

GREENWAY PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

REMOTE MEETING OF PARENT FORUM

Monday 4 February 2021, 8pm-9.08pm

Present: Fiona Duck (Chair of Parent Forum), Katharine Ellwood (Headteacher), Amy Crockett (KS2 Lead), Kayleigh Dell (KS1 Lead), Elizabeth O'Reilly (Chair of Governors), Lucy Knox Smith (Nursery), Kerry Hall (Reception), Lauren Bishop (Elm – Y1), Emma Lelieveld (Pine – Y2), Louise Jenkins (Beech – Y3), Sophie Kennedy (Willow – Y4), Natasha Goss (Chestnut – Y5), Rachel Scott (Maple – Y6).

Agenda

1. Welcome

FD chaired the meeting and EOR took minutes.

KE had noted all comments received via Parent Forum representatives in advance of the meeting and had shared these with those staff members and governors present. She thanked parents for their prompt responses and advised that AC and KD were present to clarify points arising.

2. The purpose of the meeting was to receive feedback on the revised Remote Learning Policy and Offer Document and current Greenway remote learning provision

It was agreed that due to the number of responses (many of which were duplicated) the best use of time would be for Parent Forum representatives to give two examples of what is going well and what could be improved upon from their class.

By way of introduction, KE reminded parents that we are all in a very different position to the first lockdown in March 2020 which had happened suddenly and without any real notice. At that point schools had been unable to plan properly for their remote learning offer. This time around there has been more time to prepare for the digital delivery of remote learning. Government/DfE guidelines have changed substantially since last Spring around the expectations of what schools should be delivering and how – what was required then is different to what is required now as is reflected in the revised Remote Learning Policy now ratified by governors. As such it is not fair to compare this lockdown with the last period of school closure. They are two very different scenarios.

Year 6 – Parental feedback has been very positive particularly around the class meet and greet sessions; motivating work set; and good challenges set.

It would be good for the children to be encouraged to speak more in the class meet and greet sessions.

Response - KE commented that Year 6 pupils are a lot more independent than the younger year groups and that school are aware that they may feel a bit more constrained talking in front of their parents/peers. The class teacher is using more specific questions to encourage discussion, and this is helping.

Year 5 – Parental feedback has been very positive particularly around the class meet and greets and the use of pre-recorded clips in the learning.

There had been requests for more pre-recorded clips and 'live' teaching (particularly with spelling dictation – could that not be delivered to the whole class 'live?') and for the 'missing' flag to be removed when work is submitted after 3pm.

Response - KE reminded parents that she had communicated about the deadline/'missing' flag in correspondence. The flag cannot be removed – it is part of the Google Classroom package and cannot be removed. Parents should not be stressed about it – if there are reasons as to why they cannot get work submitted by 3pm or if they are having technical issues then communicate with the class teacher. One parent noted that if work is delivered late by her child, she just does not allow her child to see the 'late' flag - this had been cleared with school.

The 3pm deadline will not be changed as the majority of families are managing to upload work by then – staff need to have time to plan for the next day and do so using the work submitted. The deadline is in place to support staff aswell as families.

AC advised that it would be impossible to provide a 'live' spelling session for a class as spellings are differentiated for all the children in every class. She will group the children and then ensure that each group has the appropriate spellings uploaded for them via Google Classroom. AC confirmed that teachers have multiple groupings within their class. Work is differentiated for all children although this will not necessarily be apparent to families all the time.

Year 4 – The pre-recorded videos in which the teacher has demonstrated work have been very welcome as has hearing the

teacher's voice. Children have particularly enjoyed hearing the teacher read a chapter from a book every day and parents feel that this has been very beneficial for them.

There had been requests for more pre-recorded clips; face to face/'live' lessons/assemblies – the latter would ensure that children feel closer to the school community. General guidance on how autonomous a child should be in their learning would be helpful along with guidance on how to prioritise work and as to whether 'perfect' work should be submitted or whether it should just be what the child has achieved without input from the parent.

Response – KE stated that if guidance is an issue for parents, they must email the teacher but that inevitably every child is different so it's not possible to give blanket guidance.

KE reminded parents that teachers had never been trained to deliver remote learning and that they are therefore having to do their day job whilst at the same time learning a whole new set of skills in the gaze of their school community. Teachers have a weekly training session which supports them in developing their skills and increasing their confidence. KE confirmed that she has absolute confidence in her staff to use their professional judgement as to how best to enhance the remote learning for their class. Teachers are becoming more confident in compiling and uploading pre-recorded videos and have appreciated the positive feedback from parents and pupils.

Year 3 – Parental feedback has been overwhelmingly positive; pre-recorded videos have been very well received; the feedback has been excellent and individual to the child.

Parents would like more pre-recorded videos and some 'live' lessons not least because some parents are finding it challenging having to sit with their children.

Response – KE felt that there is a lot of confusion around 'live' teaching. KE is very clear on what Greenway is doing and why they are doing it and has the full support of her staff and Governors. **Greenway will not be undertaking any 'live' face to face teaching. The only 'live' session will be the class meet and greet sessions** and these are going very well with the teachers being extremely inventive in maintaining the children's focus. Some parents want more; others think twice a week is about right; others feel it's too much. KE believes that what is in place is appropriate for the children and for the staff.

Parents may inevitably try and make comparisons with other schools but having attended a Berkhamsted Headteachers meeting that morning KE was very clear that there are only three State schools in Berkhamsted delivering 'live' teaching.

Year 2 – The pre-recorded video clips are very popular and these help the children maintain focus and motivation although more would be welcome. Mr Lewis and Mr Pettifer's lessons have been very popular. There are a lot of families in Year 2 where both parents are working so the uploading of work by 6pm has been very welcome.

There were requests for 'live' teaching and assemblies – other schools were doing these so why couldn't Greenway?

Why did parents have to attend Zoom sessions with their children – no other schools require this for anything other than Reception children?

Response – KE confirmed that no decision has been taken about assemblies and that these may be delivered in due course.

So far as 'live' teaching is concerned she is aware that a lot of parents complain that their secondary age children have it so expect their primary age children to have it too. KE has to consider what her pupil engagement is like and as to what is appropriate for her staff bearing in mind their circumstances. Pupils engagement at Greenway is very high and so in her view what staff are doing is working. KE regularly seeks feedback from her staff as to how they are managing their workloads and personal lives and feels that the blended offer (that most schools deliver) is appropriate for the children but acknowledges that it is very hard work for her staff.

AC reminded parents that the school is trying to be fair to all children and KD reported that for her class, most children are currently finding it difficult to sit and concentrate on the meet and greet for 25 minutes.

KE had checked with the Berkhamsted Headteachers at their meeting that morning and all schools required parents to attend any 'live' sessions – she was unclear as to where the information had come from that parents did not have to attend.

KE will investigate the position with reading scheme books as some year 2 children are running out of these.

It was noted that there is little point in making comparisons with other schools and particularly not with a secondary – teenagers find it exhausting sitting in front of a screen all day.

EOR confirmed that the role of a governor includes many things not least being involved in the strategic direction of the school and acting as a critical friend. However, governors are also responsible for ensuring the wellbeing of the Headteacher and all staff. Governors have considered the remote learning offer and are content with what Greenway are offering mindful of the fact that everyone's circumstances are different (staff and pupils/families) – they are aware of the huge challenges for staff in learning a new way of teaching 'on the job' and of the challenges for parents in supporting their child/ren with remote learning. Whilst governors are aware of what other schools may or may not be doing currently they have to focus on the Greenway staff body and what is reasonable to expect of them – some schools are much larger and have far more staff to deliver eg 3 weekly assemblies. Greenway is a one form entry primary school. The last thing any governor would want is for staff to go off work with stress as a result of the demands being placed upon them.

Year 1 – Parental feedback has been very positive, and parents are really appreciative of the effort put in by the teacher to make things fun for the children. Feedback given has been well received.

Main themes arising were around 'live' lessons and additional pre-recorded videos supporting parents in how to support their child in delivering remote learning. A front sheet for the day's work would be helpful (this had been dealt with by the time of the meeting) and there were also suggestions for a daily story and possibly some pre-recorded yoga lessons.

Response – KE is very aware from conversations/communications with parents that a lot of parents have hit a wall and are really struggling particularly as it looks as if remote learning will continue at least until 8 March. She will be writing to parents about this and to remind them that in fact last time around the children all bounced back – they were doing brilliantly by Christmas.

Whilst the Year 1 class teacher has changed the front sheet for the day's work this will not necessarily be the case for all classes – different teachers have different styles.

KE is already investigating the possibility of purchasing some pre-recorded yoga/Happy Human Project pre-recorded sessions.

Reception – Parental Feedback is all very positive, and the children love the pre-recorded videos and would love it if the teacher could read a story. Teacher feedback has been well received.

Live lessons have come up as an issue – some parents want it and some don't.

Nursery – All parents are very concerned about the class teacher and wish her well and a quick return to full health. Her weekly letter is really appreciated as is the work that she is putting up for the children.

It would be nice for the children to see something of the school via Zoom – some of them are wondering if they still go there. Also parents would like to know what is the school's game plan if the teacher remains unwell.

Response - KE will be communicating with all Nursery parents before half term as to arrangements moving forwards.

Additional Queries/Comments

Are all schools using Google Classrooms? No – Westfield is using Seesaw; Bridgewater is using three different online platforms depending on the age of the child; Victoria and Thomas Coram are using MS Teams and Zoom etc – the choices made are what these schools feel is appropriate for their school communities. Greenway has selected Google Classrooms and the purchase of Chromebooks for use by eligible children as this is what children who go to Ashlyns will be using.

And finally.....

The town library is offering a scheme to parents where they can request a pack of 12 appropriate aged books to borrow for 3 weeks for themselves or their child/ren.

[Ready Reads | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

Next Meeting: Date tbc