

Parents' Forum 29.6.16

Attended: Ciaran Dodd, Amanda, Ellie Burt, Sally McMillan, Pam Gregson, Anna Jones.

Apologies: Shaun McCartney

As this is the last meeting of the year we took a bit of time to celebrate the achievements over this year for the forum- starting with the phonics workshops and contributions to the booklet for parents- we have achieved the highest phonics results ever, with 91.5% of pupils in Year 1 pupils achieving a pass and 96% of pupils in Year 2 retakes passing.

Internet safety, school website, anti-bullying information leaflet, school menus, changes to reading diaries, feedback on the new Reception pupils induction to school are just some of the items that parents forum have had a positive impact on this year.

Website: Parents love the new format, Ciaran just asked if the plan is still to make the format of the website accessible on mobiles/ tablets? Anna explained that this is something that Mrs Powell is working on in conjunction with Noel Baker our IT provider.

Olympics:

Menus- children in the juniors particularly have really enjoyed it. There are quite grown up choices in the menu this time, perhaps in retrospect it might have been a bit grown up for the infants, but the children have really enjoyed this week so far. Pupils in the infants who have actually tried the new foods have come back very positively and spoken at home about how much they have enjoyed the foods that they have tried.

Pam Gregson wanted to say a thank you on behalf of the parents to Mr Goodwin, as he has made such an impact on the confidence of the children to try new foods and has such a caring nature with the children- as seen when parents have been invited in for lunch with their children. This was seconded by Amanda and other forum members.

Reading: motivating readers- Reading Workshop ideas for the Autumn term.

Anna asked if forum can think about ways in which school can help parents to engage children with reading at home.

Ciaran explained that sometimes children are not interested in the school reading books. Could we send a reminder to parents that any type of reading is good and explain that parents should be writing them all down in the reading diaries. Perhaps think about giving a guide to parents about a range of reading books suitable for their year group that their child might like to read.

All parents suggested reminding others about looking at opportunities to read things you see when you are out e.g. signs, posters, adverts etc as all these count as types of reading, especially for younger pupils in Reception/ Year 1 who are building up reading skills.

Pam said that it really helps when child is tired or not enthusiastic for parents to do reading of a page, then child reads the next page, as it helps child to see where to put in expression when reading aloud and often motivates the child to carry on and take over reading the rest of the book themselves to the grown up.

Ciaran said could we perhaps set challenges such as using dictionaries, improving skills in using the alphabet to locate words and definitions.

Spellings in diaries: Ellie asked if it would be possible for the Year 3 spellings could go in to the Year 1 and 2 reading diaries for the higher ability readers? Parents of infant children have appreciated having the words in the diaries, could this now be added to the junior diaries?

In relation to working on authors, could Roald Dahl week in September be followed up by asking parents to read Roald Dahl at home, perhaps giving a suggestions list of the books he has read that might be suitable for different year groups, so that parents can work on this at home and maybe donate any copies of Roald Dahl in that they don't need any more for a book swap shop after school on Roald Dahl day?

Could we think about authors that could write back to the children- E.g. Jeremy Strong?

In the reading diaries could there be a guide in the junior diaries, spelling rules for the year group below, at and above.

Ciaran asked if we could follow the format of the phonics workshop- model a session and a reading session could then be shared on the website for parents to get an idea of how to do it?

Year 1 parents were very excited about the audio books that Year 1 are creating to be shared with Reception pupils, what a great idea!

Could we put on the website quick tips for reading and all other subjects?

Parents wanted more guidance about knowing what to write in the diaries. Being helpful for things that parents can work on. Could we make a list of code words e.g reading with help, read independently to be used in the diaries, so that parents and staff all understand each other?

Could we have some way of making sure that children are changing the reading books for the junior pupils. Check and change reminder for key pupils to be put on the wall in the classroom perhaps?

Could all the children have a specific time to change the books in class for the juniors, such as at the start of break?

Could parents be made more aware of the order that our book band colours go in, so that parents are more clear of how their child is comparing to year group expectations?

Communication about how important the children are at, how confidently they are reading and what types of text they are reading is really important between parents and home and parents felt that perhaps the significance of how much they read at home and what level books they are on can be affected by comments from parents to help the teacher think about moving the child up a box or down a box if needed.

Donations: Book swap. If school is worried about being overloaded with donations Sally suggested perhaps that families just donate one book that they have enjoyed and would love to share with other children. Ciaran suggested a Book drop week- Anna asked could we link this in with parents forum week, so that we could spend at least some of our meeting sorting the books into roughly appropriate year groups?

One week after Xmas. Maybe reading workshop could be used as an opportunity to swap books. The others could be used to bulk up the summer fair.

Reports:

All parents felt that personal comments are really the most important part of the report, tracking your child's achievements and showing that the teacher really knows your child.

Ellie suggested that perhaps the Foundation Curriculum subjects could go onto a tick sheet format so that staff can focus more on the main subjects and personal comment. All of the forum agreed that this would be much better and we discussed some feedback from a couple of parents at Sports Day yesterday about how making it simpler would make it more accessible to parents with dyslexia and other learning difficulties as at the moment there is a lot of text on the page to get your head round, even though it is only two pages long.

Personal comments – could we move to creating more on the personal comments section, more like the Reception learning journals. Can we think more about an achievements type style of report? Steal good practice from staff in Reception about a journey over the school year for the report?

Parents workshop- could we think about ways that we could re-engage parents into becoming part of parents workshop? Could we finalise workshop requirements by the Wednesday of the week, so that parents know if they need to come in on the Friday or not?

Ciaran suggested that we could have a rota for parents to take part in the workshop. Could parents be asked to come in and help for just an hour or two on a Friday afternoon and sign up so that they know they are only going to have to come in once every few weeks for example, so that it takes the pressure off having to do it every week?

Set up for September- could we give things to parents to do at home and bring back? Could parents come in another day of the week?

Could all classes have a plastic wallet in your classroom to build up stuff for parents workshop, then this could be collected on a Wednesday afternoon with the register and left in a box at the front of school for the parents workshop to pick up? It would be helpful if there are clear instructions accompanying the work so that parents know what to do with it and perhaps a demo one as well.

FOMPS-Facebook page, could this be used in a better way for the parents? Could the school have their own? Sally has offered to help Monica (who runs FOMPS) by taking on the responsibility for the Facebook page if that helps, Anna to put them in contact with each other.

See ways we can engage parents in the FOMPS. Reminders about events and how you can help perhaps at the beginning of the school year so that parents can book in time to see how they can assist?

As Forum left they had a quick look at the Sportivator and our Olympian Sarah Holt working with Year 2 and 3 pupils. They were so happy to see the children so engaged in sport and wanted to thank staff for the opportunities organised this week for pupils.

Meeting closed: 10am