

Parent Council meeting Friday 4th October 2013

Attending:

Paul Ayliffe (school)
Jo Harbour (school)
Helen Doran (Chair) Yr 3
Lotty Gladstone Yr 4
Gill Bunting (minutes) Yr 2
Amy Ellis Yr 6
Diane Rowland Yr 6 (second half)
Roger Wulferstan (link Governor)
Debbie Goodrick Yr 1 (second half)
Efrat Liberman Yr 1

Claire Hancock Yr 5

Apologies:

Kate Noble Yr 2
Sima Shimi Yr 5
Sarah Leigh Yr 2
Rachel Watson Yr 4
Zara Jahwad Yr 2
Emma Smith Yr 5
Tanis Bendall Yr 3
Charlotte Lestienne Yr 5

1. Actions from the last meeting/update

- FAQs have been passed to Kate Vadhia (School Bursar) to be uploaded on the school website
- Photos and contact e-mails of reps to be put in classroom windows for new academic year
- An article in the school newsletter announcing the FAQs and inviting new reps to join the Council to be sent once photos have been posted
- We would like to welcome a new parent rep to the council – Lottie Spires for RC.

2. Homework

Miss Harbour gave some background to the new homework policy. At the end of last term a team met to review the existing system, which was not consistent between classes and year groups. The aim of the new system is:

- To improve consistency across juniors
- Engage children who had previously not been doing homework (and were consequently spending time in homework clubs)
- Focus on the core skills needed in maths and literacy to support reading
- Make maths in particular more relevant to children by incorporating into everyday life
- The children will get new maths and literacy challenges in the spring and summer terms.

Maths

Key Instant Recall Facts (KIRF)

The aim is to reinforce skills learnt in school by frequent practice.

KIRF's should be practised three times a week for a couple of minutes each time, although there is recognition that this is not always practical.

There are two KIRF sheets, one for years 1, 2 (infants – Key stage 1) and a different level for years 3,

4, 5 and 6 (juniors – key stage 2) hence the range of ‘difficulty’. The children should know what level they are expected to be working at. If this is not clear to them please ask the class teacher.

There will be a new sheet, covering a different topic (probably based on multiplication tables) at the start of next term.

Maths at Home

The aim of this is for children to understand and relate to how maths is used in everyday life (e.g. shopping, telling the time).

The parent council asked if it would be possible to provide some ideas and resources to help parents with this. This received a positive response, but will take some time to develop. Parents are very welcome to send suggestions or ideas that worked well to the school via the parent council Reps.

The parent council asked whether the Mathematics web site was still in use. A decision has been taken not to re-new the schools subscription, mainly for financial reasons. Links to similar, free web resources can be found on the school website

http://www.mayfield.cambs.sch.uk/menu5.php?WEBYEP_DI=4#links

There was a query about helping children when they got stuck, as the methods taught are often very different from those which parents learnt. There is also some information about this on the school website, at the bottom of the same page <http://www.mayfield.cambs.sch.uk/> [HYPERLINK "http://www.mayfield.cambs.sch.uk/menu5.php?WEBYEP_DI=4#links"](http://www.mayfield.cambs.sch.uk/menu5.php?WEBYEP_DI=4#links) [HYPERLINK "http://www.mayfield.cambs.sch.uk/menu5.php?WEBYEP_DI=4#links"](http://www.mayfield.cambs.sch.uk/menu5.php?WEBYEP_DI=4#links) [menu5.php?WEBYEP_DI=4#links](http://www.mayfield.cambs.sch.uk/menu5.php?WEBYEP_DI=4#links) , but parents should be aware that there is a major update of the curriculum planned for next September and this document may be revised as part of that process.

Literacy

Miss Harbour re-stated the central aim of the literacy challenges is to encourage reading for pleasure by engaging children in conversations/written work about the books they have read.

Again there are two sheets, one for years 1 and 2 (infants) and a different level for years 3, 4, 5 and 6 (juniors).

The most important part of literacy homework is **encouraging your child to read** either with them or independently if they are able. The idea is that the literacy homework then follows on from reading. It doesn't have to be written work every week – if a discussion with your child/acting out a chapter is better for them then just make a note in the homework book that this is what you have done.

Action: Miss Harbour (as maths lead) and Miss Murray (as literacy read) will provide a full response to the comments collected by the parent council on homework to share with the rest of the school.

3. Targets and target sessions

The parent council is concerned that target sessions have been reduced to 15mins, which makes it difficult for parents with children in more than one class who have sessions on the same day. **Action:** Lotty Gladstone to clarify timings with the school and add FAQ on target sessions to the parent council section of the school website.

Action: parent council to ask the school office to put a sign on the junior and infant school gates on the day of the target sessions as a reminder to parents.

4. Website upgrade

Clarification needed from the school, but an update is thought to be unlikely before the new curriculum is introduced September 2014.

Action: Need to discuss the process for adding items such as this to the School Develop Plan with the link Governor.

5. Google Groups

Are new parents automatically added to the Google groups when they complete all the other forms on joining the school?

Split between messages coming from class teachers on Google groups – some year groups only receive messages from one class teacher. This can mean that half a year group never receive a message from their own class teacher which makes them seem out of touch with parents who don't pick up/drop off children (currently seen as an issue in Yr 2 and Yr 5).

Action: clarify with the school office whether new parents are automatically added to Google groups

Action: clarification from the school on the policy for teachers providing their individual email addresses to parents (as opposed to correspondence via the school office).

6. Meet the Teacher sessions

Some concern was expressed that this year's format for some classes gave less opportunity for providing information than in previous years. The timing was also particularly difficult for parents with younger children.

This may have been in response to poor attendance at recent curriculum evenings and the 'online safety' sessions.

Action: Clarify with the school what the plans are for next year?

7. Year 5 challenge

Parents from last year have concerns that the amount of time and effort put into the Yr 5 challenge are still not justified from an educational (what are the skills children are learning by doing this) and financial perspective (spend by some Yr 5 parents on fund raising activities is more than the reduction in the final PGL bill).

Action: Parent reps in Yr 6 to ask for feedback on last year's challenge to be sent in an e-mail to Mr Fenton by current Yr 5 reps for follow up.

8. Parent Council Terms of Reference and split role of the Chair.

The Premises and Pupil Wellbeing Committee (Governors) at their meeting on the 7th October agreed a revised Terms of Reference for the parent council. The main changes are to termly meetings from half-term meetings and Judith Greenwood, Chair of the Governing Body, and previous Chair of the Premises and Pupils Wellbeing Committee will be the new link governor for the parent council.

The Chair role is now split into 3:

- **Secretariat** – sourcing meeting dates, minute taking, booking rooms via school office, minutes onto school website. Maintaining parent council e-mail list and ensuring website and classroom posters are up to date.
- **Communications with other parent reps & school** – gathering agenda items, drafting generic messages from minutes for other reps to post on Google groups. Sending agenda and any supporting information to school lead before parent council meetings, checking any text for website/ school newsletter/Google groups with school.
- **Chair** – chairing meetings, deciding on agenda items (clarifying which issues need to go back to class teachers, refer to FAQs or school office). Sign off of minutes/other comms, link to governors, fielding requests made of parent council, helping other reps to work through

issues such as recruiting new parent council members. Responsible for keeping parent council to terms of reference.

Action: the parent council need to agree who will take on these new roles before October half term.

9. MAPs

Gill Bunting has agreed to be the liaison between MAPs and the parent council to feed in ideas of what could work well for fund-raising opportunities, for example, refreshments at sports day or other events linked to the school calendar (e.g. Christmas plays and concerts).

10. AOB

Concern was expressed that parent helpers have in the past not been clearly briefed about how to deal with difficult situations on school trips. This issue is being resolved through the Premises and Pupil Wellbeing committee.