

Parent Forum Notes – Summer 1

Date of Meeting: 5 May 2023

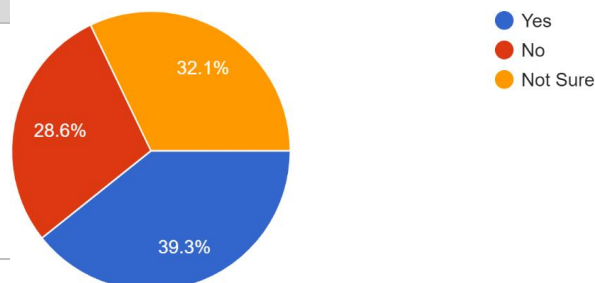
Present: Jen Cooke, Orchid Mantis; Jo James, Blue Tits; Maria Dimech, Ravens; Jo Craig, Siberian Huskies; Charlotte Web, Artic Foxes; Jen Bleeck, Malamutes; Tansy Bailey, Sandpipers; Cath Dixon, Cobras; Vicky Lowrey, Hyenas; Rachel Holloway, Cobras.

Discussion area: Value of Planners (£4500 per year)

– Are they worth it to parents?

Issues...

Parents don't feel teachers check them
Exercise book could do same job, or Google Classrooms
Could be used for parent/teacher communication



Positive feedback...

Reference bits useful

Without a planner it would be harder to track and monitor regular homework.

Encourages to do the reading, can check spellings and prompts us to do TT rockstars

In year 3, we used to get occasion comments on reflections which was really nice and motivational for all concerned

I think the planners are great, lots of useful information and reference for children.

My child seems to like the zones of regulation faces so maybe that's useful

Please don't get rid of the planners. I am so impressed with these. As parents it is our only communication tool that goes directly into the classroom to the teacher. Also my daughter's class teacher looks at these every week to check on reading reflections and other home learning completed. I appreciate they are expensive but I feel they are invaluable.

The children feel the value of it and it is useful to have one place to find all information - spellings, passwords, emotion trackers...

Notes from discussion at meeting:

The school really likes planners and would like to use them more for targets and for parent/teacher communication. It is planned that some information that used to be in the planner will be separated out into a Parent Handbook.

Action: Parent Forum have suggested that the draft planner, or at least a table of contents, be shared with parent forum for comment.

The school notes the comments about regular checking and promotes the practice of teachers reviewing the planner with a group of children each day when they are doing guided reading. It is acknowledged that some teachers are better at this than others.

Discussion area: The recent Parent Survey found that 36% of respondents did not feel that they receive valuable **information about their children's progress**. The school would like to understand what parents/carers feel is missing and how could this need be met?

Issues...

Parents evening slot not long enough/not frequent enough

Would like targets for child

Parents evening not the time to say that a child is slipping behind (we agree!)

Share My Learning – what the focus should be, how to raise concerns

Positive feedback...

Having a face to face parent's evening really helped with this and the take away info sheet which showed areas to work on.

I feel that year 6 have had a good amount of feedback.

You also provide lots of additional info evenings as well if people want to attend.

My son absolutely loves school. Thank you to all the wonderful staff who work so hard to support the children to learn and develop.

Notes from discussion at meeting:

The school agrees that Parents Evening is not the appropriate time to communicate that child is falling behind, this should be discussed much sooner.

The school are looking at communicating targets half termly and including a page in planners with Reading, Writing and Maths objectives at the Autumn and Spring Terms.

No marking in the book doesn't mean that the child hasn't had feedback on their work. The teacher considers where in the journey feedback going to have most impact, eg after first draft of a piece of writing. Verbal feedback is often given, and the School is encouraging teachers to use a green tick to show the work has been looked at.

Teachers should be in the classroom during share my learning, but this is not intended as an informal parents evening. There have had occasions where teacher was on playground duty, this has now been coordinated to ensure this doesn't happen. School will aim to send an MCAS message if the teacher is sick. Share my learning will become more directed, eg focus on one or two subjects with focus questions or prompts to encourage discussion between adult and child.

Moving away from "projects" and will be talking about "wider curriculum". Eg Egyptian project, am I learning history or geography?

Discussion area: The recent Parent Survey found that 36% of respondents did not feel that the school **responded well to the concerns** that they raise. The school would like to understand more about the issues that parents/carers have experienced in relation to raising concerns - what is it that the School needs to change or improve to address this?

Issues...

Emails get missed or not replied to
Limited opportunities to raise concerns
Confusion over infants message not to email teachers

Positive feedback...

Only on one occasion this year have I need to address something with my daughter's class teacher and I was impressed by the prompt call I received from teacher and matter dealt with.

Notes from discussion at meeting:

School have set up a raise a concern email address raiseaconcern@shirleyschools.co.uk which is checked daily by Mrs Tearle and Mrs Hixon (as well as the office) who will also track the response. This will be added to contact details on the website.

Office@ - to be used for administration and enquiries, eg trips, attendance etc (It is still fine for Junior parents to send us emails, apologies for the confusion over this)

RaiseaConcern@ – for concerns and questions about children that requires a response by the teacher or Senior Leadership.

It is also suggested that if parents have had a chat with a teacher and agreed actions, that parents email the above address with a summary of the conversation. Leadership will then monitor this to ensure it is followed up.

The Forum have requested that if an email is sent to Senior Leadership but they need to delegate the response that the parent is cc'd so they know who is dealing with it. Eg "thank you for your email, NAME is the best person to deal with your concern, I am asking them by copy to respond to you."

Discussion area: The school would like to invite your feedback on the **new reading books**, what do children and parents/carers think of them?

Issues...

Some parents not aware of these

Reading books not being changed much and finished quickly

Positive feedback...

Excellent. My child much prefers reading the new books.

Love these its do much easier to read actual books with children especially the younger ones.

My child loves the library and book selection

We have enjoyed the reading books, more interesting topics and exposure to interesting ideas and stories- really thankful to be off screens!

Yes, real reading books so much better than online

Books themselves are good. So far my son has really enjoyed most of the ones he's had.

Notes from discussion at meeting:

Free readers won't have seen the new books. All children should have a book in their bag.

Will have a book at school that is the one that is very specifically chosen for them at the level that they need to work on. They should also have a library book of their choosing, to read for pleasure, so this may well need a bit of support from an adult at home.

Generally Reading Planet books should be changed weekly, once they have been read. In Year 4, they get the children to answer the questions from the back of the book, in their planners, before they can change their book.

Discussion area: Value of Marvellous Me (£500 per year)
– Is it worthwhile for parents?

Issues...

MCAS can be used instead

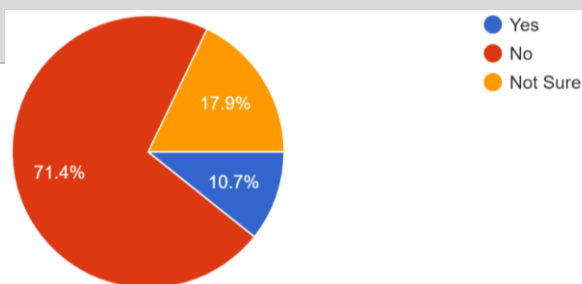
Too many streams of communication

Not used in way that was advertised (rewards, sharing work)

Suggest the school rethinks the approach to comms - use one

electronic method (available to majority) and use paper based as

back up. Proof read. Share as soon as possible - bearing in mind many of us work full time. Give reminders and a route for questions. Review quarterly for effectiveness.



Positive feedback...

Last minute reminder are useful.

Mme nice for photos and when used well

Makes my day, and my child loves me celebrating this with her.

Perhaps things like spelling test results or BMBT scores? I think it's useful but needs to be consistent so you can rely on it more. I particularly like the personal tone and sign off of messages compared to emails from the office which can be very brief, sometimes just a subject line and attachment.

Notes from discussion at meeting:

Parent Forum agreed that MM did not add value to the Junior School (more so value for Infants) and any value that was added could be moved to within MCAS. USH use MCAS to great effect and it has been suggested that SJS "buddy up" with USH to understand how they use it.

This lead to a wider discussion around communications:

Weekly comms has too much information, some gets lost. Juniors would like to do a Bulletin; an example was issued last month.

Parent Forum like the bulletin example but don't want this to appear in addition to Weekly Comms. For the benefit of parents who have children in both schools there needs to be some coordination between both schools.

It was agreed that there are three types of information

1. Upcoming and need to know (eg cardboard box needed for Tuesday) – Parent Forum suggest that Weekly Comms remains the best place for this.
2. School and Curriculum News – Parent Forum suggest a half-termly bulletin.
3. PTA and Community Information – Parent Forum suggests that this is kept to key dates and bullet points with a link to further information.

Action: Jo T to take feedback back to Admin and SLT.

Discussion area: Do you have any feedback you want to share in relation to **PE**?

Issues...

Lessons have been cancelled

Use of Golden Mile

Poor communication or participation in events eg Cross Country, concerns around equipment and sporting kits - Is there any funding parents could help the school access?

Concerns around equipment

Year 5s not being offered boys football this year. Parents would be willing to support this and volunteer their time.

Positive feedback on...

Favourite lesson by all accounts!

My daughter particularly enjoyed dance and the tennis sessions last academic year.

Notes from discussion at meeting:

Lessons should not be cancelled, Jo T will look into why this is happening.

Mr Tough is the new PE Lead and the school is reviewing the role of sports teaching assistant, who will be taking on more duties around coordination and communication of sports events as the school acknowledges that comms around events has not always been clear or timely.

Lack of other school teams is down to staffing. There is more interest than there is space on the Football team so currently places are prioritised for Yr6, with Yr5 getting their priority next year – however more volunteers would mean we could have an extra team. If we want to participate in other team sports we would need to have dedicated parent volunteer to coordinate and communicate other teams, potentially coach too.

Action: If parents are willing to volunteer to support/set up school teams then please contact the office FAO Jo Tearle who will pass the names on.

Golden mile is used differently in each year group. Upper school really like Morning Moves, Lower School enjoy golden mile.

There is PE funding, some of which has been used for staff training in movement for mental health. Team Spirit still do a daily lunchtime club.

Discussion area: We are expecting Dolce, who provide our school dinners to attend the Parent Forum meeting. Do you have any specific questions or feedback relating to **school dinners**?

Issues...

- Lots of concerns over portion sizes (too small) and quality of food, children coming home much hungrier than before
- Concerns over menu being too carb-based, not a wide variety of vegetables
- Food seems to run out, so if at back of line, may not get pudding
- Last minute changes to menu so meals are not as ordered
- I think a taster afternoon where children could try out some of the dishes would be useful. The secondary school does it and it's very helpful.

Positive feedback on...

My children love the school dinners, especially the cooked breakfast. I also like the online platform as can see the ingredients and kids can choose at home. Helps me plan evening meals too
Really like the booking system. I would always be happy if pudding options were just fruit or yoghurt!
Love the pizza every Monday and fish Fridays

Dolce's response...

Portion sizes are smaller than Chartwell but are weighed portions and more nutritionally balanced. Will take feedback back to senior team at Dolce. Concern that the greater nutritional balance is leading to children not liking the food and therefore not getting the benefit. Veg needs to be hidden better!

Bread and salad bar is available at every meal, this is self-serve. Parents with hungry children may want to encourage eat children to take bread and salad with their meal.

Dolce will arrange to do a spot check in the next few weeks on a non-popular day and will arrange an after school tasting event before the end of the year. They also plan to attend parents evening every year starting next school year.

Direct Debit option is going in September, will continue through the rest of this year.

The school does have extra snacks in school for children who may not be provided with an adequate breakfast from home.

General Feedback

Do yr 6 children have to do reflections still, especially when getting sats papers home regularly?

Ideally yes they would still do reflections – please talk to the class teacher if this is not manageable.

When children are given an action, they say they sometimes don't get enough time to eat afterwards and sometimes don't get any time outside. Missing the whole of lunch doesn't seem very restorative or proportionate especially if a minor incident. Could they eat their lunch whilst reflecting?

We don't want children to miss the whole of lunch either – although sometimes, unpicking a big conflict can take a lot of time. We will talk with teachers about this – it should only happen when the child has had ample opportunity to turn a situation around, and been reminded, and should not take up all break. If it's happening often then parents are encouraged to speak to the teacher, and then raise a concern if not resolved, as this could mean the provision is not right.

Class mixing

Will classes be mixed and when will we be notified, how will it be decided?

No mixing this year so transition should be much more straightforward.

Differing provision

- *Why do some children get to go to Forest school?*
- *Some children are given snacks or toast in school, could more information be provided?*
- *Why do some children get to use a chrome book in lessons?*

Some children have different provision because SJS is an inclusive school and understand that we need to treat children as individuals with differing needs – they aim to meet those needs in the most appropriate way for the child. Some children may need a different approach to their learning for a while, due to their background or life experiences so far. Some children may have come from backgrounds with differing degrees of disadvantage and may not have been able to have the experiences that others can take for granted, and may be at a different developmental stage as a result of this. We aim to give them this provision, using Pupil Premium funding.

Some children arrive at school without having had breakfast, or without a snack, and hunger prevents them from being able to focus. In this case, we will provide them with a snack, or some breakfast, purchased using Pupil Premium funding.

Some children need brain breaks more regularly in order to be able to focus, due to trauma in their pasts that may have caused their brains to be wired differently – they may experience a heightened response to stress, heightened anxiety and vigilance, and more frequently intense feelings that affect their focus. There are mindfulness apps on the iPads that we encourage staff to use with the children so this may be what other children are seeing. That being said, we do not want Chromebooks to be used other than for learning, so will be addressing this with staff.

Also like to raise issue of bags - the school style bag is not big enough - have been through 3 this school year. Please could rucksacks be considered - more practical, acknowledge size needs to be considered.

School don't mind a sensibly small rucksack for some children who need them – if everyone has one, it becomes unmanageable in terms of storage space.

There used to be team spirit facilitated sports at lunchtime. Does this still go on and if not is this due to funding? If so could this be something the PTA could consider supporting?

Yes this still happens every lunchtime.

With regards to music lessons, my son has missed many due to various reasons, but he missed the last one due to being taking to church for an Easter service, would it be possible to make sure who has lessons and ask the relevant music teacher to change the times wherever possible

School will ask teachers to do this in future.

Yr4 went to another school the other day for bench ball. This is great but why was it not communicated?

Apologies it should have been. Parental consent is not required for local outings (the class went to Hollybrook school) but parents should still be informed, and this has been clarified with the school office.

Y6 SATS – feedback

Yr 6 parents and those with older children that have been through SATs had nothing but praise for how the school has managed SATs, kids are keen to do well but in general there is not a sense of pressure among year 6, however obviously some individuals naturally feel more pressure than others.