

Parent Forum Minutes



CHILDREN COME FIRST.

Meeting title: Autumn term meeting of the Somerby Parent Forum

Date and time: Thursday 15th Nov 2022 at 3.15am

Location: Meeting at the school

In attendance

- * Andrea Brown, Headteacher
- * Louise Buckenham
- * Hannah Maydwell
- * Shelley Morton
- * Anna Duval, MET Clerk

Welcome and Introductions

Mrs Brown welcomed parents to the autumn term Parent Forum and explained that the rationale of the meetings is to get feedback and suggest improvements, and to help promote positive and effective two-way communication between parents and the Trust. The improvement of children's learning experience is the Forum's clear and consistent goal.

Parents were reminded that these meetings do not discuss items relating to specific pupils, specific parents, or individual staff and this should be discussed one to one with the relevant teacher or Headteacher as appropriate.

Autumn Term 2022

Mrs Brown gave an update on FOSS. FOSS is the Friends of Somerby School pta committee. FOSS committee met and attracted some new parents. The cakes sales are back, and the school is supporting FOSS in giving out the raffle tickets to parents to save carrying cash. There will be a Christmas raffle. They are organising a 'bags4school' fundraising activity in the next two weeks where parents or people in the community fill bags with donated items and return them to school for collection.

FOSS's fundraising has purchased the following items for the school: benches, personalised clock, books for the library, new outdoor signs, outdoor seating, and the Panto this December.

The next focus to spend the FOSS funds on is to rejuvenate the library with soft furnishings and bookshelves and to update the sink area.

Mrs Brown said the library books have now been organised into reading number order to match the accelerated reading programme. The next aim is to arrange boxes of topic books.

Mrs Brown gave a huge thanks to FOSS for all the work they do and their contributions to the school for the children.

Update on the roof works

Mrs Brown gave an update on the roof works. The works started late due to scaffolding issues and that work began work at the end of August. It was then noted that the contractors did not have DBS checks therefore when term restarted work was again delayed until DBS checks were completed. Stone works has started, and guttering will next take place. The tiling is due to start soon and weather dependant the work is due to be completed by Christmas and the scaffolding removed. During the works there have been a couple of very small leaks which have caused no damage and any repairs will be covered by the contractors.

Curriculum update

Mrs Brown said the school aims to offer a broad and balanced curriculum which excites children, staff, and parents.

- The brass music lessons have started.
- The school choir are involved in the Mayor's carol service at St Mary's Church, Melton. They were invited following the choir's involvement in the Queen's Jubilee concert where they won a song lyrics prize and will be joined by children from Ab Kettleby's school choir.
- Every child took part in the 'Take one Picture' 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 that reading is the school's big focus this year with every topic being based around reading and children are being encouraged to be engaged in reading.

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Open Mornings

Mrs Brown said she received positive feedback from parents regarding the open mornings.

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. The children then talk to the whole school, and this allows discussions and debates from the children's voice. The debate question this half term was online games and what games are age appropriate.

Stay and play sessions

The school held a stay and play session on 6th October that was well attended. The next session will be on Tuesday 29th November. The session was advertised on social media and 6 new children from outside the village attended.

Parents asked about anticipated numbers joining school next academic year and asked if there was a breakeven point of numbers required. Mrs Brown said that the LA predict an intake of 3 for next year and that they base this number on local birth figures, however the school has potential 4 EYFS applications. The school could take up to 7 but 3 or 4 is fine for numbers.

Friends of the Tenth

Mrs Brown said the Friends of the Tenth are very supportive of the school. Friends of the Tenth is a charity that honours the memory and legacy of the brave men of the 10th Battalion, the Parachute Regiment, and their involvement in the Battle of Arnhem in 1944 during WW11. The charity has provided the school with P.E. shirts and have provided the school with 96 tulip bulbs to plant in the school grounds that represent the 96 men from this area that died. Some of the children attended the memorial service. The school is linking with a school in Arnhem.

Twin Lakes – Whole School Trip

The school won the lyrics competition at the Mayor's Queen's Jubilee concert and won 33 tickets to Twinlakes and £150. This will be used for a whole school trip in the summer term.

OFSTED

The school was visited by Ofsted recently. Mrs Brown said the report is due by end of November.

What is new?

SENCO.

Mrs Toghill is due to start maternity leave in February. Mrs Green will be starting before Christmas. Mrs Child, from Brownlow school is covering the SENCO role until the new Grove school SENCO 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 Year 5/6 will attend a one night/water sport residential and a longer, two night residential on alternate years.

Topic Plan.

Mrs Brown discussed the 3rd year cycle of Year 4/5/6 topic plan. It will ensure any gaps in topics that may have been missed due to Covid will be covered.

Queries / Complaints Process

Mrs Brown outlined the queries / complaints procedure. If it 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 Sida as the lead teacher and Mrs Brown. If it is a whole school issue that you should come to Mrs Brown or Mrs Sida.

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 showed the following feedback that has been received from parents:

- The day to day is going well, even with the new teachers, everyone seems to be settling well.
- I think the school is very well organised, and as a parent we are kept very well updated with what is happening.
- Sports clubs.
- Dojo forum is good for keeping parents informed and promoting discussion with children around events that have occurred during the school day
- Everything works well for my child. He's very happy at school and gets all the help he needs.
- Everything!
- The after-school clubs are great!
- The family feel the school brings is so unique and special.
- The fact that every teacher knows all the children well.
- The outside covered area for Willow class is so important.
- The SEND provision and support.
- Fabulous little school which feels as though it's improving all the while!

- Overall, I wouldn't change the school for the world, and I know the staff work incredibly hard every day and we really appreciate everything you do! Thank you.

Feedback from Parents: Things to Improve?

Mrs Brown contacted parents in advance of the meeting for questions to raise. The following was received from parents in advance of the meeting. Mrs Brown addressed each one.

- Gate opening time seems to be getting late again.

Mrs Brown said that if it is regularly 5 minutes late then please let us know.

- Why is the roof taking so long and are the builders going to sort out any problems that are happening on inside of school because they are taking so long. i.e., leaks in classrooms.

This was covered in the roof update above.

- Parental communication for academic achievement of children. Many dojo posts are about sports outings or pieces of art, but we see very little celebration of academic outcomes or even what is happening in lessons.

Mrs Brown said that there is an expectation that teachers post on Dojo all the time but doing so takes time out of teaching to take the picture, check children's permissions, upload the picture and doing this does not improve the children's learning experience. There is a variety of items posted and there are opportunities to view children's work at parent evenings and open events etc.

- As a full-time working parent, I wish that times when parents are required to attend meetings especially could be considered to be early evening as I would do more but cannot regularly request to leave work early to do this. And maybe it might attract more parents who also work full time.

Mrs Brown said that there are a variety of times offered.

- The nit situation is tiring. Took 5 days after half term to catch nits. Managed to get rid of them only to catch them again 2 weeks later. This is such a tiresome vicious circle that is time and money consuming. There clearly is a bigger issue going on please can more be done? I really don't want to have to shave my child's head but it's looking the best option!

Mrs Brown said she can't talk about individual children and families. If the situation is a safeguarding issue, then they will refer, and the school provide treatment lotions for families.

- More storage, so toilets don't have to be used to hold other items.

There is limited storage space in school. The disabled toilet has a storage area for spare clothes so that children can be changed there if they need to be. It is also more discrete for the child storing the items there.

- I'd like to ask that the forum to consider whether parents should be informed when there are confirmed cases of covid in the school. I was surprised that this information was not shared with the parents of my own children's classmates when they were confirmed as infected given that they are in such close contact. This information would enable parents to be extra vigilant monitoring children for symptoms and, of equal if not greater importance, make an informed decision around contact with family members who are immunosuppressed when cases are actively circulating. I have received numerous notification of head lice cases and personally feel that a similar approach to covid cases would be beneficial. Many thanks

The school follows Government guidance and are no longer required to test or report cases.

- Better signage to slow traffic down, zebra crossing etc more of a council thing I guess but definitely a huge concern of mine.

Mrs Brown and parents discussed the ongoing problems of speeding traffic outside the school. Mrs Brown said she has written to the parish council and Leicestershire county council to ask them to come and look at the situation.

- A general spruce up (easier said than done I know!) Paint railings outside school for a really smart first impression, once the scaffolding is down it would be a great chance for a fresh look outside.

Mrs Brown has obtained a quote to repaint the railings, and this is planned for after the roofing works.

- Create a quiet, calm corner (with partition maybe) for children who feel overwhelmed, SEND, received bad news and need somewhere cosy to sit for a moment etc

Mrs Brown said the library area is used for the older children and they are looking at creating some space for the younger children.

- **Before and after school care for working parents.**

How vulnerable the school is to outside influence, with the situation with Rosie, lots of children are willing to travel to the school to access the wonderful setting, and I wonder if we are losing out on new applicants/leaving ourselves vulnerable to losing current students, by not offering consistent before /after school additional care.

Is there scope to discuss “employing” Rosie before and after school? Possibly at village hall if not on school premises? It could be a factor in less children applying to the school. With the planned expansion of the village, we should be attracting lots of new families - it could even be a revenue stream for the school.

The parent forum discussed the before and after school care situation. Mrs Brown is exploring what opportunities are available and is contacting Brownlow school’s before and after school providers to see if they can offer a service at Somerby.

Discussion was given to using the school premises and/or the village hall and the possibility of approaching the preschool to see if they could extend their offer to include before and after school provisions with the possibility of employing Rosie. Louise Buckenham is the Chair of the preschool (Knossington and Somerby Preschool) and agreed to contact the preschool committee to see if they would consider this option.

Next Parent Forum Meeting

The next Parent Forum will be in the spring term.

The meeting closed at 4.15pm