

Minutes of the Parents' Forum Meeting

Held on Friday 15th June at Emmbrook Junior School

Present: Samantha Dowse (Chair), Annabel Yoxall, Vickie Robertson, Karen Crawford, Mr Fenton, Vicky Cooper (School representative)

Apologies: Claire Worsfold, Jo Tucker, Michelle McLeish, Jas Dhaliwal, Claire Freeman

1. Welcome

Sam welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited all to introduce themselves.

2. Parent survey follow up – Photos

The first item discussed was school photos.

The response to the survey was good and feedback was received from all year groups via the survey (between 15 and 21 responses per year group). It was agreed to let the photographer know the feedback.

The reviews of the photos were very mixed and any bad reviews seemed to be around poor presentation, if the school badge was visible and if too close, as well as time related.

The suggestion to overcome this would be more helpers to aid with the photo time slot. These helpers would go to get children to and from the hall for photos to be taken and to check the how the children looked before they went for their sitting as this is not possible with only teachers and teaching assistants. Parents could be asked to help.

The other suggestion was to possibly split between two days for photos allowing more time so not as rushed. This would require working around a busy timetable and would again require more helpers and support from parents to assist. **ACTION:** The school will consider this option and confirm potential before individual photos are taken

The format of the photos was discussed as some have suggested that more modern class photos would be better yet a lot prefer the traditional approach. Modern photos could be taken in smaller groups and merged to make it easier to get the children to look at the camera. It was discussed whether both options could be offered in future. **ACTION:** The action is for the school to ask the photographer for advice.

3. Parent feedback: School ranking

Some parents were concerned that the school ranking at end 2017 was lower than expected and wanted to know why.

Mr Fenton explained that every year, once results are received in July, the school evaluates where their results stand compared to the National Standard. In July 2017 the school judged themselves to require improvement and prepared plans to carry out in the following academic year. This feedback was sent to parents as part of the Welcome letter at the start of the academic year (September 2017).

The ranking tables show the progress made by the school primarily and the ranking of Emmbrook Junior School was not a surprise to the school and is being continuously monitored by the school, their governors, and the local authority.

He explained that progress scores are calculated by comparing the end of key stage two (year 6) SATs results to those achieved in the end of key stage one teacher assessments at the end of Year 2. There is a general pattern that Junior schools struggle to obtain good progress compared to primary schools. Emmbrook Infant School achieve results that are in the top 10% of schools nationwide. In order for the progress score of zero (0) to be achieved by Emmbrook Junior School, it needs to be in the top 10% too. This is an objective that the junior school is striving to but it is not there yet.

This does not explain the ranking of the school, that was near the bottom of all local Junior Schools but Mr Fenton reiterated that the school's performance was highlighted in the Welcome letter.

To further explain the system in relation to Emmbrook Junior School, Mr Fenton highlighted that the rankings are based upon all three subjects of Reading, Writing and Maths. He said that most Emmbrook children are excellent in one or two areas but in order for the school to achieve high ranking all children need to be good or above in all three areas. Also, the SATs that are taken in Year 2 are used as a piece of evidence to inform teacher assessment, whereas the SATs taken in Year 6 are externally marked with no consideration for teacher assessments – this means children are also under exam pressure conditions in Year 6.

It was mentioned that some parents also felt that the wording used in the recent information evening covering the School ranking suggested that a portion of students who did not achieve the benchmark result in their SATs by a small figure were the cause of the school rankings. Mr Fenton insisted that this was not the intention at all and in fact the figures were being used to demonstrate how close the school was to meeting the national benchmark.

It was discussed that it may be sensible for parents to be informed of this process before the SATs results are released in July and when communicating to parents the need to include a breakdown of the facts about how decisions and rankings are calculated.

4. Gate Timings

Next item was Gate timings and that opening at 8.30/8.35am was creating overcrowding and a backlog of people queuing out of the gate area. This is causing safety issues along the road for all drivers and pedestrians. Mr Fenton has been awaiting approval for further ideas on how to overcome the issue and ensure everyone's safety.

It has been agreed that from September the gate at the road will open at 8.30am and feed through into an area (safezone) between the outer and inner gates.

The inner gate would then open at 8.35am when the car gate locks ensuring everyone's health and safety. This extra safezone will be created over the summer holidays to avoid any disruption and will be ready for use upon returning in September.

5. Parent forum reorganisation

Sam was concerned about the lack of feedback received to the email address and we discussed possible options to help this such as more reps, getting the word out that it is for all within the school and any ideas or issues that might occur. Surveys still seem to reach the wider school community and seem to invoke a response. It was therefore suggested that surveys requesting feedback be sent out regularly.

The following have agreed to be representatives for the academic year 2018-2019:

Year 3: Christine Leddy & Claire Worsfold

Year 4: Jo Tucker & Vicki Robertson

Year 5: Jas Dhaliwal

Year 6: Michelle McLeish & Karen Crawford

Sam has made the decision to step down as chair in case the fact she is also now a governor is a deterrent for people coming forward with feedback etc. If a new chair is found that would be good however if no one can be a chair then a rolling chair would be possible between the current representatives.

We wish Sam all the very best and thank her for her amazing work over the last three years.

If you would like to be the chair person or a class or year representative please let us know.

6. AOB

Under discussion and setting up and on the agenda for next meeting is the wrap around care for juniors after school.

Twitter account for the school is currently awaiting permission from the governing body.

Promotions in the Wokingham paper will continue also any other ideas to promote the school welcomed.

Closed meeting at 14.50