

Minutes of the Parent Voice meeting - Tuesday 17th June 2014

Held in The Barn Cedar Studio

1. Welcome and introduction

Mr McIntosh (Deputy Head teacher) welcomed parents, introduced himself to the group and outlined the purpose of the meeting.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and action points

• Homework

- Mr McIntosh gave feedback from the last Parent Voice meeting to teachers at the next possible staff meeting on 3.6.14.
- Access to different Mathletics levels for children seemed possible but had to be clarified.
- SAM learning would be extended down to Year 5 in the next academic year to increase the provision of high quality and challenging Maths IT resources.
- The 'Big Talk' homework that helps children to prepare for their bi-weekly 'Big Write' session in class, could indeed be set earlier in the week, on a Monday or Tuesday. This would start from September.

• Uniform

Unfortunately, samples from Tesco's embroidery service had not arrived in time to share with the group assembled. This would roll over to the next meeting. The current provider is to be used until further notice.

• Swimming

Aligned to the school's obligations under the new curriculum, the school will be seeking information from parents about pupils' swimming ability in order to best meet the needs of all children, ensure resources are used efficiently and wisely and help respond in a pragmatic way to parents' own provision for their children. Following on from that, the leadership team of the school will review the data and put in place a new cycle of provision.

• Coffee morning

The first parents' coffee morning will be held in The Barn Cedar Studio on Thursday 17 July from 8.45am – 10am. A request for cakes will be made via the newsletter or a separate letter. Donations will go towards a small project for the Junior School as decided by the school's PTA, Friends of Barnes Farm Schools.

• New curriculum/language club offers

The school has been successful in a bid to gain the services of a language assistant from China who will support the teaching of Mandarin to Years 2, 3 and 4 from October 2014. Years 5 & 6 will continue to be taught French and there would also be at least one extra-curricular Mandarin club offered to children as well.

Some parents expressed their dissatisfaction about the teaching of Mandarin and were unhappy about not being consulted. Mr McIntosh was keen that Parent Voice was a forum in which all views, both negative and positive, were represented and given a response where possible. The school believes this is an excellent opportunity that will greatly enhance our provision of modern foreign languages, exposing our pupils to varying cultures and different languages as well as promoting knowledge and understanding of our global community. The influence of China in the world's

political and economic spheres is ever-growing and a rudimentary knowledge of the language and awareness of the culture is likely to serve our pupils well for the future and may go some way in helping to guide language study choices at secondary schools, many of which now offer Mandarin as a language from Year 7. The decision of which languages to teach at Key Stage 2 is a decision delegated by the Governors to the leadership team of the school, as with the content of every other curriculum subject. Parent views are valued and can be considered in the future, but the school's leadership team will make decisions based on their professional judgement of needs and opportunities.

Several parents made offers to run a club teaching the basics of their first language, which will be taken up by the school in the course of the next academic year.

- **Changing for PE**

The school is actively considering ways, as detailed in the last minutes, in which this may be realistically altered. More details will be shared as they are available.

3. Friends of Barnes Farm Schools (PTA)

Mr McIntosh had recently attended a meeting of FOBFS and was impressed at the dedication of the team and the commitment to help facilitate the best possible experience for pupils during their time at the schools through the raising of funds to support new and existing needs and projects and the planning of events to be enjoyed by the children. He knows that the FOBFS are aware that their profile needs to be increased in order to attract more involvement in their work and wanted to sound out parents at the meeting about their views. Some parents had been unsure about whether the PTA was a membership-only group and you had to be invited to join; Mr McIntosh explained this was not the case and that any parent is welcome to attend their open meetings and help in whatever way they could. Some parents suggested that they wouldn't mind helping with specific events if a request went out as for the upcoming Infants Discos, but may not be able to sustain a long term commitment. Mr McIntosh said this had been mentioned at the FOBFS meeting as a successful route of gaining help for these events. Some parents suggested more publicity on the schools' newsletters and websites. Mr McIntosh said that the new Facebook site for FOBFS was being promoted in our newsletters and website.

4. AOB from attendees

- A request to continue the usual, end of year class photo to be taken in-house by the school was made, as opposed to a professional one taken that may be too expensive. Mr McIntosh was sure that this was the case but would represent this at the next leadership team meeting.
- A request to share exam feedback promptly (before end of year reports) was made. Mr McIntosh commented on the positive value of sharing feedback and that it would be considered to share results after next year's exams. However, it was important to remember that exams show a child's attainment on a particular day with a particular set of questions and are not always representative of a pupil's ability. This is why teacher assessment is used, which gives a more accurate reflection of a pupil's achievement over a recent time period and in different learning circumstances.

- Year 3 had not had an educational visit this year and this was felt to have been a missed opportunity. Mr McIntosh said that he was unaware of this as he was not long into post, but that he would investigate the reasons why.

Mr McIntosh thanked parents for their attendance and reiterated that any requests for agenda items could be made to him in advance. The meeting concluded at 3.20pm. A request was made to begin future afternoon meetings at an earlier time to allow for more discussion; this was agreed, and therefore the next *afternoon* meeting will start at 2.15pm (refreshments from 2pm).

Date and time of next meeting: Tuesday 15th July 2014 at 9am (coffee/tea served from 8.45am) in The Barn Cedar Studio.