

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

Wednesday 8 March 2023, 8pm-9.30pm

Present: Fiona Duck (Chair of Parent Forum), Katharine Ellwood (KE) (Headteacher), Elizabeth O'Reilly (Chair of Governors), Lou Collins (Governor Lead re Parent/Child Survey, Behaviour/PSHE and PE), Catherine Millest (Nursery), Kirsty Abbas (Reception), Kirsty Lee (Elm - Y1), Catherine Falla (Pine – Y2), Fleur Mumford (Beech – Y3), Sam Crowe and Lynsey Linnell (Willow – Y4), Louise Jenkins (Chestnut – Y5)

1. Welcome

Fiona Duck (FD) chaired the meeting and Elizabeth O'Reilly (EOR) took minutes.

Apologies were received from Emma Hart and Charlotte Gardener (Maple – Y6).

2. Minutes of Parent Forum meeting dated 9.11.22

Agreed by all present. PF reps circulate the minutes to all PF reps and ask them to alert parents that the minutes are being circulated by the school via email and the school then email the minutes to parents and place the minutes on the website. Some PF reps also send the minutes via Whatsapp although it was noted that this could be more difficult to read and that not all parents are on the Whatsapp groups. It was not felt that it would be appropriate for PF reps to summarise the information contained in the minutes for their classes and that ideally parents needed to read all the information for themselves to avoid any misunderstandings and to note that any questions raised by them had been answered.

3. Matters Arising from Parent Forum minutes dated 9.11.22

3.1 KE to speak to Nursery teacher re opening time of class

KE had done so. The school accepted that for the first few weeks of the Autumn term there had been delays in welcoming children into the class at the start of the day as children got accustomed to their new routines, but they are now doing so quickly. Nursery starts at 9am and this is when doors will open unless there is inclement weather.

3.2 Bikeability

KE had discussed provision in other schools with local and Dacorum Heads and further enquiries had been made with Bikeability – it is apparent that sessions are held by schools both in and out of term time in equal measure. Y6 will be receiving details of dates for Bikeability sessions in the summer holidays in due course – it is not feasible to hold local authority run sessions during school time as this requires in the first instance an updated travel plan which the school does not have the resource to manage. If their children are unable to attend, parents will need to make their own alternative arrangements.

3.3 Resend instructions re Arbor to parents

This had been undertaken and 100% of parents have now signed up for this service.

3.4 Form PF Working Group to consider issues around parental/school communications and possible solutions

The 3 main methods of school communication and what they were used for were highlighted at **p.8 of the PF Minutes dated 9.11.22** ie Arbor; Google Classrooms; and email admin@greenway

KE advised that 3 parents and the Office Manager had had a productive meeting on 18.11.22 to review the app from Arbor and also Google Classrooms. This enabled school to understand process from an end user point of view. Parental WhatsApp groups were also discussed but it was noted that these were not under the School's control. The GSA use Whatsapp. It was agreed that:

- Future emails from the School would have a clear heading – this had been put in place and some PF reps noted that this had been working well.
- Some emails had to go to the whole school and not just certain classes.
- Some parents found communications being largely sent on a Friday troublesome to manage but others preferred this to having them sent intermittently throughout the week
- The school often receives short notice of sporting events (**see p.9 PF Minutes dated 9.11.22**) and cannot do anything about this.
- No further action needed to be taken by the school.

In light of feedback received it was agreed that it would be helpful to send (in addition to the PF minutes) a separate reminder to parents of a) the different forms of communication from school and b) that parents need to remember to turn on the notifications from Arbor.

Action KE

4. Issues raised for discussion by school at Parent Forum

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.

5. Possible introduction of Twitter

The overwhelming response from all classes was that Twitter would not be a welcome addition.

Response

Information was shared with the meeting as to how other local schools are already using Twitter, including with live-feeds on their websites, with examples shown i.e. as a form of 1 way communication (limited text with photographs) with the parent body celebrating many of the activities that the school undertake with pupils. Anyone can sign up to follow the account if they wish to do so but a feed

appears on individual schools' websites so there is no requirement to sign up to Twitter in order to see the posts. The school believes that for a variety of reasons this would be an easier and instantaneous method of sharing aspects of school life with parents than individual staff members having to upload photographs of events to the class pages of the school website and/or Google Classrooms Arbor cannot be used in this way and even though Google Classrooms can be used in this way, it would then require individual staff members to upload and the GB and the Head are very aware of carefully managing teacher workload. The negative feedback from parents would be discussed at the forthcoming GB meeting along with the specific request from one Parent Forum representative to perhaps consider Instagram as an alternative.

Action KE/Chair of Governors

6. Parent information evenings

The response from classes indicated that sessions covering Maths and/or Phonics and Read Write Inc and/or with Dr Kathy Weston would be particularly well received. KE has in any event been in touch with Dr Kathy Weston about undertaking an evening remote session but is also considering, cost allowing, whether to sign up to her Tooled Up Education service which would provide parental access to various resources as well as two 'free' parental talks.

Action KE

Parents are reminded that they can already sign up to weekly emails from Dr Kathy Weston which they may find useful [Wednesday Wisdom - Sign Up Free - Tooled Up Education](#)

Action ALL

The GSA had run a first aid course for parents pre pandemic and KE would ask them to reconsider doing so again.

Action KE

7. Annual Parent Survey

There was little feedback from classes on the annual parent (and child) survey. Format (e-survey on Google Forms) was not considered a problem but a general comment had suggested that there was 'no point completing it as no suggestions would be implemented and that there needed to be recognition and action' and separately 2 general comments that there had been no feedback from governors on two specific questions in the survey with lower scores. A general discussion took place.

Response

- The Governing Body undertake a parent/child survey annually - there had only been a break during Covid when parental feedback had been sought through Parent Forum instead.
- Most of the parent questions used by the Governing Body are the same as those used by Ofsted to parents (in the 'Parent View Survey' that is always available to complete via the website at any time, and that Ofsted sends to all) when they inspect a school – these cover key areas that everyone agrees are really important for the school to understand in terms of parental (and pupils) views. A few additional questions are also asked, in

line with school-specific priorities and to give parents the opportunity to give some open-ended comments.

- Parental responses are reducing in number – last year it was only 54% of families who responded to the survey.
- The Governing Body analyse the responses and provide a detailed report which is circulated to all parents, and which is always published on the school website.
- Parent Forum reps support, in encouraging responses, would be hugely appreciated this year. Parents will have 3 to 4 weeks to complete this year's survey over the Easter holidays and in the first week or two of the summer term.
- Greenway is in the Ofsted window so they could visit at any time – the last inspection was in 2017. Some parents had noted that other local schools had received inspections in recent days and weeks – however some of these had not had an inspection for well over a decade.
- The Governing Body's survey has been used as an exemplar by other schools nationwide.
- Suggestions made in response to the survey are all always welcome but may not be pursued for any number of operational/financial reasons – they are however, *all* shared (anonymously) with the school's Senior Leadership and considered.
- The Governing Body provided **comprehensive feedback to the 2022 survey which was circulated to parents in Summer 2022 and appears on the school website [here](#).**
- The issue around negative feedback was raised at the last PF meeting and was fully dealt with as set out at **p.3 within the minutes dated 9.11.22** which appear on the school website.

8. AOB

It was apparent from the class feedback that there were some common areas of concern which will be dealt with in the minutes by topic and with reference to which classes raised them for ease of identification.

8.1 Curriculum Overviews – (Y1, Y3, Y4)

This was raised a number of times by parents requesting information as to what their children are learning including in PE.

See the information previously shared with parents as follows:

- **Welcome to Class powerpoints on School Website Learning tab/Class sub tabs class pages of school website**
- **Curriculum Overviews on School website – School Tab/Our Curriculum Sub Tab**
- **Governing Body Feedback to Parent/Child Questionnaire 2022 sent via email and on School Website**
- **Parent Forum Minutes P.7 dated 9.3.22**
- **Parent Forum Minutes P.7 dated 9.11.22**
- **End of Term Letter dated 21.12.22**

- **Specific issues raised with PSHE and RS&HE are fully covered in the detailed policies on the school website and in the Parent Forum minutes dated 7.12.20.**

8.2 **Additional Clubs Requested particularly for Art- (Y1, Y3)**

See the governor feedback to the Annual Parent/Child Questionnaire 2022 and P.7 of PF Minutes dated 9.11.22. Unfortunately, no parental offers of help have been forthcoming. The Governing Body has discussed the position with KE – unfortunately, there is no additional capacity amongst staff to run any clubs on top of those already offered internally. Efforts to engage outside providers are ongoing but parents are asked to be aware that, at Greenway, even these would be unlikely to go ahead without pupils having some oversight from Greenway staff who they are familiar with and who are familiar with them meaning that staff capacity remains an issue.

8.3 **PE/Sport (Reception, Y1, Y2, Y3, Y4)**

Some parents expressed concerns about the school's commitment to the provision of PE/Sport. The PE Link Governor noted that this feedback was disappointing. All issues raised on this subject were addressed in full in the meeting.

- Mr Lewis's role was clarified. Mr Lewis is not a dedicated PE teacher. He is a full-time teaching assistant and the school's PESSPA (PE, School Sports & Physical Activity) Subject Lead. His responsibilities, with regard to direct teaching, extend only to him working alongside teachers to assist them in the delivery of sport to their classes, where appropriate, and undertaking regular skills and CPD (continuing professional development) assessments.
- By law the school cannot claim any Sports Premium funding unless it can demonstrate that *all* teachers have been upskilled to deliver sport to their classes; critically, 'sustainable upskilling' was the key purpose of additional Sports Premium funding from the government and that remains an absolute requirement. The Governing Body (and our external improvement partner) is satisfied that Greenway does this exceptionally well.
- It is not the case that the school deprioritises PE lessons and there is no evidence to support this.
- It is not the case that Greenway fails to offer a wide variety of sports. The variety on offer is set out in the curriculum overviews showing which sports each class undertakes each half term. Please see the 'post meeting notes' provided below which lists around 40 sports which most children will gain exposure to.
- The Dacorum School Sports Network (DSSN) operates predominantly for KS2. Although they are only government funded for KS2 upwards, they do offer a few taster sessions below that,

which school can (and does) access wherever resources allow. DSSN – which is the expert local body in such matters – has determined that the bulk of competitive sport should take place in Upper KS2, with ‘one off’ opportunities only for the years in Lower KS2. Again, school does take up all the opportunities that are on offer wherever these are enabled (even at a stretch) by available resource.

- Greenway’s significant engagement with School Games (achieving Gold level for several years now and aiming for Platinum this year) shows the extent to which school goes above and beyond in terms of its sporting opportunities offer (particularly for a school of Greenway’s size). This is routinely recognised by DSSN.
- Y1 class are situated furthest from the running track – currently it takes them around 15 minutes to get there and back so key learning time is lost. Instead, the class teacher has intentionally built in movement breaks twice in the morning and afternoon via range of programmes including BBC Supermovers, Cosmic Yoga and Mood busters. Any parents with specific concerns about this should contact KE directly.
- There appears to be some genuine misunderstandings around the running track – this was discussed at length at Parent Forum in March 2022. **See P.7 PF Minutes dated 9.3.22.**
- Unfortunately, there are no funds to reinstate the swimming pool. Budget priorities lie elsewhere.
- Post Meeting Note – **the email circulated to all parents on 1.3.22** noted that at that point in time Greenway ‘.....currently provide clubs, PE curriculum sessions, taster sessions and sporting events/competitions in: **Football; Tag Rugby, Rugby Union, Tennis, Table Tennis, Netball, Basketball, Tri-Golf, Badminton, Handball, Dodgeball, Ultimate Frisbee, Lacrosse, Hockey, Climbing, Orienteering, Athletics, Indoor Athletics, Cricket, Rounders, Volleyball, Benchball, Kabaddi, Tchoukball, Quidditch UK, Rapid Fire Cricket, Gymnastics, Dance, American Football Softball, Health related Exercise (such as circuit training), Yoga, Archery, Cross Country, Boccia and Curling**’ with the expectation that the majority of pupils would have had exposure to those sports highlighted above at some point between Y1-Y6 inclusive. Since then the following sports have been added to the list namely Disc Golf, Footgolf, PopDarts, Speed Stacking and Canoeing.
- Post Meeting Note This year Greenway has attended approx. 34 different fixtures and events so far. 24 of these have been football/netball fixtures for 1 of the 4 football teams organised by the school or the 2 netball teams. It is of note that other local larger schools have had to pull out of the local football and netball leagues due to issues they have faced with resourcing them.

8.4 Team Selection – (Y4)

This was discussed in detail at PF in March 2022.

- [See Team Selection Policy on School website](#)
- [See PF minutes dated 9.3.22](#)

8.5 **General Communications (Reception, Y2, Y4)**

- The school calendar has been widely welcomed. School will provide parents with details of school trips etc as and when they have been organised – these take some considerable planning. Sports Day dates will be finalised and circulated in due course.
- The existing platforms used by school i.e. Arbor and Google Classrooms cannot be combined.
- KE was sorry that some parents felt they had insufficient notice of World Book Day – it had been in the school calendar at the start of the year albeit that specific information had only been sent out a week beforehand. It was noted that parents require more notice of this.
- The Sports Centre had changed their policy with regard parental attendance at the Y2 event and had not given prior notice with the result that the school could only give short notice to parents of this event.
- The GSA have to meet and formulate their plans for the year and therefore dates for e.g. the school disco and other fund raising events cannot be shared with parents at the start of the year.
- The school cannot just communicate content in email (to save attachments) – some communications are required to be sent out on a letterhead.

8.6 **Site Security – (Y1, Y2, Y4)**

[See P.5 of Parent Forum minutes dated 9.11.22](#). There is no issue with site security. The Local Authority are satisfied with the arrangements in place. The cost of installing electric main gates has been previously considered by the Governing Body who determined that this would be prohibitively expensive bearing in mind the school risk profile. Parents are reminded that if they see the gates open, they should close them as occasionally they are left open by visitors to the site. The gates are bolted closed but not locked due to the number of deliveries during the school day. However, when the school is not open the gates are locked.

8.7 **Sidegate – (Nursery, Y2),**

[See PF Minutes dated 3.3.20 and letters dated 24.1.20, 31.1.20 and 5.2.20 on the school website](#). The position remains unchanged - a padlock accessible to a few individuals only did not provide an effective solution and the gate will remain locked.

8.8 **Childrens Toilets - (Y3)**

Staff in the younger year groups are very aware of the state of the toilets in the classrooms. For older year groups, children need to take

responsibility and speak to an adult if they feel that the toilets are not clean. Toilets are cleaned daily. Unfortunately, there is no staff capacity to undertake an hourly check.

8.9 Minibus – (Y4)

See p.3 PF Minutes dated 9.3.22 which noted that 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. If parents wish to pursue this they need to liaise with KE and the GSA – ready access to its own minibus would be fabulous, however it is not just the cost of the minibus but ongoing insurance and maintenance costs, as well as training a driver that also has to be considered. **Action ALL PARENTS/KE**

8.10 Music Service – any issues with music provision need to be taken up with the Music Service directly and not with the school. School has no control whatsoever over this facility. **Action ALL PARENTS**

8.11 Post Meeting Note - School Trips and Homework – the school has a clear policy **on Offsite School Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom** on the school website. Visits are planned for every year group during the year and parents will be notified once arrangements have been made. Parents are also referred to the **cultural capital document on the School tab/Curriculum subtab of the website**. The school has a **Home Learning Policy** also on the school website. Home learning has always been a divisive issue with some parents believing that too much is set and others believing that not enough is set. School has sought to establish its rationale for the home learning that is set in the policy but class teachers should be informed if any child is struggling with their home learning.

9. Additional Specific Issues per Class were raised and discussed as follows:

Nursery – Concern around access to Greenway via St Thomas More gate – parents had approached their school caretaker who had been unhelpful.

Response – **see P.5 PF Minutes dated 9.11.22**. Parents to go to the St Thomas More office and raise the issue directly with the school there. KE will in any event speak to the new Headteacher. **Action ALL PARENTS/ KE**

Reception – offers of support/help to be raised directly to KE outside of the meeting

Year 1– Can the school booking system for parents evening change back to the old paper system?

Response – No. It is too labour intensive for staff. The school will aim to send links out to the booking system at times other than pick up.

Year 2 – no additional queries not covered elsewhere

Year 3 – concern around the out of school drama club becoming a victim of its own success.

Response – KE will raise with the after school drama teacher whether he feels the enjoyment of the older children is being compromised by the presence of the younger children and as to whether there is capacity with him and the school to have 2 separate sessions. **Action KE**

Year 4 – no additional queries not covered elsewhere

Year 5 – Can Child-Shows-Parent be moved to a Friday?

Response – No. **see p.5 PF minutes dated 9.11.22** .The Senior Leadership Team had, however, noted the success of the recent reading session with parents and are considering introducing a half termly session with parents reading to children on a Friday afternoon from 2.45-3.15pm.

Year 6 – no representation so no additional points

KE confirmed that she would wish to review the format of Parent Forum with the Governing Body in light of the repetitive nature of much of the AOB raised. It was also noted by some PF reps that there was a lot of positivity amongst parents regarding Greenway and that perhaps a change in the format in collecting feedback from parents would capture this.

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