

PARENT COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday 26th March 2019, 2pm

In attendance:

Lynette Searle (Headteacher)
Michelle Browne (Assistant Headteacher)
Joeleen Lefevre
Sarah Corless
Tina Young
Lisa Frensham

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

LS welcomed all attendees to the meeting and shared apologies for absence in respect of Amanda Hayward, Katy Woodhead and Serena Lee.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING
2.1 To agree the minutes of the last meeting and follow up actions

All attendees agreed the minutes of the last meeting as an accurate reflection of the matters discussed at Parent Council on 24th January. It was agreed by all attendees that the actions due to be carried out from the previous meeting have been duly completed, with the exception of the 'translation' facility on the school website which has been actioned but requires further IT work to ensure it is functioning properly.

3 PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE
3.1 To share the results of the recent parent questionnaire
3.2 To discuss parent views and comments

MB shared hard copies of the recent parent questionnaire results, following its distribution to all parents for completion at parents' evening in March 2019. There were 126 parent questionnaires completed.

MB highlighted that there has been an increase in positive feedback from parents in many areas; in particular, 100% of parents agree that their child likes school, that they feel welcome when coming into school, and that their child is making good progress at school. This is an excellent reflection of the school's efforts in those areas. It is also very positive to note that 98% of parents agree the school expects their child to work hard and achieve their best, 97% of parents agree that weekly newsletters are helpful and informative, 98% of parents agree that school reports and parents evenings keep them well informed about how their child is getting on, 96% of parents agree that the school provides a safe environment for their child, and 94% of parents agree that they would recommend Harrow Lodge Primary School to other parents.

It was noted by all attendees that, since the modification of the parent questionnaire to split out 'poor behaviour' and 'bullying', there has been a much improved response from parents in agreeing that the school deals effectively with bullying; increasing from 58% to 71% in this area.

It was agreed by all attendees that many of the parent responses stating 'don't know' may be indicative of language barriers for some parents who speak limited English, or speak no English at all. To tackle this it was agreed that the school may wish to seek out volunteers amongst the school community, including staff and parents, who have the relevant skills to be able to assist with translation of parent questionnaires into various languages. This could also be helpful for other important school documents to be shared in a more accessible way for EAL parents in the future.

ACTION: LS and MB will consider ways to harness language skills amongst staff and parents in order to provide translated school questionnaires/documents for EAL parents in the future.

4 4.1 4.2	PLAYGROUND AND BUILDINGS UPDATE To update on the current position with regards to the playground improvements To discuss plans to move the school entrance and new fencing to safeguard children and the new playground facilities
<p>LS shared hard copies of the playground improvement plans drawn up by Pentagon Play and Creative Play. There is a third company still yet to meet with LS and MB who will provide a further quote and playground designs. These will be shared at the next meeting.</p> <p>All attendees agreed that the playground designs received so far are well thought-out, practical and appealing for the children. It was agreed that each section of the playground works could be completed in 'stages', in order to spread the cost and ensure improvements can start to be seen with minimal delay. All attendees agreed that the 'quiet area' with sensory garden and the giant climbing frame should be considered as the first set of works to be completed for the children's benefit. LS pointed out that using the same company for the entire playground works would put her in a stronger position to negotiate prices.</p> <p>The potential for National Lottery funding was discussed; it was highlighted that the school's previous request for lottery funding had to be ultimately dismissed as a viable option. This is due to their funding rules which would require the school to open up the playground for public use in the local community such as after-school, at weekends and during school holidays. All attendees agreed that this is simply not possible due to staffing restrictions for monitoring those activities. Most importantly, children's safeguarding may be compromised and school grounds may be subject to misuse, damage and/or vandalism. To raise money for playground works, PTA fundraising is continuing and Company sponsorship is also being considered as a potential option.</p> <p>The potential for 'selling off' a section of the school field in order to raise funds was discussed at length. This would dramatically heighten the school's ability to make improvements across the board, both externally and internally. However, this option was already explored by Havering Council and senior school staff previously, leading to the proposal being dismissed. There seems to be some confusion regarding who has true ownership of the land. That said, the possibility of selling off a section of the field is not entirely ruled out. LS agreed she would explore this proposal further with Roger (CEO) at the next opportunity.</p> <p>ACTION: LS and MB will share details of the third company quote and playground designs at the next Parent Council meeting.</p>	
5 5.1 5.2	SHARING THE NEW BEHAVIOUR POLICY To discuss the restorative process and how it will work in practice Training for MDA's, parents and peer mentors
<p>LS shared a hard copy of the 'Rights and Responsibilities for Behaviour' policy which she proposes to put into effect as soon as possible. It was agreed by all attendees that the ethos of promoting a safe, respectful and welcoming school community relies upon staff, parents and children alike to be aware of their rights whilst also taking responsibility for their own contributions in building a positive and enriching school environment for all. LS confirmed that training will be provided for all MDA's, parents and peer mentors to support a successful implementation of the new behaviour policy.</p>	
6 6.1 6.2	FINANCE AND BUDGET CUTS How pupil numbers affect our income, what pupil numbers may look like next year and what this will mean for the school Increasing parent volunteers and appointing a volunteer to carry out a 'Parent Skills' audit
<p>LS confirmed that the school is still under-subscribed, with the exception of Year 4 whereby there is now a waiting list for children wishing to transfer into that year group from other schools. Having a waiting list for the first time is a very positive step forward, however it is noted that the new reception year intake in September 2018 and the predicted intake for September 2019 are not fulfilling the school's capacity. For example, the current reception year is under-subscribed with 42 children on-roll out of a possible 60 spaces. Unused spaces result in lower overall Government funding for the school and, in some cases, the school</p>	

being used as a 'stop-gap' for children who are waiting for spaces elsewhere. It was agreed by all attendees that the playground improvement works are likely to be an attractive feature to encourage a higher intake of children in the future. The positive changes being implemented by the Senior Leadership Team are also having a beneficial impact to the reputation of the school in the local area, as well as paving the way for a glowing Ofsted report which would undoubtedly attract higher levels of intake year-on-year.

It was agreed by all attendees that, due to budget cuts, the importance of PTA fundraising and parent volunteers is more significant than ever before. LS proposed setting up a 'Parent Skills' audit in order to identify any skills amongst our school community which could be utilised in the future for the benefit of the school. TY agreed to set up a skills questionnaire in electronic format for distribution to all parents, in order to gather information as proposed by LS.

ACTION: TY will formulate an electronic 'Skills Questionnaire' for distribution to all parents to identify skills within our school community.

7	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
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It was agreed by all attendees that having LS (Headteacher) and MB (Assistant Headteacher) present at the school gates in the mornings encourages parents and children to feel welcome and gives them the opportunity to communicate freely with Senior Leadership staff. It was also agreed that the presence of Miss Kelekun and Mrs Taylor in the school playground in the mornings is much appreciated by many parents, as those members of staff have an excellent rapport with most of the children. Parents feel supported by this.

8	DATE OF NEXT MEETING
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The next Parent Council meeting will take place on **Thursday 2nd May at 2pm.**

ACTIONS SUMMARY	
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| 1 | LS and MB will consider ways to harness language skills amongst staff and parents in order to provide translated school questionnaires/documents for EAL parents in the future. |
| 2 | LS and MB will share details of the third company quote and playground designs at the next Parent Council meeting. |
| 3 | TY will formulate an electronic 'Skills Questionnaire' for distribution to all parents to identify skills within our school community. |