

**Greenway Primary and
Nursery School
Parent Forum**

**20.00-21.35
Tuesday 3rd November 2015
Cedar classroom**

Minutes

Present:

Katharine Ellwood – Head teacher, Nigel Wiggins – Governor (Chair), Caroline Crozier – Deputy Head.

Parent Forum Members: Dan Bishop (Green Ash) Emma Gaskill & Natasha Goss (Red Ash) Gemma Chatt (Elm) Karin Huber (Pine) Helen Hanbidge (Beech) Caroline Green (Silver Birch) Izzy Hall (Maple) Beverley Brookes (Willow) Laura Whittingham-Jones & Liz Hopwood (Chestnut) Kate Moody (Sycamore) Charlotte Woollett (Spruce) Becky St. John (Oak) Suzanne Mitchell (Cedar)

1. Nigel welcomed new members and thanked those who are remaining in post. Introductions were made. Apologies were received from Nicola Shukla (Silver Birch).
- 2 Minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and Katharine reported on progress relating to action points:
 - Rucksacks are now in place - those members who worked on introducing these were thanked;
 - Introduction of the new scooter rack hopefully this has solved any previous safety issues; forum reps were not aware of any scooter incidents since.
 - Football after school is now being played on large field; (NB. Some older children who are unsupervised are staying on school site and parents are urged to remind them to walk straight home.)
 - New display in front entrance shows all staff members – PF members last year reported that lots of parents feel they don't know many staff other than their child's class teacher;
 - Texts re Child shows parent have been sent – members agreed that this has been helpful;
 - Library timetable is in place and children should all be visiting at least once a week;
 - Year 6 new roles and responsibilities in place and children are carrying out their duties with enthusiasm.
- 3 Nigel reviewed the terms of reference (as found on school website), especially in relation to the frequency and timings of PF meetings. Katharine suggested termly

meetings, in the evening for 1.5 hours. This was agreed. *Action: Nigel to arrange for ToR to be changed on website.*

- 4 PE clothing in winter – children need jogging bottoms and a fleece or sweatshirt to keep them warm. Katharine confirmed that these do not have to be green. Charlotte asked whether trainers that get wet could be sent home at the weekend so they can dry out. *Action: teachers to remind children to take wet trainers home.*
- 5 Congestion outside Nursery was discussed as it had been raised in the past – parents congregate outside and it is difficult for others to pass. Nigel has organised a quote for an additional path to gauge likely costs and it came in at £1980 + VAT. Katharine suggested that this is a lot to spend, especially as the school will be reducing in size after this year. Charlotte suggested that the grass area that gets muddy could be mulched. Drainage work has been done and this has improved the situation. *Action: PF members to monitor and report back to next meeting. Nigel to discuss with the Site Manager if mulching could be done.*
- 6 E-safety training – Katharine asked members to continue to promote this. Children will be writing an invitation to their parents. There will be a final mention of it in the forthcoming newsletter. Caroline G said several parents have expressed that they like to have plenty of notice and a slip confirming that something is going ahead. Katharine said that experience has shown that giving plenty of notice (which there has been in this case), then reminding parents at the last minute with a text works best. Several members agreed.
Suzanne raised the issue of mobile phones and e-safety for children in Years 5 and 6 as these are being used increasingly and different families have different levels of security for their children. She wondered what school is doing to teach children about using their phones safely. Katharine said the e-safety session will give parents plenty of support in this regard and she reassured members that e-safety is covered in lessons too. Karin asked whether resources would be available after the session so that if both parents are not able to go, they can still both see the information that has been given. The powerpoint used by the trainer is not available, but other helpful resources will be put on the website. There was some discussion around ways in which school can support parents in e.g. if children are seen using their phones to take pictures of each other or selfies, wearing their school uniform and therefore making themselves identifiable, parents need to tell the school so that messages about e-safety outside of school can be reinforced inside the classroom. Becky pointed out that controls can be put on individual routers so that certain websites cannot be accessed. It was generally agreed that it is parents' responsibility to manage this area of their children's lives but school will work in partnership with them by reinforcing the key messages.
- 7 Rewards system – Katharine explained that we have asked for feedback on this so that it can inform a review that school is undertaking this term. Nigel went through responses that have been received.
 - The issue of visible rewards (e.g. planets system in place in Chestnut class) was discussed at some length. Katharine explained that individual class teachers have their own reward systems in place in addition to the formal system. It was agreed that there needs to be a framework that is used by everyone, but there also needs to be flexibility and room for individuality.
 - Some parents had raised concern about children not knowing why they have received an award, although this should not be the case as certificates have the reason written on them.

- Top class is very popular and especially with the arrival of Mr Lewis, as the winning class not only goes into lunch first (with ketchup), but also has a play session with him.
- Izzy shared the children's frustration reported in some classes where one or two children are always behaving in a way that makes it difficult for their class to win. *Action: Katharine agreed to monitor this situation.*
- Katharine also explained how the House Points system has been altered this term so that the winning house each half term gets a reward on the last day of the half term. A parent asked for clarification on the system as her son does not like it and doesn't like to record his points.
- The difficulty of obtaining Head Teacher's awards was discussed and Katharine reminded everyone that there needs to be a graded approach to this and it is right that some rewards are hard to achieve, but this should not result in children not trying to achieve them. There was discussion about the fact that some children are motivated by rewards and some aren't. Stars have less impact as children go up the school – Becky said that depends on the child. School does a lot of different things to reward children and hopes that the needs of different groups are catered for within that range.

8 Transition to secondary

- Respect for choices – Katharine said that whatever happens in school we can manage. Where conversations are happening at home and being brought into the playground by children it is more difficult to manage. Charlotte said there is a certain etiquette in some private schools about not discussing things like this at school. However, this is something new at Greenway this year, with our first cohort of Year 6 children. Re the 11 plus, Becky said that there has been nothing on social media among the parents, however, Caroline and Katharine reported that the children in Year 6 had been talking about it quite a lot. There has been some pressure in the Year 5 cohort this year and last year and a sense that you should be being tutored because 'everyone else is'. Katharine said she is very proud of the Year 6 children who have gone through the experience this year as they have handled it well. She asked everyone to think very carefully before going down this route as it can have a negative impact on the children in terms of pressure, tiredness and for those who do not pass a strong sense of failure. When it comes to promoting the range of secondary schools on offer, local places for local children is the overriding desire of the association of Berkhamsted heads and Ashlyns is our nearest secondary school, so we have strong links with it. We do get visits from other schools, and have good links with Berkhamsted School, some of whose Year 13 students volunteer here every year.
- Transition arrangements between Greenway and Ashlyns are very strong.
- Cycling proficiency will happen for Year 6 children.
- Timetable for transition - visits from former Greenway children in summer term would be a good idea. We plan to ask James Shapland to come back in Spring/Summer term to do another assembly and talk specifically to Years 5 and 6. Ashlyns sports leaders already come regularly and some children come back to do work experience or volunteer in WACCY.
- Year book for Year 6/arrangements for leavers - because of golden jubilee celebrations this year, there will be a year book for the whole school. In any

other year there will be a book for Year 6. Katharine shared the idea about children choosing three books from their secondary schools reading list and Greenway then presenting them with one of those books on graduation from Greenway. Leavers' hoodies are also being considered – Alison H is acting as link governor on ideas for leavers.

9 Birthday book club

Feedback on this was more negative than positive so it was decided not to go ahead with it.

10 AOB

- Quality of school uniform is poor this year (buttons falling off cardigans, thin fabric, sizing issues, etc.) *Action: Office to investigate alternative suppliers.*
- Quality of school photos is poor – this must be about last year's photos as not yet seen this year. Katharine did give feedback to the supplier last year.
- A few parents had expressed that they find the "new" time slots for parents' evenings much less convenient than the old system - the new system works well for staff as they are not sitting around in between appointments. It was agreed to alternate the night of the late evening where possible in the future to make it easier for people to attend.
- Lack of clear information to all parents regarding donations for the harvest festival – apologies from school about this.
- Will we provide further opportunities for children in Year 3 to learn a musical instrument? – there is a lot of music taught by peripatetic teachers throughout the school. Wider opportunities are available to Year 4. If we were to offer further music lessons we would struggle to find the space for these to happen. We do not currently have the capacity. As Year 3 move up through school, opportunities will be made available to them.
- Are KS1 having a Carol concert this year? - KS2 only this year.
- Are the school considering a Christmas Jumper day where children pay £1 and it is donated to either a Children's charity/Children in Need/NSPCC etc? – probably not as parents are asked for quite a lot already. Children in Need will be 'Dress down day', There will be another of these for tombola prizes for the Christmas Fair.
- Could you bring back the special friend system, where a year 6 is paired with a reception child?– we plan to do this when our numbers make it manageable. Currently it would be difficult as numbers of children are not equal. Y6 children are supporting younger children in other ways.
- Parking nightmare- could there be a turning circle within the school grounds? – this would be too dangerous.
- Can aprons be provided so when the kids do crafts or experiments they don't bring half of it home on their uniforms? – these would need to be washed in the same way that uniforms do and school does not have the facilities to do this.
- Parent consultation summary sheets – well received. Katharine explained that this was a trial and feedback from parents is welcome. If parents generally in favour of receiving a copy this will be arranged for next time. *Action: PF members will canvass opinion and feed back at next meeting.*