

Home Farm Primary School – Parent Forum - Friday 31st March 2017

Present – Mrs Harden; Mrs Jackson; Mrs Mansfield; Mrs Wright; Mrs Ciobataru; Mrs Khan; Mr Travi; Mrs Hayton; Mrs King; Mrs Berry; Mrs Turvil; Mrs Nesbitt; Mr Potter; Mrs Carlin

1. Mr Potter welcomed parents to the meeting. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the February meeting.

Target books and assessment

2. Mr Potter provided an update on assessment matters. He had included an article about this in the previous week's newsletter, which explained that the paper target books would no longer be used from September. Parents would still have the chance to look at work each month at Open Classrooms, and would still receive a termly report and a termly parents evening meeting. Over time, Mr Potter was aiming to be able to email this information to parents. The school was still committed to providing comprehensive information for parents, but wanted to do so meaningfully. He invited comments or feedback from parents on this.
3. Some parents commented that target books contained lots of information, and that less might be better. It was felt that sometimes target books raised more questions than they answered, as when there were spaces, it was sometimes difficult to know why this was the case. Some felt that the termly report was more useful to parents in seeing where their children were up to and flagging any issues.
4. A parent asked whether there would be an opportunity for parents of Class R children to understand more about the transition to Year 1, and Mr Potter confirmed that the school would be sending information about this home later in the summer term.

Football

5. Mr Potter raised the issue of the playing of football informally at lunchtimes and break times. He explained that sometimes this led to poor behaviour on the pitch. He had explained to the children that it was important that anyone who wanted to should be able to get involved, but that if there was any misbehaviour, he would ban those involved from playing for a week. He invited parent feedback on these issues.
6. Parents noted Mr Potter's position on this. Parents asked whether children were able to bring their own footballs into school, and Mr Potter explained that he preferred it if the school's footballs were used as this avoided issues with balls being lost. Parents asked whether other sports were played, and Mr Potter explained that the Year 6 play leaders initiated other games with the children during the lunch hour.
7. Parents asked whether extra-curricular football would continue after Mr Arrowsmith's departure from the school, and Mr Potter confirmed that Colchester United would continue to provide football clubs, and that Mrs Palmer was taking on the PE coordination role.
8. The Parent Forum discussed the availability of girls and boys football during lunchtimes and after school. The school was keen to get more girls involved in sport and the provision of extra-curricular activities reflected this. Mr Potter confirmed that if parents had any specific concerns about the availability of football, they were welcome to raise them directly with him.

School uniform

9. Mr Potter noted that some parents brought to his attention the fact that some shops were selling gingham playsuits as part of their school uniform ranges. He confirmed that children could wear gingham summer dresses, but not playsuits. They were not school uniform, and there were hygiene

issues as they would fall on the floor when children were using the toilets. Grey smart shorts for girls were fine if they wished to wear shorts.

Issues raised by parents

10. Some parents had previously raised questions about the Earwig online learning journey tool, saying that it did not display well on mobiles. Mr Potter had looked into these issues and Earwig had advised that it was best to view the information on a laptop or tablet. Parents:
 - Commented that the function for parents to leave comments was not user-friendly as a comment left could not subsequently be edited
 - asked whether the school could use its own website rather than Earwig. Mr Potter explained that this would be resource-intensive, and the website did not give us the functionality for tagging which would be needed.
 - Asked whether photos could be 'time-stamped' when downloaded;
 - Asked what would happen to the information on the website at the end of this school year.
 - Asked whether Earwig could in theory be used for HFSA events – it was confirmed that this was the case.
11. The school would look into these issues and would report back to the Parent Forum.
12. A parent had asked through their class representative whether the children could be provided with nail brushes to use after gardening. This was not possible, but the children did wash their hands after gardening. Good hygiene and hand washing was taught as part of the curriculum.
13. Parents asked whether there was any update on the ongoing consideration of whether the school should join a Multi-Academy Trust. Mr Potter explained that if the Governing Body took a decision to proceed, there would be consultation events for staff and parents taking place in May 2017.
14. Parents discussed the financial context for schools, as covered in recent newsletters and letters sent home. Mr Potter noted that there was a Government funding consultation which parents could respond to, and parents were able to write to their local MP about any concerns. A parent asked whether Governors would consider starting a petition and encouraging parents to sign it – Mr Potter would raise this with the Governing Body.
15. Parents asked whether children were encouraged to tie up long hair to avoid the spread of head lice, and it was confirmed that they were encouraged to do so. The school would issue a reminder through the weekly newsletter.
16. There was no other business. The next meeting had originally been scheduled for Friday 21st April, but this would not now go ahead as it was the first week back after the Easter break.