

Great Missenden C of E Combined School
Parents' Open Forum – 'Let's talk about school'
10th October 2011

Present:

Belynda Cook (BCK) Chair of Governors

School Senior Management Team(SMT): Mrs Thomson (RT) Head Teacher,

Mrs Addis (CA) Deputy Head teacher, Mrs Bowden (AB), Miss Cartwright (BC)

Parents: Ms Dalton, Mrs Charlton, Mrs Gannon, Mrs Stanley.

BCK - Presented findings of a Governors survey of Parents, Summer term. See attached.

Survey was across a randomly selected group of 33 parents of a general mix of children of various ages who were contacted by School Governors.

Thanks from school governors to all who participated.

Parents were very willing to offer observations, constructive criticism and positive feedback.

See attached document for summary of findings.

RT - thanked BC for conducting the survey. Important for school to listen to and encourage feedback. School is here for the children and want to make it better for them. Parent comments are appreciated and as a result of these and surveys which include the children, the staff are able to analyse and build responses into the School Development Plan.

School Development Plan(SDP) 2011 – 13 (draft copy) was circulated to attendees. The SMT asked parents whether the 10 point plan is well phrased and when agreed a copy of this will be available on the school website.

RT and CA outlined each of the ten points (see attached) and further discussion took place on some points.

Challenge for All

Miss Taylor, new Inclusion (previously named SEN and Gifted and talented) Coordinator, has provided training for Governors and staff which has helped staff to re calibrate and think differently about each child in the school and how at varying times they may need support and/or further challenge. Staff were asked to consider in their subject what they would do to challenge raise expectations for all children.

RT concluded that by aiming high, every child would achieve more.

Exciting writing

As recorded on draft.

Food for Life

This is now embedded in the schools every day practice. Aspects are tied into the curriculum.

Children and adults take part in SNAG (School nutrition and growing) decision making meetings.

Further areas to explore include community and charity aspects ie.looking at farming abroad.

Economic Awareness

As per draft.

Spiritual Development

Discussions are taking place about having areas to enable children to have quiet and reflective time during the school day. The children may choose to say grace before meals in the classroom.

Parent suggested additional facilities for quiet area outside in the playground.

Assessment for learning

More advanced electronic system for data analysis which can look at effects on achievement by varying factors i.e in year birth date, gender etc.

Parents: Information and communication

School Governors are involved through the Curriculum Committee and want parents to feel involved.

More information from staff on to website suggested.

Parent workshops – weekends and evenings . More are taking place.

More shared information between staff and parents including feedback help in maths/ literacy.

Road Safety and Travel Plan

The biggest cause of accidents for teenagers is road traffic accidents. More emphasis to be placed on road safety awareness in KS2, as well as KS1.

Outdoor Area Development

As a result of minimising the Reception play area, KS1 playground is increased in size.

Permanent markings are planned.

Area in KS2 playground between Inclusion and Dining Rooms has been ear marked for a sensory garden , where children can escape from the bustle of the playground.

A sports provision area is being considered but requires funding.

Global awareness: The Olympics

Acknowledged that more sport and more varied sport is needed. A girls football team has started this term and tag rugby has started with the help of a qualified parent volunteer.

Comments were invited:

Parent: If not enough emphasis on sport now, how can resources be put into place to build on this?

RT: Clubs take place once a week in staffs own time. KS1 now offers a multi sports club and a range of sports take place via the curriculum (2 hours PE per week) Outside help would be needed to provide more. What would parents like?

Parent: The emphasis on healthy eating is not balanced by the amount of sport. Cross country races have been poorly attended compared with other schools.

RT: Agreed. Cross country letters offered to all KS2 children and made clear that the children don't have to be in the after school club to attend. The sportier children often take part in other sporting commitments at the weekend, which can restrict their ability to attend.

Parent/s: Request for more coverage of rugby, cricket etc. Range of clubs narrow. More diversity i.e. archery.

CA : Acknowledged that school currently falls short on range of girls activities but netball for example requires an adult for each 10 children to run each match. Difficult for more as currently needs more teacher/ adult help.

There are currently 23 after school activity clubs which encompass a wide range of sports and interests. These are offered voluntarily by the staff. All staff are already giving generously of their time.

Parent : What about more focus at lunch times? New interests which are structured and maintained.

RT: Misbourne 'A' level sports students could perhaps be utilised as they have in the past. The KS1 playground is free 12.45 to 1.15 and perhaps this could be used.

Parent: 'Challenge for all' – Can't see how this is achievable in sport.

RT : Certain sports are pushed more than others and this is down to the enthusiasm of the teachers.

Perhaps the Governors could be asked about how they feel about more resources being put towards improving this. A discussion took place.

Parent: More exercise for the children , perhaps by way of power walk round the grounds.

BCK : Walking crocodile to school poorly attended , needs another push/ reminder to parents.

CA : Needs to be more sustained for each of the year groups, with long term , built in opportunities.?

Outline given on the structure of the 2 hour PE sessions. Different skills each half term. Swimming lessons for years 4/5/6.

BC: KS1 currently ball skills outside and dance for other session.

Parent: Perhaps with Olympics, it would be a good idea to tap into their resources to help to put things into place?

Parent: Extend cycling awareness to target older children who require more knowledge on road safety.

Emails from non- attendees:

Easy fund raising - line on bottom of newsletter to prompt parents as this is an easy and good way to make funds for the school.

General agreement was that this should be added to all PTA communications and adding it via a PTA link on school website.

Discussion about request for parental expertise information and how this would be utilised.

If staff have knowledge of parents' skills that they are willing to share in school , they can contact parents on an ad hoc basis when this links in with their projects. May also be useful re sport help.

Parent: 'Spiritual Development' – Does this include thinking time for the children, enabling them to think as individuals and respect those around them?

CA :There is reflection time in assembly which helps to teach this particularly to the younger children. The church environment is used and will be used more to give the children the opportunity to acclimatise to this environment. Some children welcome the silence and get comfort from this.

Parent: How will the exciting writing work?

AB: The scheme is aimed at excellent writing , particularly for boys and children who may need a challenge. Writing will take place across the curriculum from Reception upwards and will envelop whole life experiences and whatever experiences help to excite them into their writing

Boys are a long way behind girls usually in KS1 nationally.

There was a discussion about what topics led to children becoming enthused to write.

Parent: Felt that learning log book very factual and could have more imagination / story.

AB: The log looks into different characters and could then lead the child to continue.

Home learning logs: RT asked if the expectations were too great or too little.

Parent/s: would be nice to be personalised, perhaps hand written every other week?

Open ended tasks with a minimum limit set.

CA – children pressured – tightened up. 2 hours maximum to be spent over the whole week.

Learning logs could be personalised but not pressurised.

Team points have now been limited to help prevent the children feeling pressurised.

20 minutes is a long enough limit for small time tasks.

The discussion continued briefly before the meeting ended at 3.15pm.

