

Minutes of parents focus group 24.11.22 at 1730

Present

Becky Coombes
Kate Stanton
Becky Braunton
Doug Gubbins

Apologies

Amy Bishop
Jon Carre

Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions - who is who/what class or year group are they representing?
2. Purpose of the PFG - terms of reference
3. Why we think its important and the role within the school
4. Communication
5. AOB

1. DG welcomed all to the meeting. Each member briefly introduced themselves. Rationale of the group explained to all parties DG explained that usually this meeting would be chaired by AB and that the focus group is very much her area to lead on. However due to illness, rather than postpone the meeting, DG would chair and report back to AB.
2. DG distributed and read through the terms of reference with everyone. No questions were raised, but there were two points that DG will ask AB to clarify. (1) In terms of parent members feeding back to other parents, what is the expectation? Would it be a paragraph that goes in the newsletter? Members felt they would be happier to make a group response – as opposed to one each. Would this be okay? (2) Could AB be the main point of contact for the members (as opposed to DG)? The group also felt that a preferred way of communication outside of the meeting would be a Watts App group. DG thought this was a good idea, but just reminded everyone of confidentiality. DG to ask AB to set the group up.
3. This group is about gathering a parents voice in terms of school development. For other issues, normal procedures should be followed. The group would give parents a chance to evaluate what is working well within the school and also allow us to think about how we can make the school ‘even better’.
4. We looked at the current methods of communication that the school offered and evaluated each:

Letters	It was felt that the ‘welcome to Yx’ letters at the start of the year were informative. They need to come out sooner rather than later. Parents also felt that the photo profile of new teachers and classrooms were useful. Could KS1
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	<p>teachers write a short bio about themselves to accompany the photo?</p> <p>It was discussed how parents want to know more about things like school council – as sometimes young children do not always remember things from assembly.</p> <p>It was also felt that parents wanted to know more about things such as Jigsaw and Stormbreak. Although these information documents for parents are on the website, it was felt that the website is not the preferred route of communication.</p> <p>Parents like the reception weekly overview.</p> <p>In year 1 and 2, the overview is termly.</p>
Website	<p>It was felt that whilst there is lots of information on the website, that it is mainly used by people wanting to find out about the school (prospective parents). There is A LOT of information on the website to navigate around.</p>
Texts	<p>This (and Facebook) was by far the most popular means of communication. Parents notice texts straight away and address them almost instantly. It might also be useful if a text comes out to remind people when letters and newsletters have been sent out.</p>
Tapestry	<p>Very successful in reception and Nursery. Parents miss this as children go into year 1. DG explained the formality of the national curriculum from Y1 compared with the Early years differs greatly and that in terms of formal assessment and staff workload, most school end Tapestry at the end of EYFS.</p>
Staff on classroom doors	<p>BC felt that feedback from 1:1 staff is strong.</p> <p>Some parents don't want to overload the teachers.</p> <p>The playground can be very busy.</p> <p>Some parents have younger siblings and are unable to stay to talk to the teacher.</p>
Monthly newsletter	<p>The general feeling was that everyone liked the newsletter, however a lot of parents 'skim read' the letter and do not always absorb the information – particularly dates.</p> <p>It was felt that it would be helpful to send out the key dates to remember in the text body of the email (when the newsletter is sent out). Some parents are finding that the newsletter is going into the junk box.</p> <p>DG puts the newsletter on the front page of the website each time that an issue is produced.</p>
Emails	<p>Felt this was an effective route of communication.</p>

	We discussed setting up class email addresses to trial after Christmas. It was agreed that protocol should be short, to the point questions that can quickly be answered.
School report	Changed to mid-year. This document will be reviewed in a following meeting – it maybe that we adjust the template.
Parents evening	It was felt that 10 minutes was too short. Although this is generally the norm, parents felt that 15 minutes would be much better. Parents also wanted more opportunities to look through books/work before the parents evening meeting in a space outside the classroom. DG advised that this was pre-COVID practice and would be quick to re-implement.
Workshops/ welcome to ... meetings	Welcome to reception evenings are well received. Although the school ran a Y1 and Y2 welcome meeting, it was felt this needs to be delivered sooner and not during the school day. 1800 was proposed as a better time.
Telephone	Very few parents telephone the teacher.
Facebook	Lots of parents use the school Facebook page as a source of communication. It was felt that putting all letters and newsletters on the Facebook page as well as the website would be useful.
Word of mouth	Lots of parents still ask KS for dates – despite being in the newsletters. We mentioned putting key dates in a text to ensure people don't forget.
SLT in the playground	Some parents do chat to members of the SLT. SLT are planning on rotating to ensure that parents do know they are there. DG always stands on the front gate and parents on the back playground do not feel they have the opportunity to see him regularly.
PTA facebook	Not all parents are aware that this page even exists. The school needs to raise the profile of this page.

- The group felt that Social Media is the way forward and by far the most effective way of communication. It was felt that an Old Town app would be useful with notifications, letters and messages coming through. DG and AB to explore what is out there.4
- KS discussed the idea of sending out a Teams invite with Key school dates on. DG to investigate.
- BB felt it would help knowing what days children need to bring in their P.E kits/wellies etc.
- Parents also felt it would be nice to have a timetable so that they can see what subjects the children are learning across the week.
- Questions were raised about the KS1 church Christmas performance. As the event is not ticketed, some people may bring large families. DG to speak to St James re. capacity and then send information out to families.

The meeting ended at 1920. The group would like to focus on the Curriculum at the next meeting.