

GREENWAY PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL
MINUTES OF REMOTE MEETING OF PARENT FORUM

Wednesday 9 November 2022, 8pm-9.35pm

Present: Fiona Duck (Chair of Parent Forum), Katharine Ellwood (Headteacher), Elizabeth O'Reilly (Chair of Governors), Louise Collins (Link Governor for RS & HE and Governor Lead re Parent/Child Survey), Catherine Millest (Nursery), Kirsty Abbas (Reception), Catherine Falla (Pine – Y2), Fleur Mumford (Beech – Y3), Sam Crowe and Lynsey Linnell (Willow – Y4), Louise Jenkins (Chestnut – Y5), Emma Hart and Charlotte Gardner (Maple – Y6)

1. Welcome

Fiona Duck (FD) chaired the meeting and Elizabeth O'Reilly (EOR) took minutes. The governors present introduced themselves to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Kirsty Lee (Year 1 – Elm) who was unwell. Charlotte Gardner joined the meeting at 20:20 and Louise Jenkins at 20:55.

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.

Katharine Ellwood (KE) had noted all comments received via Parent Forum representatives in advance of the meeting and had shared these with those governors present. She thanked parents for their responses.

The purpose of the meeting was to seek feedback on a number of issues. It was agreed that representatives would provide summaries of the specific feedback given on the individual questions, and these would then be addressed by KE.

2. Parent information evenings – arrangements for these moving forwards in light of need to cancel recent E-Safety evening?

Nursery, Reception, Year 2 – no feedback provided although reps felt that the general feeling was of disappointment that the session didn't happen; that it might not be relevant for Reception parents; and that the start time was difficult. School communications had been missed.

Year 3 – parents had wanted to attend (at least 10) and were disappointed in the event being cancelled.

Year 4 – parents were disappointed that the talk had been cancelled and suggested seeking an RSVP when the initial information is circulated by

school; is there a possibility of having an event recorded online live as per the recent GSA meeting as this might encourage attendance?

Year 6 – parents had missed the need to RSVP; could there be another session organised next term as the view of a parent who had attended the previous event was that it was very useful and beneficial?

Response

- The speaker (who has previously presented to parents) advises that this talk is applicable to all parents/carers from Nursery age upwards.
- With only 30 respondees confirming attendance at an event costing £600-700, KE had taken the decision to cancel the event. Feedback to the school at the time had been that many parents had not been aware of either the date and/or the need to confirm attendance.
- The school had sent out various communication about the e-safety talk: 2 save the dates on 22.6.22 and 6.7.22; a mention in the July newsletter; a mention at the September Welcome to Your Class meeting; a mention in the school calendar on the website; two letters at the start of term one of which advised that children were coming home with an invite; an invite from children being placed in book bags asking for an RSVP to confirm attendance; and a text advising parents of low numbers and asking for a response. When the same event had been run in the past this format had worked successfully but clearly it hadn't worked this time around. Lessons had been learned and moving forwards a parental response will be sought at the point of parental notification of the event.
- An online e-safety session had been organised during the pandemic and only 6 parents attended (this had been offered to the school for free by the same speaker). It was therefore not at all clear that an online event would be supported by parents. It would in any event have to be agreed with the speaker and the relevant equipment would need to be made available. This will be considered in the future.
- If there was interest KE would investigate having another e-safety session put in the diary around Internet Safety Day in February 2023. She would also look at having other events for parents, eg around mental health and well-being. Kathy Weston's talk had been well received by parents in the past. **Action KE**

3. Parent Survey – feedback

Nursery – no feedback

Reception, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 – positive feedback about the format of the survey which parents had found easy to complete

Year 5 – some parental concerns around the generality of the survey questions.

Year 6 – some parents would have liked to be able to explain their survey answers in more detail.

Response

- The questions used in the survey are, in the main, those questions that are asked of parents by Ofsted on an inspection. Parents were reminded that the Ofsted survey (called Parent View) can be completed at any time and that a link is on the school website – see School/Ofsted tab [here](#)). The Governing Body has determined that these should be questions that we ask of parents (as this is what Ofsted will ask) subject to a few very minor adjustments and a couple of additions that relate specifically to the school's priorities. The Governing Body has used these questions previously and continues to do so as this ensures commonality of approach between surveys which allows governors and the school to track any trends.
- Schools nationally use a resource called 'The Key' for research purposes, and in preparing for the survey, it was discovered that they use the Greenway survey as an exemplar.
- The questions asked of children were taken from templates suggested by The Key (as Ofsted does not produce a pupil survey equivalent to Parent View).
- A couple of free text boxes were in the survey, but to provide these for every question would not be appropriate; it could compromise agreed parent/child anonymity and the analysis of all findings would prove too onerous a task. Instead, if any parent has any issue or concern that they would like to discuss in detail, then they should contact the school.
- Parents should feel reassured that if they look at other schools' websites and the responses given to their parental surveys Greenway's is by far the most detailed and considered. It also appears on the Governing Body agenda for discussion, with findings used to validate or challenge thinking and to drive improvement.
- Post Meeting Note – the Year 1 rep was absent. In response to the Year 1 query raised about the communication of progress by the school to parents, this happens at children's parent consultations and in the end of year report. If any parent has any concerns about their child's progress this should be raised directly with the teacher in the first instance. However, the aim is that any concerns noted within school monitoring will be shared with parents, so that no such information given at consultations and in reports comes as a surprise. For that reason, and to offer reassurance, generic information had been given in the survey response about how and when progress is routinely monitored. It should be noted that schools have not had to publish any pupil progress data since 2019 due to the pandemic and lack of SATs tests.

4. Relationships, Sex & Health Education and PSHE (Personal, Social, Health & Economic) curriculum – feedback

Nursery – no feedback

Reception – no feedback as parents are just getting used to the school. A reminder of the resources that are used would be helpful, particularly for parents new to the school.

Year 3 – positive feedback

Year 4 – parents appreciated the Jigsaw resources being made available at child shows parent and would like this to be repeated as there is a lot to consider. Guidance around how to use the language demonstrated at school at home would be helpful.

Year 6 – it would be helpful to remind parents where information can be accessed.

Response

- Governors and the school had undertaken a wholesale review of teaching of the relevant topics ahead of it becoming a statutory requirement for them to be taught in September 2021. That led to the introduction of 'Jigsaw' resources to support learning and had involved discussions with Parent Forum to develop and confirm the policy that is now on the school website. A pupil voice session had also been undertaken which was delightful and impressive in equal measure – pupils could remember what they had learned previously (lesson content was 'sticking') and could talk about what they were learning at the time.
- The key topics being taught for each age group (curriculum map) along with the age appropriate language for each age group are clearly set out at Appendix A in the Relationships Sex & Health Education Policy located on the school website and [here](#). Parents are encouraged to take a look at that information, which is shown in detail for every age group. They may also want to remind themselves of the information in that policy at Appendix B (which details what each child should know when they leave primary school) and in the PSHE Policy at Appendix A ([here](#)) where information is given about which Jigsaw resources are used to cover each topic (Jigsaw calls them 'puzzles') by year group.
- A reminder had been given at the Welcome to Your Class evening as to the school approach.
- The December newsletter will carry a reminder of this information in addition to the minutes **Action KE**
- Jigsaw resources will be made available again for parents at future parent consultations and the Child Shows Parent sessions and parents will be reminded of this in advance **Action KE**

5. AOB

Nursery – (1) there had been an issue with the opening of the St Thomas More gate resulting in parents being late for pick up. Could the side gate in the alleyway be opened for Greenway parents? (2) Could the children enter the classroom as they turn up rather than waiting for 9am (start time) as the anticipation is proving too much for some?

Response

- (1) When St Thomas More had erected the fence between the two school sites Greenway had insisted upon a gate being placed in it to facilitate access for families of both schools and older children going to Ashlyns etc. St Thomas More control the opening and closing of the gate and there had been a mistake on the day in question. Greenway does not have a full-time site manager nor the staff available to man the side gate and it therefore remains locked save in the event of Greenway specific evening events.

Post Meeting Note: following a conversation with St Thomas More, if parents/carers ever find that the gate is locked they should contact the St Thomas More school office.

- (2) **Action – KE will speak to the Nursery teacher about times for opening the classroom and discuss the situation.**

Reception – the yearly calendar has been well received. Could the Child Shows Parent (CSP) events please be on different days of the week to support working parents as the first few are always on Thursdays?

Response

The Senior Leadership Team meet with KE every Monday and there is a staff meeting every Tuesday. Therefore, CSP events will only ever be able to be held on a Wednesday or a Thursday as teachers need to be present. To support staff, KE will not allocate a Friday to CSP.

Post Meeting Note – the CSP events advertised on the school calendar on the website are Thursday 17.11.22; Wednesday 18.1.23; Thursday 9.3.22.

Year 1 – confirmation was sought that all external doors to the school are closed during the day and that the only entrance to the school is through the reception.

Post Meeting Note: This point was not discussed in the meeting. The main school gates on Crossways are closed after drop off. If parents ever see that the gates are open after drop off (which unfortunately can occasionally happen when visitors access or leave the site) please close them. The classroom doors had been left open to improve ventilation when the school was open during the pandemic. They are now closed unless the classroom is too warm in which case they are opened – the heating has not yet been switched on but the hot water system causes the school to feel very warm. All visitors to the school need to report to reception and check in electronically via the school office so school is aware of all authorised individuals who are on site at any given time.

Year 2 – (1) there have been some issues with Google Classrooms which are causing difficulties for some parents. (2) can the buddy system be reinstated?

Response

- (1) There is a glitch with Google Classroom in that it auto logs the accounts out each night to do an update. The school support service has liaised with Google Classrooms and unfortunately there is no option to change this at present. It affects some devices but not others so some parents will have no issues but others will have to log in each time. Communication did go out explaining this previously to parents.
- (2) The buddy system (between Year 6 and Reception children) will re-start in this half of the autumn term. It does not start before half term as Reception children need to be given time to settle a little first.

Year 3 – (1) concerns raised around perceived unbalanced school meal options and in particular the vegetarian options (2) queries around homework set (3) will the 'star in a jar' system continue with the new teacher – this is missed by some of the children? (4) could pupils wear PE kits on PE days? (5) concerns around lack of art/making school clubs.

Response

- (1) The school lunch menu is set by Shire Catering with whom school liaise to ensure that the menu is suitable for all. A balanced menu is offered – details are on the school website of the three-week rolling menu options. Of the 15 weekly options just 3 contain processed meat. There are a large range of vegetarian options. Meals are prepared on site. Children are encouraged to have a balanced meal including vegetables though they cannot be forced to comply, and some children are particular about what they will and will not eat. If any parent remains concerned, they should contact KE.
- (2) Currently the home learning set is Reading, Spelling and a consolidation of the Maths learnt in class. Writing home learning is not given. Due to Covid this is an area for improvement across the whole school and the school wishes to manage this in class. Parents can use the weekly spellings within sentences to practise at home. Consideration is though currently being given to extend home learning into other curriculum areas.
- (3) **Action – KE will speak to the new class teacher** to discuss the reward system being used. It is only an issue for Year 3.
- (4) Years 1 and 2 are allowed to come into school in their PE kits as it takes them such a long time to get changed. Currently there is no decision to change this, but thought will be given as to whether it should remain the position for next year. If any child is uncomfortable about the changing arrangements the parent should speak to the class teacher but as this also applies in Year 4 KE would discuss this with the Year 4 teacher. **Action KE**

- (5) Post Meeting Note – the issue of additional art/crafts clubs was not discussed at the meeting. Parents are reminded of the governor feedback to the 2022 parent child survey in which governors indicated that they would be considering with the school what might be possible but that if any parent or carer has a skills-set or qualifications and capacity to lead or support an after-school club to advise the school. There has been no response to date. **Action ALL**

Year 4 – (1) queries about the amount of homework set for completion online/screens (2) details of curriculum topics sought

Response

- (1) The engagement of pupils with their spelling and maths has gone through the roof since the introduction of online tasks with Spelling Shed and Mathletics. The introduction of these tools has had a big impact on engagement and application for children. The point was however accepted that there should be a balance
- (2) Curriculum topics for each year group are found on the School tab/ Our Curriculum sub tab of the school website.

Year 5 – (1) how are pupils chosen for School Council/Sports Council – there is a perception that only the ‘popular’ children are chosen? (2) How is the GSA money spent? (3) Can parents input into when term, Occasional and Inset days are scheduled?

Response

- (1) Pupils are selected as sensitively and as fairly as possible for School Council/Sports Council – selections are not based on perceived popularity. There was a real concern that any parent felt like this – this is the first comment of this nature that KE has ever received whilst a Head at the school.
- (2) Communications will be circulated by the GSA post the recent AGM.
- (3) Term dates are set by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) for all maintained schools and Greenway has to adhere to these. The school liaises with other local schools as to when Inset dates are taken to try and ensure some sort of uniformity and a date of 6.1.23 was agreed for one of those days. The school is also allowed to take an occasional day in the academic year – rather than taking it on a random day in a term which can cause difficulties to parents. Greenway has elected to take it at the end of the Christmas holidays on 5.1.23 ie the date that HCC determined that the term should start. Whilst it is acknowledged that this may cause an issue for working parents particularly as no school clubs are running the school is looking into whether the Happy Human sessions may run during that particular week.

Year 6 – (1) Can Bikeability sessions be reintroduced as these have stopped at Greenway? (2) Clarification sought as to why Year 6 cannot join Year 5 to attend Young Voices at the O2 next year.

Response

- (1) As the service is led by an external provider the school has no control over the dates allocated. Unfortunately, over the last two or three years (including during the pandemic) the dates given by Bikeability had clashed with other school events. **Action KE will speak to other schools locally** as there is an issue for Greenway around manageability.
- (2) KE reminded Parent Forum of what had happened last year around the cancellation by O2 of the Young Voices event for the then Year 5 due to Covid and the subsequent re-scheduling of the event at unsuitable times/venue (Post Meeting Note –see Parent Forum minutes dated 9.3.22). This issue had been discussed at some length at the time and the school's decision remains unchanged. KE is sorry that some Year 6 parents are unhappy about this, but parents were asked to respect her decision and to seek to understand the many considerations that she is required to take into account for all off site school events.

AOB: Communication between school and parents

It was noted that parents were finding communications from school difficult to manage and a number of overlapping issues had been highlighted by year groups. KE has had a preliminary conversation with staff.

Response

- (1) School uses three main methods of communication with parents:
 - Arbor – used for emailing parents/classes/year groups/whole school with an additional in app texting facility
 - Google Classrooms – used for home learning
 - Email admin@greenway – used for illness, specific issues, extended services eg WACCY
- (2) There are some issues with Arbor which have come to light through practical application eg feedback from parents suggesting that there were no push notifications thus requiring users to login online each time. There are push notifications which parents have to enable when setting up the Arbor App. **Action School will resend out the instructions that were sent to all parents when Arbor was introduced last February. Parents should contact the school office with any further issues.**
- (3) Class parents organise their own WhatsApp groups over which the school has no control.

- (4) School is very often notified of sporting events at short notice – KE can only apologise for this but school alerts parents just as soon as they can.
- (5) **Action – KE will send an invitation to Parent Forum reps inviting a small number of them to join a working group to consider the issues presenting to parents around communications and come up with some communications solutions which are manageable for all.**

KE reminded Parent Forum representatives that they should not feedback to parents until the minutes were circulated as these would ensure that all parents received the same messages at the same time.

Next Meeting: Date tbc