

Marsh School Parents Forum
Meeting 17th June 2010 9.00am

The purpose of the Parents' Forum is to provide an opportunity for parents of children throughout the school, from nursery to Year 2, to meet with Mrs Morrisson regularly to discuss matters that may be concerning us, ways to improve the school and other general matters. All parents are welcome to attend but we are aware that some parents might find this difficult if their first language is not English. We do want the forum to be open and welcoming to everyone so if anyone has any ideas how we can get over the language barrier we would be pleased to hear them.

Mrs Morrisson has also stated that the Chair of Governors and other governors or staff are more than willing to attend on occasion should we wish to understand more about the Governors' role or so the staff can talk about specific projects in the school.

Breakfast Club and Hot Lunches

Mrs Morrisson confirmed that she has put a bid in to the Council to be able to start up a breakfast club in the near future. This will start at 8.15am every day and provide cereal or toast for those children attending. There will also be games and activities available for the children so they can get to make new friends across different age groups and feel as though they are in a friendly, welcoming environment as well as practising Numeracy and Literacy skills.

Obviously there are financial matters to consider when undertaking such a project such as extra staff cover and food costs.

There is also the possibility of hot lunches being made available to the children. However, as there is no canteen on site, these lunches will have to be delivered to the school by a specialist company. Storage needs to be sorted out so that the lunches can be kept warm and in a safe place until the children are ready for them.

Nursery

The new fencing around the nursery playground has been warmly received and is much safer than the old wooden fencing. Although this has resolved one issue in terms of safety, it has in fact raised a couple more: -

- The combination lock that is used does seem to be a bit awkward to open so it has raised some questions about how quickly it could be opened if there was an emergency. Mrs Morrisson confirmed that there was the same sort of problem when locks were fitted to other gates in the school and it just needs the nursery staff to all have a lot of practice in opening it.
- Some nursery parents have been concerned that, because of the nursery gate being locked, they have to wait by the gate to be let in and this is very close to one of the classroom windows. Obviously, at this time of year with the windows being open, there is the risk of the class being disturbed by the parents talking amongst themselves. Mrs Morrisson did not think this was the case as she had not received any comments either from the teacher or any of the pupils in that classroom but she would check just to make sure.
- It was suggested that photos and names of the nursery staff should be placed by the coat pegs in nursery so that parents could get to know all the staff quicker. This has worked really well in the main reception lobby of the school, where all the staff have their photos and names.
- It would be helpful if the nursery newsletter could be put on the school website as the main school newsletters are. Perhaps a nursery section could be made on the website so that nursery parents knew where to look for newsletters and other information relating to the nursery.

Safety

An advertisement has been placed for a lollipop person and Mrs Morrisson is confident she has two good candidates for the role - it is just a matter of getting to the interview stage now.

It is suggested that parents try and be a bit more considerate about how and where they park in the mornings. Abbey Barn Road is a particularly fast road so the lollipop person should make a great deal of difference there. There is also concern about parking along the road to the Retail Park. It is very difficult to park down that road, what with the give way bollards and delivery lorries needing to get down there. Perhaps in the better weather parents could give thought to parking in other areas and then walking round to the school. Please be aware that you do this at your own risk and there may be restrictions on parking elsewhere.

Mrs Morrisson has managed to secure funding for a bike rack and scooter rack at the school. It is just a matter now of finding suitable ones and locating a place on the school playground to fix them. Hopefully this will also encourage children to be more active in getting to and from school every day.

Parents are reminded that all gates leading in to the school should be shut behind them when entering or leaving. We know it is difficult if you see someone coming behind you who you know is coming into the school but the gates are there to keep our children safe. Mrs Morrisson will be purchasing some signs shortly to put on the gates to remind parents, delivery men and visitors to secure the gates when using them.

Learning

Parents are aware that help is given to those children who may struggle with certain aspects of learning but wished to know what happened about any child that showed a particular gift or talent for a subject. Mrs Morrisson confirmed that special activities for gifted/talented children would always take place within the school where possible, sometimes this might be from an extra teacher providing specialist subject teaching to a small group or children being encouraged to improve their talent by attending a local football club for example. Teaching is always planned for all the different levels in the class

including the most able. This is the most important way of making sure the needs of the children are catered for.

Computers are used in class but only at appropriate times and for learning. One example of this is the children being able to access phonics learning games on the computers, which encourages not only speech but also reading ability. It was suggested that extra materials could be provided for home learning so that parents were fully aware of how their child should be progressing and what pattern to follow. Mrs Morrisson confirmed that there would be a phonics training session for parents in September, as there is one held every year. Perhaps at the session materials could be made available for parents to buy or borrow for use at home. It might also be a good idea for parents to visit one of the classes when they are learning phonics to actually see (and hear!) it in action.

It would be good to be able to have specialist teachers in certain areas. This has been beneficial in relation to music classes (with Miss Ramell) in the past and the school is keen to find someone to help with ICT/Art learning - if anyone has any knowledge or be willing to lend a hand please let us know. We may have an art specialist starting in September but the teacher is trying to work out how this fits in with having a family and she needs interviewing.

Parents commented on how good the Golden Book and school mascot are. It is nice to see the children being praised for good behaviour or doing something really well. They also are given stickers when appropriate. Mrs Morrisson was keen to reiterate that stickers are not given out frequently, that they are earned and this way they are more appreciated.

There is a need for more consistent parent meetings to let everyone know what is going on with the school and perhaps the syllabus could be discussed at these meetings so that parents are able to find out what exactly is being taught at school so we can encourage our children at home. Mrs. Morrisson mentioned that we had made a good start this year but need to keep working upon this next year.

There will be a change in the starting time of the main school in September - to 9.00am that needs to be agreed by the governors at their next meeting. Mrs Morrisson feels that the extra five minutes might help parents who have to do more than one school run.

Forms

There is a need to streamline the form filling that has to be undertaken by parents when they are requesting a place for their child at the school. This is usually carried out on parent consultation days when staff are on hand to help fill out the forms if parents are finding them difficult. Unfortunately, help is not always being asked for and parents then find themselves in the situation where their child has not been given a place at school because the forms have not been completed properly or at all. Any suggestions to make this easier for everyone would be greatly appreciated. A form filling session in the hall has already been tried but this had little success.

It was felt that this was more than enough for the first meeting. We would like to hear your feedback on this and whether you feel regular meetings like this would be helpful to how you feel about the school, your child's learning and other matters. We have not decided how regularly to meet - perhaps once a half term or once every term - if you have any thoughts please let your child's teacher or Mrs Morrisson know and we will try to take everyone's suggestions and comments on board.