

## Minutes Parents' Forum -Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015

### Present:

**Parents:** A M Feeney, M Sherwood, M Sicheri-Peel, A Jackson (& staff), K Mordenti, G Clancy (& staff)

**Staff:** T McBride, J Tucker, F Letts, S McAllister, J Shelbourn, M Nugent, M Gray

**Governors:** P Clancy (Chair of Governors & Parent), J Doneo (& parent), F Long (& Parent), F Ayankoya (& Parent)

P Clancy opened the meeting with a prayer and welcomed everyone.

He said the purpose of the forum was an opportunity for the parents to engage with teachers and SLT(Senior Leadership Team) and discuss how parents and teachers can work together in ways that would benefit the school and also to give the Head Teacher a chance to update everyone since the last forum.

The discussions would not be class specific but rather look at things that affect the whole school. He thanked the staff for staying on late to attend the meeting.

### **Agenda**

School Development Plan (SDP) 2014/15 - update

Wednesday Word

Website

Items raised prior to meeting

### **SDP 2014/15 update**

TM reported that the areas identified by Ofsted as requiring improvement had already been identified by the school and were part of the SDP for this school year. She talked through actions our school was taking to improve learning in writing and maths and how this was being monitored and reported to governors.

TM then explained about the new assessment system being used by the school and how this is being implemented. The school has adopted the Hertfordshire assessment system. Teachers complete ongoing assessment of pupils learning using the criteria for what each year group is expected to know and understand by the end of the school year. TM showed parents an example of this expected learning in mathematics (which is on our school website under Children's Learning - Mathematics). Parents will be advised if their child is working at, above or below age-related expectations. It was commented that parents need to be aware that these are the expectations for the end of a school year, after a full year of learning.

TM then gave an update on the new curriculum and advised parents that details are on our website (also in Children's Learning)

Another key priority in our SDP is “promoting a learning community.” TM asked the parents for feedback on the Open School sessions where parents are invited in to school to look through their children’s work. How can the school improve on promoting it and get more parents to attend?

Parents thought that they were a good idea and loved seeing their children’s work. Also the children feel really proud to show their work to their parents. The sessions were very informal.

Suggestions from parents included: each child write an invitation to their parent (as parents would feel more pressured then to attend), change the days each time as some parents work set days (*this is already in place*). Also parents need to take responsibility for their children’s learning - talk more about what is happening at school and if parents want to know how their child is getting on then looking through their work books is a good idea. It was also commented that some of the parents attended the last forum to criticise the school on its weaknesses but were not present this time to praise or hear the head’s response on how good the school is now doing.

TM asked if there were any other ideas on how the school could promote learning. Are parents reading the newsletter and the updates?

Parents agreed the newsletter was good especially all the terms dates but although lots of information goes out to parents, some are still not satisfied. It was suggested that at the new Nursery and Reception parents’ meetings that they would be informed how the school communicates with parents etc (*this is already being done*). Perhaps parents could be informed when display boards were changed and parents could come in to school to view work on display. This could be done at Open School sessions.

### **Wednesday Word**

J Tucker asked parents if they read or share the “Wednesday Word” with their child.

Parents replied was that it was not being read, although one parent said that it explains the gospel in a way that a young child can understand. JT said that it cost the school £750 per year, but if it is not being read the school would have to consider not subscribing and distributing the leaflet. She told the forum that it was recommended by the diocese for families who don’t attend mass regularly. Parents stated that we are lucky that we have a good parish priest who keeps a good community spirit going in the parish and explains the gospel clearly. If parents do not bring their child to mass each Sunday, are they going to take time to share the Wednesday Word? It was suggested that perhaps a questionnaire be sent out to see who wants it and only purchase for these families. Or was there a possibility of an electronic copy? (*no electronic copy available*).

### **Website**

TM thanked Emma Elliott & Marian Gray for the work they have done to date in building the new school website. The next stage is to get parents (*and children*) to trial it before going live. MSP, MS, KM, and AJ agreed to be part of the trial and would ask other parents to volunteer as well. Trials to begin w/b 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015.

TM showed the parents the website and told parents of that we are looking to add a translation feature. TM showed how events and the school calendar could be accessed. Once the website has been launched and parents have had time to become familiar with it, the school will stop sending text reminders for events and only use this method of communication for urgent/emergency school information. Currently the school is sending out almost daily messages to remind parents of events that are in the weekly newsletter, on display boards and on our website. This is not an effective use of resources i.e. admin time and cost of sending text messages. It was agreed that parents need to take responsibility for being aware when school events are happening and read newsletters, or check the school website to do this.

When the new website is launched, parents will be able to download an App on their mobile phone, which will advise when the website has been updated. The forum thought that this would be very useful.

### **Questions or suggestions raised**

No questions or suggestions were raised.

TM thanked everyone for attending the forum and for their support in working together to make our school the best that it can be.

Meeting closed 7.50pm