

Minutes of the Parents' Open Forum

Held -14th February 2011 @ 2pm

Present – Mrs Thomson (RT), Mrs Addis (CA), Miss Durrant (RD), Miss Close (MC) and Mrs Tomlin (NT) plus parents who signed in (P).

Mrs Thomson (RT) opened the Forum and welcomed parents. Copies of the results of the NFER survey were circulated, and attendees were asked to sign in. (The survey took place in November 2010).

Mrs Addis (CA) began and stated that there had been a good response rate to the survey (149 returned out of about 240 families), which was very pleasing as the survey was completely anonymous and people could be very honest indeed without fear of repercussions. CA stated that the school found the results most interesting and the document was very useful to show ways to improve.

Responses specifically focussed on, were:

Q1. I am satisfied with the school's (d) sports facilities. The “disagrees” were 13% and whilst this number is not high, it is significant.

CA asked why we thought this was. Is there enough sport in school? Were parents aware of the curriculum requirements? (1hr PE and 1hr Games – outdoors). There are additional ad-hoc sessions provided when guests / specialists are in school, such as dance workshops and our recent visit by Danny Lawrence - Gymnast. P stated that when swimming happens the children are only in the pool for 1/2hr due to the requirement to travel. Another P stated that some boys didn't enjoy dance. CA also reminded parents that the KS2 children had just taken part in a Cross Country event (despite awful weather!) and that had been an opportunity for those strengths to be shown in the children who may not be as successful academically.

P pointed out that outside of school there were many opportunities for a whole range of sporting activities to take part in, and that perhaps we are fortunate to have the facilities.

CA reassured P's that sport was a high priority in our school and the school would continue to press forward and encourage all children to achieve in some way, and get excited about the 2012 Olympics.

Q1. I am satisfied with the school's (e) Science facilities. 12% disagreed. CA stated that the children receive between 1 and 2 hrs of science per week depending on the year group. Science Days have been successfully organised in the past and we have had visiting specialists. There is a Science Club after school – which is very popular and over subscribed. CA asked if the perception from P's was that there was not enough? Or that the facilities could be improved. Perhaps there could be a summary of what is happening each week at school posted on the website?

Q1. I am satisfied with the school's (g) canteen. The Agrees or Strongly Agrees totalled 93% which is an excellent statement and clearly demonstrates where the school has focussed.

Q1. I am satisfied with the school's (k) opportunities for adult learning. The agree/disagree/not applicable/don't feel able to answer section highlighted this section to the school. The recent numeracy day & evening where there were over 170 participants has proved that this is something that was very well received by P's and demonstrates a way in which P's are willing to help support their child's learning. (There are 2 follow up workshops for parents – please see the school office to add your name to the list). MC did state that in the past other sessions have been run successfully in the Oldham Hall, but that space had become a consideration.

Q2. The school's approaches to the following are effective: (f) Homework. 13% disagreed. The P's were asked to add their comments. A suggestion from EYFS was that in the last term before moving into Yr1 some homework could be introduced. P's present all confirmed that information from the children was minimal if at all, about almost any aspect of their school day.

Learning Logs (LL) – some P's felt they were far too open ended, with high expectations and levels of input each week. The topic subjects were too vague and could lead to a huge amount of "weekend time" being spent on one activity. The children felt pressure to produce better and better work each week, so as to feel that they had "pleased" their teacher. Some P's really don't like them. MC added when they were introduced some P's commented on how they loved them, to allow the child the freedom of expression and linking in with the creative curriculum.

P commented on how they really did not want the LL or any homework given out on a Friday as this interfered with the family weekend. MC commented that again some P's had complained in the past because they had not had the weekend to do it – are we ever going to please everyone?

Q3. The school encourages my child to (c) Eat healthily – 97% Agree – great! And 92% are satisfied with the lunches – which are fabulous.

Q4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements: (c) I am well informed about my child's progress. 18% disagree. RT asked does the school provide parents with enough information about progress? Currently there is "Meet the Teacher" in September, Parents Evening in Oct/Nov, Interim Reports March and then Assessment data at the end of the school year. RT asked were P's aware if they felt there was not enough time at parents evening there were other channels to use – letters, e-mail, 'phone calls, and messages via the school office, the teachers will return calls and make appointments, if requested.

Q4. To what extent do you agree with the following statements: (b) The school helps parents to support their child's learning. There was a good proportion

who agreed and this theme such as the Numeracy day would be continued, and perhaps made into a regular slot. RT asked what about other subjects? Literacy for example, there are changes in guided reading which P's may find very useful.

Spellings – all attendees were given a spelling test, and a significant proportion did not get them correct! RT wanted to discuss how spellings should be taught, and how our children could feel if they really don't know the answers.

MC – stated in EYFS and KS1 they use lots of different methods to help the children learn to spell. Phonics, kinaesthetic spelling, blends, sounds, amongst others, and the object is to teach the children the tools then to set them free. The children should have fun with words and language. In Yr1 and 2 spellings are sent home, and the children are tested although not every week.

RD – KS2 children's spellings are corrected and the Oxford Spelling kit is used. In Yr 3 and 4 there is a structured approach through the grammar lessons, they are taught the rules and they are tested. The number of words given relates to ability. Into Yr 4, they are encouraged to write spelling sentences.

In Yr 5 & 6 the children have grammar lessons, and are given topic words which again may or may not be tested. They are taught patterns, rules, and use the phonic approach. Into Yr 6 the children are encouraged to use the spellings in their LL as appropriate.

P's were asked how our approach to spellings could be improved.

Making up silly sentences, and rhyming games were mentioned, and keep sending the spellings home.

RT – to investigate where Yr 5 spellings had been going as several P's were not aware of them?

Timing of the Survey – one P stated that as a new to school Mum the timing of the survey was not good, as she felt unable to answer many points with knowledge.

RT – thanked the P's present for their contributions and the Forum closed at 3.15pm.