

Parent Forum Minutes



CHILDREN COME FIRST.

Meeting title: Autumn term meeting of the Ab Kettleby Primary School Parent Forum
Date and time: Monday 21st November 2022 at 3.15 pm
Location: Meeting at the school

In attendance

- * Andrea Brown, Headteacher
- * Felicity Taylor
- * Kelly Vanderweele
- * Tracey King
- * Rachael Connerton
- * Suzie Skelton
- * Anna Duval, MET Clerk

Welcome and Introductions

Mrs Brown welcomed parents to the autumn term Parent Forum especially to those parents who are attending their first meeting.

A MS Forms survey was sent to all parents in advance of the meeting to give feedback and raise questions to the parent forum. Mrs Brown said that some of the feedback and questions received were more suited for the complaints/queries process, however she will answer all of them and explain the process that allows things to be dealt with straight away rather than wait for a parent forum that meets once a term.

FOAKS. Friends of Ab Kettleby School

Mrs Brown said FOAKS put in an amazing amount of effort into organising events and raising fundraising.

They have raised £11,348.49 that that has enabled the purchase of additional items to support the children that could not be met by the school's limited budget. Recently FOAKS have purchased: the buddy bench and books, digital cameras, transport to the panto, Christmas gifts for the children, easter eggs for the children, playground clocks as requested by the children, picnic benches, and the ten-pin bowling trip for year 6 leavers. FOAKS are now raising funds for improving the outdoor area with an outdoor classroom/ shelter that they aim to have by the spring.

Autumn Term 2022

Staffing.

Mrs Brown said that when she first started as Headteacher the biggest issue parents raised was the turnover and changes in teaching staff. Mrs Brown said she promises to always replace with better and will never replace with someone who is less qualified or able. If she can't do this she will go back out to advert. Mrs Brown said that she feels that the set of staff they now have are strong and that the Trust are supportive in employing staff for the school that have more experience and are looking to employ a pool of talent. Mrs Brown said that she can't plan for staff that leave mid-year due to moving from the area or taking maternity leave. Mrs Brown said she does all she can with staff retention and to build and develop their skills and ensure they are happy in their work.

Curriculum

Mrs Brown said they have listened to parents who had said there was no music in school and have introduced music lessons. Years 4/5/6 are having music lessons and there is a school choir. The choir together with the choir from Somerby school have been invited to perform in the Mayor's carol service at St Mary's Church, Melton. They will also be visiting Framland care home in Melton to perform for the elderly residents. Parents said the music lessons are brilliant and that the whole of class 3 are learning to play the guitar. Mrs Brown said the instrument being taught next year will be brass and the following year there will be a third instrument so that during years 4/5/6 children get a chance to learn three instruments. There will be opportunities for those that want to continue lessons on an instrument to pay for group or individual lessons. Mrs Brown said they have set up trolley of musical instruments from some that were previously stored in the loft.

The children have taken part in an art project led by the Kathryn Saunby Studio.

Years 4/5/6 have taken part in some drama led by a drama teacher from Iveshead secondary school.

A modern foreign languages specialist from John Ferneley College is delivering language classes to years 4/5/6.

Subject Reviews The trust is doing subject reviews and have been deep diving to see what each subject offers. Subject reviews have taken place for history, science, and computing. The rest of the subject reviews will follow.

Mrs Brown said the school has invested a lot of time and money in the reading books to ensure they have topic based, diverse, and inspiring books in addition to the phonics level books.

Mrs Brown said the school has had open mornings and reminded parents that they need not wait until an open morning and can arrange a visit at any time.

Pond Area Mrs Brown said that a project idea to improve the pond area has been accepted by Tesco as a community project and we are waiting to hear if our project has been chosen for the blue tokens. This is the scheme where customers place a blue token to vote which community project receives funding. We are hoping to hear by December.

Parents asked about the pond. Mrs Brown said it needs to be drained to make the area safe and then it will be turned into part of the outdoor area.

School Council

The children are still doing charitable fundraising activities that include Macmillan and cake sales. The children are now doing debate questions to talk about each half term and then present this at assembly, so the topic is heard from the children's voice. The debate question this half term was 'is online gaming safe?'

Stay and play sessions

Mrs Brown said there has been a lot of interest in the school. 8 new families attended the sessions. Another four families have visited the school today. Mrs Brown said the local authority (LA) predict the numbers that will start school each year. Last year the LA predicted 9 and 10 started. The LA is predicting 10 for 2023 and there is already 15 children on the school's list before the four that visited today therefore the school may have a waiting list.

PPA Change. Mrs Lee has returned from maternity and supports the Hive class. Mrs Triggs covers Bumble Bee and Honey Bee classes and also covers any required supply.

SENCO.

Mrs Fryer is the school SENCO and is currently on maternity leave. The SENCO from Grove was covering but has since left for another post. Mrs Child, from Brownlow school is covering the SENCO role until the new Grove school SENCO Mrs French starts in January 2023.

Year 4/5/6 residential.

Parents of year 4/5/6 children were asked their preferences for residential. From this it has been decided that Years 5/6 will attend a two night more expensive residential and a less expensive one night residential on alternate years. One of these will have water sport type activities. The year 4 children will have a day trip. Letters will go out soon.

Queries / Complaints Process

Mrs Brown said parents should ask if they have any queries or complaints and outlined the queries / complaints procedure. If it is about your child / class teacher – you should go to your class teacher in the first instance. If you are not happy with the outcome you can go to Mrs Morris or Mrs Brown. If it is a whole school issue that you should come to Mrs Morris or Mrs Brown.

Years 4/5/6 mixed age classes

Mrs Brown said that she has received queries about the Year 4/5/6 mixed classes. Mrs Brown said there is no choice but to mix classes as the school has 3 classes and this is the best split of year groups for the curriculum. R/1, 2/3 and 4/5/6. Mrs Brown said this does mean that year 4/5/6 is a larger class although this helps with transition as the children will be taught in bigger classes at secondary school when they have had smaller classes in a village school. Year 6 children are regularly taken off in their small group to learn specific things. Mrs Brown said there are benefits of having mixed years where children are exposed to higher learning. Mrs Brown said that if parents have any particular concerns about their child in that class the speak to Mrs Morris.

Parent said it feels a big jump from the year 3 class to year 4/5/6 class and felt the children can take time to adjust but can now see that it has helped them mature and learn at a higher level. Parents asked if there are opportunities for children to have transition sessions before they move to the year 4/5/6 class. Mrs Brown said they have transition sessions and will have already regularly visited the class.

Free School Meals

Mrs Brown informed parents of the criteria for receiving free school meals. If you qualify for free school meals the school also receive extra funding for the school. Once you qualify, even if your circumstances change, your child still will receive free school meals for the duration of primary school.

Feedback from Parents What is Working Well.

Mrs Brown contacted parents in advance of the meeting for feedback and parents said the following was working well.

- Very clear communication from the school. It's great to be kept in the loop and the school does so much for the children
- Rainbow road.
- Shared reading.
- Sports team activities.
- Extra Curriculum activities. This term there has been lots of options for children to try out, from fencing, golf street dance etc
- This year has been so much better for my child since COVID restrictions have been fully lifted.
- New class teacher has made a great start to the year for my child.
- I enjoy getting updates on class dojo.
- Communication on Class Dojo
- Shared reading
- Support from school staff for FOAKS activities
- Structure and communication of what's going on and learning schedule. School communication generally excellent.

Feedback from Parents: Things to Improve?

Mrs Brown contacted parents in advance of the meeting for questions to raise. Mrs Brown addressed each one.

- Lots of events/meetings etc are within working hours, sometimes it's difficult to get time off work. There have been a lot quite close together recently.

Mrs Brown said she has to balance the workload of the teachers who get paid for the time that children are in school and are already doing work before and after school and have many meetings outside school hours. Parent forums are scheduled at a different times each term. There are parent evening slots at 6pm and these slots are only released for booking at 6pm to allow parents who work those time access to booking them. Events and activities outside of school hours are limited as they many need to take place when children are in school. Mrs Brown said if parents have any questions or need support then please contact the school. Parents asked for advance notices of events. Mrs Brown said that she sent the autumn term dates out in August and will soon be sending dates out for the spring term. Monthly reminders and dojo reminders are also sent.

- SEN information and updates on what is being done for my child.
- I have had no updates what is being done for my child to cater for his needs.

Mrs Brown said this is statutory and updates should be given to parents each term, during parents' evenings and via the end of year reports. If parents feel this has not been done, she asked parents to contact her so she may look into this.

- Unfortunately for SEN children the school has poor communication with parents and always has since my son started school.

Mrs Brown said the SENCO supports the teacher and the teacher supports the child therefore the communication should be between the parent and teacher and said they should make an appointment to speak to the class teacher.

- Maybe reminders/encouragement for bringing home reading books each evening. This reading seems to have less emphasis placed on this year?

Mrs Brown said reminders are given each day. This is not the case reading has a massive focus and has increased. Topics are based on reading. The lowest 20% of each class are read with every day and phonic interventions take place every day.

- More proactive discussions when a child is struggling with a particular subject/topic
- Mrs Brown said teachers will speak to parents if they feel it is necessary and said that if your child mentions they are struggling then please speak to the teacher.

- Maybe even more encouragement and motivation for children when they do well
- Mrs Brown said praise and encouragement is given to children and the schools behaviour policy is based on positive reinforcement. Children are given Dojo points, gold and silver awards and stickers.

- Even more music, singing etc? The children have responded so positively to the opportunities they've had so far. Ideally not just as optional after school as these aren't always possible for children to attend in terms of logistics.

Mrs Brown showed the music curriculum set by the DfE and said that music is one of the many topics in the whole curriculum and explained how the school meets this. The school has one hour of timetabled curriculum music per week. The children have access to lessons across a range of instruments and voice. There is a school choir. The children play music together as part of the music lessons and the plan is to have a school ensemble/band/group. There is space for rehearsals and individual practice and the children give school performances. Children have the opportunity to enjoy live performances and will be visiting the panto, will watch nativities and years 4/5/6 children will be visiting the Leicester music festival and a performance of back to the eighties at John Ferneley college.

Any more questions at meeting

Parents said that the updates on Dojo showing a selection of children's activities taking place in school are good to see.

Parents said that overall, they are happy with how their children are settling with the new teachers.

Parents said they have noticed that there has been some children swearing quietly in classes that teachers may not be picking it up. Mrs Brown said that parents should talk to the class teacher with specifics so that they can pick this up. Mrs Brown said she is aware of a swearing incident in a class that has been addressed.

Parents asked about school work in class 4/5/6 and said that some work previously covered is being repeated. Mrs Brown said that some work has been repeated to consolidate the children's knowledge as there was gaps in their learning with some due to missed learning during covid. The six year 6 children are having sessions with Mrs Dickson two days a week and that will include preparing for their SATs.

Mrs Brown asked if parents have any knowledge of people or companies who can visit the school to speak to the children or to deliver a session to enrich the curriculum to let her know.

Next Meeting

The next Parent Forum meeting will be arranged in the spring term.

The meeting closed at 4.35pm