

Emmbrook Junior School Parents Forum

Meeting Minutes

Friday 15th May 2020

10.00 to 11.30 Zoom Meeting

Attendees: Mr Usher (EJS Head), Miss Barnes (EJS Assistant Head), Emma Mitchell (Yr 3), Mell Morris (Yr 3), Christine Leddy (Yr 4), Martina Smith (Yr 4), Emma Wilkinson (Chair, Yr 4), Jo Tucker (Yr 5), Cathy O'Connor (Yr 5), Clare Doyle (Yr 6), Jo Westrap (Yr 6)

Abbreviations:

SLT Senior Leadership Team

EJS Emmbrook Junior School

EIS Emmbrook Infant School

PPE Personal Protective Equipment

DfE Department for Education

SENCO Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator

1. Welcome & Introductions

Mr Usher opened the meeting by welcoming and thanking everyone for attending in such unusual circumstances. He stated that this was not his intended start at EJS and he had been looking forward to meeting parents and children in the playground, however, this is a unique situation we find ourselves in. Mr Usher handed over to Emma W to chair the meeting.

Emma said that the Forum is working really well and has gained momentum over the last 12 months. Parents are really responding when we ask for feedback. Emma said that it would be good to review how Mr Usher and the SLT would like the Forum to operate going forward and who will be involved. We are flexible and here to help the school. Mr Usher responded that he was very pleased to find an active Parents Forum already established at EJS and he finds them to be a useful tool. He will aim to attend the Forum meetings himself and is looking forward to working together.

2. Previous minutes - 7th February 2020

Clare ran through the minutes from the last meeting. Obviously global events have overtaken us since the last meeting so the majority of the actions have been put on hold until normal school life is resumed. The **actions** are listed below and will be carried forward to the next meeting:

- a) **New Scopy system for the clubs to be reviewed following the allocation of clubs for the Autumn Term; EJS to promote under-subscribed clubs and to liaise with EIS to make sure the clubs letters get issued at the same time, as previously agreed.**
- b) **Plans for Family Day / Woodland Walk.** EJS asked for help organising a 'Family/Community Day', the purpose of which would be to sort out the forest area and make it into a usable space for children of both Junior and Infant Schools. This will be put on hold and EJS to come back to the Forum as and when they are ready to pick this up again.
- c) **School Communication: EJS to ensure that ALL letters will be emailed; Anything that requires a response will also be sent out in hard-copy. EJS will continue to put a list of letters that have been issued on the newsletters and also to remind parents to check their Spam folders.**
- d) **PE Kit:** EJS to confirm whether children can stay on and get changed in the classroom after PE (if their lesson is at the end of the day) so they don't have to come home in their PE kit. To be reviewed in September.

- e) **Lost Property:** Clare explained the current arrangements for Lost Property to Mr Usher. Mr Usher agreed that the Lost Property box is always a problem in every school and thanked the Forum for taking it on. He is happy for the current process to continue (Current process is that Forum members will go through the Lost Property box on a regular basis. Any named items of clothing will be returned to the school office and unnamed items will be donated to charity).

3. **Parent Feedback on the EJS current academic provision during the school closure**

In response to a request put out on the various Facebook Year groups by the Forum, on behalf of EJS, comments regarding the current academic provision have been submitted. A good number of responses have been received and they spread across the year groups. The Forum members went through the responses received from each year group in turn.

Year 3 – Mell and Emma M summarised the responses. There was a mixture of positive and constructive comments but an overwhelming sense of gratitude towards the school for their efforts; parent's experiences did seem to depend on their individual family circumstances. Communications from the school were felt to be good and Teams was working well. A number of parents are struggling to get their child engaged especially with the English and some parents have found their own way rather than use the work issued by the school. It was requested that work is uploaded onto Teams by Friday rather than waiting until Sunday/Monday to give parents time to get organised. There was concern about transition back to school and whether enough is being done to maintain progress.

Mr Usher responded by saying that he was pleased with the feedback; EJS are grateful for everything that parents are doing and are happy if parents feel more comfortable using other resources such as books, Twinkle, White Rose, BBC Bitesize etc. The message is to just do whatever works for you and your family circumstances. He explained that sometimes the work may seem repetitive or uninspiring but it needs to work across the whole spectrum and ensure that all children have a fair opportunity. The school are keen to continue with the zoom assemblies and drop-ins.

The school are not planning on doing any formal assessments when the children return to school, the focus will be on pastoral care and re-engaging with learning. The SLT are discussing an opportunity for parents to share thoughts and/or concerns regarding their child's progress although they are mindful to not cause further stress or anxiety to parents.

Miss Barnes noted that English was always going to be the trickier subject to get children engaged as there is usually so much discussion involved during the class-time and this is not always possible at home. Forum members enquired as to whether additional zoom calls can be scheduled to help with the English, however Mr Usher noted that it would be too much pressure for parents to try to incorporate this into their routines.

Year 4 – Christine, Martina and Emma W ran through the comments received from Year 4 parents. The comments mostly reiterated those already discussed; English was raised again as the tricky subject and further options were discussed such as introducing a focus topic into the zoom drop-ins. It was requested that work is uploaded onto Teams earlier. Parents had also commented that their children were losing motivation and questioning the point of doing the work if no-one was checking.

Mr Usher said that they were very mindful of the pressure that parents and teachers were under and did not want to increase anxiety by requesting that work is 'handed in' to be marked. He reiterated that the Year group email addresses were checked regularly and parents can send in anything their child has done to this and teachers will respond.

Year 5 – Cathy and Jo T. summarised that the comments received from Year 5 parents replicated those received from the other years. An overwhelming sense of gratitude and appreciation to the school and a recognition that individual family circumstances will affect whether your child is finding the work easy or hard. It was suggested that extra tasks could be put in the Optional Extras folder on Teams so if any child is finding the allocated work easy, they could dip into the additional tasks.

Year 6 – Clare and Jo W. reiterated much of what had been said previously. It was noted that when emails had been sent to the Year group emails with examples of children's work, lovely responses had been received. Miss Barnes said that from a teacher's point of view, it was wonderful to hear from the children and to see examples of what they had been up to.

Post-Meeting Note: All Maths and English work for the following week will be uploaded to Teams by the preceeding Friday. Zoom drop-in's will be adapted to include a focus topic such as the weekly English focus.

Return to school

Mr Usher wanted to say a few words in light of the recent government announcement to begin to re-open schools on 1st June. A letter has been sent out to all parents setting out the initial plans regarding the return to school. As the guidance is constantly changing, the approach taken will be adapted on an ongoing basis. Priority will be given to ensuring the safety of children and staff and the school will only do what is safe. Year 6 children will go into school first, most likely from the 1st June. The current thinking is that children will either attend each morning, or each afternoon, with cleaning over lunch. Children from one household in both the Infant and the Junior schools will all attend the same afternoon or morning session. Each half class will then be split into a 'bubble' of eight children with one nominated adult to teach them (either a teacher or TA); children from different bubbles will not mix so this 'bubble' can then be asked to self-isolate if necessary.

The school recognise that no arrangement will be suitable for all parents, however, this arrangement is considered to be most consistent for the children. There will be no fines if parents choose not to send their children in and plans will be made to accommodate all children, to allow parents to choose to send their children back to school at a later date. The work children will complete in school will mirror the home learning. Decisions and arrangements for the return of Years 3, 4 and 5 will be made once Year 6 have returned to school. Risk assessments are underway, for example to minimise the mixing of parents during pick up/drop off. PPE is unlikely to be used, it is not recommended by the DfE and research varies as to its effectiveness; parents can choose to send their child in with PPE if they wish.

4. Update from Infant Parents Forum

Christine summarised feedback from Year 2 parents whose children will be transitioning to the school in September. There are concerns, such as: they have not seen Mr Usher; concerns over the transition arrangements due to the current situation; and how classes will be arranged.

Mr Usher fed back that the usual transition arrangements will be adapted as necessary. The school is looking to create a virtual tour of the school; teachers will liaise actively with the Year 2 teachers as they usually would. Arrangements for mixing of children in classes is likely to mirror the current established procedures. The school will make the transition as smooth as possible and make sure they are flexible as to the needs of children.

5. AOB

Mr Usher thanked the parents for all their support of the school and encouraged any feedback from parents to come through the proper channels e.g. either direct to the school or via the Parents Forum email.

The school are currently recruiting for a new SENCO to replace Miss Barnes.

6. Next Meeting

Friday 10th July 2020 at 8.50am - tbc