

**Greenway Primary and  
Nursery School  
Parent Forum**

**20.00 – 21.45  
Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016  
Cedar classroom**

**Minutes**

**Present:** Katharine Ellwood – Head Teacher, Nigel Wiggins – Governor (Chair), Caroline Crozier – Deputy Head.

Parent Forum Members: Louise Jenkins (Green Ash), Isabel Hall (Red Ash), Natasha Goss (Elm), Laura Whittingham-Jones (Rowan), Gemma Chatt (Pine), Karin Huber (Beech), Stephanie Gresham (Chestnut), Helen Hanbidge (Silver Birch), Caroline Green & Tracy Lerpiniere (Willow), Liz Hopwood (Spruce), Charlotte Thrower (Cedar), Sophie Kennedy, (Oak)

1. Welcome & apologies for absence from Kate Moody (Cedar) and Beverley Brookes (Sycamore).
2. Katharine shared the headlines from the parent survey (available on the website). The Governing Body has analysed the results of the survey and Katharine highlighted the two points made in the 'even better if section':
  - Extra curricular opportunity - Katharine explained that things have changed since the days when teachers had time to run clubs at lunchtime or after school. The school offers a range of clubs but understands that some parents would still like more. We try to strike a balance between offering children opportunities but not adding too much to the very busy schedules some of our children have.
  - Stretching the more able – the Maths Curriculum Evening on 9<sup>th</sup> November went some way to explain how we are doing this in Maths.
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3. The School Development Plan 2016-17 – Katharine shared the slimmed down version of the school plan and explained how the plan is drawn up annually. She went through the three sections of the plan and the sub-headings under each of these which make up the school's objectives for the year. This slimmed down version has been ratified by the GB and will soon be sent out to all parents. Nigel added that the plan is reviewed termly by the GB and the school is accountable for the actions and objectives on it.
4. Benches – current benches are in a poor state. Caroline C went to the GSA to ask for help with funding and they have agreed to pay for all our benches to be replaced. Katharine asked for one or two PF members to research the different types of bench on offer and report back to her. Karin agreed to do this. (Thanks to her)

5. Feedback on the Parent Consultation pro-forma – this was very positive. Katharine explained that the reason we introduced this was so that there was a starting point for the discussion and a record of the main points. Queries raised were:
- Nursery – not much information - Louise to feed back about the learning journal
  - Silver Birch – comments about reading between the lines have been passed on to teachers. Katharine said this is something for us to chip away at as we all get used to the new assessment system. She would encourage parents to keep asking questions. The recent consultations took place before any assessments had been done; the next ones will have more information about assessments and levels.
  - Katharine asked Y6 parents about inviting the children to the meetings. Some had expressed concerns about saying things to the teacher they didn't want their child to hear. Sophie and Charlotte said they'd had no feedback from parents and that the children had liked it.
  - Laura said the forms are useful to Y5 parents in that they formalise the expectations about what they need to do to improve.
  - Are other subjects talked about? Katharine said Maths and English were always going to be the main focus – not that the other subjects aren't important, but 10 minutes is not long enough. If parents have other issues they'd like to talk about they can always make an appointment with the teacher at another time.
6. Matters raised through Parent Forum reps:  
For the benefit of new members, Katharine discussed the role of the reps and the main purpose of PF in receiving feedback but not to canvass opinion.

#### Nursery

- The overriding response was how wonderful Mrs Tritton and Mrs Swinson are.
- There appears to be a lot of assumed knowledge which first time parents don't have - Katharine pointed out that when an information session was planned only 4 parents attended. School provides information in a variety of ways so it is frustrating if parents choose not to take opportunities offered.

At this point we referenced to the parent information leaflet for new parents which had been under discussion at the last meeting – Katharine thanked the working party for their work on this. She has turned it into a Word document and explained how she would like it to be accessible through the 'Parent Information' section of the website. There was discussion around the map and security issues around putting this on the website. It was suggested that a map showing the main areas of the school without details about specific class names could be displayed in the main entrance.

**Action: Nigel will produce an amended map with class names taken out.**

- What are the integration arrangements for January starters?  
Meeting for new nursery parents will take place on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> November. In January the new joiners will have a staggered start – as always. Numbers will not be known until the children actually start.
- Text reminders about events at school for example, coffee mornings - there won't be more of these. Many parents feel there are already enough.

#### Red Ash

- Thanks from a parent for being able to spend time with their child at the Foundation Stage open morning.
- Katharine and Izzy discussed how to move forward with the other comments received as Katharine will talk to the parent who put them forward as it was felt this would be more helpful. All the issues raised are happening in Red Ash.

**Action: Katharine will arrange a meeting with this parent.**

- (As an aside, Laura asked if the open mornings could happen further up the school. Katharine said it would be too disruptive to the learning)

#### Elm

- The path/alley that runs between reception playground and Thomas More nature garden is our responsibility. Could the leaves be swept in the mornings as when frosty or wet they are very slippery?  
**Action: Katharine/Caroline C will talk to Mr Rapson about clearing it.**
- Governors have considered solar panels but will not be going down that route.

#### Chestnut

- What classes can use Top Trumps in the playground?  
Children know the rule about not taking anything brought in from home into the playground. Parents are asked to support school in ensuring this doesn't happen. Year 6 children are allowed to take Top Trumps that belong to school outside, not their own Top Trumps.  
**Action: Katharine/Caroline C will put something about this in the next newsletter.**
- Unpopular menu choices and how children can have input into these.  
Hayley (the school cook) is very amenable and open to menu change suggestions, but time needs to be allowed when a new menu is introduced. We will continue to monitor this. Nigel pointed out that there are far fewer complaints about school meals now than previously.  
**Action: school to monitor pupil attitudes to meal choices and discuss with kitchen as appropriate.**

#### Silver Birch

- Portion sizes of school lunches  
The kitchen is constrained by Herts Catering recipes and the amount of ingredients provided. If portions were bigger the price would have to be increased. NB the kitchen has on occasion overheard some pupils discussing that they will change their choice of meal as they queue up and see what is on offer– if this does happen, volumes available may be affected  
**Action: Helen will speak to the parent who raised this and ask her to continue to monitor.**
- Opportunity for being in sports teams.  
For the swimming, we were only allowed to take 8 children to the gala. We can't have more teams as we don't have the capacity to manage them. Mr Loczy and Mr Lewis have 3 evenings remaining this term when they aren't taking children to sports fixtures. Katharine reiterated the fact that this problem is related to the Berkhamsted reorganisation and the fact that Greenway took 90 children in that cohort. School is aware that some children or parents may feel they are missing out on opportunities, but the issues are about capacity and health and safety, not about disadvantaging the children.
- Clarification of the team selection process.  
Katharine asked that parents who are concerned about participation in competitive sport read the 'Team Selection Policy' which is on the school's website. She reminded the meeting that a few years ago there was a call among parents for more competitive sport. We now have this and do very well at it. All children have the opportunity to take part in non-competitive sports through whole day or half day sessions at various venues or with Ashlyns sports leaders. Tracy said some children feel that if they don't get into a team at the first opportunity, they may never get into it.  
**Action: Katharine/Caroline C will talk to Mr Lewis/Mr Loczy about ensuring**

**children fully understand the way in which teams are selected and that their expectations are managed sensitively. Parents are asked to support school by encouraging children to keep trying and maintain a positive attitude.**

- Katharine confirmed that all children are reminded by adults to wash their hands before lunch, but that by Y4 children need to take responsibility for this. **Action: Mrs Hadley (who brings the children in from the playground) will remind each group as she brings them in and may introduce spot checks and anyone with dirty hands will need to wash them before re-joining the queue.**

#### Willow

- Pedestrian skills training.  
This will take place in the summer term of Y4 in preparation for independent walking in Y5.
- Watery pasta.  
This is difficult to avoid as they put water in to stop it from sticking. A slotted spoon is used but some water does end up on the plate.
- Children not getting the full choice of food.  
This should only apply to desserts and is hard to avoid as the kitchen is only given fixed numbers for main courses. This came up previously at PF and as a result school introduced a rolling timetable for when classes go in to lunch – this means it is not always the same children who go in later.
- The missed swimming lesson due to the swimming trials.  
This will be added on once the other classes have had their sessions - dates were given to all 3 classes at the start of the year so it can't be added on now.
- Project homework  
Katharine had looked at the project with Mrs Adams. Most PF members liked the idea of having a longer period to complete a piece of home learning. Tracy said the issue is about it being new and explained that people were surprised (children and parents) as it was not what they are used to. She and Caroline G suggested that it could have been mentioned at the 'Welcome to your new class meeting' but Caroline C and Katharine explained that the teachers may not have known at that point that they intended to do this.  
**Action: Katharine will feed back the comments to the Y4 team.**
- Trips outside of school hours  
Katharine explained that WACCY and Breakfast club can't support parents looking for care for their other children on days when there's a trip that goes on beyond school hours. She appreciates that this can be difficult for parents with several children, however, it does not happen very often and wondered whether parents could look to each other for support in these circumstances.
- KS2 or not KS2?  
As discussed at previous PF meetings, Y4 is part of KS2 but will continue to have assembly with KS1 and Year 3, except on Fridays this year. This decision relates to numbers and health and safety issues. On Friday Nursery and Reception come into the Celebration assembly so the 90 children from Y4 are with upper KS2 to balance out numbers between the two assemblies. This cohort will be with Y6 next year..
- School uniform. Has it been noticed if the quality has improved from the new (second) manufacturer?  
The general consensus from the reps present who had bought it was that the quality was noticeably better.
- Xmas cards.  
The comment may have been sent before the Christmas card situation was (almost) resolved last week. There was some discussion around what we plan to do next year

and Caroline confirmed she will be talking to colleagues at other schools about their providers. Katharine thanked Caroline for keeping parents informed in such difficult circumstances.

- Book Swap Club. This is a really good idea popular with the kids. Will it continue next year?

Yes it will.

- Thank you message for the maths workshop evening

#### Spruce

- Table tennis tables.

There is a rota for the outdoor table tennis tables. Each year group has its day. Sometimes the tables cannot be used because the grass around them is too slippery. The indoor table is only used by Y6. **Action: Katharine/Caroline C. Something about the tables will go in the next newsletter.**

#### Sycamore

- Maths evening

The powerpoint was put on the website the day after the session. There will be no repeat of the session and school urges parents to attend these evenings if at all possible as they are very useful. Feedback from the session is also available on the website.

**Action: Katharine/Caroline C. The powerpoint will be mentioned in the next newsletter.**

#### Cedar

- Team selection policy

Please see previous answers under 'Silver Birch'.

- The trend for girls to wear shorts under their skirts.

Katharine talked about the issue of girls wearing shorts under skirts and asked reps what they think. There was a general feeling that the girls wear them so they don't show their underwear when doing handstands and cartwheels and that they would be upset if school said they couldn't wear them. No one has heard any of the girls saying they've been intimidated or bullied about this. Katharine and made it clear she doesn't intend to change the uniform policy to stop this practice

- Positive feedback received for the re-introduction of the buddying system.

Caroline confirmed that she is currently discussing with Mrs Murphy on who the buddies will be partnered with.