

GREENWAY PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

PARENT FORUM

TUESDAY 3rd March 2020, 8pm

Present: Katharine Ellwood (Head teacher), Elizabeth O'Reilly (Chair of Governors), Alison Hoffman (Governor), Megan Owen (Nursery), Kerry Hall (Nursery), Lauren Bishop (Reception), Emma Lelieveld (Elm – Y1), Louise Jenkins (Pine – Y2), Emma Hart (Beech – Y3), Natasha Goss (Willow – Y4), Sarah Whale (Chestnut – Y5), Clare Burlingham (Maple – Y6).

Agenda

1. Welcome and apologies

Attendees introduced themselves – there were no apologies.

The resilience evening led by Dr Kathy Weston had been very well attended and received. KE thanked PF members for sending out reminders to parents to sign up. There was some interest in asking Dr Weston to come back and talk about resilience in the digital world.

2. School vision

KE explained that the school had changed significantly since she took up post 11 years ago and children starting in education had noticeably less self-esteem. With these factors in mind, the Governing Body (GB) had carried out a full review of the school's vision, values and aims, having had specific training to support this work.

The vision was about putting the child at the heart of everything. The aims had been discussed at length and reduced in number, whilst still reflecting everything the school stood for.

The Golden Values 'lock onto learning' had been developed some years previously with children and the GB did not want to change them.

See **Annex A** for the new vision, values and aims.

3. Medieval Pageant – Art Focus

The council was organising a pageant on 31 August (bank holiday) and wanted all schools to take part. It had been decided that each of the nine schools in the town would create a felt banner for display.

Jo Kidd from Berkhamsted Arts and Crafts would support this and a proforma would be sent home asking children to come with ideas for a design. Greenway's felting would take place on 15 July and KE would select a small group of children for this activity.

4. School site security

The GB had been monitoring site security and out of hours access for a long time, but as KE explained, vandalism to the school building and school property had increased over the last two years. Workmen who were replacing the library roof over the Christmas holidays were very concerned at the behaviour of some people on the site. This included youths playing football on the roof and people using/abusing early years play equipment. There had also been cases of unauthorised persons accessing the site during the school day.

Governors had decided that there was no alternative but to lock the main entrance outside school hours, and to keep the side gate off the alleyway locked permanently. Unfortunately, due to a slight miscommunication with the Head of St Thomas More (STM), Greenway parents had been told they could not use the STM side gate at the start and end of the school day. This issue had been resolved. The school had dealt with comments from parents and KE and EOR had met with one nursery parent. It was clear that the majority of parents understood that safeguarding was the school's first priority and that the issue for families was one of inconvenience. From addresses held by the school, the number of nursery families who would be approaching the school from the STM side appeared to be 13.

Q. Parents understand about safety but could the side gate be opened at lunch-time for nursery pick up?

KE explained that Greenway does not have a full-time site manager and staff did not have time to unlock and lock the gate during the day. Regrettably, some of the communication from parents was less than polite – KE assured PF that it was not a question of Greenway staff not being 'bothered' to unlock the side gate.

STM was in a different position in that their nursery is right by their main gate so their side gate does not need to be opened at lunchtime.

Two companies had looked at the possibility of installing a keypad, but this would involve replacing the gate and some of the fencing – at a significant (and disproportionate) cost to the school.

The GB was fully aware that locking the site meant people could not use the new running track in the evenings and at weekends, but Greenway was a school, not a park and was one of the last schools in the town to lock its gates out of school hours.

KE reported that there had been no instances of vandalism or unwelcome behaviour since the gates had been locked. She would be sending a follow-up letter to parents, this would include information on any inset/occasional days for STM.

EOR noted that it had been a difficult decision for the GB and had been taken with some regret but that governors first priority had to be safeguarding the pupils and staff and to ensure that money was not wasted on effecting repairs to unnecessarily damaged property particularly when finance is so tight.

5. Year 6 – feedback on mock SATs

Year 6 feedback was that the mock SATs had been handled very well and the children had been well prepared for what they were going to face. Whilst it could otherwise have been an anxious time, the children had been calm.

The only observation was that the results letter was a little confusing in that there was no explanation as to how the scaled score was calculated. KE would take this forward.

Year 6 parents who were still unclear about their child's results were urged to discuss their concerns with Mrs Adams as soon as possible – there was no need to wait until the parent consultation evening.

6. Electronic booking for parent consultations

KE asked PF for their views on using an on-line booking system for parent consultations. Currently the school did a paper exercise and allocated siblings at different times, to make sure they did not clash. Electronic systems were in use at secondary schools and in some primary schools and provided a fast and efficient way of booking, but they could not be programmed to ensure there was no clash of slots for siblings. This was something parents would have to ensure when booking.

PF members were supportive of the idea and recognised that many more things are booked online now. KE would speak to STM who had used an electronic system.

7. Bicycle marking

KE advised that free bike marking would be taking place at Halfords in Hemel Hempstead between 10am and 3pm on Saturday 14 March.

8. Yoga

KE reported that every class had recently had a 45 minute session of yoga, funded by Sports Premium money and the children had been very positive about it. The Sports Premium money would fund a further four classes for six-week blocks – two classes before half term and two after. Year 6 would definitely be involved, it was hoped this would have a positive impact at SATs time.

9. Daily mile track

In response to a question about frequency, KE advised that Years 1 and 2 should be using the track twice a week. Nursery and Reception also used the track, but the frequency varied. Children could change into trainers, but did not need to change clothes. Year 3 asked if it could be used more frequently – KE advised that this was at the teacher's discretion.

Q. Is use of the track in addition to PE? It seems to be used only once a week, the other time being during a scheduled PE lesson.

KE said that it was used when it best fits with the timetable.

Q. I have seen it covered in mud from footballers at weekend?

KE would follow this up.

10. Other feedback and questions from parents

Q. The cost of items/games at GSA fairs, especially silent auctions had increased and was unaffordable for some?

KE was aware that this point had been made in relation to the Christmas Fair. Prices had gone up over the years and it was important to be mindful that children should be able to participate. She suggested each child could have a free raffle ticket to have a chance of winning a 'day as the Headteacher'. Although the silent auction had raised lot of money, it should be more about the experience, not the money.

Action - KE to discuss with the GSA.

Q. Why is running club being run by an outside provider and therefore chargeable? Also, it clashes with Choir meaning Y3 children have to choose.

KE said that running club was an opportunity which became available at short notice, hence the clash with choir could not be avoided. Parents had to pay for running club as Sports Premium funding could only be used for sustainable sporting activities. Running club provision would be reviewed at the end of this school year.

Q. Is sanitiser provided and do children wash their hands regularly? The taps in the toilets near the Year 3 classroom are very stiff and this may put children off?

KE advised PF that children are always reminded of the need to wash their hands before eating and after they have been to the toilet. Staff ensure that this happens. However, the school had held an assembly on hygiene and the importance of proper handwashing. All official advice and guidance on coronavirus which had been received by the school had been passed on to parents. Mrs Adams' talk to year 6 had received very positive feedback from children.

As for the taps, it would be too expensive to replace them, but they had been installed when older children used the adjacent classrooms. The school had had work done to make them easier to use, but year 3 knew they could use an alternative sink in their classroom if they needed to.

Q. World book day – why are children not dressing up?

It had been agreed at the November Parent Forum meeting that for the 2020 World Book Day children would just bring in their favourite book. There might be a different approach next year.

Q. Could we have more non-uniform days?

KE advised that these should have a purpose, i.e. be linked to a charity such as Sport Relief, or for school fundraising.

Q. Can breakfast club start ten minutes earlier so that parents can catch the 8.15 train?

KE said that there were no plans to change breakfast club hours.

Q. Do year 1 routinely use the small playground – there have been a few issues with older children on the big one?

KE reported that Year 1 use the big playground in the mornings, and the small playground in the afternoon. Accident statistics are seen by governors and taken into account. She was in discussion with staff about splitting lunchtime into two, according to year group.

Q. Communication – letters sometimes come out late on the Friday before half term after people have gone on holiday?

KE reported that due to her workload, this could not always be avoided. Often, a lot of information/flyers come in very late and these needed to be included in newsletters.

Q. Will there be a Year 5 trip?

KE said that year 5 had done the Young Voices at the O2 and were also going to Wimbledon in the summer term.

Q. Lack of football coaching for Year 5?

The boys' school football team was a mix of years 4,5 and 6 and they had not had the chance to practice and play together before matches. No football team has had any form of coaching from school. In the past, parents have arranged training. Due to Mr Lewis's workload with fixtures and clubs, it has not been possible to provide training this year.

Q. Year 3 school trip – when will we find out when and where it is?

KE agreed to check with Mrs Bennett.