

## Parent Reps minutes of 16<sup>th</sup> October 2015

### Present

Mrs Owen, Mrs Foster, Miss Brooker, Mrs Wookey, Mrs Oakenfold, Mrs McLoughlin, Mrs Harding, Miss Meakins, Mrs Parkes, Mrs Lott, Mrs Litchfield, Mrs Roberts, Mrs Knight, Ms West, Mrs Turvey, Ms Fraser, Ms Le Breton, Mrs Kirkby, Mrs Aves

### Mobile Phones

Currently the policy is for phones to be handed into the teacher when children enter the classroom, and then they are taken to the office to be put in the safe for the day. There is an issue of phones being used, shown around, and discussed before the bell goes in the morning. We will trial all the children handing their phones directly to the office as soon as they arrive on school premises before school. Mr Bailey will talk to Year 6 children to reinforce the message that they should not have phones on display, and remind them of general sensible use of phones.

### Sweets

There should be no sweets in school. Bishops Down has Healthy School status and Mrs Owen needs to maintain standards in school. Teachers are not handing out sweets anymore during class time. With regards to Birthday sweets, they should not be brought into school by children for the end of the day. Instead, parents can give these out in the playground after 3.15pm to children from their child's class. This way, parents have a choice as to whether their child eats sweets or not.

The PSA cake sales are held after school and this enable parents to have the option to say no to children if they do not wish their children to be eating these items.

### Snacks and lunches

The only snacks allowed in school are a piece of fresh fruit or vegetable. This is provided free for KS1, and the school wishes to continue this healthy option through KS2. Dried fruit is ok, but can be rather sticky and sweet. There should be no rice cakes or cereal bars. Children will be informed of this in school.

The nutritional content of the cooked school lunches is balanced out across the week even though they do offer chips and cookies, for example, as part of the week's menu. Independent Catering has to conform to strict Government guidelines in this respect, and will send out the nutritional guidelines to parents. Gluten free meals need to be booked in advance with the kitchen, which can offer more options than Jacket Potato and Pasta, but parents need to discuss options with the Catering Manager.

Reps reported that on occasions the pasta was not cooked properly. The school has a Packed Lunch Guidelines leaflet on the website for parents to refer to with regards to what could, and what should not be brought into school in a packed lunch.

Parents were reminded that the KS2 classes went into the dinner hall on a rota, so if a class goes in last one week, they will not be in last the following week. The rota is available for parents to see on the outside of Y3 Mulberry classroom on the playground.

### Email Policy

Reps advised that parents believed they were not now able to contact teachers at all. The use of teachers email addresses was stopped as parents expected replies from teachers at unreasonable hours of the

evening. Parents should now be emailing teachers via the office where they will be forwarded on to staff. If parents do not get a reply from teachers after a reasonable time, please email the office again to chase in the first instance. The office email inbox is emptied by the end of each day.

### Clubs

Club spaces were allocated as they have been in the past. Reps expressed disappointment in the spaces allocated for Book Club, but it was explained that because of the nature of the club there were fewer places, and because Kelly is now on Maternity leave, there is not an option to run a second club. Next year, if there is great demand we may run 2 groups for 3 terms each, as we do for other oversubscribed clubs such as Art.

### Year 5 Residential last year

Reps advised that Mrs Spoor had suggested that due to last year's Y5 residential being shortened and taking place in the school grounds, there would be an 'additional extra 2 days after the 11+ to de-stress'. Mrs Owen was not aware that this had been mentioned or suggested, and unfortunately is not able to book anything at short notice. Mrs Owen will discuss the issue with Mr Bailey.

### SQUID

Parents were advised that there have been some software problems with SQUID this term which are being sorted out, but if parents had any queries, they should sign into their child's SQUID account and from there, there is an option to email them directly.

### Whiteboards

Reps asked of children could be moved regularly to be able to see the whiteboards in class. Mrs Owen will raise this with staff at the staff briefing. She explained that children may rotate for subjects etc. anyway, there is no hard and fast rule as it is up to each teacher to organise what works best for their class. If a child has an EHCP, then this is also factored in.

### Staffing in Classes

Reps asked how communication works when teachers job-share. Mrs Owen explained they have a contact book to record information for each other, there is much communication done by email, and they share the planning. The teaching assistants also have a 'hand-over' time already in place.

Reps asked why some classes have more TA's than others. Mrs Owen explained that the classes with more TAs have more SEN children. The class ratio is 1:15 and so a class will have a Teacher and 1 teaching assistant in place. If there are SEN children in class, then depending on their needs, there will be extra TAs. She emphasized that as a school we are very well staffed.

Year 5 parents would like to see continuity of TAs to ensure teaching was consistent.

### Spelling

Spellings in school will settle down after the holidays. Teachers have been assessing where children are. The information from the Parents Spelling workshop will be on the website shortly. A lot of parents felt this was informative.

Year 1 parents felt that 30 spellings over the term was too many for the children, even though they were tested on 5 per week, because they were then tested on all 30 at the end of term. One parent suggested a Spelling Club option. Teachers already have lots to do, but Mrs Owen would discuss any plans by parents who were interested in setting up and running this.

#### Drop-in sessions/Assemblies/Checking books

Drop in sessions are once a week and all teachers have communicated which day their own session is to parents at the starts of term. They are from 3.15-4pm.

Mrs Owen has already announced that assemblies for parents to watch are being reduced and will take place in the summer term only. Parents asked if they could be more often than this as they felt it was important for the children to be given the opportunity to stand up and talk in public. They appreciated how much work was put into the assemblies by teaching staff, but were happy to have more frequent but more low key assemblies for children in order that children regular opportunities to stand up and talk to everyone. Parents also appreciated how much work goes into the KS1 Nativity each year.

#### Walking to school/Gates

The school allows Year 6 children to walk to and from school by themselves if they and parents wish. It is up to the parents if they wish Year 5 children to do this, although school would like confirmation in writing before they do this for the first time so we know they will be walking alone. There has recently been an incident involving a Y7 pupil being approached by men on the way to school, and so school will speak to the children about Stranger Danger.

Nursery parents are let into the side gate at 8.45am by staff but there are several parents who then leave through the gate and do not shut it after them. Please ensure the gate is closed.

It was suggested that the metal side gate into the playground be opened at 4.15pm for parents to be allowed through to collect children from after school clubs, as it is a little off-putting for the children to be taking part in a club and have parents looking on. This will be put into operation after the holiday.

Reps felt that general behaviour by children needed to be improved outside the school gates, specifically Year 6 children, to remind them they are representing the school and so should not be shouting down the road etc. Mrs Owen will speak to Mr Bailey re this. Also there are parents who stand smoking immediately outside the school gates which reps felt was not appropriate, so Mrs Owen will talk to them re smoking across the road instead.

#### Homework

Reps felt this was better, more consistent.

#### Discipline

Mrs Owen explained there were a variety of ways in which this was dealt with. There was now a new 'Ladder' system which had been set up in all classrooms to ensure continuity across the school for children, and for staff who work in more than one class during the week. Mrs Owen will explain how it works in the newsletter. Yellow spots in the playground are still in use, but training for the Midday Supervisors for the Ladder system will take place.

### Walk on Wednesday

The criteria for which class wins each week will change during the year in order that the same class will not win week after week, and therefore leave the other classes feeling unmotivated.

### Maths Passports

The information for this is on the school website. Children do these every day in class. There will be a parent workshop on Maths, as there was on Spellings.

### SENCo

For parent information, the first point of contact for SEN related queries should be Ellen Stock, either by email through the office, letter, telephone or face to face if she is available. Mr Gunn is in the SENCo office on Thursdays. The new SENCo starts here for one day a week after half term, and she will invite all SEN parents to come in and meet her in due course to discuss PPP's etc.

### Various

- Mrs Owen has set up a steering group set up to change the school logo to update the image in the community. There will be no cost to parents and further details will be announced in due course.
- Y5 Pine raffle has been stopped, and replaced with the Ladders scheme as mentioned above, which simplifies the system.
- There will be a Meet the Teacher meeting set up for Reception parents soon
- The school now has a new strapline and values which are on the website
- Reps reported that many classes are too hot.
- Reps felt that the consultations were held too early in the school year. Mrs Owen explained that in the Spring and Summer there would be more information about the children's progress available. The PPP's will be done separately for SEN children as doing them in the consultation times was not appropriate.

Date of next meeting is Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015