

Parent Forum 02.02-18

Present: Mrs. Price, Mrs. Praise (Foundation), Mrs. Dymott (Yr 1), Mrs. Trew (Yr 3), Mrs. Acheson (Yr 4), Mrs. Shenton (Yr 5), Mrs. Reading (representing Yr 6 for Mrs. Kirkwood) Mrs. Ghouse gave her apologies and Mrs. Bockmuel (Church).

The Parent Forum representatives attended Collective Worship at the Junior School and enjoyed seeing the children participating and hearing about their achievements in and outside of school.

Minutes of last meeting: Mrs. Wilde summarised the minutes of the last meeting on 17th November 2017 and there were no matters arising for further discussion.

1. Items from school (NW):

a) Junior Parents Evening – Mrs. Wilde asked whether the new arrangement worked better with 4 tables for teachers meeting parents, chairs for parents running across the centre of the room and children's books available to read at the back of the hall. Parents who attended confirmed this was a better arrangement allowing more privacy. There are planned evenings three times a year at the beginning of term rather than the end so that if there are any issues that need addressing, action can be taken that term.

b) Open Sessions – Open Lessons for KS1 and KS2 are planned w/c 5th February which will be a maths/english lesson. Topic finale sessions are arranged for the end of the school day at 2.30pm/3pm and allow the children to show parents what they have produced during the term. The times are varied to try and accommodate working parents to attend sessions at either the beginning or the end of the school day.

c) Workshops – Mrs. Wilde enquired whether additional or repeated workshops would be useful for parents. Phonics for new Foundation parents was suggested as being very useful, KS 1 maths and english and KS2 grammar.

2. Items which parents wish to discuss:

a) Hot meals (MH/CA Yr 3) – The question of quality of hot meals was raised again and the possibility of the Parent Forum reps joining the children for lunch and sampling the food. Wednesday 21st at 12 noon at the Infant Site was agreed. Mrs. Acheson raised the question of why we had to order hot meals so early for the next term. Mrs. Price outlined that Haddenham St. Mary's have to put their food order in early as they cover their school, Haddenham Juniors and Cuddington and Dinton. They are also quite flexible in that you can order 3 or 5 days of meals and do the washing up which is not possible on our school sites.

(See note of hot meals tasting at end of minutes.)

b) School crossing sign (CD – Yr 1) The question of installing a zebra crossing near the Crown across the main road has been raised. In the past a flashing school sign in Cuddington like the one at Dinton has previously been suggested to the Parish Council by the school, but was not taken forward. Suggestion to be made again to the Parish Council.

c) Food at after school club Night Owls (CD – Yr 1) Query whether children could bring a packed tea with them to eat at Night Owls. Mrs. Price responded that this was not possible since the club would have to register as something different in terms of childcare if a meal was provided rather than a snack. Additionally storage of food all day is problematic as there is no fridge available.

d) New parent communication (PP – Foundation) Although the new parents morning was a useful introduction to the school, suggested preparing parents for school culture by describing terms like KS1 in a glossary and explaining how the clubs work and events such as singing round the village in May, plus important calendar dates etc. This could be parent led and could be issued in early September.

e) Recent KS2 tests Mrs. Wilde explained that the recent KS2 tests were not SATS but organised through Mr. Chantry one of the Governors who works for Harper Collins who were piloting the test. Practise Tests usually cost the school to use as and the results of this one will not be assessed.

f) School Gateway (CA – Yr 4) The system seems overly complicated and difficult to use. Mrs. Wilde acknowledged that the system had many faults and bugs and the school was looking to change but that would be costly. Mrs. Caudren spends a lot of time reopening the gateway when parents don't book or pay in time for e.g. after school club. It is not sophisticated enough to cope with the flexibility that the school are trying to provide for out of hours care. Where parents know that they need a certain time slot then it is necessary to book that half a term in advance. It is possible to book additional one-off sessions with a few days' notice but through the school office as the system does not allow this. The Gateway has only once been closed early as it was overlapping with the Survey Monkey system which is now used for booking the sessions and the Gateway used for payment only.

g) PE – Infants (CD – Yr 1) To clarify the situation re Learn and Master and if the school was intending to employ a dedicated PE teacher, Mrs. Wilde outlined the recent changes in staff and sports providers. Mr. Mould who was the last PE teacher 2 years ago previously worked for Ignite Sports who were the sports providers before that. All staff working for the current providers Learn and Masters are qualified sports coaches in the same way and the school feel they teach PE to the children well. The question of how much time the children spend outside was raised. They go out as long as it is not raining too much or is too cold.

h) Extra –curricular clubs (CD – Yr 1) Were there any plans to introduce any clubs for the Infants such as cookery, choir or science? Mrs. Wilde explained that clubs run by staff were dependant on them having the time and wanting to run a club outside of classwork. Outside providers can be brought in but there has been variable success in the past with Film Making and Science Experiments making great presentations in assembly but not delivering when it came to the actual club.

Also sharing the space with after school club may be an issue. However if there are providers who are recommended then the school is happy to consider them. The request for someone interested in running the choir will be put in the newsletter again.

i) Teacher parking – Infants (CD – Yr 1) The suggestion was made that teachers who currently park in the village near the school could park up at the playing fields freeing up some space for parents to drop-off and for people who are using the shop and the Bernard Hall to park. Mrs. Price thought this was not feasible as staff have many heavy books etc. to bring into school and arrive early and leave late meaning in the winter they would have to walk to the playing fields in the dark. Also the staff would feel unappreciated by the village as they have a job to do serving the community and should be able to park near their place of work.

j) Reading volunteers – Infants (CD – Yr1) Parents were not aware that there is a shortage of reading volunteers. Mrs. Price to put a note in the newsletter, but if anyone is interested then they need to speak to Mrs. Caudren giving the day they could regularly attend. The school prefer volunteers not to be in their own children's class and need to be DBS checked and to volunteer for a term at a time.

k) Year 1 Outside Area (CD – Yr 1) Parents offered to volunteer to tidy up the Year 1 Outside Area one Saturday am now that the Foundation area has been completed. Mrs. Venn to be asked what toys/equipment would be useful then parents can donate items.

l) Outdoor Learning (CD – Yr 1) Similarly volunteers to help clear up the mud kitchen area would enable more outdoor learning as the weather improves. Mrs. Wilde explained that more lessons would be moved outside linking with the children's topic areas such as science projects and the gardening club would restart with help from parents.

Dates of Future Meetings on Calendar on website – next one 9am 18th May 2018, Junior Site.

Parent Forum – Hot Meals Tasting, Infant Site 21.02-18

Present: Mrs. Price, Mrs. Acheson (Yr 4), Mrs. Shenton (Yr 5), Mrs. Bockmuel (Representing Yr 6 for Mrs. Kirkwood and Church) and Mrs. Trew (Yr 3).

Representatives of Parent Forum above were served hot lunch at the Infant Site with the children. Mrs. Price discussed the content of the meal and the various issues regarding the current suppliers (Haddenham St. Mary's) and the potential alternatives.

The hot meal was Roast which consisted of turkey slices, roast potatoes, sweetcorn and gravy. The children also had a Yorkshire pudding, but there were insufficient extra portions for the parents. An alternative vegetarian gravy was available which one of the parents sampled. Bread was also available.

Fresh fruit including satsumas, apples or bananas was for pudding. Water was supplied on the tables and the children were asked if they wanted milk in addition.

Appearance

The food appeared to be reasonably appetising, if lacking a bit of balance with only one vegetable. Mrs. Price also explained that the turkey had been cut into smaller pieces by the school to help the Infant children eat their meal since cutting meat is often quite difficult for them.

Temperature

The food was quite warm and pleasant to eat given it had come from Haddenham.

Taste

All parents agreed that the food was quite tasty. The roast potatoes weren't as crisp as would be desirable, but since they can't be warmed up in an oven were fine.

Supplier issues/alternatives

Previously at Parent Forum the proportion of carbohydrate to other food groups has been raised as a concern. Mrs. Price explained that one vegetable was always part of the meal but no choice was given and some meals were more balanced than others. There have been discussions with the supplier and adjustments made where possible.

Mrs. Price outlined the issues with an alternative supplier as they would require the school to do their own washing up. There is no room for a dishwasher in the school and at present the supplier takes away all the dirty tableware and brings it back clean for each meal.

Lunch organisation

Lunchtime seemed very calm and organised with the children following the routine well. The two sitting system also worked with children in the first sitting (Foundation and Yr 1) having enough time to finish their food before going out to play before the second sitting (Yr 2) arrived.

Mrs. Price explained that the school does not monitor what or how much the children eat for hot lunch, but the dinner ladies or staff on duty loosely check and do tell parents if they haven't eaten particularly for Foundation children.

Overall verdict

The parents agreed that the hot meal was of reasonable quality. Given the difficulties with supply and constraints of the school buildings they were satisfied that for the present the supplier was providing an acceptable service until an alternative becomes an option.