

Short Heath Federation Parent Council Meeting



30th January 2019

Present:

Cathy Draper (Executive Head)
Lesley Foster (Chair of Governors)
Jen Fahy (Secretary)
Justine Jackman (Safeguarding Lead)
Paul Day (Site Manager)
Deb Walton (Head of Lane Head)
Karen Bridger (PA to SLT and Governors)
Fran Ford, Safeguarding & Inclusion Manager
Helen Duckett, Furzebank Worship & Governor Representation
Sharon Leeson
Adele Somerfield
Patricia Roper
Becky Harman
Caroline Arrowsmith
Christina Shaw
Jenny Fahy
Tina Law
Belinda Fiddler

Apologies:

Sue Williams
Joanne Morgan (Chair)
Holly Vukelic
Harj Kalirai

Minutes

CD opened the meeting by reviewing the discussions at the previous meeting held on 16/1/19 and requested feedback from members regarding the draft behaviour policy which was provided.

Parents were asked to provide their likes/dislikes, key points, questions and concerns. In terms of what next, SHF would need to look at how implementation will take place and parent forum could inform on any suggestions/actions.

Concerns raised:

'The policy states that no child should be made to apologise for their actions'. If this is the case, how will the child who offends learn and how will the victim of the incident see that there has been a consequence.

It was explained that this is not literally, what is meant is that is not they will not apologise to the victim, they will not be Made to apologise, as they will need to understand their actions and the consequences of what they have done. It is too simple a task to simply say sorry and this can be so run of the mill that it carries no thought, plus it is important that the children realise that a simple 'sorry' does not make what they may have done right.

Some examples were discussed where children had demonstrated remorse by providing gifts they had made, other examples of working with children were explained where work was done on a particular subject area, i.e., homeless people to raise their awareness and resulted in a particular child creating fundraising for the homeless.

It was explained that this is known as a restorative approach, which enables a child to make amends for a negative action, either by gesture or action, i.e., helping to fix something they may have damaged. Children who are able to work through this, are less likely to repeat their actions.

It was suggested that a similar policy exists at Colebrook Primary and parents are welcome to take a look where they will see this approach in coming into existence across schools to deal with more difficult behaviours that are being exhibited.

Parents felt that there was little detail about the consequences applied.

It was explained that this policy has been drafted and is working very effectively at Rosedale but acknowledged that at this point, there is a lot of Teacher speak, and more clear information needs to be included to reassure parents.

Parents were informed that Education Psychologist at Walsall, Emma Thorne has very much promoted the use of restorative practice with children and this ethos is being rolled out across Walsall Local Authority.

Parents were informed that at a recent Walsall Inclusion Strategy Meeting, where professionals share good practice, Short Heath Federation was rated the highest in supporting children through its nurture provision. Clearly further discussions are needed with parents and it is clear that parents wish to see the impact of the strategy in action. Further work is being undertaken with key members of staff to reduce incidents in school and it was suggested that it could be a possibility that parents could be involved in the sessions if they wished.

Fran Ford, the newly appointed Safeguarding and Inclusion Manager, was introduced to the group who will be co-ordinating the roll out of the strategy at Short Heath. Fran explained that she was working directly with Heads of Schools and key staff members and identifying gaps in the policy. What is clear from the comments made today is that there is not sufficient information in relation to the high expectations that are required whilst providing high levels of support to the children. We need to assess the level of understanding of the strategy from both children and parents and then implement, for which an action plan is currently being drafted.

Actions:

Working in the policy has been altered so that it reads "will not be forced to apologise."

Summary document has been written to be shared with Parent council at the next meeting.

Ongoing monitoring with children to assess their understanding of the policy

Action Research Group to identify 'Change Champions' will liaise across schools.

Parent Query:

It was queried what would happen if a child was not prepared to make amends, despite the new policy.

It was discussed that further work continues and eventually a child will learn to gain empathy, resulting in a reduction of incidents. This can sometimes be a long process but is shown to work and

will be skills that the children will take forward in their lives. Some children have high anxiety levels and this will ensure that they develop strategies to control and manage their anxiety, effecting change for their future.

Parents voiced their concerns that this system seems overly complicated and the traffic light system seemed to be much more understandable, particularly by their children. It was explained that the reason this is no longer in place, is that this can be very debilitating to a child if they make a mistake, and will immediately reinforce that the child is bad rather than acknowledging an error, providing work around it and giving them opportunity to rectify the incident and move forward.

It was reiterated to all parents that this does not replace or reduce the high expectations that are expected of children throughout Short Heath Federation.

It was agreed that a visual replication of the policy be drafted to enable children to understand this policy better.

Whilst parents acknowledged that this was a welcome support to those children with difficulties, **there is a concern that those children who do not display any difficulties will not be monitored closely enough**, with concerns that they will begin to realise that unless they need support, they will not gain sufficient attention. A parent highlighted that she felt her child had made very little progress since coming into Y3.

It was discussed that this is a very normal scenario where children move from infant to juniors. This is a big transition in their education and generally this year group, have a longer settling period, however, once settled their progress will improve drastically.

Actions:

Monitor processes in place to identify concerns – these are multiple and include whole class screening of SEMH concerns and whole class behaviour screening.

Continue to develop a full range of SEMH interventions which address issues from all children not just those with behaviour concerns

Parents highlighted further concern that the transition is also obvious in terms of additional teaching assistants which are multiple within the Rosedale setting but not so heavily available within Short Heath and they worry their children are not supported.

Parents were informed that all teaching and learning is continuously inspected by senior leaders, both formally and informally and any areas for improvement are adapted very quickly. Children particularly in eh transition from Infant to Junior generally have a dip in the Spring Term following their move but this then very quickly picks up. The behaviour can also become a little more challenging as they feel unsettled in their new environment and test boundaries, however they very quickly start to develop some maturity and independence.

Currently Year 3 is a priority in terms of dealing with strategies to control and shape better behaviour. There is currently a lot of work around social and emotional health, either generally in classrooms, in small groups or one to one within nurture setting. The benefit of being able to provide this is that it will allow children to develop skills, whilst still allowing them time in classrooms for academic learning.

A new member of staff, Kelly Sidney has specialisms of working with children with additional needs and will be co-ordinating the nurture provision at Short Heath Junior School. The staff, who are specifically tasked with nurture provision have a huge dedication to the support the children and this can be a very difficult job, it requires a lot of effort, high levels of resilience, day after day with

sometimes very little reward. Short Heath Federation is recruiting differently now to enable the right staff to be brought in and there has been a large increase in the number of specialist teaching assistants that have been recruited, within the last 12 months and with each addition, need is being addressed where appropriate.

Whilst Y3 remains a priority, every year group has its challenges as individuals develop, where appropriate, staff may be consistently attached to year groups but this will change over time dependent on need within the federation. It has been recognised that children with autism is on the increase, which is resulting in more support being needed within schools generally and part of Fran's role is to map out how this support will be utilised best to support our children.

Actions:

Y3 Nurture group now up and running

Lead Practitioner at SHJ supporting Y3 teachers

Parent's questioned how the lunch time supervisors record incidents during lunch time and how these are dealt with.

Parents were reassured that Lunch time supervisors are given training but it is acknowledged that more needs to be done and the behaviour strategy needs to be consistent across all staff within the federation. It is essential that students are dealt with in accordance with behaviour policy to prevent an negative connotations going into their afternoon sessions. Unfortunately, the federation has suffered a period of inconsistency with LTS staff, with some staff leaving and sickness, however there is always sufficient supervision during lunch periods, with other staff supporting where appropriate. The Lunch Time Supervisors now were high vis jackets to ensure that children can point out their support.

Actions

Lunchtime training sessions have been introduced – support from IBSS (Zelpher Ferguson) to promote LTS understanding and responses to behaviour incidents.

Parent's pointed out that some children feel that the nurture area is a place of fun, as this does not follow the same structure as their classes, leaving some feeling disadvantaged.

It was discussed that whilst nurture, needs to be as it is titled a nurturing environment, it must also not be seen as a negative to those children who need to access this. It was suggested that short sessions could be arranged for all the children to experience this side of the school's provision, to ensure they do not feel left out.

Short Heath Federation utilises a system called Boxall profile to assess that the right provision is being utilised for children who are struggling to cope in the school environment. Gaps in their development are identified and then targeted work completed, which is measured for impact over time. SHF has been using this system for 2 years now and initially it raised some concern as to progress, however over time it has proven that these children for which special provision is made make good progress having been supported. As with all children there will be periods where they do not make such good progress, however at our last inspection Ofsted were very positive about the social, emotional and mental health support that worked alongside academic learning and going into the future, it seems that this seems more and more important.

Parents enquired when the behaviour policy would be rolled out in Short Heath Juniors, as the removal of the traffic light system has now left a gap for behaviour procedures and they feel that children do not currently feel there are consequences for actions:

Parents informed that we are currently in consultation although the procedure is fully embedded at Rosedale. Lane Head staff have received training and are now using this process.

For Short Heath this will require planned implementation and this will be done as soon as possible to reinforce the new system to the children, in a child friendly way. Assemblies will be arranged with children to explain this. It was suggested that a parent assembly could be arranged to explain. With regards to staff training, there are many staff that work across the sites that will be trained in the new procedures and this will be rolled out to the remaining staff.

Actions:

Assemblies have been planned and delivered to SHJ

Action Research group through the selection of Change Champions will support the implementation at SHJ

Parent's felt that those children who are doing well are not seeing consistent rewards and that there needs to be a clearer balance that it is not just a focus on those children who may be struggling.

Discussion held regarding reward/recognition postcards for good work, and that some consistent praise or activities can have a much bigger impact than actual material rewards.

Parents were informed that the policy will roll out as soon as physically possible in order to maintain consistency across the federation. Children's progress and wellbeing will continue to be monitored as per the delivery plan. Parents questioned whether senior leaders gained fair and consistent view of behaviour when monitoring classes, as it was believed that behaviours would change when senior teachers enter classrooms. However, it was reiterated that it is not just class behaviour that is monitored, the information and data comes from many sources and all information is measured, much the same as in inspections.

Parent's felt that communication needs to improve within school, highlighting a minor incident to a Lunch time supervisor and then no repercussions seen, so it seemed that nothing was done.

This was discussed at length and explained that whilst there would be consequences for the incident, the restorative practice would ensure that the child is not continued to make to feel bad and start the afternoon off on a negative note, preventing further issues during the afternoon, whilst work is done to work on the behaviour element.

Following implementation of the policy it was agreed that there would need to be a period of reflection and re-evaluation, where staff, children and parents could contribute any fine tuning of the process. Meeting arrangements to be made for 20/3/19 @ 9.20 for parent feedback.

Actions:

- **Parent and Child Friendly version to be produced, possibly a one-page summary and visual representation for children.**
- **Summary to be published on website.**
- **Child and Parent assemblies to be held after half term to confirm policy key points.**

- **Further parent consultation to be held when policy has been rolled out to gain further feedback from all parents and to explain reasoning behind the policy implementation.**
- **Next Feedback meeting to be held on 19th March 2019, 9.20 am in Short Heath Junior School (Fun Club).**