

**Thorndown Primary School - Parent Forum Minutes**  
**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017**

**Present:** Heather Wood (Chair), Vicci Godbold (Head teacher), Rob Jagger (Governor), Jenny Cowens (Secretary), Amanda Fox (Teacher), Cathy Sweet, Pawel Kurkiewicz , Louise Keeley,

**Apologies:** Clare Lorman-Hall, Sam Poole

**1. Introductions and minutes of previous meeting.**

Nothing to report here.

**2. Philosophy for Children presentation by Amanda Fox**

*Philosophy (from Greek φιλοσοφία, philosophia, literally "love of wisdom") is the study of general and fundamental problems concerning matters such as existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language.*

Another very interesting and discussion provoking presentation by a member of the teaching staff. About 12 months ago in a bid to introduce Philosophy for Children at Thorndown Mrs Fox attended a training course. Since then she has shared her knowledge and understanding to the wider teaching team and it is slowly permeating throughout the school and popping up in all years and across all subjects where appropriate. In a nutshell it aims to provide an opportunity for all pupils to ask (and answer) any question on any topic. In many cases the children create and select their own questions. There are no right or wrong answers, everyone is equal and included, everyone can have an opinion and all opinions will be respected. It can be a very formal affair where a full blown Enquiry is initiated or simply asking the 'right' open question to encourage wider and deeper thinking and perhaps challenge preconceived ideas. The teacher does not have the answer!

It runs beautifully alongside the principals of Growth Mindset and Mastery and the children have really embraced it. It also leads very well into Ethics, which is studied in secondary school.

Mrs Fox stated it had been a real privilege to facilitate the Enquiries and listen to the pupils' ideas and discussions and how the process has really allowed them to be freethinking and at the same time taught tolerance towards different views and ideas. Some of the thoughts, ideas and questions have been astounding considering the age and experience of the children involved. She is trying to keep a diary/scrapbook which is available for all to view on request.

Most of the parents present already had examples of how philosophy was being practiced at home and Mrs Fox provided some great 'Family Conversation Starters' for all ages. These will be available on the internet together with a copy of Mrs Fox's presentation.

### **3. AOB**

#### **Ofsted**

Ms Godbold and Mr Jagger briefly discussed the excellent and well deserved Ofsted report. It should be noted that the 'Good' ratings received were nearly all a whisker away from an 'Outstanding'. Following the previous inspection, the school wanted to make sure that all areas that 'required improvement' were covered and therefore really focused on the core subjects and principals and getting the 'basics' right. This they did with bells on! The areas of concern highlighted by the inspectors were in some cases felt to have arisen due to the very nature of being inspected! It was a rather false environment in which teachers were perhaps risk adverse. The staff and governors feel they can now really challenge the curriculum and encourage pupils to 'go deeper' and broaden their understanding as apparently you can't go up the curriculum. Much work has already been achieved in this area with preschool joining the school and new teaching practices such as Mastery of Maths, Growth Mindset and Philosophy. It should be noted that inspectors are not allowed to endorse these practices by officially naming them in the report (much to the frustration of the teaching staff!) However, there were favourable and complementary comments made in the report that could be directly related back to them, for example 'It's OK to make mistakes'.

#### **Homework**

A parent raised concerns that there were not enough Maths homework choices for Year 3. Ms Godbold to follow up.

#### **Class Assemblies**

A request was received to vary the Class Assembly days i.e. not always on a Monday. Ms Godbold advised that Mondays were chosen for very practical reasons. Monday is the only day on which teachers do not have PPA tasks and are therefore available to attend and co-ordinate the assemblies. Therefore no variation is possible unfortunately.

### **4. Future Topics**

- Transitioning for Pupils at Year End

### **5. Date of next meeting- Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June 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](mailto:parentforum@thorndown.cambs.sch.uk) post a note in the suggestion box in the lobby or raise it with your class/year representative.

**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 –