

Parent Reps Meeting 19 May 2017

Present: Mrs Majumdar, Mrs Harding, Mrs Aves, Mrs Taylor, Mrs Kirkby, Mrs Jones, Mrs Buss, Mrs Watkins, Miss Hardman

Chestnut Class – Reception

'Parents think Tapestry is amazing and feel it's a shame we don't get more feedback further up the school'.
[Mrs Owen will look into this.](#)

'A lot of parents have commented on how fabulous Mrs Holliday is and the creative way in which she teaches the children'.

'Thank you to the year 5 and 6 children who acted as buddies for reception when they started going into school without their parents'.

Beech Class

'One small issue is still a problem regarding catering and that's the custard pre-poured on all sponge style desserts. Eggs and dairy can prove an intolerance/allergen for kids and my son doesn't eat it for such reasons but would eat most puddings if it wasn't on. He's too rushed to speak up and request it without. Can some desserts not have custard on please? The Manager at consultation evening said it was ok to ask but at 6 years old sometimes you don't feel confident to ask'.

[Mrs Owen has asked the kitchen and they have assured her that from now on there will always be some plain sponge and some pre poured desserts available.](#)

Feedback about the gates opening later after school and the difficulty of manoeuvring buggies passed older children passing the opposite way. It can get quite hectic.

[We understand the metal gate is sometimes opened too late on Wednesday afternoons, and will aim to rectify this.](#)

Positive feedback for Mrs Parks:

'I'd like to say how creative Mrs Parks is with the curriculum. My daughter is totally enthused by the gardening, bog baby and poetry writing topics at the moment (or at least those are the topics according to her). She can't stop chatting about it all. Her writing has taken off and her reading levels have absolutely zoomed up. Phonics is being taught nice and strong. So, yes....really pleased that Mrs Parks is being so creative in her teaching and capturing the children's interests/engaging them so well'.

[Phonics testing is coming up shortly for children.](#)

Y2 Apple

'A huge Thank you to Mrs Ashley who has again stepped up when Mrs Akers is away. She is going the extra mile so that the children are not too disrupted and we are very grateful'. Parents appreciated it especially with SAT's coming up

Parents expressed their thanks to all those involved with the production of the video

Y3

Y3 parents are keen to know whether Y3 will be included in KS1 or KS2 sports day.

"I would like to ask about the format of Sports Day as I am wondering if the Year 3 kids will be lumped in with KS1 as they were for the discos. It would be good to know for booking time off etc. but some

consideration should be given about how to manage this as I think many of them found this a bit boring last year as they have been doing it for so many years"

An email will go out today to confirm arrangements for Sports Day. Y3 will be with KS2. A reserve date has yet to be decided.

Another issue to be raised is the issue of parents not paying for school trips and this eating into the school budget. One parent would like to know the outcome of this, if we could discuss it on Friday please.

Mrs Owen explained we can't make parents pay for trips & we do make a loss on both trips & swimming, which the school budget has to absorb. It also takes up a lot of time chasing outstanding payments. If things continue the way they are, we will have to restrict the number of trips we go on & the cost involved. This would be a shame, but as you know the school budget will be dwindling drastically over the next 3 years. We also need to encourage parents to sign up for FSM (income related free school meals) if they are eligible, & then the funding we get for that would help pay for those children's trips.

On average per trip, 4 parents per class do not pay and this is taking into consideration those who are already entitled to help through FSM. On an average trip this is between £60 and £90 each time.

Reps suggested that we have a notification, perhaps in the school newsletter, to advise parents how much the school has 'lost' through non-payment as each trip happens, rather like Doctors surgeries and missed appointments which cost them money.

On the subject of trips, reps were asked to encourage parents to adhere to the deadlines for returning forms for trips and sporting events. It was explained that KS1 forms need to be back to allow enough time for the lunches to be organised (because of the children's entitlement to Universal Free School meals) with the kitchen so we know that all children will have lunch on the day of the trip.

Also, sporting events forms have a deadline so we know which children are involved and who is offering lifts or needs lifts, so we can let parents know – if children do not give the form back in until the day of the event, we have no time to advise parents if they are needed or not, which they (and us) find frustrating. Please encourage parents to adhere to the deadlines!

Y4 Sycamore

Is there any advice to parents on children cycling to school – some older Bishops Down children cycle on the road past Bennett with no helmets, etc.

We will talk to the children again to remind them about being safe.

Will we get any feedback from the recent CATs tests or are they just for school records?

Yes, parents will receive a formal letter with results. The tests were sent off this week and then when we get the results we'll send them out to parents.

A lot of parents have commented on the My Maths homework over the past few weeks, it has been difficult to do because you have to use a virtual protractor on the screen! Also, one parent said that the homework was year 5 homework as it said so on one of the first pages & year 5 had done it a few weeks ago! The screen did not explain to parents how to move the virtual protractor on the screen, and so parents felt it was much better to do angle work on paper please.

The homework set is always matched or similar to what they have covered in class. Some of the year 5 homework for example, is covered in year 4 which is why they are set as homework- they then sometimes recap those in year 5 too. Sometimes they are slightly easier and this is so they can consolidate their learning.

I know some children had technical difficulties a few weeks ago however the children know and are reminded weekly that they can use the classroom computer at any point in the week if they need to and are unable to access it at home. We will discuss the angles difficulties with Mr Wyke, Maths Coordinator.

Pine

Will the coach for the year 6 residential have a tv so that a film can be played during the journey. Some parents are not happy about children taking iPads and using them for such a long period. One child also has eyesight issues which means that she cannot do close work for very long.

We have called the coach company and it is the same coach as we used last year (70 seater @ £2100, cheaper than 2 separate coaches @ £3900), so no, there is no TV. It would add another £32.14 to the cost per child. There are a number of things children can, and did do on the coach which do not involve looking at a screen, and staff will encourage this.

How much is all this promotional video costing and what are the children learning from it?

It has not cost anything. We are fortunate to have skilled parents putting the video together - Chris Gane runs a production company and Paul Whittington is a TV director. Some money was raised through the sale of the emoji cupcakes and e safety day (£300) and this has been spent on props, art material etc. The only cost for the days this week is a free school lunch for the cameramen.

Is it true that year 6's are no longer allowed to wear their leaver hoodies at school if so why?

This is currently under investigation so we cannot comment.

Would Mrs Owen say that celebrating a 50th anniversary is a very special occasion, yes or no?

Yes! The children have learnt that things take practice to get right, they have found out about different careers, drones, cameras, and that being in a film requires patience.

One further issue I have been asked to raise at the class reps meeting is re the meeting on the CATs results. I think a lot of people (myself included!) hadn't realised the sheet was in the office and so the process is different from other parents evenings. We have put something on Facebook now but may be worth a Parentmail?

The letter in the envelope with the CATS results clearly said book slots through the office.

Oak Y6

'Will there be a school disco at the end of the summer term as it is not on the school calendar?'

We are trying to organise these for Wednesday 19th July but using a different DJ. Kate Smith will confirm ASAP then Jo can put it on the website.

'Is there a leavers assembly for Year 6 pupils as this is not on the calendar either?'

The leavers assembly is scheduled for Thursday 20th July at 2pm. It will be added to the website.

'Huge thanks for managing the transition from Mr Bailey to Miss Ritchie, this was very difficult due to the timing and because the children (and parents) were so attached to Mr B but Miss Ritchie and Miss Hardman have managed this very well. Thanks and welcome to Miss Ritchie! We also understand that she

was very well supported by Mr B during the handover and Mrs Wilson who knows the children well, again thanks to them!’

‘SATS week - the parents and children really appreciated the gesture of toast and juice to show some kindness to the children before the SATS and the stress levels - we believe - were managed very well, including relaxation activities afterwards. Thanks and well done!’

‘Please clarify re: theme weeks if parents are required to provide costumes for the appropriate era for each week? Quite an ask...’

This is completely optional- it is just some fun for the year 6’s -no big deal, they can just go with accessories, rather than a full costume, or not take part with the dressing up as they wish. The children have begun to get very absorbed in finding out about the decades.

Larch Y6

‘Toast & juice – a lovely gesture which children and parents alike appreciated to start the SATs days off well.’

‘Food at lunch - significantly improved since Jan Gabriel has been managing the kitchen and her cheerful attitude has been noticed and appreciated by the children. Specific request from 2 children (and no one disagreed) for potato wedges to receive a special compliment!’

‘Maths workshops after school - the offer appreciated but more on this below...

Area of concern, and there is so far only one (it's a new low record from us!), is ability sets - it's one we raised at the start of the year and there is still a lot of strength of feeling on this. The minutes of 19 October 2016 which are on the school web site confirm the strong support from parents for ability setting at the time (just one exception in all the responses) and (quite detailed) reasons. Reply from the school was clear (also detailed) including “No we are not setting again” and “we won't reach the 85% [achieving in all subjects target] if we set.” Throughout the year parents remained concerned but felt the door on this had been shut. I want to emphasise here that there is absolutely no criticism of Miss Stock - the feedback is that she has been an excellent and very popular teacher. It is just that parents feel it must be easier, logically, to teach when there is a smaller range in ability particularly when 11+ tuition/practice papers over the Summer before the start of year 6 skews things in this area. Parents feel, from their experience, that children did better when being set (this time not even one exception on the responses) and are frustrated that it was for such a short period in year 6.

The week of Ofsted the school's position changed and children were set.’

It was changed two weeks before the February half term, and was not because Ofsted were coming because we did not know then. Ofsted only give 18 to 20hrs notice of inspection and they do not comment on teaching styles. The special revision for SAT’s at the right level was ‘set’. Reps felt this gave bright non 11+ children a chance to thrive and feedback from parents was positive

Questions:

1. Why was the policy changed -was it due to Ofsted or, if not, what changed the school's view? Parents would have appreciated being able to feedback their views earlier if they had known that the issue was still being considered. This was decided before Ofsted were due to come in. It was for revision purposes not teaching.

There was a discussion on how effective setting was for children incorporating the following:

2. Why was the set who found Maths and English harder given 3 different teachers over a few weeks, particularly when it is thought less confident children appreciate consistency? Parents explained they meant this was because some of the children are in Larch class and so started with Miss Stock, then moved to Mr Bailey when set, and then had Miss Ritchie after Mr Bailey left.

3. Although the extra Maths after school was welcomed in terms of the recognition that these children needed help, the feedback is that there was no consistency so unsure how effective it was and parents would have preferred these sessions to take place during the day and/or earlier in the year as children missed after school activities to which they had previously made a commitment e.g. school netball and query whether setting earlier would have meant these additional classes were unnecessary or children could have missed the odd one to e.g. attend a match. [They were consolidation sessions and recapped the gaps from that week's learning/revision](#)

4. Is the school still expecting 85% to achieve in all subjects? [We always aim for at least 85%](#)

5. Is the school still confident higher ability standards (43% higher level) will not slip despite parents' perception that the higher level maths was not taught as much this year (albeit there was some once they were set) but curriculum apparently harder? October minutes said no child in Larch had scored 100% in any assessment - this is not correct including in the CATs during the period they were set year 5.

6. Although it does not affect our year, those with siblings want to know whether the school policy on setting is going to change for other years.

[We do not set. The half term from February to Easter was used for SATS preparation based on gap analysis of practise papers. We don't approve of teaching to the test but it would be foolish not to give children some focussed test preparation in the lead up to SATs.](#)

'Lots and lots and lots of enthusiasm for the promotional video. It is clear staff and kids really, really enjoyed it and our class have yet to do their main bit so I am sure there will be more to add but it's clearly been a great experience for all and lovely seeing the StopGap pictures last night. Big thank you to Jan and all the other staff involved and to the parents who have given up so much time to help including Julia Refet and Paul Whittington from our class and I know Nicky Wheeler has helped too and I am sure there will have been more...'

Next a request for school to look into Sal's shoes <http://www.salsshoes.com> basically a charity suggesting kids leave their shoes at school the last day of term so they can be donated to countries where children have none. Logic being they will outgrow them over the summer and children then walk out bare foot to experience what it's like not to have shoes (although it's fine to put other shoes on to actually walk home)'.
'Bikeability – when will parents know more?' [Teachers will be sorting out the groups soon and will let you know ASAP when your child needs to bring their bike into school.](#)

[Mrs Owen will send an email out to parents in July about this.](#)

[Teachers will be sorting out the groups soon and will let you know ASAP when your child needs to bring their bike into school.](#)

Y4 Hazel

Please can key notes be put on the newsletters? [Yes, we have not done this for a while and so will do this. Also all dates are on the school website calendar.](#)

Next meeting is Friday 16th June 2017