

St Teresa's Parents Forum – Wednesday 17th September 2014 – minutes

Paul Clancy (chair of governors) welcomed parents, introduced school governors and led the start of meeting prayer.

Ms McBride shared the agenda for the meeting: Ofsted report and progress update; behaviour update; parental engagement and items raised by parents. Ms McBride explained that the school's Senior Leadership Team were present so that they could respond to any items raised by parents. Also the governors were having their full board meeting on 25th September and one of the agenda items was to discuss any matters raised at the forum.

Ofsted update

Ofsted inspection grades were shared with parents. Ms McBride talked through the strengths of the school and discussed the areas that require further improvement as they are not yet fully good. Ms McBride explained that the Ofsted term 'requires improvement' was previously known as 'satisfactory' so the school's overall judgement meant that there were some things we needed to do to improve but there are no areas that are inadequate.

Ms McBride explained how Ofsted initially looked at the 2013 end of KS2 SATs results (which were below national expectations – this year group had 3 different teachers in the year and some pupils with challenging behaviour, which impacted on the overall results). Ofsted then looked at the school's own data for each class (which was from March 2014 teacher assessments) and this showed some classes were making good progress but other classes were making expected progress (*please note – expected progress is judged by Ofsted as requiring improvement*). Therefore the achievement of all pupils was overall graded requiring improvement.

The two areas within the overall quality of teaching that were judged to require further improvement were teachers' questioning techniques and challenging the learning of our more able pupils. Over the two previous years the school had concentrated on filling gaps and getting pupils back on track within the expectations for their year group (as standards had fallen with changes in leadership and teachers). The next step is now to raise those expectations so our pupils perform better than expected which will be good achievement.

A parent asked Ms McBride to clarify how inadequate teaching had been eradicated. Ms McBride briefly explained about the appraisal process and how targets are set to secure good teaching. These are then monitored by looking at books, analysing data and observing teaching. There are further procedures that can be applied if teaching does not improve.

The areas identified by Ofsted that require further improvement had already been identified by the school and plans had already been put in place to address these areas

this school year. Ofsted recognised the significant improvements that had already been made across the school in a short period of time and the leadership and management were judged to be 'good'. Ms McBride held up the 2014/15 School Development Plan to show parents. A parent requested that they be given a summary copy of the plan and suggested that future forums could be used for the school to give an update how progress was being made against each target. Ms McBride and the governors agreed to do this.

Ms McBride explained that the word 'achievement' is used in schools to measure both attainment and progress. Parents were shown the achievement of different year groups at the end of last term. 67% of our Reception pupils had a Good Level of Development (GLD) which is the end of Foundation Stage measure of how many pupils reached expected levels in all of these areas of learning: Physical Development, PSE, Communication & Language, reading, writing and mathematics. The national average GLD in 2013 was 52%.

All Y1 pupils took part in a national phonics screen test in June. 90% of our Y1 pupils passed this test. In the previous year 63% of the pupils passed the test with the national average being 69%

End of KS1 teacher assessment results show that the Year 2 group were in line with the 2013 national averages in reading, writing and maths. Ms McBride agreed to hold another meeting for Y3 parents to discuss these results further.

End of KS2 SATs tests showed that the school had performed better than the previous year in writing and maths (these had been the key priorities last year) when compared with the national averages. However, the reading results at Level 5 were significantly below the national average. Ms McBride explained the changes that had been made to the reading tests last year and how the school would be working hard to raise the reading performance at the higher levels.

Parents were also shown the attainment and progress of other classes at the end of last year. Ms McBride explained that our teachers complete termly assessments, which are analysed by the SLT and then we have pupil review meetings to discuss the learning of every child. Overall good attainment has been made in reading and maths. In writing, attainment is average so this subject will be the main learning focus for this year. A Writer of the Week award is going to be introduced.

Parents were then shown a chart showing vulnerable groups (children who are achieving lower than the expected for their age) in each current year group. In particular, boys' writing skills need to be improved across the school. Teachers are planning writing tasks to increase boys' interest in writing and other activities have been planned to develop all pupils writing skills both in school and in out of school hours.

The school priorities for this year are:

- Writing
- Challenging our more able pupils
- Developing higher level questioning
- Promoting behaviour for learning
- Developing outdoor learning opportunities for EYFS pupils
- Embedding our new curriculum
- Embedding a new assessment system (as the national curriculum levels no longer apply)
- Embedding the New Code of Practice for SEN/D pupils
- Developing a learning partnership with parents

A parent commented that parents had noticed the improvements that had already happened.

Questions were asked:

Q: Why did two teachers leave after only 1 year?

A: These teachers returned to their home country.

Q: Could teachers produce half termly reports so parents have a continuous update on their child's progress?

A: Parents get the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher in the autumn and spring terms. The annual report is produced in the summer term. These reports take a considerable amount of time for a teacher to write for every child. If teachers were to provide other written reports, they would be summary tick sheets.

One parent commented that if teachers have to spend time writing reports they will have less time to teach. Another parent said that updates can be given through the home link book. Another parent said they would like occasional feedback about home learning.

Q: Do we have any links with 'good' schools that could help us?

A: We work in partnership with the other Borehamwood schools and complete joint projects. We also send pupils to Hertswood for some activities e.g. more able maths, PE, art, music.

Behaviour update

Ms McBride shared what the school does to promote and reward good behaviour.

New behaviour sanctions, which come into effect on Monday 22nd Sept, were explained to parents. Changes made to clarify what happens when a child hurts another child and how school will deal with any pupil who repeatedly behaves in an unacceptable way.

Newsletter on Friday 19th September would explain these sanctions in detail for all parents. *(This has already been sent out to all parents and is on our school website).*

Ms McBride explained that staff will use their discretion if they have to apply any of these sanctions to younger children who may not understand what they have done wrong.

McBride asked all parents to support the school if we have to administer any of these sanctions as a result of their own child's behaviour.

Parental engagement

Ms McBride referred to the 'Ready to Learn' sheet that had been given to parents. This gives ideas for how parents can help their child at home and how they can help the school. *(If any parent would like a copy of this sheet, please ask at the school office).*

Ms McBride stressed the importance of parents reading school newsletters. Parents were asked about how often they would like newsletters. Parents said they would like school to continue with weekly newsletters. It was also a good idea to give parents the list of key dates for term in a paper copy. Important notices are read when they are put on classroom windows. Parents think the text messaging works well.

Items raised by parents

School dinners – we are looking into how we will provide flexible choices. Helene Walker (our Hertfordshire Catering manager) will come to the coffee morning on Fri 3rd October to listen to ideas put forward by parents. All parents are invited to attend.

Items not discussed as we ran out of time:

School dinner price – *this is set by Hertfordshire Catering at £2.15 and is the same in every school*

Bicycle, scooter shelter – *school is looking into cost of this*

Secondary transition – *We do not prepare our pupils for entrance exams as different schools have different exams. Y5 and Y6 parents are encouraged to visit the Open Day sessions for secondary schools. Head teachers and/or heads of Y7 visit St Teresa's during the school year to talk to Y5 and Y6 pupils. All Y6 pupils have a Transition Day in their new school in July. Throughout KS2 we are preparing the children for the next step in their education.*

Claire Boville (deputy chair of governors) ended the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and giving the governors a chance to share ideas. Parents and governors need to work in partnership to support the teaching so that all children can perform to be the best that they can be. Parents were asked to embrace our current situation and support the school on the journey to be an outstanding school by doing it all together.