

Parent's Voice Group Minutes – 10th March 2016

Present: M .Dyke (MD), S. Noble (SN), N. Lack (NL), A. Miller (AM), S. Proctor (SP), S.Reynolds (SR), L.Cadbury (LC), S.Leaman (S.Le), S.Ludford (SL), C. Tribble (CT)

Apologies: J.Core

1 Matters Arising

A) Crossing Patrol – Provision is going to continue for the foreseeable future. All present agreed that this is excellent news.

B) Maths Websites for Home Learning –Whilst all still agreeing that Mangahigh maths website is working well for most LC asked if there had been any progress in investigating if the names of children could be removed to make the rankings and therefore the competitive element of the games less personal. SL and others did agree that even if names were removed most children in a class could quite accurately predict which child was where in the rankings. It was agreed that the competitive aspect has a positive effect on many encouraging them to keep trying and as a result improving their maths skills.

LC raised concerns that her son reported that he was able to 'compete with' children overseas. CT said that the school had made the decision to opt out of this capability but would look into it to check. Other parents also commented that their children's scores were mysteriously going down which was causing upset. CT to look into

Action point –CT to look into issues raised with Manga High.

2 School Dinners Update/Review

This is still an on-going issue.

Thank you to L.Goodenough who has overseen the collection of data regarding uptake of school meals over a 4 week period. The sheet was distributed at the meeting. It made interesting reading and highlighted the fact that the menu needs to be shifted around as a child who has a school meal on a Tuesday each week will have a pasta dish every week. It was agreed that this needs to change.

AM, MD and S.Le came in one lunchtime to see first-hand what was happening. They agreed that the hall at lunchtime is a happy, well managed environment with the lunchtime staff encouraging children to eat their food. SLe noted that there was a great deal of sandwich waste. Sandwiches were not appealing and coupled with a biscuit everyday made for a very dry meal. It was also noted that the jacket potatoes were very small with not enough filling (cheese in particular was rather lacking).

All at the meeting agreed that the issue of school dinners needs to be dealt with urgently. The question was raised as to whether TCS is able to cope adequately with the amount of school meals it is currently under contract to produce. Parents present suggested that relationship needs to end and other options need to be looked at. SL has looked into various alternatives in the past but many are not feasible due to budget and needing an initial outlay of money which is not currently available. CT suggested there may be ways of negotiating with companies to get them to help with set up costs but this all needs looking into.

CT suggested that Parents Voice group needs to draft a letter to the school governors asking them to raise the issue and to take steps to end contract with TCS and seek other alternative providers which can offer a better standard of food for our children.

Action point: SL to go back to TCS with current findings and see what improvements they can offer. SN to draft letter to governors.

3 Contact with Teachers – access to school being declined in the mornings.

SP raised the point that it is very difficult to get into the school to speak to her child's teacher in the morning. Office staff are trying to cut down on parents taking their children through to their classroom this way and in doing so are also preventing parents who genuinely need to speak to members of staff from getting in.

AM and MD have also had difficulty being allowed through to take children to maths club in the morning. Parents present agreed that Office staff are only trying to encourage parents to go to the relevant doors to drop children off but it needs to be recognised that there are also genuine reasons to be going into school through the office entrance.

Action point: SL to speak to office staff at upcoming meeting.

4 Feedback from Parent Questionnaires

Although the number of questionnaires returned across the school was quite low the feedback received from those that were completed was excellent with many 100%'s achieved across the school for a range of issues including, 'children being taught well', 'children being happy at school' and 'children being well looked after' to name a few.

It was noted that many of the lower scores seemed more significant because of the low number of responses. Just two negative responses for example could account for 10% of the final score for some year groups

One excellent achievement of note was that 94% of Hazeldown parents who responded to the questionnaire said that they would recommend the school to another parent. This significantly above the National Average of 88%.

SL asked parents present for some feedback in response to question 11 on the questionnaire which asks about 'receiving valuable information from the school about my child's progress'.

Two parent's evenings and a report mid-year were agreed to be adequate. It was agreed that reports mid-year works well and allows both staff and parents to follow up on any issues raised. It also allows children to see their progress as issues raised are addressed.

Reports were generally considered to be very good and relevant with parents feeling that the staff genuinely knew the children and therefore were able to write valuable comments that both parents and children found helpful.

5 Class Learning & Repetition of Topics

LC made the comment that there seems to be too much repetition of topics with her son having 'Teignmouth' as a topic for the third time since he has been at the school. She felt that this might be because many of the teachers are relatively new and were not aware of what had been covered in previous years. CT pointed out that repetition is a valuable way of showing children how much they have learnt. It can also be used as a safety net with children being encouraged to grow what they know by moving on from a familiar topic and taking it further.

LC felt that just a simple renaming of the familiar topic to indicate to children that they would be looking at a different aspect of the subject would prevent the 'not again' reaction of some.

CT also explained that as part of the new curriculum all classes will have their own iBook allowing teachers to look back and know immediately what skill set the children have.

6 Using the Terms at/above/below National Average in Reports and Parents Evening

It was felt that using the terms 'above or below National Average/Expectation' in reports and at parents evening were found to be slightly demoralising for some children and parents.

SL explained that the grading criteria and system in general had been changed by the government and that this is the wording that has been put in place. It is widely recognised that the jump in expectations has been significant for pupils and for year 6

children in particular. Staff have been working hard with children to bridge any gaps in their knowledge and all children are being encouraged to do their best and they have risen to the challenge admirably.

It was suggested that the blog could be used as a way of feeding back on progress and recognising interim achievement.

It was noted at this point that emails are working well as a means of communication with parents.

Particular praise was forthcoming for the Safeguarding letter put together by CT. It was thought to be excellent and very useful.

7 Mangahigh Maths Game – problems with Flash Player and Scores

Several parents at the meeting commented that Mangahigh would not work on their iPads. CT and staff are aware of this and explained that it is due to Mangahigh using Flash player which most iPads do not carry. CT said that it is an issue that Mangahigh will need to address and that some content will work on iPads but not all.

8 Concerns & issues about iCan Performance.

An email had been received from a parent raising concerns about iCan and parents present said that they had been hearing a few negative comments from other parents.

CT dealt with the questions raised:

Parent asked why they had not heard about iCan until this week.

CT and some of the parents present were surprised that a parent was not aware of the upcoming event. It has been communicated via the school website, several letters, email and the school blog. Children had been made aware of it through assemblies and work being done in the class room.

Year 2 have only just found out what they will be doing for their part of the performance as they had been focussing on their SATS. Some parents felt that because they hadn't been told what was going on they had started to worry and become concerned about what they would be doing.

Action point: CT to go into year two to reassure them and explain what they will be doing for the performance.

Parent asked if they are expected to go out and buy expensive costumes?

CT explained that most costumes are being put together in class by the children as part of their learning related to iCan. No one will be expected to supply expensive costumes. Parents at the meeting asked that if there was to be parental input into costume making could there be adequate warning of what needs to be sourced and done. SL agreed that all requests will be sent out before the half term break.

The question 'Why Torquay?' was asked.

CT explained that he looked for the largest venue he could find within reasonable travelling distance. The size of the venue was partly to do with the numbers of parents and children that would be involved in a whole school production but he also wanted to stress the idea that iCan was intended as an aspirational experience and the large, well known venue would considerably add to the 'wow' factor of the whole experience for the children.

It was agreed among the parents present that most parents and children are very excited about iCan, indicated by the 600+ tickets already sold.

Action point: CT to lead a whole school assembly on iCan in the coming week.

Meeting over ran. Agenda point (below) will be addressed at next meeting.

9 Short Notice for Year 2 SATS Meeting/Preparation

Next meeting Thursday 16th June 6.30 -7.30

Meeting closed at 7.40