

Minutes of Parent Focus Group
Thursday 21st June 2018

The following is a summary of the discussions at PFG on 21st June 2018. The parent questions are copied directly into the minutes and a brief overview of the discussions included.

Questions Raised.

1. Open classrooms - raised by Attenborough Year 6

Open classrooms. I know the idea is to have the open classrooms on different days of the week each term, but please could you make it that the Summer term one is not on the same day as the Summer Production club? This club involves the highest number of children, and I know they use space in the classrooms. Also, it must be easier for the teachers in the Juniors not to have to try and split their time between the club and their classroom.

Discussion - It was agreed that this would definitely be factored into the diary dates for 2018/19.

2. After School Club Registers - raised by Attenborough Year 6

Is there a correct process to follow if your child cannot attend an after-school club that they have signed up for please? I have heard a story (don't know how true it is) of some year 6 children signing up for an after-school club, but not going to it, and instead going to one of their houses. The parents of this child work, so are not at home. The parents of all the children think they are in school when they are not. I don't think it should be up to the school to contact parents when their child is not present at an after-school club, but wondered how this can be prevented?

Discussion - It is our priority to keep children safe so we always take a register at the beginning of each club, and if we are expecting a child who doesn't turn up we always follow it up so we can ensure it is planned and that everyone knows where the child is. It is therefore very important that once a child has signed up for a club that parents notify the school to explain if they will not be attending for any reason. (Obviously if they are absent through illness etc. we will know this through the school registers).

3. Homework - raised by Victoria Year 5 and Newton Year 4

Homework - the year 5s seem to have a lot of work to get through at home that is all due on the same day. An idea would be to have to hand in homework on Wednesday as usual but be given until Friday to complete the spelling and Maths tasks.

Discussion - The Year 5 team have confirmed that already the maths and spelling homework runs from Friday to Friday and that the main homework is given on a Friday to hand in on the following Wednesday. However, it was acknowledged that if children are doing the maths and spelling tasks in their homework books this could be a difficulty if they have handed it in for the main Wednesday deadline. This will be fed back to Miss David and Miss Jones so that can take it into account for homework scheduling next year.

Regarding the mental maths homework, parents asked whether it would be at all possible for the teachers to provide the calculations that the children need to practice rather than each parent individually writing them out each week.

Discussion - Guidance and examples are always given about the type of calculations the children should practise. As it is mental maths homework the idea is to develop mental strategies and we avoid giving out worksheets as we want children to try a range of calculations at their own level.

4. Class rewards - raised by Newton Year 4

Parents asked about how often the class is awarded extra play for good behaviour as they tend to hear more about when playtime has been taken away.

Discussion - Each class has a reward system that is suitable for the age of the children. There is a system of rewards for Newton but they tend to prefer to 'bank' these rewards so they can have a bigger treat rather than a number of smaller ones.

5. Emails - raised by Victoria Year 5

There are a lot of school emails sent out - would it be possible to group them into fewer emails?

Discussion - Communication is vital and with many messages that we send out it isn't always possible or appropriate to wait to group them. Also there is the potential problem that if they are grouped they may be missed. We understand that at times it may seem that we send a lot but conversely if parents feel they aren't kept up to date that causes problems too.

6. Supporting children at home - raised by Nightingale Year 2

I think it would be nice to have more info on how we can help them at home.

Discussion - we always try to help parents with ideas for support but currently there are already plenty of things available. There are the Take 10 activities (optional), ideas on Fronter for the current topics, daily reading, spelling activities and mental maths, as well as the activities available on Athletics and Spellodrome.

7. Year 2 to 3 transition meeting - raised by Nightingale Year 2

Will we have a meeting to let us know what it will be like for them in Juniors? And what is expected of them and us?

Discussion - we run a transition meeting for Reception to Year 1 as there is a different curriculum and the jump from Early Years to KS1 is significant. The workload to have a transition meeting for each year group would be huge. A transition booklet is given to each child at moving up day and the teachers spend time talking to the children and explaining what is different and exciting.

8. Library - raised by Goldsworthy Year 1

Can parents be reminded how their children can access the library. It seems that some children's don't know so this would help with communications. Can parents ever use the library with their children?

Discussion - Each class has a dedicated weekly library slot. Outside of these times, the prefects do organise library sessions during lunch time for the Infant children, on a first come first served basis. For parent sessions it would not be possible to have these 'unattended' as the PTA have worked really hard, and spent lots of money, to transform the library and keep it well maintained and tidy. We could though liaise with the PTA to see if anyone would be willing to organise 'open library' drop in sessions.

9. Clubs - raised by Goldsworthy Year 1, Britten Reception.

Keen on getting a regular club for mindfulness, yoga etc.

Would like optional LAMDA exams - apparently teachers can come into school and do short sessions with children who want to participate

More marital arts classes after school please.

Discussion - we will pass these ideas to Mrs Pereira who is always looking out for new clubs to appeal to as wide a range of children as possible. However when organising clubs she does have to consider the uptake and potential numbers who would attend to make them a viable option.

10. Assembly idea - raised by Britten

An assembly reminding the children about binning litter.

Discussion - it was agreed that this is a good idea and the assembly was held on the Monday of the following week.

Ideas for workshops

A parent workshop with Natalie Costa (Power Thoughts) on tips for how we can help our children at home would be great.

Mindfulness

Next year well-being is a key target on our School Development Plan and this will include Parent Workshops.

Positive Feedback

Attenborough Year 6

Please could you pass on the most enormous THANK YOU to the whole school - Mrs Gee and her fantastic team of staff - for 7 amazing years of schooling (and more!) for our children. For continually going the extra mile; for making learning fun and exciting; for giving the children so many different opportunities to experience new things; for being ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS!!!

Specific to Y6s - thank you for making SATS so smooth and painless. The breakfasts were great and all the trips this 1/2 term have been terrific!

Thanks to the effort the teachers have made - when you have a child in secondary school it makes you realise even more what high quality teaching we have at SFP and how well each of the children are set up to achieve.

The Houses of Parliament trip was wonderful - all I heard that evening from my child was how fantastic the day had been, and no mention of the early start!

Churchill Year 6

Just general comments about teacher's hard work for the SATs and organising all the great trips for end of term.

Newton and Darwin Year 4

Thank you very much to Miss Jones and Miss Savill for organising the Metrobank workshops and visit. The children really enjoyed them and learnt about the importance of saving and having a good credit rating. Parents really appreciated that the children had the opportunity to learn such important practical life lessons in a fun way.

Redgrave and Holmes Year 3

"Thank you to Miss Gilby and her team for easing the transition into juniors."

"It's been great to see the new classes bond so well and new friendships being created."

"The sleepover was such a wonderful experience for the children and a really good introduction to their Sayers Croft trip. So much thought and effort went into the experience...thank you."

Nightingale and Faraday Year 2

Thank you to the staff in year 2 for the careful way they handled SATs.

Just wanted to say that I think Mrs Carpenter has done a really good job taking over for the last term - it can't have been easy coming in for part of the year, but the kids are very happy and engaged.

Dance Festival Feedback from Year 4 parents

A huge thank you to Mrs Walker, Miss Smith and Mrs Glasspool for everything they have done for the girls involved in this year's Epsom and Ewell Dance Festival. We are so grateful to them for giving their time and expertise so generously and for providing our girls with such a fantastic opportunity. The show is a wonderful, positive community event and we were incredibly proud to see our girls open the show and give such an amazing and confident performance.