

## Parent forum minutes 3.2.2022

**The parent forum is run with the representatives from the parent body, the headteacher and governors. It is run on a 'what works well' and 'even better if' system allowing for acknowledgement of the good, questions about current practice and sharing of ideas to improve outcomes for the children.**

Present: Mrs Gurr (MG), Miss McIntosh (CMc), Mrs Craig(JC), Mrs Pawsey(JP) Mrs Salmon(HS)  
Apologies Gemma Winwood(GW)

MG welcomed everyone. MG asked if there was a way to encourage more parents to come and join the parent forum. We agreed that attending is a positive experience and a great chance to share ideas and talk things through. The more sharing of ideas the better for the children so we hope more parents will come forward to join us.

### **Reception**

Very positive feedback about the sign language being taught and reports of children also using what they have learnt beyond school

Parents are impressed with progress of their children and how happy they are going into school and coming out of school

Parents are really enjoying the homework and the use of Tapestry for seeing and sharing learning with, and from school.

A parent wanted to thank all staff who went 'above and beyond' to help their child who needed support with eating.

School meals are so much better and the children are really enjoying them. JP confirmed this, as a midday assistant, who sees the children eating well, enjoying their food and trying more.

Q: Is it possible to let parents know ahead of time who will be taking the classes when teacher is off? Is it the LSAs?

A: Yes, this can be done if the absence is scheduled and has been in the past. Absence is a challenge. It has been almost impossible to find any supply teachers across Essex, due to Covid, so the majority of cover is done by LSAs with the parallel teacher co-ordinating the learning. We are extremely fortunate that we have very experienced LSAs in all year groups.

Q: Are the school accepting donations of books as some of the STAR books are very old and worn?

A: This was halted due to Covid. We do regularly cull the books and would be grateful if parents let teachers know if books have pages missing or are ripped or torn. We can accept books after half term, however there are rules around the books we accept. MG will mention this on a newsletter.

Q: Is there a hole in the ceiling in the toilet in reception? The children say there is a monster coming in the toilet? Are the toilets blocked? The children say they cannot go to the toilet.

A: No the toilet is not blocked. Perhaps the children are not flushing so please remind children, as we do, to flush or let the teacher know. There are definitely no monsters and MG will look to see if there is a hole! Children have wonderful imaginations.

Q: Were the stickers from (donations for books) the last parents evening put into the books, as parents have not seen their child's sticker?

A: Yes, they were all put into books. The books were red or yellow books, so it will depend on the books the children are on. Many of the reception start on pink books, but we did not need new pink books.

Q: Are the children being encouraged to drink?

A: The same as the last parent forum. Yes they are. MG explained there is no more that can be done to 'make' the children drink. They are told to drink whenever they want (unless they are on the carpet when they just need to put their hand up and ask); they have a drink at snack time, after play, during lunch-when they are given cups of water in the hall, not from their bottle; reminded to drink when they come in from lunch. Teachers and other staff will see these minutes and continue to do this. MG also asked parents to consider the size of the bottle they are sending in with their children.

Q: When are the children 'tested' on their buzz words? Parents are also not sure when to move on.

A: The children are assessed while the teacher is reading with them as a matter of course, but they are assessed specifically each half term and certificates given out. However, if your child is confident with one set please move onto the next set. The certificates will 'catch up'. Sometimes a child will receive three or four at once in assembly. There is no other way to do this without an adult spending all day everyday assessing and writing certificates. MG will ask Mrs Chapman to reiterate this on Tapestry.

Q: Do parents have to apply somewhere for specific funding to support their child? There has been information about some children having access to funding for extra support from the government.

A: There are two types of extra funding that has been made available to schools for support post Lockdown. The first is the 'catch up premium', which is for the benefit of all children and the school reports to the DFE on how this is used. This has been used predominantly for providing extra LSA hours to support children both within class but also to provide extra or 'overlearning' in small group interventions. These groups change depending on the need assessed by the teacher, and for our children, has meant a work around communication, speech and language, phonics, reading and social and emotional support. The second is the funding from the National Tutoring Programme, only made available to younger children this year. This has been allocated to us and children have been contacted to receive this support, which is provided after school for one hour a week. The allocation for us is only 9 children.

## **Year 1**

Comments sent to the representative that the school is amazing and it is wonderful that the children do so much. Thank you for this.

\*Comment to pass onto the junior school that before and after club are convenient and the children have a lovely time.

The subsidy for clubs to get the children more active is amazing as well. Just a minor issue is that the football club initially missed the subsidy.

Parents are really enjoying coming in to be mystery reader.

Q: Is it possible for children who have speech and language support to have more updates.

A: MG said she would mention this to teachers but parents usually hear at parent's consultation meetings, one plan meetings, or if the children have a visit from speech and language specialist. Parents are of course welcome to ask the teacher for an update if they need more information.

\*Comment to pass onto ISA that the Christmas cards is a lovely idea, but the keen parents missed out on discount, as that was applied after the first day.

Q: Could appointments for parents evening be sent out in the evening? It was suggested that it is not fair for parents who are not able to access their emails during the day.

A: It is a difficult situation for those people; however, the admin and office staff do not work in the evenings. It was acknowledged by the parent forum, that previously, notice was given that the appointments are going out and that this is appreciated. This will continue and the appointments will be sent out as late in the day as possible.

Q: Could the Wednesday afternoon reading be rotated to a different day to allow parents who work on a Wednesday to attend?

A: It is always a logistics question for the timetabling but MG will take it to staff to consider.

Q: Could Year 1 staff give more notice if they want something brought in and be clearer about things they want parents to do with the children or send in.

A: MG will relate that to staff.

Q: Will the cold lunches or sandwiches be brought back?

A: No, not that we are aware of. The menu is a hot one for the year.

Q: Do the children all play together at lunchtime? Suggestion that there are issues between year 2 and year 1 children behind the climbing wall.

A: Yes, they do all play together. The rule is that unless they are on the climbing wall they should not be playing behind it; JP who is a midday assistant confirmed this. MG will reiterate that to all children and ensure staff are continuing to supervise that area specifically. MG also said children need to make sure they tell an adult if there is an issue.

Q: Could it be reported to the FITC that the children are missing football time because they are taking so long to change?

A: MG said she is aware of this and has already mentioned it to the children to focus on being changed quickly and that she will mention it to the football coach to be a little more proactive. Parents can also contact them directly as it is an external club.

Q: Could there be more individual uploads of children engaging in learning on Tapestry, instead of group work?

A: There is no time for support staff and teachers to take photographs, upload individual pictures, and ensure every child is included. If we do this, we would be taking teaching time away from the children. Additionally, there are more opportunities to capture children in groups as they work closely together.

## **Year 2**

Q: What is the rule about bringing a snack to clubs?

A: Children should not bring a snack. Only a drink.

The French club is run by and held in, the junior school. They are all sitting down and their rule is different.

Q: What books should be accessed on the big cat Collins ebooks? Parents mentioned there was not one allocated for their child.

A: The information on the letter says teachers will allocate the books. I have checked the letter and if the children are on Turquoise level or above they will not be allocated a book on Collins, as they are fluent readers. They will bring their book home from school. If you are still not sure, please ask your child's class teacher. There is no general library of books available.

Mrs Gurr asked the parent forum if they had any ideas to engage the parents particularly in Year 2, with Tapestry, homework and Mystery reader. It was suggested that the homework could be more active and creative rather than written. I have now double-checked and the current Year 2 homework challenges include creativity such as poster making, videoing, painting, finding out which is using books or google, making ice-lollies, an exercise routine, a design challenge, and role play. There is also an option for parents to make it as creative as they like. The teachers put a lot of time and effort into planning for this, so are disappointed in the take up, even if it is optional.

The challenges are sent out at the beginning of the term and can be done whenever parents like.

We discussed if we should keep Tapestry for year 2 as the engagement is so minimal from year 2 parents. Current reception representatives said that they would like it to continue for when their child is in year 2. There is little engagement for mystery reader and staff feel the children are missing out. The staff hope more parents will volunteer for mystery reader whichever day they can.

Mrs Gurr thanked the parents for attending the meeting and contributing on behalf of all the parents.