

Minutes of the Parent Voice meeting – Thursday 30th April 2015
Held in The Barn Cedar Studio

1. Welcome and introduction

Mr McIntosh (Deputy Head Teacher) welcomed parents.

2. Minutes of last meeting and action points

It was noted that the minutes of the last meeting had not been easy to locate on the website and a suggestion was made that there could be a distinct 'Parent Voice' tab on the main page so as to make information about Parent Voice more accessible. Mr McIntosh said that this was an easy change to make that could be implemented straight away.

- **Homework**

Mr McIntosh confirmed that the calculation policy was available on the school website.

Some further discussion took place about the new format of homework. Some parents (in general, not just those attending this meeting) were not completely sure about what the children should be doing. Mr McIntosh recalled that there was information sent out before Easter about expectations for the new homework, but acknowledged that this may have been misplaced or not to hand and it would help parents to have a reminder.

All the information about homework is on the school website, with several documents that can be downloaded, a presentation and a video:

<http://www.barnesfarmjuniors.co.uk/website/homework/90655>

Mr McIntosh would ask for this link and a reminder to be included on the next newsletter.

Some points raised for consideration as possible improvements were:

- The instructions for the weekly homework could be printed and stuck into the front of the Learning Journals as a permanent reminder to both parents and children about expectations.
- Some parents would still appreciate an example given for the maths that is carried out in the week, if their child chose to make that the focus of their weekly homework.
- The weekly overview of what is being studied (the front page grid) is not always particularly detailed and can be too vague for parents to understand what has been the focus and then subsequently help with homework. This could be alleviated by having printed slips for each week on which the teacher could type to provide more detail.
- Not all classes are having notes to accompany the 'verbal feedback' stamp. It would be helpful if the children could write down what the teacher has said.

Mr McIntosh would take this feedback and share with teachers at the next staff meeting.

- **Costumes**

Mr McIntosh had thought about how this could be organised by school staff if necessary but wanted to check with FOBFS if this was something they could accept responsibility for. School could arrange for storage and a collection/return point for the times it would be used. Mr McIntosh would make contact with FOBFS in the first instance with his idea. He would also make an initial request in the newsletter for donations when the administration of the scheme had been decided.

- **Esafety**

A date for an additional parents' information session had been arranged – Thursday 11th June at 7pm. There would also be age-appropriate talks with certain year groups in the school during the day.

While talking in the area of safety, discussion also took place about the misuse of mobile phones by pupils before and after school and the road danger posed by various factors at the beginning and end of the day. Mr McIntosh would be making some reminders in future newsletters.

- **Absence requests**

Mr McIntosh had been assured that when requests came through to the office, using the correct form (available in the reception area of the front office), responses were returned to parents. He would remind other staff of the procedures in place for this in case some requests were being dealt with in other ways.

3. House events/points

Mr McIntosh asked for initial feedback about the new House system. The launch event on the final day of Spring term was largely successful, though from the perspective of parents who were there as helpers on the day, it was felt that more parent helpers would improve the second day, particularly with the Infant pupils. It also seemed that there was an uneven mix of Junior and Infant staff in some of the activities and that Foundation stage children would especially benefit from having a familiar face at each activity. Mr McIntosh would discuss this at the next joint BFJS/BFIS meeting.

4. Ofsted 'Parent View' questionnaire

The school had concerns about some of the feedback given by parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire. Although it was acknowledged that the responses were quite low in number (95 out of a potential of 720 parents), and perhaps therefore not wholly representative, this was the information that Ofsted had received in their inspection of the school in the previous week, and what they used to help them form judgments about the school.

Of particular concern was the fact that so many parents would not recommend the school to another parent – currently at 26%, though it was closer to one third at the

time of the inspection (some additional responses came in since the inspection and subsequently altered some of the percentages). Mr McIntosh wanted to explore further the reasons behind the survey responses at a future meeting when there was more time and a greater attendance. At this stage, the key factor was to explore how better to engage parents in communication with the school. Some discussion took place about the timing of Parent Voice meetings and that an evening meeting may attract greater numbers. Another idea proposed was to reform Parent Voice into a Parent Council, similar to the Infant School, where each class has at least one representative to attend meetings. It was also noted that, although there was now a Parent Voice email, it might be useful to have a method by which anonymous contributions can be made, such as a suggestion box in the front office. The use of an internet survey tool, such as Survey Monkey, could be worthwhile in exploring how better to engage parents and how best to go about addressing the negative response areas on the Ofsted questionnaire. Mr McIntosh was willing to try almost anything to improve parental engagement and greater communication and he would consider some of these discussion points in consultation with the school's leadership team.

5. AOB

Although this was something the school could not directly change, it was brought to Mr McIntosh's attention that the local authority were changing their secondary school transport policy, meaning that some parents now face a fee of between £800 - £1200 per child per year for transport to and from their school. This was going to affect many BFJS pupils from now on. Mr McIntosh explained that Mr McTaggart attended termly meetings of local authority primary school Head teachers and that he would ask Mr McTaggart if this issue had been discussed and what more was known about it.

6. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting would be on Friday 15th May at 2.15pm (refreshments from 2.00pm) in the Barn.