

Home Farm Primary School – Parent Forum

Friday 23rd September 2016, 14:15

Present – Mrs Smith (Deputy Headteacher, Chair); Mrs Newson; Mrs Harrison; Mrs Turvil; Mrs Wilkins; Mrs Hayton; Mrs Khan; Mrs Rudkin; Mrs Harden; Mrs Wright; Mrs Nesbitt; Mrs King; Mrs Velcherean; Mrs Rivett (Chair of Governing Body); Mr Macfarlane (Parent Governor, Vice Chair of Governing Body); Mrs Carlin (SBM).

Welcome and introductions

1. Mrs Smith welcomed parents to the meeting and passed on apologies from Mr Potter who was attending another meeting off site.
2. The Parent Forum agreed class representatives for the 2016-17 school year as follows:

Class R	Mrs King
Class 1	Mrs Turvil
Class 2	Mrs Nesbitt, Mrs Hayton
Class 3	Mrs Harden, Mrs Wilkins
Class 4	Mrs Newson, Mrs Khan
Class 5	Mrs Harrison, Mrs Hayton
Class 6	Mrs Rudkin

Ofsted inspection outcome

3. Mrs Smith thanked parents for the positive messages of support received since Ofsted's judgement was published, and for the positive feedback that parents gave to the inspectors during the course of the inspection. The inspection had taken place over two days, and it had been rigorous and fair. Ofsted had given very positive feedback on the school and on the children, and Ofsted had confidence in the case made by the school that it was outstanding. There had been a long wait until the report was published, but the school had not been able to say anything about the outcome until that publication date.

School places in Colchester

4. Mrs Smith provided an update on the pressures on school places in Colchester, where large numbers of additional spaces would be needed over the coming year. Essex County Council was looking at the options for building new schools and expanding existing schools, and this included consideration of whether Home Farm should be part of this plan. The school would keep parents in touch if there were any firm developments.
5. The Parent Forum discussed these issues. Parents asked how quickly decisions were being made and new buildings were being constructed, and Mrs Smith confirmed that the County Council appeared to be taking plans forward quickly. Parents asked whether any expansion of Home Farm was likely to involve bigger class sizes, and Mrs Smith explained that it would be more likely to involve additional classes rather than larger classes. Parents noted that other local schools were expanding.

Academies

6. Mrs Smith provided an update on the ongoing consideration of the Government's academies agenda and the possible implications for Home Farm. The Parent Forum had discussed this previously and those attending the forum were aware of this ongoing consideration. The school worked closely in partnership with other local schools already, and the school leadership and Governing Body had taken the view that its preference would be to continue to collaborate locally rather than with other schools which were

geographically remote from Home Farm. Mrs Rivett noted that the Governing Body was clear that if closer collaboration was pursued, Home Farm would retain its identity, as would other partner schools retain their own identities. Mrs Smith noted that Mr Potter would keep parents in touch with this and would share information whenever he was able to.

Issues raised by parents

7. The Parent Forum discussed the issue of girls changing for PE and whether they were getting changed in toilets. Mrs Smith confirmed that for Years 5 and 6, girls and boys changed separately using the classrooms and the study. It was possible that children might be asking to change in the toilets, but other than that they should not be doing so. Mrs Smith would check this point.
8. Parents asked whether the Burwell kit list could be issued much earlier before the trip, and preferably before the summer holidays. Mrs Smith agreed that the school would action this. She also noted that there was no expectation that parents should buy new things for residential visits, and old clothes were best.
9. Parents asked whether any consideration had been given to an earlier start for Breakfast Club, noting that some other local schools started their Breakfast Clubs at 7:30 or 7:45 and charged higher fees of £5 per session. It was confirmed that the start time had not been reviewed since Breakfast Club had started in 2014, but the school would consider this further. The Parent Forum also discussed the possibility of further consultation on an after school club.
10. Parents asked what the procedures were around the opening or closing of the car park gates during the school day. It was confirmed that the gates were closed in the morning, but were sometimes left open by delivery drivers during the course of the day. Staff who were leading groups of children in the garden area near the car park would generally be alert to the issue of whether gates were open or closed. Parents suggested putting a sign up asking drivers to close the gates after them.
11. Parents asked whether there had been any developments on the parking situation at school drop off times, and suggested that a gentle reminder be issued in the newsletter about the informal one way system in operation, and a reminder never to park on the zig zag lines.
12. Parents asked whether any consideration had been given to varying the day of the Parent Forum meetings to reflect different working patterns for parents. It was noted that this used to be the case, but Friday afternoons had proved to be a popular time. The school would consider further.
13. A parent asked what the procedure was in relation to pen licences and handwriting pens. It was confirmed that the school did have handwriting pens, and that the procedures operated through the classes. Mrs Smith would look into the specific instance mentioned.
14. Mrs Khan provided an update on the recent HFSA AGM and Committee meetings. The new committee had been appointed, with Mrs Hayton as Chair. The Parent Forum discussed the situation with the swimming pool and agreed that it would be useful to provide an update to parents in the context of the money raised by the HFSA for the pool. Parents asked whether, if the local authority took a decision to expand the school, they would be likely to build on or develop the pool. It was not possible to be definitive at this stage, but the school believed this to be unlikely.
15. Mrs Smith thanked parents for attending the meeting. The next meeting would take place on 21st October at 2:15pm – all welcome.