

## Marsh School Parents Forum Meeting 15<sup>th</sup> June 2011

We started off this meeting by briefly going over the Minutes from the previous meeting in March.

### **Health & Safety**

The cover to go over the reception class area has now been built and is providing more useable outdoor space for the children in all weathers, plus an area for parents to shelter in bad weather.

### **Asian Parents Forum**

A couple of matters had been raised in the Asian Parents Forum:-

#### ***Homework club***

Some parents felt a bit out of depth with the homework and unsure of how to help their child. It was suggested that an after school session should be held, with the parents in attendance as well so that they can be guided as to how to help their child and what is required. It is important that it is not seen by the children as just another lesson and that teacher input will be at a minimum – it is more about initial guidance from a teacher but then parents and children doing the homework together. There was also an opportunity for a grant to be obtained to pay for an official interpreter (this could be a willing school parent).

#### ***Religious Holidays***

There was some confusion over how much holiday allowance was allowed to be authorised absence, when religious festivals happen. Mrs Morrisson advised that 1 day was allowed as authorised absence but that she would obviously look at things on an individual basis and take into account whether families had to travel abroad for celebrations etc.

#### ***Speech Therapy***

There will hopefully be a facility once per school year for the school to purchase an integrated service dealing with speech therapy and cognitive therapy. There is hope that in the future the school can obtain funding and staffing for a drop-in centre based at the school once a month.

### **Website/Newsletters**

The updating of the website and school policies is in hand but is a long process as a lot of information needs to be included and some policies need to be looked at again before being included.

**Comment [R1]:** We actually have bought into an integrated service with speech and language with the cognition and learning team meaning that we have the services of a highly trained speech and language therapist and a specialist teacher for one morning a week this term. This has involved training for staff, in depth assessments of children and also a talk for parents. This means children have had quicker access to speech and language therapy than they might otherwise have unless they have a statement of special needs. We will fund this service £1500 at term next year too as it is an excellent use of funds with maximum impact.

## **Smoking**

Mrs Morrisson said that she was going to get a polite notice made up to remind parents not to smoke outside any of the school gates.

**Comment [R2]:** by both gates

## **Parenting**

Mrs Morrisson has now sorted out some books for the parents' self-help library. These are situated outside Mrs Morrisson's room and parents are advised to help themselves if they see a book that they feel might help them with any issues they might be facing in their parenting/childcare.

## **New Matters**

### **Breakfast Club**

There was some concern about healthy eating during breakfast club. Some children have been putting sugar on cereal that is already sugar coated (i.e. Sugar Puffs) and then following this with toast and jam. This obviously is not very healthy. Mrs Morrisson said it was important that Breakfast Club offered a range of breakfasts as obviously different children had different eating habits and likes and dislikes. If any parent felt that their child should or should not have something then a quiet mention to Mrs Thackeray or Mrs Marmion when dropping your child off would be acceptable.

### **Appointment Diaries**

It was suggested that each class have an appointments diary for the class teacher to note any meetings with parents in. This would mean that, should the teacher be called away to deal with something else and not be able to make the meeting, the teaching assistant could look at the diary and contact parents to let them know that the arranged meeting could not take place. This would save parents sorting out childcare and/or work issues. Mrs Morrisson did not like the idea of each class having a diary but explained that the school did have a central diary system, which everyone should use and does get checked. Mrs Morrisson is going to remind all school staff to use this diary and then hopefully this will solve the issue of wasted time.

**Comment [R3]:** as there can be mix ups with other events and we need to see the whole school picture.

### **Get Together**

There had been a suggestion at previous meetings that an event be held at the beginning of the school year so that new parents could get to know each other and the teachers and that the new school starter children could also get to know each other. Mrs Morrisson had found out some exciting news that a lottery grant could be made available for events like this and make it into a whole school event open to all parents and children so that everyone could come along and have a fun time. Everyone could bring a dish of food to eat and there would be entertainment laid on for the children such as bouncy castle, trampoline etc.

**Comment [R4]:** This is a one off payment as part of the fact finding mission for the Big Lottery bid for the Micklefield and Marsh areas. We will definitely be getting this money.

### **Parking/Road Issues**

It was felt very strongly at this meeting that the road running alongside the school is becoming busier, especially now that the new housing development has residents in some parts now and this is only going to get worse as the development carries on. Cars are speeding down this road and obviously bad parking is making the flow of traffic difficult and tempers are getting frayed. Several ideas were suggested, including contacting the Council about building speed bumps, installing a zebra crossing instead of the island where people cross now, putting double yellow lines all the way down both sides. It was agreed that this should become a big issue for the school to get behind and see if we can tackle this to make the road (and paths) safer for all users (not just people coming to and from the school). It was also suggested that the Council create a disabled parking space opposite the school so that the appropriate badge holders could park closer to the school safely when dropping off children.

To this end it was agreed that the Council be contacted and our local Councillors and MP be asked to attend a meeting with members of the Parents Forum (and Mrs Morrisson) to explain the issues in great detail that we feel are affecting the safety of everyone. It is hoped that we could also create a petition for parents and teachers to sign and this could be handed over the Council with a covering letter from the school explaining the reasoning behind it. If, at this stage it was felt we were not getting any co-operation, we could contact the local press to gain publicity over the issue and hope that press coverage would put some additional pressure on the Council to sort matters out.

Also a questionnaire was to be sent out to parents to gain a wider range of views and ideas and also to establish whether parents would be willing for the school to take photographs of bad parking and publish this in a separate parking newsletter sent out to all parents.

Following on from the subject of parking, Mrs Morrisson said she was aware of some parents that did not appear to have car seats for their children, which is obviously against the law. It was suggested that perhaps the school could hold a table top sale (with a nominal fee being paid to the school of say £2) and parents could sell off any old car seats, school uniform etc that their child has grown out of. This would help parents that are in need of items and also parents whose children have outgrown things.

### **New School Year**

Mrs Morrisson confirmed that letters would be going out shortly to nursery children who were going up to Reception in September. This would give information about the "taster" session when the children come to school and meet their new teacher and stay for lunch. This will take place on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2011. Reception children do not necessarily have to come to school full time initially. If the parent feels that their child cannot cope with a full day at the start then they should speak to Mrs Morrisson and a plan will be drawn up to make the child more comfortable with the new routine.

This year, parents will get an opportunity to meet their child's next class teacher in July, rather than find out in September when the new school year begins. This will involve an open morning where parents can come into school and have a meeting with the new class teacher. Reception classes will go up to Year 1 in mixed groups (they will not necessarily be with all their classmates that they have now). Mrs Morrisson did however explain that thought is given to who goes where and groups within the classes that currently work and play well together and have formed good friendships will probably stay together.

**Comment [R5]:** including a chance to visit their own child's room and look at work first and an end of year talk in the hall from Mrs. Morrisson

### **Teachers Strike**

It had been announced recently that there was to be a national teachers strike on 30<sup>th</sup> June. Mrs Morrisson was allowing her staff time to make their minds up as to whether they were going to strike and would endeavour to let parents know as soon as possible in case alternative arrangements needed to be made for childcare.

### **School Gates**

- (a) Part of the bottom black fence onto the playground is missing. This meant that when children were out on the playground playing with small balls there had been incidents where balls were rolling out of the playground onto the road which had caused cars to have to brake or slow down a couple of times. Mrs Morrisson advised that she would ask Mr Browne to have a look and fix it.
- (b) It was asked that the black gates be opened fully at the end of the day to ease congestion with parents, children, buggies, scooters etc.

This brought the meeting to a close.

The next meeting date is yet to be arranged. New dates will be made when the new school year starts in September.