

**Minutes of Parents in Partnership Meeting  
Community Room, Sunnymede Junior School  
Friday 7<sup>th</sup> November at 9am**

Present:	Name	Role	Class
	Ronnie Branch	Headteacher	
	Suzanne Kelly	Parent representative	4B
	Lucy Moffat	Parent representative	4H
	Leah Rogers	Parent representative	4H
	Jackie Whaplington	Parent representative	5D
	Michelle Galley	Parent representative	6L
	Sheila Gibson	Parent representative	6H
	Kate Smith	Parent representative	5K
	Lisa Zeffie	Parent representative	3H
	Michelle Wain	Governor & SMSC Adviser	

### 1. Welcome and apologies

Mrs Branch opened the meeting; apologies were received from Deborah Wilson (3H), Kerry Vickers (3S) and Sam Russell (4C). Sharon Wornham (6H) Jacqui Dignum (6L) and Ellie Hill (5D) did not attend. Introductions were made. Mrs Branch also introduced Michelle Wain, an Ethnic Minority Achievement Adviser for Havering Local Authority, who had been invited to the meeting to explain the Ofsted requirements of SMSC (spiritual, moral, social, cultural) development in school, following a concern raised last year. Michelle will carry out an audit of our SMSC provision. Michelle is also a parent (5D) and a governor.

Mrs Branch explained (for the benefit of the new PiP members) that the purpose of this group is to encourage communication with parents on wider school issues, at a more strategic level e.g. sharing the School Development Plan with them this year. Michelle's visit is as a result of a concern raised at the last PiP meeting regarding perceived promotion of other faiths.

### 2. Notification of AOB

- Gates - Mrs Branch agreed a consistent approach was needed and explained that, as with any new procedures, there is a trial period where there are likely to be teething problems and adjustments needed. Staff are on duty from 8.45am and the bell goes at 8.50am when the remaining teachers come out and children line up. Parents are asked to leave at that time because all the teachers are on duty. The gates will be locked by Mr Evans at approx 9.15am to allow parents to vacate the site if they had been in the school office etc. Mrs Branch reiterated that the changes have been agreed and it was disappointing that a minority of parents have been rude to staff in relation to this matter and are refusing to adhere to the new procedures that have been put in place for the health and safety of the children and the smooth running of the school. This is particularly disappointing given that the school is trying to strike a balance for the benefit of parents; as pointed out by parents in the meeting, many schools do not allow parents on the school playground in the morning at all. However, as a result of the location of the site and the need for many parents to access the infant school also, we have decided to allow parents in until 8:50am. If, however, there remains a problem over time, the school may well have to consider making a decision not to allow parents

- into the playground at all in the morning or keeping the gates to Mons Avenue and the Infant playground permanently locked. This is not, of course, what the school wishes but the current arrangements will depend on all parents following new procedures
- Parents brought up the issue of a number of parents regularly dropping off their children outside the Mons Avenue entrance. They reported that they are parking on the hatched areas outside school and this was a health and safety matter, particularly given the blind corner. They also felt that a safety barrier where the hatching is would prevent parents from parking there and also mean that a child could not run into the road if they ran out of the school gate. Mrs Branch confirmed these issues are technically outside the school's remit but she will contact Basildon Council, as she agreed this is a concern and contact from the school might encourage the Local Authority to come and conduct a health and safety review of this area
  - A parent noted that there was no disabled bay for an infant pupil - Mrs Branch confirmed that this is currently an infant school issue and would pass this on to the infant headteacher. Mrs Branch said that, when the time comes for the pupil to transfer to the junior school, a review of the child's needs would be conducted to ensure appropriate provision was made on the junior school site. Mrs Kelly offered advice on DDA issues for which Mrs Branch thanked her.
  - Coats left in playground; it was suggested a rota is put in place for collection of these at the end of play and lunch. Mrs Branch agreed this was a good idea and would action it as soon as possible
  - Goal posts in playground - Mrs Branch confirmed that the school does have funding to buy these but that storage is an issue at present because of issues with foxes in the playground. The foxes damage the goals by eating all the nets. This is being kept under review and we are hoping for a resolution in due course.
  - Y6 Pen licences - Mrs Branch confirmed that any Yr 6 child who is still writing in pencil by the Spring Term will automatically move to writing with a pen and this was agreed by staff last term as part of their policy reviews
  - Mathletics, it seems that the homework task is 'in advance' of the class lesson. It was confirmed that staff had been made aware of this the previous week and had agreed that Mathletics homework would now link to lesson content that has already been taught in class

### **3. Review Minutes from previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed

### **4. Crucial Crew update**

Mrs Branch explained that the reason for this agenda item was because there had been some feedback last year that the content of the Crucial Crew programme was too hard hitting. We have now received dates for this year's programme and a pre-delivery session for all head teachers has been organised, as had been requested by us following feedback from the PiP group last year. Mrs Branch, or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, will attend. Mrs Branch confirmed that the Yr 6 children do cover related topics on these issues through their PSHE lessons before they attend Crucial Crew.

### **5. Homework Policy update**

- Mrs Branch took the opportunity to confirm the final changes made to the Homework Policy following consultation with both the PiP group and staff in the summer term

- Mrs Branch confirmed that the spelling homework was now given out so the children had the weekend to learn their spellings and this seems to be working well
- Mrs Branch confirmed that a written maths task was now included in the three weekly rota
- Yr 3 'written' homework is not set until after the autumn half term, allowing new Yr3 pupils the chance to settle in to junior school
- The homework poster has been published and was included at the end of all the year group newsletters
- Mrs Branch said that, following parental consultation when the policy was overhauled, it was agreed not to impose punishments for not doing homework but to reward children for doing it. All children who have completed their homework are entered into a raffle at the end of every term. Although homework is not statutory there is an expectation that children complete their weekly homework and they are challenged if they don't. A statement has been included in the policy, therefore, to confirm that it is an expectation that children do complete their homework
- Mrs Branch confirmed that she would expect teachers to remind children to hand their homework in, but children do need to be encouraged to become more independent and take responsibility. She will remind teachers at the next staff meeting. Mrs Branch does not, however, expect teachers in a junior school to check the bags of individual children as we are encouraging them to develop their independence.
- Mrs Branch confirmed that if there is a child on the special needs register, then appropriate adaptations to homework may be made as part of their personal support plan
- It was felt that there was a significant jump in the volume of homework from Yr 5 to Yr 6 and whether this could be increased gradually to prepare them for Yr 6. Mrs Branch said that there will always have to be a jump at some point and to do this from Y5/6 seems more appropriate than from Y4/5. Also, the policy was designed to give additional optional homework projects for those who wanted more homework, as well as the option of using Mathletics to practise Maths skills. Mrs Branch is wary of putting in more expected homework tasks. However, she agreed to give this some thought.
- Some parents expressed the view that Mathletics was very easy and very quick, although it was accepted that the children can do the optional homework if they want to do more work. Was it possible to increase the amount of tasks as the children progress through the year? Mrs Branch said she would look into this as she was not sure whether the programme allows for it and how this would impact on teacher marking and workload. She will also discuss this with the teachers but, as the policy had only just been updated and was updated annually, any changes that may be agreed may not be implemented until next September as to keep changing a policy mid-year can be confusing for parents.

#### **6. Feedback on Reading Prompt booklet / reading workshops**

Mrs Branch confirmed she had received very positive feedback - the only two real suggestions for improvement were as follows:

- That coffee was provided!! This is usually provided at workshops However, due to school circumstances on the day, it had not been possible for this workshop
- It was asked whether there could be two separate workshops, one specifically for phonics and less able readers. Mrs Branch said that she thought the Infant School held their own phonics workshops so most parents would not need this again in the juniors. This will be considered, however for the future. Mrs Branch explained that two workshops had been

considered for Y3/4 and Y5/6 but that this proved problematic as there are high attaining readers in the upper year groups and lower attaining readers in the higher year groups. A mini-workshop for parents of lower attainers could be considered

- Two members said that they did not find the part of the workshop where they observed the guided reading lesson to be as beneficial as they did when the Maths workshop was run and they observed a maths lesson. Parents said this was because they did not see 'direct' teaching to the whole class or because the teacher was working with a group that didn't include their child. Mrs Branch said she was keen for parents to see our guided reading sessions, which were praised by Ofsted, but understood that maybe a different approach for reading than writing might be of benefit. For example, Mrs Wain mentioned that there are a number of guided reading videos available and maybe one of these could be shown instead of parents going into class.
- Although there was an opportunity to ask questions, one parent suggested that the chairs could have been arranged in a circle or similar to encourage greater discussion and dialogue

Mrs Branch said that all these were interesting points to consider and would be considered when we planning the next reading workshop.

Mrs Branch was asked whether, when a child is a free reader, anybody checks that the books the children choose are appropriate. Mrs Branch replied that when children are on 'bands' these are checked. However, all children are entitled to a free choice book and these are not always checked, particularly as 'free choice' is just that. She said that there are a number of reasons why an able reader might choose an easier book and a less able reader might choose a harder book. For example, it was noted that many 'picture' books that on face value might seem 'easy' actually offer excellent opportunities to develop their inferential skills by 'reading' the illustrations. Also, lower attaining readers may choose a harder book as they want to try and challenge themselves more or be seen to be reading what their peers are reading. However, Mrs Branch will remind teachers to check books for pupils who may require this.

## **7. Changes to Assemblies**

PiP members reported that feedback on the Class assembly changes has been very positive and parents enjoyed the fact that their pupils now performed a song or poem at the end.

## **8. 2<sup>nd</sup> hand uniform shop**

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

## **9. Discussion: Promoting British Values & Celebrating Diversity**

Mrs Branch handed round a copy of the Ofsted Grade descriptors in relation to SMSC provision and the expectations placed on school by Ofsted by Michelle Wain, school governor, then defined the development of the four elements (spiritual, moral, social and cultural) and how this is achieved in school. Whilst it is important that the school promotes British values, the aim is to encourage all children to have respect, understanding and interest in exploring different cultures and faiths and become global citizens. This is particularly important for our school where the majority but not all pupils are white British. A discussion took place and it was agreed the school's approach needs to be broad and balanced.

PiP members agreed that it was important to both promote British values and also celebrate diversity, encouraging pupils to gain an understanding and respect of other cultures and religions, including their own. It was noted that because the embedding of British values

underpins the majority of what we do, parents may not realise we are doing some of these things and perhaps these could be emphasised more. Mr Branch noted this point and said that she would endeavour to highlight these as much as the work we do to celebrate diversity.

Mrs Branch asked the PiP members to come up with any ideas of how to celebrate and promote British Values at the next meeting.

#### **10. School Development Plan**

Mrs Branch circulated a draft summary of the School Development Plan and asked that the PiP members take it away, have a read and bring it back at the next meeting together with any comments or questions. Although this is still a draft document, it is confidential, and should not be shared outside this forum.

#### **11. Agree date and agenda for the next meeting**

- Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015 in the Community Room
- Agenda to be circulated at the meeting

