

Home Farm Primary School Parent Forum

Friday 23rd February 2018 – Minutes

Present – Mr Potter; Mrs Mansfield; Mrs Khan; Mrs Jackson; Mrs Grindall; Mr Travi; Mrs Nesbitt; Mrs Carlin.

Apologies – Mrs Hayton; Mrs Turvil; Mrs Newson

Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

1. Mr Potter welcomed parents to the meeting. Actions from the previous meeting had been taken forward. Homework sheets were being posted on the school website and the strapline on the template had been updated. Feedback about classes not leaving the classrooms on time at the end of the school day had been taken forward. There had been further discussion with Essex County Council about the issues with the school roof, and ECC would be funding a project to address this during 2018-19.

Update on the building works

2. Mr Potter provided an update on the building works. The footings had been laid, and the next stage was for blocks to be laid as part of the foundations. The cold weather might delay this as it could only be done when the temperature was above a certain level. The frame of the building would be put up during April and the school garden was being moved to the field in order to accommodate works to the car park.
3. The School Council was collecting some questions for the Site Manager, and Year 5 would have the opportunity to visit the site to see how the floor was being laid. A copy of the plans for the build was shared with the parents.
4. A parent commented on there being mud on the road leaving Burns Avenue and on deliveries to the site taking place between 8:15am and 9:15am. This feedback would be passed to the Site Manager.
5. Parents asked whether the build was on schedule. Mr Potter noted that it was currently ahead of plan. He had asked for two classrooms to be ready in July so that Years 5 and 6 could move into them at the end of the summer term.
6. Parents asked whether noise levels from the building works were creating any problems. Mr Potter noted that there was low level noise from the machinery being used, but he had observed lessons in the classrooms on this side of the building and it didn't seem to be affecting the children and their learning.
7. Parents asked when the children could go back on the field. Mr Potter explained that the field was currently very wet and muddy, but as soon as it had dried out a little, the children would be able to use it again at play times.

World Book Day

8. Mr Potter provided an overview of plans for World Book Day. There was a programme of activity in place based on the theme of 'Share a Story' and children would be able to submit a 'shelfie' – a photo of their bookshelf at home. In the afternoon, there would be nine books being read around the school, and children would sign up to go and hear the book of their choice.

9. The children would be in normal school uniform on the day and would not be dressing up. The Parent Forum discussed dressing up for World Book Day. Some parents liked this, but feedback from lots of parents was that they didn't.

Issues raised by parents

10. A parent had asked a form representative to ask for further details of plans in place to cover the maternity leave of the Year 5 teacher. Mr Potter explained that the class would be taught from April by a new member of staff who was known to the children. There may also be some teaching cover between now and the new member of staff beginning in their post – this would be delivered in the first instance by Mr Kennedy, Mr Lucas, Mr Potter or Miss McGill.
11. Parents asked whether children were made aware of who was teaching them and Mr Potter explained that when planned arrangements were in place, the class teacher would generally let the class know. Sometimes there were unplanned situations which needed to be covered at short notice.
12. A parent asked how the school would respond to reports of cold weather over the coming week. Mr Potter explained that school always strived to stay open, but parents would be informed at the earliest opportunity if there was any change to that. Decisions about opening or closing the school were made by 7:30 in the morning, and were communicated to parents through email, text and through the school or the ECC website. The cold weather procedures would be posted on the school website.
13. The Parent Forum discussed how snowy days in school were managed. Mr Potter explained that children were allowed to play out in snow, but that there was a 'no snowballs' rule – the children were encouraged to make and build things out of the snow instead. On a recent occasion, the school had operated a staggered pick-up time to avoid congestion on the icy road outside the school, and this would be used again if necessary.
14. A parent commented on a dog being brought into school recently – this had been addressed.
15. Mr Potter commented on the Governing Body's ongoing discussion of options for academisation. The Governing Body continued to look at this but there were no firm proposals to share with parents at this point.
16. Parents asked whether the school was on track to deliver swimming lessons in the summer term, and it was confirmed that this was the case. The school would look at whether a clip on step could be attached to the steps for the children to enter and exit the pool
17. A parent asked whether all classes had been receiving two sessions of PE per week, and it was confirmed that this was the case – all classes had two one hour long sessions.
18. Mr Potter thanked parents for attending the meeting. The next meeting would take place on 23rd March at 2:15pm in the school library.