

**Thorndown Primary School - Parent Forum Minutes**  
**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

**Present:** Heather Wood (Chair), Vicci Godbold (Head teacher), Claire Gerrard (Deputy), Cathy Sweet, Sam Poole, Jenny Cowens, Pawel Kurkiewicz, Louise Keeley

**Apologies:** Rob Jagger (Governor), Georgina Pope, Amanda Mumford, Russell Burgess

1. Introductions and welcome by Heather Wood

**2. Key topic – Review of school year and the year ahead**

Ms Godbold highlighted the areas of focus over the past year:

**Mastery in Maths** The new maths curriculum is all about the depth of understanding rather than the breadth or quantity of knowledge. The ability to reason and make connections is critical. These skills will help to create critical thinkers who can reason and draw conclusions and this is important in meeting the future needs of industry and business.

**Cursive Handwriting** – During the past year there was an emphasis on developing a cursive handwriting style because it will help with the flow of written work.

**Pride in Presentation** – emphasis on the importance of personal presentation ie ensuring children wear school uniform and also about children taking pride in their work .

**New Assessment (Age Related Expectations)** – there were national changes to the way pupil attainment was assessed. At Thorndown the classification is OT (on track), GD (greater depth) and WT (working towards). Most children will be OT but for children who are not, other support will be available. This will be discussed with parents individually at the Parent Consultations.

Ms Godbold and Mrs Gerrard also set out some of the areas the school will focus on (or continue to focus on ) over the coming year:

- **The emphasis on mastery in maths and the cursive writing style** will continue. Thorndown continues to be at the forefront of the developments in teaching Maths.
- Children undertake group reading in class with greater emphasis on questioning the text to help deepen their understanding. Parents who were present noted that their children seemed to understand what they were reading more fully and would even stop and re-read sentences if they thought they didn't make sense.

- Emphasis on grammar and also on developing cross curricular links with writing and applying knowledge learned in one area of work to other lessons.
- Growth mindset - teaching children that their abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work and are not fixed or dictated by brains and talent.
- More focus on science and on e safety.
- Open classroom sessions will continue as these have proved popular.
- Pre-school has become part of the main school and so there will be improved links between the learning in Reception and pre-school particularly in relation to the Early Years Curriculum.

### **3. Parent Forum**

A survey was sent to parents in July to establish why attendance was not better at the Parent Forum. The main reason given was that the time was not suitable. However, after discussion it was agreed that other times (ie straight after school) would not be any better for some working parents. It was agreed by all present to make the start time slightly earlier on a trial basis and to ensure that people were aware of the finish time in case there was also concern about the length of the meeting. The next meeting will therefore be 7pm-8.30 pm. There was no feedback in relation to the name of the forum although those present noted that it was important to try and ensure that future meeting topics were able to describe as clearly as possible what the meeting would be about.

#### **Future Topics:**

- **November – Let’s get Physical** – information about the sport opportunities available
- **Subsequent topics:** Food/Healthy eating including snacks, lunches etc, Ofsted feedback

### **4. AOB – Home school diaries and communication**

Ms Godbold explained why there had been some changes to the arrangements with home school diaries:

- The format of the diaries has changed – although the previous style diaries were popular they were very expensive in comparison to the new diaries. Feedback from the parents present was that the new diaries are still working.
- Home school diaries will continue for Yrs 1& 2. Diaries will also be re-instated for Yr 3 as this was originally requested at the Jan 2016 Parent Forum. However, diaries will no longer continue for Yr 4 children as the

teaching staff do not perceive that they are used as much and that other methods of communication between home and school can be used (ie a note to the class teacher or via the office)

- Ms Godbold advised that these changes had been made in order to provide financial savings following the decision to move away from mixed aged teaching to single year teaching which was a costly decision but ultimately better in terms of teaching outcomes.
- **General Contact/messages** - Ms Godbold advised that if a matter needed to be brought to a teacher's attention promptly ie different collection arrangements from school, it is best to send in a note direct to the teacher. The office are happy to deal with messages and emails but, due to the volume received, it can sometimes take several hours at least for these to be processed.
- **Accident Notification** – the school have moved to electronic notification ie email or via the Gateway app rather than the paper accident slips as these were sometimes mislaid in a child's book bag. The electronic notification should be a more prompt method of notifying parents.

#### **5. Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> November, 7pm, 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 representative.