

GREENWAY PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

REMOTE MEETING OF PARENT FORUM

Wednesday 9 March 2022, 8pm-9.35pm

Present: Fiona Duck (Chair of Parent Forum), Katharine Ellwood (Headteacher), Kai Lewis (Sports Subject Lead), Elizabeth O'Reilly (Chair of Governors), Louise Collins (Link Governor for Sports/PE), Megan Lemon (Nursery), Rachel George and Lucy Knox Smith (Reception), Kirsty Hartley and John Murray (Elm - Year 1), Rachel Leuw (Pine - Y2), Kate Hamer (Beech - Y3), Louise Jenkins (Willow - Y4), Fiona Lydon (Chestnut - Y5), Steph Gresham (Maple - Y6).

Agenda

1. Welcome

FD chaired the meeting and EOR took minutes.

This was the first meeting of the current academic year. With many new representatives on the Parent Forum, the terms of reference had been circulated and all were reminded of the purpose of the Parent Forum and of the need to be respectful of each other's views.

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 KL was present to clarify points arising.

2. The purpose of the meeting was to receive feedback on the questions circulated re the school's revised Team Selection Policy in the post pandemic environment

It was agreed that representatives would provide summaries of the specific feedback given on the individual questions, and these would then be addressed by KL and KE.

Question 1 - How did you think Greenway selected children to represent school for sporting events prior to this new Team Selection Policy?

Nursery, Reception, Year 1 – No feedback as parents had no experience of this due to lockdowns etc

Years 2 and 3 – the new policy seemed well written with clear guidelines on how selections are made adopting a criteria established by Dacorum School Sports Network (DSSN). Concern from some parents that it was the same pupils being selected for events and that it was not always clear what events children could be selected for.

Year 4 – there was not much understanding amongst parents of the sports on offer but there was a view that the same children are being selected for events.

Year 5 – there was not much understanding amongst parents of the selection process but it was felt that communication could be improved upon.

Year 6 – some parents were unclear that there was a Team Selection Policy and had not understood that teams might be selected through a PE lesson – if pupils (and parents) were aware of this then there was a view that the children might try harder to be selected and the parents could support them in this respect.

Responses

- When Greenway changed from being a first school to becoming a primary school and had at least 2 forms of Year 5 and Year 6, a decision was taken to put in place a Team Selection Policy because the school was much larger.
- As far as we are aware, Greenway is the only local primary school to have a Team Selection Policy.
- There had been limited opportunities for competitive inter school sport during the various lockdowns.
- Greenway is part of the DSSN and engages with the offers of sport competition offered by DSSN through their School Games Organiser Claire McCawley, compliant with the national School Games framework which was reframed in 2021 at three levels and as set out within Appendix B of the policy ie 'Compete'; 'Aspire and Develop'; 'Inspire and Engage'.
- Since January 2022 DSSN has only really been offering sports at the 'Compete' level. Greenway (and other schools) have also been heavily impacted by ongoing Covid restrictions within schools in the first half of the Spring term making it very difficult to access the other two levels. It is hoped that as the year progresses that more levels of competition will be offered at the 'Aspire and Develop' and 'Inspire and Engage' levels.
- Prior to the pandemic DSSN provided schools with an annual calendar of events with schools arranging specific fixtures between themselves. Post the pandemic the DSSN is operating what is at best a half termly timetable – suggested events are

circulated to all the Sports Leads within schools and it is only when they have all replied that a specific fixture can be arranged, often therefore at short notice for parents and pupils.. The hope is that things will become easier moving into the summer and as everyone gets back to some level of normality.

- When making selections the PE curriculum is used along with staff knowledge of the children and PE Lessons.
- When selection takes place outside of open trials, KL always tells the children that this will be happening in the lesson but KL reassured the meeting that the lesson is not just dealing with selection of the most able pupils as thought by some parents.
- Some parents had heard that the school might be the recipient of a minibus. Unfortunately, the charity through which that was to be given has withdrawn their offer due to the pandemic.
- **Action – KL will consider how events can be communicated more effectively to parents and children.**

Question 2 - Do you think the new Team Selection Policy will enable Greenway to maximise the opportunities available to all of its pupils?

Nursery – No feedback as parents had no experience of this.

Reception, Years 1, 4 & 5 – Most parents thought it reasonable and fair although suggestions were made about having a Team A and B for those sports played and that all children should have an opportunity to shine.

Year 2 – there was a concern around inclusion and as to the opportunities on offer for those pupils who were less able or engaged and a concern that the lower two pyramid levels should be accessed.

Year 3 – no responses

Year 6 – some parents thought it would be helpful if there could be a clearer understanding that pupils could be moved up and down teams.

Responses

- Where the onus is upon the school to provide fixtures eg football and netball, the school always tries to ensure that there is an A and B Team.

- For some events offered through DSSN there is the opportunity to enter a class or as many teams as possible (eg the ultimate frisbee competition hosted by Greenway pre pandemic enabled the school to enter multiple teams). Claire McCawley at the DSSN will alert KL if Greenway has put in an insufficient number of teams so the school is always maximising the allowable limit. It is hoped that for the DSSN levels below 'Compete' that DSSN will promote more events as we approach the summer.
- For table tennis, the school has (unusually and at the request of KL) been allowed to enter 2 teams for Round 1 of the National competition. After the first round the school's hands are tied and only one team can move forwards in the competition.
- If any pupil feels that another pupil is dominating the use of the table tennis tables at break/lunchtime they should raise this with an adult at school. Every class has the use of the table tennis table for one playtime and one lunchtime per week on a rotating basis. **Action - school will aim to monitor the use of the table tennis tables more robustly at playtime and lunchtime.**
- Whilst there are indoor tables which could be used by all, these tables are currently being used by the team practising for the National finals (this will end in March when the competition ends). However, there are logistical issues around staffing supervision for a greater number of pupils so use of the indoor tables will be kept under review.
- It is a perception rather than a reality that other sports are cancelled to enable the table tennis team to practise. To the best of KL's knowledge netball has never been cancelled due to table tennis. **Action – school will do some work on this with pupils to dispel these myths.**
- Pre pandemic the Under 16 England Cadet Coach came into school to lead sessions for all KS2 pupils during PE Curriculum time in 6 week slots using Sports Premium monies exposing them all to high class expertise. The coach had also run a club for Year 5 children which fed into the Year 6 team. It is hoped that the school will be able to secure the same coach for the summer term this year.
- Greenway always aims to obtain the School Games Mark each year. This is a national-level scheme, robustly monitored, to reward schools for their commitment to sports competition in their setting. For the past 5 years Greenway has sustained the Gold award. Should Greenway obtain it again this year the school will be awarded the Platinum award.
- **Action Pupils do move between A and B teams but KL will endeavour to improve the level of understanding and communications around this with pupils.**

Question 3 - Can you foresee any issues with the new Team Selection Policy in operation and if so what?

Nursery & Year 5 – No feedback.

Reception – There was a view that PE should be delivered at club level throughout the school and that it should be delivered uniformly.

Years 1 & 2 – there was a concern that pupils who are not so sporty might miss out and for those children with special educational needs. It was felt that there should be consistency in the application of the sports offer across the school.

Year 3 – concerns were raised around the fairness of the selection process for the table tennis team but it was also acknowledged that this was a complex process.

Year 4 – views were expressed that pupils needed to be clear if a PE lesson was to be used as part of a selection process.

Year 6 – children still need to be able to enjoy sport.

Responses

- It is impossible to offer consistency of provision when the school comprises Nursery pupils and those up to Year 6.
- The Greenway ethos is totally opposed to the view that children who are good at sport should be involved in everything and instead believe that whilst those with natural ability should be nurtured, the school has a responsibility (as required by the government's PE, School Sports and Physical Activity (PESSPA) curriculum) to *all* pupils to inclusively develop their 'physical literacy'. KL explained that physical literacy is the key aim for a primary school as it provides children with the core skills and attributes they need to be able to participate in exercise and to take on a whole range of sports opportunities moving forward. This is the platform on which a lifelong love of exercise and sport can be based and. Greenway is committed to providing this for every pupil.
- Where a child has a particular sporting talent they will be encouraged to join a local club who will support them in developing their enthusiasms and talents.
- Content of the Sports Curriculum is supported by DSSN eg if KL knows that Claire McCawley will be organising some inter school competitive basketball games for the end of February

then the curriculum will be planned to cover a 6 week basketball session in the PE lessons at the start of the year so that the children can experience the sport; attend trials for it and then compete. The curriculum is flexible and changes can be made to adapt to the changing situation.

- For those pupils with special educational needs DSSN provides a carousel of opportunities which Greenway accesses including boccia. Many children with additional needs have gone on to compete for Greenway in a number of different sports and so there is the same equality of opportunity for all.
- Pre Covid the sports provision at Greenway was excellent. Covid has caused numerous frustrations for so many not least that events have often been cancelled at short notice (particularly over the last few weeks). However, Greenway's expertise and consistency of provision which is age and stage appropriate has been acknowledged by the fact that the school (KL) has been asked to lead at the Hertfordshire PE annual conference attended by all PE Leads from the County. Greenway has also been specifically invited to apply to become PE Primary School of the Year (Post meeting note: due to pressure of work this will likely be actioned in the next academic year
- Sport is the backbone of the curriculum – the objective is for children to develop their skills from Nursery to Year 6 and for those skills to be applied to different sports so that they have had a wide variety of experiences by the time they have left the school.
- A wide variety of sports was on offer pre pandemic and it is hoped that the school can pick up on these. An alternative would be for the school to only focus on a limited number of sports, but this will not make them physically literate. Evidence of this is shown by how well the current Year 6 class have adapted to learning the entirely new (to them) sport of American Football.

Question 4 - What opportunities would you like to see added or provided to our current sporting offer?

KE noted that it was important to remember that the school is building back up to its pre Covid offer. It has been very difficult for the whole community and staff have been unable to have parents on site. The school had even gone back to operating in bubbles last half term due to the amount of Covid outbreaks present within the school.

Nursery, Year 1 – No feedback

Reception – the PE provision in Reception seems to be cancelled or inconsistent.

Response - KE's background is Early Years and she is very clear on how active the children are. KE confirmed that Reception has one scheduled PE session per week. She was only aware of one PE session being cancelled for Reception and that is when she was showing prospective parents around the school and needed the Hall for that purpose. Beyond scheduled PE sessions, Reception children are offered indoor and outdoor activities to support their learning for a large part of their day – they are extremely active. Clubs are never offered to Reception children as they are exhausted by the end of the school day. **Action – if any parent has a specific concern they should contact the class teacher directly and particularly if it involves a child being upset about getting changed for PE.**

Year 2 – communication as to what is on offer is really key and more efforts should be made to communicate with parents.

Response -The school website Curriculum tab sets out what is being covered by every year group across all subjects and is what is discussed at the Welcome to Your Class session at the start of each academic year. If parents focus on the sport/PE element of the curriculum overview they will see what is on offer. **Action flag this information again for parents in eg the newsletter.** Communication is key and parents should refer to the termly Sports Newsletters and Sports Ambassador updates on the website as the school sporting world opens up again.

Year 4 – there was a concern that pupils do not regularly use the running track and that they are not even getting changed for indoor athletics.

Response

- In KS2 pupils have one inside session and one outside session a week. Currently the external session is swimming.
- The Daily Mile Track had not been given the name because it was envisaged that children will run a mile every day – the aim of the creator of the track was that where possible the track should be used on a regular basis and that children should work up to three runs weekly on it although the runs might not be for a mile. The feasibility of this would depend on the child and the day itself. Timing of the 'Daily Mile' has tended to enable pupils to refocus, but if it is not used by a class they might have an alternative like a movement break within the classroom instead.

Year 5 – there was a view that there should be more netball competitions on offer and that the children should show some resilience by playing netball in the rain.

Response

- In KL's experience Year 5 pupils suddenly 'get' netball. Currently his professional view is that the children need more practise and they need to build up to competitions organised for the summer term.
- KL undertakes the risk assessments for netball; accidents can happen very easily as players have to stop very quickly; netball and rain do not go together particularly on the playground surface we have. If KL thinks that there is a likelihood of anyone getting hurt he does need to cancel the session – parents noted that the field drains onto the sloping playground and that this does not help matters.
- KL has looked at running drill sessions indoors but this was not deemed feasible when the Unicorns team tried to do this in previous years – the hall is just too small.

Year 6 – it was noted that some parents wanted more than just taster sessions whereas others felt that the diversity offered by the DSSN was entirely appropriate.

As Link Governor for Sport LC said that while this forum had clearly demonstrated the need for more communication about PESSPA from school, she hoped that with that (starting with the minutes from this meeting) parents would be able to feel better informed about provision at Greenway. From her perspective, she could not stress enough the very high regard in which Greenway was held so far as its PESSPA provision was concerned. It is considered to be an exemplar school in terms of its range of offer, its participation in competition, its creative approach to cross-curricular application and its clear focus on physical literacy for all. This assessment is demonstrated by KL's invitation to lead at the County Conference and is regularly reinforced by independent experts who involved with Greenway, including the School Games Organiser and our School Improvement Partner (who is also an Ofsted Inspector). The suggestion that Greenway should be 'benchmarking against other schools' was entirely inappropriate in her view though she acknowledged that work needs to be done to help parents to understand this. LC gave some examples of the stretch that Greenway offers that is over and above many schools, including lunchtime sports challenges and all that is offered by and from Sports Ambassadors. The Sports Ambassadors were said to be an absolute joy to behold and watching them adopting the whole school therapeutic approach to behaviour management to defuse a tense sporting issue and enable inclusive activity for

all was extraordinarily impressive. As was Greenway's drive to integrate physical activity throughout the day, with KL spending considerable time working with staff to find creative and fun ways to weave it across a whole range of other curricular areas (such as Maths, English and Geography). Overall, LC was clear that while all schools had faced significant struggles through the pandemic and while KL was always seeking improvement, Greenway's PESSPA offer could be evidenced as being outstanding.

3.AOB

As time was running late KE picked up on various additional issues as set out within the written responses submitted to her.

3.1 Child Shows Parent – there will be no child shows parent event this coming half term. There is a current Covid outbreak in Year 4. We hope to bring this back in the summer term.

3.2 Choir – hopefully this will start imminently. It could have started last week but had been unable to due to the illness of a family member of the teacher, Mrs O'Brien.

3.3 Jigsaw Resources – KE apologised that the resources referred to by Vanessa Rogers had not been circulated and (post meeting) had arranged for that to now happen. **Action KE**

3.4 O2 Young Voices– the school are aware of the disappointment of Year 5 children and parents that the event will not be taking place this year – this is entirely outside the control of the school. KE confirmed that she was sorry that some parents felt that the information had not been communicated appropriately to them but was not sure what more could be said as there simply had been no availability other than in Manchester for the date requested, which was far too far to travel. There will not be an O2 trip for Year 5 children when they are in Year 6. The school do not plan residential trips for Year 5 but as stated in the communication to Year 5 regarding the O2 their teacher is planning events for them later in the year. Whilst some parents felt that the children had missed out in Year 5 because the O2 event was not going ahead KE pointed out that every year group had missed out to some degree and that the school was simply unable to replicate all the missed experiences within every class.

3.5 Residentials – the current residentials for Years 4 and 6 are still due to take place.

3.6 Maths Videos – support had been requested by one parent for Maths videos from every teacher to support parental understanding of Maths. Historically the school had held a Maths curriculum evening for parents but a repeat had not been possible due to Covid. If a parent has a specific query it was suggested that they should approach the class teacher and/or look at the resources posted on the school website.

3.7 Cross Country – recognition of achievements will be in the termly Sports Newsletter.

3.8 Football Training – KL is trying to fit in as much training as possible but with 25 sports fixtures approaching in 18 days these will need to take priority over training.

3.9 Gender Divide between Sports – at Years 5 & 6 most competitions are either invited as a mixed class or a mixed league (mostly boys) and a girls league. The netball league is girls only which has been a shame for boys who are interested in netball though there is now a 'High 5s' tournament that is akin to netball and is played in mixed teams.

4. Future Meetings – there was a 50/50 split as to those who would prefer a daytime meeting to an evening meeting.

KE reminded Parent Forum representatives that they should not feedback to parents (other than in the very specific named instances that were detailed) until the minutes were circulated as these would ensure that all parents received the same messages at the same time.

Next Meeting: Date tbc