

## **Parents Forum Meeting 20/3/2018**

**Attendees:** Victoria Lock, Anna Morris, Pru Risely, Clare Fenwick, Abi Michael, Justin Armstrong, Jo Stone, Chris Booker, Fiona Blenkin, Paul Cook, Vic Haymes, Joanna Ledger, Zoe Wilkinson, Viviana Levy.

**Apologies:** Pete Luetchford, Alice Bell, Mel Armstrong, Abi Steel, Theresa Mellor, Wendy Cook

### **Agenda Items:**

Evaluating and tracking children's progress  
Communication / school calendar  
Teacher absences  
Medical appointments  
Attendance  
Social Media groups  
Homework  
Class assemblies

### **Evaluating and tracking children's progress**

A question was raised asking for an understanding of how the school monitors progress over time from Foundation Stage through to Year 6. It was felt by some parents that communication of children's progress isn't as clear as it possibly could be and although there are 2 parent consultations each academic year, it is felt perhaps not enough is being done to communicate individual progression.

Miss Lock explained that the school heavily tracks children's progress using a 'Target Tracker'. School doesn't necessarily share all this information as it used within the school to help make assessments and reports and Miss Lock feels a lot of this would be irrelevant and parents would not need to see all the detail. Individual cases can always be discussed with the parents should either the parents or school request it. Miss Lock explained that school is fully accountable for the children's progress and this is an Ofsted requirement. Pupil progress meetings happen frequently within the school and the school is continually reviewing and assessing how the children are doing. The Target Tracker also tracks progress categorising for girls, boys, pupil premium, SEN etc. Parents will receive school reports before the Easter holidays and this will buy time to communicate with parents, carry out another parent consultation in the summer term and allows 10-12 weeks to bring in extra support if required for children before the end of the academic year.

A parent governor explained a little about their role in this, which is to check what the school is doing to meet their progression targets and to highlight any areas where the statistics show problems.

It was agreed that Devoran is doing all it can to ensure all pupils make progress and if parents have individual cases to discuss this can always be arranged in addition to the parent consultations.

## **Communication**

Parent Forum members asked whether the school calendar could be revamped as the app does not allow you to view things easily and although newsletters provide upcoming dates and events for the coming weeks, it was suggested that perhaps the newsletter had a 'year in view' schedule of key dates and events. If any changes were made to the calendar these events/dates would be highlighted each week on the newsletter so that parents could easily see the highlighted changes each week. The school used to use this system and it was agreed this could be used again and Miss Lock will look into.

## **Teacher absences**

Some parents have shown concerns regarding how the school is managing teacher absences with respect to the impact of continuity for the children. Some children can become emotionally attached to teachers and find the constant changes overwhelming. Parents were asking whether there could be more communication regarding which teachers would be teaching their children given that supply teachers are often changing at short notice. Miss Lock confirms that she often carries out pupil conferencing to explain any potential changes to the children. She has also and will continue to send letters to parents about teacher changes when she has the available information with enough notice from the supply agency although this often isn't possible due to short notice of supply teacher availability.

School is looking at recruitment within the budgets they have been given. Some roles (eg Mr Morgan) have been absorbed by the current teaching staff. The school management is fully aware of the lack of male influence within the school however it is a well-known issue nationwide that male primary school staff are not so readily available.

## **Attendance**

Parent Forum members discussed the possibility of the school newsletter not focussing so strongly on school attendance. In addition to this some parents were concerned that school assemblies celebrating school attendance were perhaps making some children feel guilty for letting their class down having suffered long periods of absence due to illness. Whilst parents recognised that parents and school are held accountable for attendance figures, and that the school needs to demonstrate what it is doing to improve attendance figures, many parents felt that the current methods of demonstrating this can feel soul destroying. Some parents explained how they feel the relationship of trust has been broken down when it comes to things such as medical appointments being classed as unauthorised when parents cannot always provide evidence of these appointments in advance. This has led to parents feeling untrusted. Parents are looking for the school to work with the parents rather than cause friction in often unavoidable circumstances. It was queried whether the attendance figures could show the unauthorised absences rather than when children are sick or have medical appointments as parents felt this is something that no-one can influence. Miss Lock explained what she needs to demonstrate to the Educational Welfare officer and that they specifically check the correct codes have been used when marking absences. Attendance is heavily linked to progress within school for which school is held accountable. Miss Lock explained there are lots more requests for unauthorised absence

than illness and this is the area she is keen to influence, making sure parents use time in school holidays or after school hours to attend medical appointments if possible. Whilst she understands the difficulties parents often face being able to take their holidays during school holidays, she is accountable for ensuring the school send a clear message to parents of the importance of attendance as per Ofsted requirements. She has agreed to review the assembly cup for attendance and will take it the student council to see how the children feel about this.

### **Social Media Groups**

The school actively supports social media groups for classes and they can see the benefit of sharing of information and class discussion around homework etc. However, the school would like to find a way of encouraging parents (that have grievances) to air them to the school directly rather than on closed social media groups. It's important that issues are brought to them directly so that they can act on them. They would also like to discourage negative personal comments made about teaching staff. The school was looking for the support of Parent Forum members to monitor these groups and ensure if there is any negativity, it is put to an end and instead these grievances can be directed to the school. In addition, if those parents have a specific issue they feel they can't speak to school about and want to discuss it in a parent group, perhaps parents reps can offer to private message these parents and discuss it out of the group chats. Data protection and confidentiality rules are changing in May and it is important that parents are aware about what is shared. It is hoped that Parents Forum members can help influence parents attitudes and offer that support.

### **A.O.B.**

Agenda items not discussed due to time constraints: Homework and Class assemblies. However it was briefly discussed that the reason there are no assemblies this current term is due to the fact teachers are writing reports.

Chris Booker will be stepping down from the Parent Forum due to standing as Chair for the PTCA. He explains the PTCA will be looking for a representative from each year group.

Year 6 wanted to know if there would be a Leavers Assembly. Miss Lock confirms this will be on the next newsletter.

Date of next meeting: to be confirmed.