

Minutes of Parent Representatives of Great Missenden School

Thursday 24th November 2011 at 2pm in the Staff Room

Present

Mrs Thomson
Julie Gannon Chair PTA
Sarah Bettis Pre School
Tracie Noon Pre School
Fiona Charlesworth Reception
Louise Stockdale Reception
Louise Kingham 1B
Bex Jewell 2C
Tanya Crockford 3T
Claire Meichtry 3T
Lavender Otieno 3W
Katy Arnot 3W
Helen Lee 4C
Sian Pollitt 4C
Sally Adams 4W
Alison Jarvis 4W
Laura Rothwell 4H
Louise Glasspoole 4H
Lorna Kynaston 5K
Britta Holland 5R
Siggi Halling 6H
Rachael Hylton 6H
Sarah Hewat 6S
Penny Semple 6S
Sue King 6B
Caroline Arnold 6B

1) Apologies / Absent

Caroline McDonald 1B
Carla Robertson 2C
Helen Lee 4C
Jade Mar 5K
Kate Adams 5R

2) Good News

Mrs Thomson and Class Reps shared individual pieces of 'good news' including £8230 raised for the school as a result of the fireworks display.

3) Year 1 Maternity Cover

Mrs Stark, who is already known to the children, will stand in for Mrs Banks when she goes on maternity leave in January.

4) Threadworms

Question: Can notes be sent out to parents when there are cases of threadworm in the class? Mrs Thomson stated that it is not good practice to send home letters but if a teacher spots a child who exhibits threadworm symptoms, (itchy bottom, normally at night), then a gentle call would be made to the parents. Proactively the school reinforces the message that children should keep their nails short and wash hands before they eat.

The treatment of threadworm was discussed, namely tablets available over the counter from pharmacies.

In addition a comment was made regarding head lice and a request made that boys with long hair be asked to tie up their hair.

5) Year 4 Hampton Court Trip

Question – ‘Was it wise to go into the shop at the end of the trip?’ Prior to the trip teachers had sent out a letter suggesting £3 pocket money spend on the trip. Some children only bought sweets and their parents were disappointed and it was questioned whether the toys in the shop had been too expensive leading children to spend their money on sweets instead. A suggestion was made that if parents strongly objected to sweets that they should brief their children beforehand.

Children had differing amounts of pocket money and some children were able to buy better souvenirs. A suggestion was made of giving a maximum amount to be spent in the shop.

It was questioned whether children should be allowed to spend any money in the shop at all, however allowing children the experience and responsibility of making their own purchases i.e. aiding economic awareness was thought to be beneficial. In addition children enjoy having souvenirs.

Mrs Thomson said that she would pass on all comments to the teachers.

6) Playground Supervision

Question raised: ‘When there is a genuine problem children are told to get on with it and not to tell tales. Is this common?’

Mrs Thomson explained how current playground supervision works. There are a minimum of 3 staff in the dining room, minimum 3 adults outside and 4 adults in the KS1 playground. Sometimes children want the midday supervisor to adjudicate but staff are limited with their time and may well ask the children to sort the matter out themselves.

The ‘Helping Hand’ procedure which allows children to place a hand with their name on their teacher’s desk to flag that they have a problem was discussed and one class rep commented that this system only works if the child is not timid.

Mrs Thomson also explained that in September each child was asked to choose a trusted adult that they could turn to if they had a problem. If a playtime situation is not resolved the child should go and tell their nominated adult about the problem. Mrs Thomson said that they would reinforce this message with the children.

8) Hinduism Workshop

Comments were made about how much the children enjoyed the experience i.e. dressing up, bindis, incense etc.

9) Parent Skills Community

A huge list of skills ranging from Afrikaans to Amateur Dramatics was provided by just ten parents! The list was being used to inspire others to come forward and to realise that they do have skills themselves. The children benefit enormously when people come forward to offer anything from consultancy to getting their hands dirty.

10) Strike 30th November

On the basis that more staff had decided to strike and that staff were under no obligation to tell Mrs Thomson that they would be striking until the morning of the strike and following talks with the Governors, Mrs Thomson felt that reluctantly the school would have to close.

A class rep asked if the school could remain open in a limited capacity to accept pupils whose parents' work commitments would otherwise be affected. Mrs Thomson explained that then the school would simply be a childcare facility and that 'absent' pupils would have to be marked as absent. A final decision was due the next day.

11) Year 6 School Market, 9th December 2.30pm

The culmination of Year 6's mini enterprise project would see Year 6 pupils selling their products at the market. Requests were made for helpers and letters will be sent out with explanations of what parents can do at home to help.

12) Star Wars Trading Cards

Although this topic was brought up at the previous Class Rep Meeting, when it was decided that at this stage the cards were not to be banned, comments were made about children's trading cards being stolen from rucksacks and when children leave their cards to go to lunch.

Regarding children stealing cards as they walk past the bags of Year 3 children, Mrs Thomson explained that the House Captains and Vice Captains are asked to report on children who are in when they shouldn't be. Mrs Thomson reiterated that the school will take no responsibility for trading cards; however stealing is very serious and is also bullying. This has recently been raised with the children.

13) Girls Football

A comment was made that the girls loved playing football in a team but that there were no matches for the girls' football team whereas the boys' football team did have matches. Mrs Thomson said that she would pass the comment on.

14) Show at the Misbourne

The PTA and teaching staff are in discussion with the Misbourne over holding a joint festival which would strengthen the links with the secondary school, allowing Misbourne children to work with our children which would be a very beneficial experience. It would be the same as our village show but in a different field and run from 12pm to 10pm. The show section for our children would run from 12pm – 4pm and include activities such as Ready Steady Cook. Julie Gannon of the PTA said that the discussions with Misbourne PTA were in the early stages.

15) Morning Playground Supervision

Playground supervision is to be provided by the school from 8.40am. Comments were made that this morning the teachers had not arrived until 8.50am. Mrs Thomson stated that she would like to know when this happens.

16) Playground Supervision in the Afternoon and Unlocking of the Gate to the Main Playground

A point was raised that there are children often queuing up behind the gate waiting for it to be unlocked at the end of school. Mrs Thomson explained that teachers may need to finish off what they are doing before they leave the class and that she would think about it.

A point was also raised that there should be teachers available to look after children whose parents are late. Mrs Thomson explained that KS2 children are expected to go their own way at the end of school and to go to the office if their parent does not arrive on time.

Tracie Noon kindly offered to open the gate some days and Mrs Thomson asked her to set up a gate opening rota.

17) PTA Items

- Parents' party takes place on 3rd December, all welcome and tickets on sale in the playground.
- Parent help needed for the school discos on 12th December.
- A reminder to purchase the teachers their Xmas gifts /vouchers through easyfundraising.co.uk, in fact to use this for all online shopping if possible! Easyfundraising.co.uk raises their income through retailer advertising. If you buy from those retailers, they make a donation to the school of either a % of your purchase or a set amount. E.g. Amazon, EBay. Searches made through easyfundraising.co.uk earn the school 8p a search. The school has raised over £700 through Easyfundraising and it is still only used by a small number of parents.

18) Home Learning Logs

Question posed: 'School and teachers think that they are fantastic. Some parents find them difficult and that not enough guidance is provided. What guidance would be useful?'

Some comments made:

- When asked to 'demonstrate knowledge of X', some children do not know where to start
- Children benefit from pointers e.g. it could be a diary entry, newspaper report, letter home...
- Teachers should give examples then children can come to their own decisions
- Include key words, adverbs reflecting on what was being learnt in literacy that week.

Mrs Thomson explained that teachers discuss examples of what the children can do in class and that she would pass on the comments made.

A point was raised: Some children spend more than the recommended 1 ½ hrs on home learning a week. Mrs Thomson replied that this was good if they wanted to spend this amount of time on their home learning.

Next Meeting: Thursday 26th November at 2pm in the Staff Room.