

Parent Forum – 24.05.2018

3 parents, Jon Clark (JC), Diana Massa (DM) and Judith Rutherford (JR) (Chair of governors)

Started with two items which school wanted to raise: Site Security and SMSC

- 1) JC wanted to ask parents' views on site security. Although the school considers site security to be good, there are always improvements to be made. He outlined the 'points to be looked at': the shared site with the Infants, access to site at drop off time and pick up time, special events e.g. Sports Day, children on site before and after school (breakfast club, 3:30pm Club and after school clubs), parents in building for good reason. Vik Batten (School Business Manager) also attended this part of the meeting to share her views on this topic based on her experience in other schools. Parents loved how welcoming the school is and how they can see teachers and staff without an appointment but also appreciated that this open ethos does pose questions for site security. Parents said that safety of their children had to take priority. We discussed some ways of possibly making site more secure whilst still striking the balance to maintain the current ethos. JR asked for the school's Health and Safety governor to be involved and for the issue to be taken to a Full Governors' meeting.

- 2) JC wanted to share what the school curriculum offers children in terms of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development. JC shared the front of school's SMSC policy (which is also available on the website) and gave parents copies of a Hampshire County Council checklist and an example of the school's current provision for SMSC. This is also available on the school's website. JC asked for feedback from parents. Parents said that they were pleased with all that the school is already doing and offering their children. Another parent that that children were polite and well-mannered. JR concurred this and said that visitors to the school always comment on the children's excellent behaviour and confidence. One parent asked the reason for teaching French over other languages. DM explained the reasons behind this. The parent also said that it would be good to look more at different cultures, church groups and religions. DM said that school ensures that the theme days in January look at a country with a different culture and religion but agreed that more could be done. A parent said that there was a growing body of evidence for the usefulness of mindfulness and asked the school to consider this. The suggestion was also made that the school could trial getting the children to do a 5 minute run at the start of the day to see if this has a positive impact. This has been trialled in other schools and has been in the national news recently. JR said that the governors spend time talking about SMSC and that every half term, a governor comes in to monitor this. JR made the point that whatever we do, governors and senior leaders must be conscious of workload on staff and ensure that what we do gives the best outcomes for children.

JC then opened up the discussion to topics which parents wanted to discuss.

- 3) One parent asked to discuss the context of persuasive writing units in school and the reason for the topics children are asked to write about. JC explained that if the children consider that the topics could be real issues, their writing is much more powerful and the quality is remarkably better. The parent asked about using real issues that are actually happening in

that moment rather than 'made up' scenarios. JC explained that real issues don't always occur at the right time in the curriculum but that all scenarios the children have been given are possible. JR explained that she had been involved in the units and said that the quality of the writing produced by the children was fantastic. She also explained that the scenarios were all feasible and that having a real outcome e.g. writing to the Chair of governors gave the children a real purpose and an outcome which the children could relate to. JC reaffirmed that if the children are worried, parents and staff would and should reassure the children. Discussions were around whether it was possible to find a scenario which was plausible and engaged the children without some children being worried about it.

- 4) A parent said that they liked how the school worked and wanted reassurance that these things would stay even with a new headteacher in place. JC said that nothing is ever static and Mrs Hunter has brought lots of positive changes to the school in the time she has been head. JC explained that a new headteacher would also bring his/her new ideas but it is how and when these are implemented which is important. JR said that there is a panel of 5 governors who have been through a training process and have spent a lot of time setting the criteria for selection. She said that the governors were very rigorous and also clear about looking for a headteacher who would build on the successes and someone who has a vision to develop us. Part of the recruitment process is to understand from the candidates how they would do this. Another parent asked if there would be an interim headteacher for the Autumn term. JR said that we were set up for the Autumn term and everything was in place for the school to continue to be strategic and work through the School Strategic Plan. Parents asked what would happen if we were unable to appoint during this round. JR explained that there was time to build in a second round which would still mean a January start if someone was appointed. The governors had thought carefully to give the right amount of time to give the best opportunity to get the right person.