

Parent Forum
17th May 2022 2.00PM
HATFIELD PEVEREL INFANT SCHOOL

In Attendance:

Dr John Guy (Chair of Governors)
Mrs Mary Gurr (Headteacher)
Mrs J Ellis
Mrs Salmon
Mrs McIntosh-Brown
Mrs C Jennings (School Business Manager)

MG welcomed everyone and thanked them for their attendance. She introduced Dr John Guy as our chair of governors who would be joining us for this meeting.

Before starting with parent comments, MG asked the group for their opinions on the new guidance for changing the terminology around the children's sexual bodily parts as set out in the RSE (Relationship and Sex Education) Policy. She assured the group that although this is the name of the policy, there is no Sex Education taught in KS1. However, guidance from the DfE now recommends that teachers begin using the correct terminology for body parts such as penis, testicles, vagina and vulva. MG asked the group how they felt about this; Mrs McIntosh-Brown said that in hospitals they refer to the correct names of the body parts and in doing so at school also, this will remove the taboo around these words. Mrs Salmon agreed and said that this should be done from Reception. All said that it can be awkward when children say these words in a public setting, as they are deemed as 'funny' because they are not taught them, but by introducing this early on, there will be no taboo and it will just become the norm. All agreed that this should be implemented within the school. Mrs McIntosh-Brown asked what would happen if parents disagreed about this change; MG said that she appreciates that some parents may feel uncomfortable with this and think that the children are too young. In any case, this will go to a parent consultation which will be published on the school website and all parental views will be considered before making a final decision around the implementation. Mrs Salmon asked how these terms would be taught to the children and MG confirmed that this will be done by following the published PSHE association lesson plans, appropriate for the ages of the children at the school.

Following this, the group moved onto the year group parental feedback; Mrs Pawsey was unable to attend the meeting, however, did send in the following comments/ feedback for Year 1.

Year 1 Comments:

- A few parents had asked whether children are being encouraged to fill up their water bottles during the day now the weather is becoming increasingly warmer. MG confirmed that there are water dispensers in all classes and the children are encouraged to fill up their own bottles. However, some children will ask the staff to help when doing this.
- Parents had also been discussing the potential mixing of the classes moving up to the next year in September and wondered if a decision had been made on this. MG confirmed that a decision had been made, however wanted to make sure that all the parents had the same, accurate information about this and so will be sending out details in the coming weeks. MG did say that the mixing of the classes is for the benefit of the children and appreciates some parents feeling worried, as this has not been considered in the last few years due to the lost schooling. The group was divided, with some members feeling that the children had only just begun to settle and make friendships, whilst others felt that it would be beneficial and support the children's adaptability and resilience. MG confirmed that prior to any mixing of classes, the children will be asked who their closest friends are, and they will be put into classes with at least one of the children they have chosen. MG said that she wants to send out this information detailing the reasons behind this and how it would be done. All agreed that this would be a good idea.
- Parents had thanked the staff for the class assemblies as these were enjoyed by all and it was wonderful to see each child shining.

- Reading records were discussed, and there was a feeling from some parents that there was not enough teacher feedback or acknowledgement of the children's reading at home. Mrs Salmon had said that she thinks parents want more information on progress and asked if this was being monitored. MG confirmed that this is always monitored and goes on the children's records for assessments. MG said that whilst the children's progress is being monitored, she can understand this and has in fact pre-empted this by ordering new reading records. These have space specifically for teacher feedback and comments which will hopefully eliminate this issue. All agreed that next steps are important, and MG suggested that every time a child moves up onto a new colour, they get a printout detailing the expectations that they need to meet on that colour. All felt that this was a good idea. Mrs McIntosh-Brown did ask whether there was a reading rota as there doesn't seem to be a pattern when she looks in her son's record. MG said that the Reception children do not take part in guided reading until the summer term, but will read at least once or twice a week. Years 1 and 2 have guided reading twice a week and there are individual readers on a rota. It was mentioned that some parents feel that their children can read competently at the level that they are on but are not moved up to the next colour. Dr Guy asked whether the reason for this could be the comprehension as mentioned before and MG confirmed that, although some children can read the words fluently, they may not understand the feelings, reasoning and inference that they are expected to before moving up. This is where the new level descriptors/expectations should improve the understanding around this for parents.
- Finally, it was asked what the Covid Recovery Premium funding had been spent on. This had been discussed at the previous Parent Forum meeting and so details can be found in the minutes from that meeting. However, MG reiterated that the majority had been spent on staffing and increased provision to support the children following their extended time out of school. Mrs Ellis mentioned how much the speech and language provision had helped the children, which was something that had been increased throughout the school and funded by this.

Year 2 comments

- The transition between Year 2 and the junior school was mentioned as some of the parents were wondering what had been arranged. MG said that Mrs Fairbairn and Mrs DuTaut (Deputy head in the junior school) are still working on the timetable and there is always a good transition. Parents will be informed of this after half term. The main date for transition across the county is 6th of July. One parent had asked whether the children who had chosen not to move up to the junior school would go to their new school on that day also. MG said that she could not comment on other school's transition arrangements, however, she would allow a visit to other schools. She is not aware of any children going elsewhere.
- A few parents had mentioned that they were unsure whether the school discussing the Ukrainian war with the children was the right thing to do. MG said that there were not any lessons on this; however the school promotes an ethos where children are able and feel safe to open up about things that concern them. This had been brought up and sparked a discussion on the topic, which was then raised again in assembly. MG appreciated that in future an explanation to parents about how the school may address sensitive or world events as part of the PSHE curriculum, can be sent to parents.

Reception Comments

- One parent had asked whether the children will still need to come into school in their PE kit on their swimming days. MG confirmed that this was the case.
- Another question was raised about the ratios around swimming and how many adults would be present. The group were informed that the swimming teacher is fully qualified and can have up to twelve children in the pool at any one time; however there will always be at least two staff and one parent helper with the children. We are still hoping for volunteers.
- A few parents were asking about Mrs Chapman's leaving date and what will happen at the end of term with regards to cover for the class. MG said that a communication would go out about this in the coming week.
- All parents wanted to express how great they felt the reception trip had been and that it had been organised well and all the children had had a fantastic time.

- Parents had asked whether the hole in the reception toilet ceiling had been fixed as the children had been saying that a 'monster' comes out of this. Mr Keenan had been informed and it will be checked that this has been done (this is now done).
- Finally, Grandparents morning had been a huge success and all that had attended had thoroughly enjoyed themselves. However, it was mentioned that for those children who do not have grandparents, or have them, but live far away, that they could bring in another family member. It was also suggested that the name of this would be changed to reflect this. MG said that she understood, however those children are usually 'adopted' by other grandparents and have an equally enjoyable time. Dr Guy, who had attended the morning said that he had a number of children with him, and it was enjoyable for all. The forum agreed that there would not be a change of name but that in future if parents are worried they can always contact Mrs Gurr.

MG thanked all for attending.

Meeting concluded at 3.10pm.