

# Parent Forum - Spring Term

## Minutes

11/3/17

**Present:** Mr Mitchell, Mrs Conway, Mrs Yardley, Mrs Gray

### **Agenda:**

1. Finalising Parental Code of Conduct discussed during last meeting
2. Ideas for smooth transition between year groups / key stages
3. Your thoughts on the format/content of end-of-year reports

### ***Item 1: Parental Code of Conduct***

- The draft was read and all agreed it was well-worded and made important key points.
- Slight wording amendments were made so it was clearer.
- The feeling was that it would be well-received by parents/carers.
- Discussion about the best way to share it took place – it was suggested via parent information meetings each year or alongside the annual update of paperwork sent to parents. An idea taken from a sporting club attended by one of the pupils was to ask children to take it home and ask parents to read and sign so children could see school and home working together and that everyone, not just children, followed a code of conduct.

### ***Item 2: Transition***

- Parents were aware that children took part in a class sample day but wondered what happened 'behind the scenes' An overview of the activities that took place were given such as meetings between old and new teachers to pass on key medical/behavioural/assessment information.
- It was feedback that, on the whole, children moved through school smoothly and that the majority of teachers knew their children well when parents met with them on the first parents' meeting.
- Future strategies which had been planned by school to improve transition were shared, for example teachers visiting and spending time with their future pupils in their current class so they can see 'where they are coming from' and understand their development better.
- Discussion took place about the transition in Early Years and the Infants – the 'jump' in formality was raised as an issue especially for some children, e.g. toys in year 1 to no toys in year 2. It was noted that if children have a negative transition experience, it has a knock on, lasting effect. School acknowledges this – it was explained that changes were being implemented to improve this – 'fazing' year one so that it starts off more informal (like Early Years) and becomes gradually formal towards moving into year 2 (and being flexible depending on the children/cohort as this varies from year to year). However, this then has a knock on effect on year 2 – the new practice of teachers observing the year below the year they teach will hopefully help.
- Feedback was that the school had 'nailed it' when a family had relocated and their child had started new to school in KS2 – receiving a card from their future class mates, being offered a sample of activities to complete and coming in for a taster day before starting, had all helped and the child couldn't wait to start.
- It was questioned how year 6s are prepared in terms of their well-being for their transition into high school. It was explained that links with high schools are made where possible, e.g. taster days, special visits,

although other things which had once been common practice, e.g. high school teachers coming into the primary school and letters/q&a sessions between year 6 and year 7 pupils, unfortunately no longer happen due to current pressures such as time, curriculum and budget. Children move onto many high schools and not just one 'feeder school' which also makes things tricky to organise. It was explained that the year 6s are given the opportunity to talk about high school and leave questions in a box if they didn't want to air them publically. In some circumstances, if children have specific needs or are very anxious, a mentor/buddy comes from the high school. It was also mentioned how they receive greater responsibility when they move into year 6, e.g. homework expectations, consequences, etc.

### ***Item 3: End-of-Year Reports***

- All liked the reports that were sent out.
- It was voiced how they were long reports and must take the teachers a great deal of time.
- It was voiced how what was important at primary school is how children are developing as people – the 'personal' section is important and valued.
- All agreed they would not want effort/attainment grades.
- All present agreed they liked that the reports stated whether children were 'on track' or not so there were no shocks at future parents evening. However, it was agreed that an exact year group didn't need to be given if children were behind and parents could ask for further information if they wanted to. It was explained if any children had specific needs/SEN these would be discussed with parents.
- It was voiced that as well as the core subjects, the other areas were valued on the report as children may have other areas of strength and it was nice for this to be acknowledged and gave an insight into what subjects would be good for them to choose in high school.

### ***Other Items Discussed:***

- Discussion about how to increase attendance at parent forum meetings. A 5.30pm start for many working parents is difficult – another parent would have liked to attend but was unable due to finishing work later in the evening. It was suggested using social media as method of canvassing parents' opinions and ideas – this will be looked into. It would need monitoring and introduced with a clear purpose.
- It became apparent, from a member who hadn't previously attended, that not everyone may be clear on what the purpose of the parent forum is. This was clarified (a communication channel for parents so they can be involved in decision-making about the school) although it raised the need to make this clearer to all parents. Further literature will be produced.
- It was questioned why issues such as nits were being raised on the PTA Facebook page when the purpose should be to raise funds for school/advertise fundraising events. It was clarified that the PTA Facebook page is not an official page created by our PTA – starting an official page and identifying someone to oversee this will be looked into.
- It was queried whether we offer a residential for year six children as another parent had said we don't – this was clarified; year 6s (and year 5s when there are additional spaces), are invited to attend Tower Wood each year.
- Changes to the outdoor were talked about positively and it was questioned if there were further plans. It was explained how the future budget, with the issues and concerns which were outlined in the letter sent home this week, would sadly not allow for school to fund outdoor development but school would apply for grants, such as Awards4All, and continue to be supported by the PTA fund-raising, as we still had a large wish list!