 potential sources of funding through local/national grants. We may also be able to use our Sports Premium funding. Tesco Bags of Help was suggested as a possible avenue for further fundraising, as well as the Co-op.

10. A parent raised a question about **eggs being banned in packed lunches**, given that many items served by Ashlyns may actually pose a greater risk to children with a severe egg allergy. Mrs Castell said that she would discuss this with Ashlyns as naturally this is an issue we take very seriously. A menu listing all allergens in the school dinners is available on our website.
11. Finally, after a question raised by Ralph Bray, it was agreed by all that the level of **communication** at the school is good and that parents would rather have too much information than too little. The school was also commended for publishing diary dates with as much notice as possible.