

## Home Farm Primary School – Parent Forum

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Present – Mr Potter; Mrs Rivett (Chair of Governors); Mrs Wright; Mrs Mansfield; Mrs Jackson; Mrs Hayton; Mrs Ciobotaru; Mr Travi; Mrs Khan; Mrs Rudkin; Mrs Turvil; Mrs Nesbitt

### Minutes of the previous meeting

1. Mr Potter provided an update on action taken since the last meeting. Parents' feedback about Earwig had been passed on to the company. The school was looking at whether or not to continue to use this the following year.

### School meal prices

2. Mr Potter explained that, as publicised in a recent newsletter, the Governing Body had reviewed the price of school meals and had decided to increase the price of KS2 meals to £2.20 a meal from September. This increase reflected the rising cost of ingredients; staffing and fuel. The price had been fixed at £2.00 for seven years. The school was provided with £2.30 for each meal taken by a KS1 child under the Universal Infant Free School Meal programme.
3. Parents provided feedback on the planned price increase. There was a general feeling that £2.20 was a reasonable price for the meal and that the increase would bring Home Farm into line with what other schools were charging.

### Pupil reports

4. Mr Potter provided an overview of changes that the school was planning to the format of pupil reports. The school currently used a system called Target Tracker for assessment purposes but was moving to a new system which was better able to meet the school's needs.
5. The new system would also enable the school to provide a more individual report which was more personalised to each individual child. This would include details of where children were against age-related expectations; details of things for them to work on; comments from the teacher and Headteacher; and an effort grade. There would also be a list of curriculum objectives which would be green / amber / red rated to show whether children had achieved these or not. Some examples of this format were shown to the Parent Forum. The school would aim to send these to parents by email. Mr Potter invited comments on the proposals.
6. The Parent Forum considered the proposals and made a number of comments:
  - Some parents like receiving paper copies of the report. Mr Potter explained that emailing the reports would be more cost effective for the school and that it facilitated getting the reports to separated families.
  - A parent asked whether the school could avoid the use of red on the list of objectives, but this was generated by the system so could not be overwritten very easily.
  - Parents asked whether the reports would still be termly. Mr Potter explained that this new format was for the end of year report, but there would still be a termly update.
  - A parent commented that it was important to bear in mind teacher workloads and that it wasn't necessary to provide very lengthy individual teacher comments.
  - A parent asked whether the reports would cover other subjects beyond the core subjects, including speaking and language. Mr Potter explained that the report would cover the core subjects initially and would extend to others. Speaking was part of the national curriculum, but there was currently no assessment framework for this, how he would look into this further.

7. Marilyn Rivett explained that the Governing Body had received a demonstration on the new system at its last meeting and had asked for a further update at the end of this term.

### **Issues raised by parents**

8. A parent commented on Mathletics and said that there had been some instances of questions being marked as wrong when the answers were definitely correct. Mr Potter asked if parents could send screen shots if this happened again so that it could be investigated with the company. A parent commented that Mathletics did not seem to be registered that a child had logged in if they only did the lessons and not the activities – the school would investigate this.
9. A parent asked whether the slides from the recent e-safety session were available to parents. The school would check whether they had been posted on the website. (The slides are available on the school website at <http://www.homefarm.essex.sch.uk/parents/e-safety>)
10. Parents asked for an update on the proposed school expansion and build. Mr Potter explained that Essex County Council was currently reviewing the proposed location of the additional classrooms. In the meantime, the exhibition of plans scheduled for Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May had been postponed. Mr Potter provided an overview of how the plans would affect the existing school building. Improvements were planned to the reception area and school office to make it more fit for purpose, and to the hall to provide some increased capacity for additional children. This involved making the space currently used for table storage suitable for children to use during assemblies. Improvements were also planned to the kitchen.
11. A parent commented on swimming lessons and asked whether the school would consider starting the lessons later in the summer term when the weather was warmer. Mr Potter explained that although the air temperature was cold, the water was kept at a warm temperature. The school would look at whether swimming lessons could be scheduled differently the following year.
12. A parent asked about the planned visit to Jimmy's Farm by the Reception class and asked whether the school had considered cheaper alternatives. (The voluntary contribution sought from parents had been £20.82). Mr Potter confirmed that the school had looked at alternatives, but Jimmy's Farm provided a good quality of support and input for educational visits. The school did negotiate a group deal, but a significant part of the cost was for the coach. A larger coach was needed than for some other school trips in order to accommodate the number of adults needed to maintain the EYFS adult to child ratio.
13. Mr Potter explained that in general, the school had reduced the number of external visits, and had sought cheaper alternatives which did not involve longer distances.
14. A parent asked whether the cost of extra-curricular clubs was automatically refunded by the school when a club was cancelled. When the payment for the clubs went directly to the external provider (e.g. fencing, dance, golf) the provider would be expected to make an arrangement for any missed sessions, such as refunding an amount or offering a deduction the following half-term. When the payment came through the school (e.g. netball, Colchester United clubs), the school would refund the payment through Scopay for any missed sessions.
15. Mr Potter thanked parents for attending. The next meeting would take place on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July at 2:15pm.