

## Parent Reps meeting Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2014

Present: Dan Turvey, Emma Bonwick, Fiona Higgott, Naomi Lynch, Lucy Farrimond, Gemma James, Heather Gane, Julia Refet, Kelly Page, Penny Sloan, Amy Rogers, Catherine Thorp, Charlie Moore, Rebecca Neeves, Paula Nicolaou, Emma Wilson, Michelle Rule, Angela Applegate.

### 1 Introduction and welcome

Dan welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the school year. He explained that the meetings had a dual function. It was an opportunity to give both positive and negative feedback from parents to Dan, and to ask questions about the school. It was also to allow Dan to bounce ideas off reps and get feedback from them and parents on various strategies for school. The function of these meetings is not to air individual grievances about individual teachers/classes. If a parent asks a rep to do this, they need to be referred to the class teachers.

### 2 School values and visions

Dan explained that the school has a set of values which were agreed by Governors, Parents, staff and children 4 years ago. Governors have asked for a review of these values. Dan asked reps 'As parents, what values do you want encouraged in school?' This exercise was done with the teachers and they compiled a list of 9 words. After a short chat Dan wrote the values which reps had felt important onto a flip chart. He linked these to groups/similar meanings. The reps were then shown the list the teachers compiled and the two lists were compared to each other. Over the next few weeks Dan will be blending the lists together, and commented that it was good to see a crossover of ideas.

Dan also showed the reps the school vision, explaining this was about thinking ahead, *what do we want the children to be when they get to Year 7, or move on from secondary school?* Dan asked reps (before the next meeting) to think about the idea of children moving into Year 7 and asked 'How do we equip the children to make this happen?' If reps are interested in giving this some thought, please feedback to Dan. If they had no thoughts/opinions on this, then no response was necessary.

### 3 Survey on Reception places in September 2015 and sibling replies

Dan explained that the number of siblings wanting places next September may have an effect on many parents. In September 2014 there were 5 pupils on the waiting list who did not get a place but who were siblings of children higher up the school. So far, the school is aware of 21 siblings for next September based on the feedback from parents which was asked for in the newsletter. Dan explained that the school is totally dependent on parents telling us if they have a 3 or 4 year old child at home (maybe who goes to another Nursery all day and we never see at school) who will want a place. Dan asked the reps to check with their own class parents if they know of anyone who perhaps has not yet replied. He believes that from 2016 the number

of siblings will reduce and calm down, although even before expansion, there have been years where there have been 24 siblings wanting places.

#### 4 PSA

A timetable of PSA planned events was handed out to each rep. The PSA have decided this year to plan the whole year's events/dates to encourage support and take up by parents and asked reps to put the dates in their diaries. A member of the PSA then explained that reps were called upon by the PSA to gather support from other parents for things like fairs and cake sales, it was not expecting reps to do everything themselves, but to encourage parents from their class to work together on their particular class responsibility, such as running a stall at a fair. The big change this summer is that the Summer Fair will be held on the same day as the Camp Out in the hope that families can have a good time at the fair and then want to stay on for a chilled evening afterwards.

#### 5 Tunbridge Wells Primary Schools Collaboration Trust/Teaching Alliance

There are two major organisations in Tunbridge Wells of which Bishops Down Primary School is part. Both of these involve raising standards and sharing good practice among all the schools in Tunbridge Wells.

The Teaching Alliance members are all the primary schools in Tunbridge Wells, together with three secondary schools, and some schools from Sussex. It was started by developing training for teachers, and will give teacher training coaching and qualifications without the need for people to travel to Canterbury Christ Church University, or Brighton University. The aim is to develop teachers locally. There is a big problem nationally of teachers leaving the profession and the aim is for this to not happen so much locally by giving support and training.

The Tunbridge Wells Primary Schools Collaboration Trust (TWPSCT) has been set up by all local state schools in the Tunbridge Wells area (except Pembury). The aim of the trust is to build strength. In Tunbridge Wells, schools want to build capacity to support each other and this support is important to Governors and Head Teachers. Dan showed the reps the core values of the TWPSCT.

#### 6 Feedback

Q Is there a place for parents to wait indoors while their children are doing clubs after school now the weather is getting colder?

A No there is not as there are so many clubs and everywhere is being used by clubs or staff.

Q Are there new reading books for the younger years?

A Yes we do have them. Parents need to tell staff if a book has pages missing or torn. As they get handled a lot they do wear out and are replaced.

Q Can parents have more notice of trips?

A Teachers are trying to do this, they have been told. However, as there is a new curriculum this is taking lots of work to plan and prepare topics so although teachers know roughly when they may be going out, there is lots to work out.

Forest School – there have been many positive comments from parents about how much the children are enjoying their sessions, and how much they seem to be learning. Reps, please remind parents to send their children in with appropriate clothing as the weather gets cooler/wetter, as some children still don't even bring a coat to wear.

Q What is happening with fruit?

A The school complained about the bad carrots. It was explained that children do not get a choice of fruit, we are sent a specific fruit to be eaten on a certain day, and of course if the fruit is bad and staff take the next day's fruit then a shortage continues. It has been explained to staff only to take fruit for the correct day to give to the children, and parents are welcome to send in their own fruit if they want to.

Q Can the dates for the Christmas plays go onto the website please?

A This has been diarised.

Q Can the microphone be working for the class assemblies please as parents cannot hear the children?

A It was unfortunate that the batteries failed half way through the last assembly, but they are checked before assemblies start.

Q Why are children in Y1&2 not going swimming, parents were upset?

A The school only has two slots at St John's pool each week, there are no more available. We have asked at other local pools but there are no more spaces. The school needs to prioritise which classes swim, and after consultations with the coaches and teachers, the focus is to be on Year 3 and above.

**Action: The school uniform list will be amended to reflect this change of swimming.**

Q When can parent log into SQUID and see what their child is eating at school?

A There was a problem with the software being used which was not taking into account the fact that children in Reception and KS1 were having free meals, so it was creating debt letters each time a child went for lunch. Independent Catering are sorting this and then the letters with login details will be sent out so parents can see.

Q Why are the toilets not cleaned in the classrooms? There was an occasion when one was blocked.

A The toilets are cleaned every night by the cleaners, but we do not have that resource during the day. However, very occasionally, something happens, children do tell the staff and incidents get dealt with as they happen.

Q Why is there not always enough Football time in the playground/do the children spend so long in the hall?

A The children go into lunch on a rota basis so that the same class is not always the last in. There is a separate rota for when classes can play football. Sometimes these 'clash' and so there is not very long for children to play Football.

Q What if a Reception child is not being given enough to eat, they are hungry?

A The Midday Supervisors monitor this and there is always bread and salad to offer if a child wants more.

Q Some parents are worried that the children are not eating enough.

A Midday Supervisors (MDS) are good at picking up on this and will encourage children to eat enough before they clear their plate. Children are also expected to wait at their table until everyone is finished before they go out. Last year slow eaters ended up cleaning tables and were sometimes left by themselves, so this year we are encouraging children to have good manners and wait for other children to finish and not leave the table.

Q The water cups are worn out and /or mouldy

A They are put through the dishwasher, and if a MDS spots this they are changed. Children need to tell an adult.

Q The puddings are stodgy, can there be a fruit and yoghurt option instead?

A There is this option each day. Independent Catering have to satisfy strict guidelines about what they prepare, and KCC do check.

Positive feedback about lunches – it is convenient being able to choose on the day if a child can eat a school lunch.

Q Can reply slips which need to come back to school be sent electronically?

A Yes

Q why was the swim bus late twice?

A They got stuck in traffic caused by an accident, but do need to leave more time to get to us.

Q Can the school provide larger P.E. bags as the ones we have are too small for older children who have larger shoes and tracksuits etc?

A We will look into this.

Q Can the school source a cotton-rich V-neck jumper instead of the acrylic ones?

A We will look into this also

Q What about changing the uniform to shirts and ties?

A The reps felt that this was not a good idea, and as Dan pointed out, it makes changing for PE very difficult and slow.

Q Does the school have a swim kit for the Gala now?

A Dan will check with Mrs Tizzard

Q Please can reps be told about new children to the class

A Yes

Q Can water bottles be on desks please to encourage children to drink more, as some are going back home full as they have been in a box all day forgotten about?

A Dan explained this was down to the individual teachers to decide what works best in their own classroom.

Q Can parents leave a name of another parent who they will always be happy for their child to be released to if they do not arrive at school?

A Dan says no, he would prefer to be safe than sorry and always have a specific message from parents, as early as possible in the day please to allow time to get it to the classroom before 3.15pm.

Next meeting is to be held on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November at 9am