

# The Fern Hill School Parent Council Meeting – 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017

## Meeting Minutes

### Attendees

Robert Waiting (Deputy Head)  
Karyn Georges (Chair/Sycamore)  
Caroline McDonald (Secretary/Bracken)  
Alan Waterman (Parent Governor)  
Deborah McNair (Sunflower)  
Rob Pughsley (Sunflower)  
Victoria Wilson (Poppy)  
Claire Burke (Bluebell)  
Lara Myers (Lavender)  
Saphina Crocker (Foxglove)  
Giulia Iannucci (Bracken)  
Rob Terry (Heather)  
Sophie Roberts (Heather)  
Kate Bell (Clover)

Noa Steinberg Kovner (Beech)  
Camilla Waterman (Rowan)  
Sean Lewis (Elm)  
Inma Pedregosa (Yew)  
Frances To (Lime)  
Amanda Newman (Sycamore)  
Maike Rentel (Ash)  
Aarthi Sridhar (Oak)

### Apologies

Rachael Cox (Cornflower)  
Gavin McOwen (Chestnut)  
Stuart Blower (Yew)  
Juliet Coombe (Elder)

### Terms of Reference

Chair Karyn Georges (KG) reminded everyone of the purpose of the Parent Council (PC) and which topics are appropriate for discussion. She also stressed that feedback should represent the views of all parents rather than a few individuals and that the Council needs consensus on any actions.

Robert Waiting (RW) emphasized the importance of the PC which will shape procedures governing the day-to-day operation of the school and steer the school's plans but he also warned that the school might not be able to implement some changes this school year and that some actions might impact on staff needs or other areas so these issues need to be taken into consideration.

A concern was raised that PC members need to be careful how we feed back to parents who have contributed opinions and that PC members can't be seen to make promises to parents. RW reminded everyone that the PC is a forum for sharing parental views.

**Action Point:** Caroline McDonald (CM) to send Frances To the Terms of Reference document.

### Assessment Overview

RW gave an overview of the statutory national assessments in Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6, and how the school's current assessment structure feeds into these national assessments.

Reception – Good Level of Development

Year 1 – Phonics Assessment

Year 2 – Reading, Writing, Maths (teacher assessments)

Year 6 – Grammar, punctuation and spelling (assessments set externally). Also writing.

## Parent Consultations

- Timing of consultations

RW explained that the spring term consultations had already been pushed back a month from February to March in response to feedback from the Parent Survey that there was too big a gap between these and the end of year reports.

Many parents felt the first consultations are too early and want these to be held later in the autumn term (or even in early January). The current timing means it is too early for the teachers to give an academic assessment and the discussion is often therefore focused on how they are settling in which may be important in early years but less so in KS2.

Others felt the timing was right and appreciated the opportunity to find out how their child was settling in and to meet the teacher.

RW pointed out that the end of the autumn term is extremely busy so realistically consultations could only be pushed back to the first or second week after half term. In order for up-to-date academic feedback to be given in these first consultations, teachers would need to carry out assessment tests in class in September and many children fall behind slightly over the summer break so these tests might not give accurate results.

- Informal Meet the Teachers sessions

It was suggested that the school could hold a 'Meet the Teacher' session in the autumn term and move the first parent consultations back to early January. RW said the current year group Parent Forums give parents an opportunity to meet the teacher and learn about the curriculum for the year but these don't offer the possibility of a personal chat with the teacher and there needs to be more opportunity for parents to raise questions.

A request was made for an additional parent consultation in the summer term. One member said the school she used to teach at held informal evenings in the summer term where parents could view their child's work and have a quick chat with the teacher.

**Action Point:** RW said it would be possible to implement an informal parents evening for the summer term. RW to look into giving more emphasis to parent feedback in Parent Forum sessions.

- Structure of Parent Consultations

It was suggested that parents should be made aware that the autumn term consultation (in early years especially) may be more focused on pastoral issues although RW said this depended on the teacher and the individual needs of each child.

Some parents (particularly those in Reception) said they would appreciate a more structured approach to consultations giving an overview of how their child is doing academically. NB Reception children don't have the Target Summary Sheets to measure progress.

### **Target Summary Sheets**

Contrasting viewpoints from parents. Some felt they were helpful indicators of their child's progress while others felt they were of little use.

- Content and structure of sheets

Some parents felt these were confusing and misleading: the colour coding system doesn't make it clear if the child is not yet capable of achieving these targets or if they simply haven't been covered in class yet. RW explained that the content and structure cannot be changed as they are produced by a software package but the sheets need not be given out to parents if the consensus is that they are not helpful. The teachers use them to measure progress against the national curriculum requirements and the target statements mirror those in the end of year report.

**Action Point:** RW offered to do a workshop to help explain the Target Summary Sheets.

- Timing of distribution of sheets to parents

Many parents felt these sheets were of little use when issued at the autumn term parent consultations as they hadn't been updated since the summer so gave no indication of their child's progress so far that term. RW said they were an important indicator of what their child needed to learn that year and it would be very late to give out this information in the spring term. He also said that they highlighted any gaps in the child's learning from the previous year which need to be addressed.

### **End of year reports**

Feedback shows that people find the reports helpful but it needs to be an ongoing tool and not forgotten. It was suggested that a report of this type could be issued earlier in the year.

**Action point:** RW to review with staff the viability of this proposal.

### **Frequency of books**

General feedback is that parents are happy with receiving these books every half term. RW responded to feedback about noting concerns about a child's progress in the books which the child can read, saying these comments should be given verbally to the teacher in a meeting/parent consultation and comments made in the book should be as constructive as possible.

### **Parent Council Meeting Outcomes**

**Action point:** RW to give specific outcomes from each meeting at the start of the next meeting.

### **Topic and date for next meeting**

The following topics were suggested by members:

Clubs

Lunches

Sport

Health in the Classroom

Initiatives in the Community

**Clubs** was voted as the topic for the next meeting which will be on **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January at 9.10am**. KG asked members to email herself or CM with any other topic suggestions.

A request was made for a clearer explanation of topics to be provided with future agendas.

**Action points:** KG and CM to work with RW to provide prompts and explanations for future agendas. Meeting minutes to go out to all PC members (along with shortened bullet-point version to send on to parents). Meeting minutes to go on the school website.

### **The process of getting feedback**

Some members have struggled to get feedback from their classes. CM suggested informal chats in the playground and at class coffee mornings was a good way to start discussions and get feedback.

**Action points:** Topics for the remainder of the year to be agreed at the next meeting. RW, KG and CM to ensure agendas are sent out in plenty of time for feedback to be gathered.