**Parent Forum 1/2/23**

**Present: Mrs. Weeks, Mr. Haylock, Mr. Parker, Tommy Roberts, Haylea Elsey, Julie Shipley, Raghav Kapoor, Yesim Koch, Dave Carter, John Andrisan**

**Apologies sent from: Ellie, Claire, Zoe, Lena, Gemma, Yana, Kylie**

Walnut

**Apologies for the late question! I've just been speaking with a few parents and I wonder if it would be possible to get an update on the lollipop man who used to help families & children cross Poverest Rd.? He hasn't been there since the holidays and it's such a busy road that really needs someone to help the children cross - especially the older children who often walk by themselves and don't have a parent to help them cross.**

**From my perspective, this goes hand in hand with the road closure issue on the other side of the school, as these two locations are thoroughfares for heavy pedestrian traffic and school opening & closing times. If the lollipop man was a council contract that's been cancelled, then possibly we could get parents to volunteer as a temporary solution until a permanent solution can be sorted? Happy to work with you to find a solution or spearhead something myself / with the parents' forum.**

Our lollipop man was on long-term sick but has now resigned. He is employed by a company who we pay. They find it very difficult to recruit and in fact our last one we managed to recruit for them. We have spent many hours trying to get volunteers to man the barrier and I think that Poverest Road is even more dangerous than Tillingbourne Green so I wouldn’t want to put a person’s life in jeopardy without proper training,etc.

**Governor comments:**

The School Street timings 8.20- 8.50am and 2.50-3.20pm were given to Bromley last June. We asked for the signs to be changed for the start of the Autumn term...they were not! To say that Bromley have been dragging their feet, during on-going communications would be very much an understatement. Their lack of appropriate response has put our community at risk, in "an accident waiting to happen" sense.

The issue of the congested Tillingbourne / Lee Green junction should be eased if / when the yellow lines are finally extended. Again communication about this has been unsatisfactory from Bromley, with much time wasted.

If further intervention is required, we need a significant number of parents(40+) to write to councillors / Bromley. Emails / letters should be brief, concise and focussed only on the key points. We now have councillor support that goes beyond the standard letter, which merely re-produced the Bromley version of events.

Willow

**"I would like a question asked about what the school can do about the idling cars issue. I was at the school half an hour early today, and there were at least five cars parked on Tillingbourne Green or Lee Green with their engines running.  It happens every day, not just today."**

The council have put up signs after our last request. We would imagine this is to keep warm. We can educate our children about how the emissions from cars contribute to air pollution around our school. We could make some posters to put on the school fence and send messages on Dojo. Apart from that, there isn’t a lot.

Holly

**I don’t know when the homework checking date is. I know that it's Friday and every Friday I put the homework notebook and reading recording book but sometimes it is not being checked, just like last Friday. Could you please let me know which date is it?**

The homework is due on Thursday and given back to the children on Friday so it gives us a day to check their homework. In terms of the certificates, Numbots, Mathletics and Reading Eggs are determined via the app.

**I also would like to know what are the criteria for the reading certificate. I know the maths and numbots through the app however what is the reading certificate or the star of the week certificate? Does the adventure Tedd is going to stay with all students on weekend? Do you have a list of which kids are taking? My kid is waiting since September if you don’t have a list what are the criteria for that? Thank you**

The other certificates chosen by the teacher are Reading, homework, Adventure Ted and star of the week. These go to children that the teachers in the class have acknowledged have made an extra effort that week (lists are kept for all of these to keep it fair). All children should have the opportunity to achieve these by the end of the year.

**It was run by a white woman and I was very surprised to see that. I am not sure why we could not have found a black person if not African, who could have run the workshop for the kids.**

**Especially for Samuel who is the only black child in his class, specifically African, it would have been good to see accurate representation of what African really looks like.**

We were also surprised. We were using a new company which came with glowing references and what the children did was excellent but completely agree. We are looking to give feedback to the workshop leaders so the parent forum comment is going to be given. The dance teacher was a professional dance teacher who had trained in many different cultural dances. She showed pictures of the real Zulu South African dancers and spoke about their culture before the children learnt to do the dance. Most teachers then showed the children the real dancers back in their classrooms therefore showing the children what Zulu Warriors looked like.

**Hazel**

**Some children don’t understand the current reward system in class, what do they need to do to get a certificate or reward (eg a trip on the reading bus).**

We use the Dojo system in the classroom. Mathletics, reading eggs etc these certificates are earned from work they do at home and certificates are given out each week during Tree of Success assembly. The library bus is not used as a reward as we all go every two weeks.

**- Are the children put it ability groups and if so are they aware of what ability/level they are at?**

The children are put into ability groups and named colours but it is not advertised what levels they are working at. The children will also work in mixed ability groups for different tasks too so that those who can’t read as well but great thinkers have the chance to thrive .

**- What is the criteria for the reward system?**

A couple of the children in the class have an individual reward system that has been put in place to help with behaviour and they get to choose a 10 minute activity at the end of the day if they get all four stickers during the day.

All of the other children receive Dojo's during the day. I also have reader of the week, speller of the week and homework certificates that go out each week. There is also a star of the week that goes to someone who has done something above and beyond.

I keep a record of who receives these certificates so that it is fair.

**- Would it be possible for some more written maths and English homework?**

We agree that there should be more written homework as not all children can work on a device. Also you will see the children starting to get more homework as they are older and have become more confident with their writing in English and Maths

**- If children are falling behind in phonics/reading what support is available other than online apps?**

The children that are falling behind get interventions in the afternoons. These include a whole variety of physical games rather than online apps.

**Chestnut**

**Club  options - is there any possibility of having any more options.**

We have 22 school clubs on offer at the moment and of course, we would like to offer more. Teachers run 14 clubs for free and give up their own time to do so. As a school, we have 8 external clubs and we part-fund these to bring the cost down. The majority of clubs are not full to capacity. The school cannot afford to subsidise any more school clubs and it will be incredibly difficult to continue subsidising moving forward as the government has not increased our income and our costs are increasing on a huge scale similar to households across the country.

It is a risk to the school when we offer a new club as external clubs will expect a minimum uptake with the school covering costs for no attendance. Most clubs that we have contact with charge around £7 to £9 per session and we feel that we wouldn't get the required number of participants to make it worthwhile. One option is to have more clubs run by school staff but these would have to be paid for by parents, and it is an option we will look at in September.

**Communicating with parents about events that are taking place and contributions towards these from the parents, e.g. diversity week - a weeks’ notice of payment no matter how small a contribution is not sufficient notice.**

There was a 2 week notice period given for the contribution however the money was not expected to be paid on/before that date, it could be given in after - sorry if this was not clear enough to parents.

**Could you please ask whether we will have a new lollipop person to help crossing Poverest Road.**

The position has been advertised but we haven’t had any candidates come forward. Please advertise it in your newsletters. We are finding it increasingly hard to fill School Crossing Patrol positions and currently have 5 vacancies within the borough. We are not able therefore to cover the position, however I will inform you as soon as anyone is appointed.

**Can the school please review its regular recommendations for kids to bring single use plastic bags on trip ? We all know the impact of single use plastic on the environment so it would be great to have this recommendation removed.**

It is not our regular recommendation to use single use plastic bags. We are now encouraging back packs for trips. This has been shared with teacher’s meetings this week so all remember what has been said before.

Cedar

**Is it possible to shake things up a bit so the children at the back of class can switch with those at the front? I did think it might impact on children’s engagement in class.**

The children are moved around the classroom regularly depending on the activity, each individual child's needs and their behaviour. If a child is not engaged, they are moved to a different space in the classroom to support them.

Beech

**Some parents have asked about the possibility of the reintroduction of hand sanitiser and children being encouraged to wash hands daily, especially before lunch, as there's a lot of illnesses / sickness bugs going around at the moment.**

There are a lot of illness/sick bugs nationally. I went to a meeting for Bromley Headteachers with public health where this was discussed. We wash hands before breaks and handles are cleaned daily to reduce transferring germs.

Birch

**1) This may already be in the works but Could letters that have been sent home be available to view on the school website. Eg letters home section like a lot of other schools have on their websites**

**Eg bishop justus, Harris, Tubbenden,The Highway, Green street green**

**This shows prospective parents what the school gets up to as they’re able to see the letters that have gone home**

These are put on the website > parents > letters home

**2) Weekly news sections from class teachers are lacking.**

We have a detailed newsletter every half term partly to reduce the workload of teachers. However our teachers put news on dojo almost, if not every single day.

**3) Birch class is showing that miss otieno is teacher on the school website, class news and class photos not up to date.**

We are moving to a new website and that is why it hasn’t been updated.

**4) There doesn’t seem to be any school trips in the pipeline for year 3. Will they be going on any in the spring term?**

The River Cray and The Science Museum

Fig

**Can we check the Forest school area for any poisonous plants as one child came up in a rash after the lesson (may not have been from this school or the activity but parents are concerned and would be good to allay fears)?**

We have already checked and there is no poisonous plant there but there are nettles.

The parent said it was Hogweed (picture below) which is not present throughout the Forest School (certainly not at this time of the year anyway as everything is dead).

We'll be keeping an eye to see if it pops up anytime.

**EAL parents**

At the meeting we discussed my role in school and how to help your child at home. Much discussion arose over when to speak English and when to speak the child's home language(s). I advocated speaking English at school and your home language within the home, however, reading school books must be done in English. It's a good idea to ask your child questions about the story so that you can check their understanding of the whole storyline. This is called 'comprehension' and unfortunately comprehension lets a lot of children down in tests as they cannot answer questions on texts. Asking questions can be done in English and your home language.

Many parents said that siblings spoke English together in the home. It is up to parents to promote their own language at home. I think it is vitally important that children learn their heritage language. There may be times at school such as in the playground where children who speak the same language could converse in that language.

Some parents found it difficult to motivate their children to read their reading book. A couple of parents said it was a good idea for the children to see you reading a book ( something we don't do so much now as we have kindles, ipads etc.) as this sets an example.

Parents thought our diversity week last week was a good idea but wanted more events where their children could speak about their culture and customs and feel proud of it.

**Final discussion points:**

We discussed what was happening about the petition and the correspondence with the council over the road.Mrs. Weeks explained that she had received an email and would be replying to it tomorrow and then depending on the response from the council, she would let the forum know for next steps, if necessary.

A parent suggested that we could use social media to advertise for the lollipop position as people look at these and we spoke about how we advertise our jobs on

Mr. Parker spoke about improving links with Friends of Poverest so that perhaps more of them could attend the Parent Forum to make them more aware of the links with Teaching and Learning and for the Class representatives to support them more too.