

Thorndown Primary School - Parent Forum Minutes
Thursday 19th January 2017

Present: Heather Wood (Chair), Vicci Godbold (Headteacher), Rob Jagger (Governor), Cathy Sweet, Sam Poole, Caroline Skinner, Pawel Kurkiewicz, Louise Keeley, Russell Burgess, Clare Lorman-Hall, Angela Cook, Helen Cooper and Omair Nawaz

Apologies: Jenny Cowens

1. Introductions and minutes of previous meeting.

Updates to the list of parent reps:

Year Reps

Foundation – Jenny Cowens

Year 1 – Pawel Kurkiewicz

Year 2 – Russell Burgess and Sam Poole

Year 3- Pawel Kurkiewicz

Year 4 – Russell Burgess

Year 5 – Clare Lorman-Hall

Year 6 -

2. Home/school communication (Discussion with Mrs Cook)

Mrs Cook asked for feedback to improve home/school communications. The following suggestions were agreed:

Email - Parents requested more targeted emails where possible. Mrs Cook will send out separate e-mails to each year group with attachments that are only relevant to that particular year. If parents have children in more than one year group they will receive more than one email. It was also suggested that documents could be prefixed with the relevant year to save opening all correspondence (although this may not be needed if emails are targeted per year group).

Parents preferred to receive key correspondence on a single day of the week (with the occasional additional email) rather than having lots of smaller emails.

Thorndown Lowdown – this is popular and useful. It could be improved further by including links to key sites such as the online payment system and parent consultation booking system. Mrs Cook offered to include links in future editions.

Social Media – Parents find the Facebook page useful, particularly the fact that it can generate event reminders. However, parents do not want to replace the emails with Facebook as not everyone has been able to receive information (or uses Facebook). Mrs Cook was in agreement that both email and Facebook will continue.

The possibility of opening a Twitter account was raised. In addition to providing information to parents it can serve as a marketing tool for the school including recruitment. There was some debate as to how useful and well used Twitter would be and concerns about the potential for misuse (in terms of lack of control about followers –v- the closed, controlled access to the Facebook page). Miss Godbold will speak to staff at other primary schools whom use Twitter to get some feedback as to how successful it is.

Online payment and booking systems – Mrs Cook and Mrs Cooper are investigating new software packages because the school currently use different systems for payment for trips/dinners etc and for booking parent consultations. Overall parents were happy with the existing systems but having separate systems does not work as well for school staff. Mrs Cook will include the web links in the Thorndown Lowdown.

FOTS – parents like the fact that the FOTS newsletter is still paper based because it contains quizzes/competitions for children to enter. However, it would be good if there could be more photos of FOTS events on Facebook for publicity and also feedback on the amount that FOTS raise at each event. Mr Burgess will pass this feedback to Rebecca Burgess – FOTS Chairperson.

Actions:

Mrs Cook – to send out year specific emails and add links to the Thorndown Lowdown.

Miss Godbold – to investigate the use of Twitter in primary schools

Russell Burgess – feedback the points relating to FOTS

3.Update – School Uniform Providers (Mrs Cooper)

The school now has two uniform providers in order to provide choice and cater for a range of budgets. The providers are Price and Buckland and Tesco. Mrs Cook will provide web links in future Lowdowns. Overall the feedback from parents was that they were happy with the service from these providers. It was noted that the Tesco service had greatly improved from the previous year.

Miss Godbold is considering having coloured shirts for PE instead of white shirts (children to wear their house colour). This suggestion was well received by parents in attendance.

4. Feedback – School Dinners (Mrs Cooper)

A new cook has recently taken up post and this did lead to under catering on one occasion. This has been rectified although further adjustment to quantities may be required.

If parents have concerns about the menus then it is possible to visit the Lunchtime UK website and provide feedback. <http://www.lunchtime.co.uk/>

Overall parents were satisfied with the meal service but sometimes had concerns as to whether children were choosing varied and balanced meals. Parents are to be invited in for a meal with their children to help address this concern. The menu cards for Reception children were popular – Miss Godbold explained that these were introduced because not all Reception children were tall enough to see the food choices on offer – the menu cards may not be needed throughout the whole year as the children become more used to the meal system (and tall enough to see the food on offer!)

Action: Parents to be invited to a class meal with their child. Reception parents to be invited first. Mrs Cooper will also ask Lunchtime whether they can provide meal taster pots again to encourage children to try different food.

6. AOB

Concerns were raised by Year 5 homework and whether the topics were always appropriate. Mr Sweeney will arrange a meeting or drop in session specifically for Year 5 parents to discuss their concerns/suggestions.

A new sculpture will be arriving that was commissioned when the new building was designed.

Parents also asked if the school sign could be replaced with something more modern and in-keeping with the design of the school. If this is important to parents it will need to be fundraised for as the school do not have funds themselves for this.

The new climbing frame funded by FOTS will be arriving soon – enough money has now been raised and the children have chosen the colour.

7. Future Topics

- Growth Mindset (the power of yet). Miss Godbold will include a video link introducing the topic to encourage parents to attend.
- Philosophy for children

8. Date of next meeting- Thursday 2nd March 7.15pm in Dragonfly Classroom

All parents are members of the parent forum and are welcome to attend the meetings. If you cannot attend but wish to raise an issue you can email parentforum@thorndown.cambs.sch.uk post a note in the suggestion box in the lobby or raise it with your class/year representative.