



'T.E.A.M - Together Everyone Achieves More'

Please find below a copy of the minutes from our Parent Council meeting. Parent Council members are happy to discuss and raise any questions or concerns on behalf of other parents and carers. Please feel free to speak to the Parent Council members or the school senior leadership team about any issues raised in these minutes.



Minutes of meeting – 10th December 2019

Present: Daniel Cooper (Deputy Head), Kirsty Griffiths (A.U), Toni Smith (N & R), Nicholas Fry (Y1), Amy Cole (Y2), Andy Mayes (Y4), Matt Gower (Y5).

Absent: Sophie Peyton (Y5 – sent apologies), Sebastian & Sylwia Poznanski (Y3), Sue Ridding (Y6), Anthony White (Y6 – sent apologies).

Minutes: Daniel Cooper

Agenda:

1. Welcome and remit of parent council
2. SDP priorities
3. Bullying – parent brochure
4. Successful elements of the school
5. What could be better in school?
6. Questions from parents
7. Parent Voice
8. Next meeting date

1. **Welcome** – DC thanked all parents for attending the meeting and for giving up their time to support the school. The aim of the parent council is to support the school with its strategic direction and to help the school make further progress. Parent council members represent all classes across the school and bring their own and other parents questions, feedback and ideas to the meetings. The council will formally meet every half term, but they will have direct contact to DC at any point to discuss school related issues. Parents are urged to bring matters of immediate concern to the attention of class teachers or the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher in the first instance if it needs to be resolved quicker than half termly.
2. **SDP priorities** – DC shared the School Development Plan (SDP) for 2019/20 and the rationale for these priorities. Parents felt it was important that Literacy, Numeracy and Science priorities were included and had been identified. Parents felt that these were the most important priorities to be on there and that the Parent Council was a positive step to support the Parent/Governor priority. Parents felt that the school had identified all the most pressing areas for development.

Action - DC to upload the SDP priorities to the school website to share with all parents.



3. **Bullying** – DC shared the Welsh Government’s ‘Challenging bullying – Rights, respect, equality: Guidance for parents and carers’ document. DC explained that there are some misconceptions and discrepancies amongst some parents in the school about the definition of bullying. Bullying is an important issue that we take seriously as a school, which is why it’s important for us to ensure that all stakeholders have a common understanding of the definition in order for us to deal with this issue effectively. The Parent Council have decided to create a parent-friendly brochure/leaflet to highlight key areas from our anti-bullying policy and the above document in order to provide parents with a clear definition of bullying and how the school addresses this.

Action 1 – DC to email/text a copy of the Welsh Government’s ‘Challenging bullying – Rights, respect, equality: Guidance for parents and carers’ document to all parents in the school (please request a paper copy from the office if you don’t have digital access). Parents are asked to read this by the next meeting and to bring along the views of other parents in order for us to create this brochure.

Action 2 – Parents mentioned in conversation that a parent-friendly brochure for attendance, reading and behaviour would also be worthwhile. DC to place this on the agenda for the next meeting and email/text relevant documents to parents to read beforehand.

4. **Successful elements of the school**

ClassDojo – Parents like the ClassDojo behaviour system and feel well-informed about how their children are behaving in school, particularly as they have access to the points the children earn and lose through the app. DC explained that children should be receiving points on a daily basis for a range of positive behaviours. Parents felt that this system motivates the children well and that their children like the rewards at the end of term.

Action – One parent commented that they don’t have access to the app. DC will ask the office to monitor which parents across the school haven’t been linked to their children’s accounts and to print off their access codes and instructions for their children’s accounts before Christmas. Another parent also commented that it would be useful to have ClassDojo for parents as a home reward system. DC will check if this facility is available and forward their feedback to ClassDojo.

School Culture – Parents like the fact that the school is multi-cultural and embraces the ethos and beliefs of various religions. Parents stated that the school supports pupils well with a range of medical, social and emotional needs, as well as the fact that pupils are very understanding of each others’ needs. One parent commented that the school’s reputation in this area was the reason they chose to send their children to this school, despite there being other good schools in the area that they could have chosen. DC explained that we are continuing to develop in this area - recent initiatives include all pupils, staff and governors being trained and certified to support pupils with ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) and pupils from Years 3-6 play with pupils from the Assessment and Observation Unit every lunchtime.



Class sizes – Parents like the fact that class sizes are not too big and feel that this supports their children’s learning well as it allows children to receive greater support from their teachers and teaching assistants. DC explained that class sizes are an average of 27 pupils and that the school is almost at capacity at the moment, therefore class sizes are unlikely to change much in the near future.

Pupil engagement – Parents commented that their children enjoy the Cornerstones topic-based approach to learning and often come home excited and looking forward to completing home learning projects. One parent commented that the teachers make the learning interesting for the pupils, but that some of the projects are covered in too much depth. DC explained that a new curriculum will be in place in Wales in 2022 and that the school is currently reviewing our curriculum and preparing for the new one. The school will seek parent and pupils opinions about future topics, but there will be a strong emphasis on developing pupils’ skills in line with the four core purposes of the new curriculum and to enable children to become ethically informed citizens of Wales and the wider world.

5. What could be better in the school?

Breakfast Club – Parents felt that breakfast club doesn’t provide pupils with a positive start to their day due to behavioural issues and a lack of structure (examples raised were children running around and limited activities), which has resulted in some parents choosing not to send their children to club anymore. DC explained that breakfast club is run by the catering department and not the school, however the school acknowledges that there have been issues and have taken steps to support this. This has included DC attending a breakfast club session to monitor behaviour and activities, as well as establish routines (behaviour was good during this session and pupils had a wide range of games to enjoy), requesting a member of the catering department management to do a spot check to monitor the club, changing the entrance point to the club to improve staff:pupil ratios, Mrs Luff has issued a temporary ban for some pupils from attending the club if behavioural issues have been identified, etc. Breakfast club staff have also attended some of the recent staff training in order to ensure consistency of approach to behaviour management and school policies.

Actions – Parents suggested that we could request some volunteers to support with the club, such as invite PGCE or BA student teachers to attend (this would also benefit them by giving them additional experience of working with the children). DC will contact the University and the Pontarddulais school network of students to see if anyone is available to attend, as well as contact the catering department to check that they are happy with this arrangement. Parents also suggested that breakfast club staff could receive access to the school ClassDojo accounts in order to award pupils with points during the club and to support their current behaviour management strategies. Parents also felt that pupils would benefit from accessing the Pausepoints meditation videos during the club and take part in various projects to support pupil engagement. DC will discuss this with the catering management team and provide training to the breakfast club staff if they are in agreement.



Reading – Parents felt that their children should get more access to books via a school library or greater access to the town library. DC explained that all year groups have access to books within their classes and that we have recently sorted the books in classes to ensure that they are of interest to the pupils and are linked to their topics. The books removed from the classes are currently being held in the cloakroom areas around the school as we do not have any spare rooms/areas to create a school library. Parents liked an idea discussed in a PTA meeting last year whereby the school could purchase an old double decker bus (almost like an outdoor cabin found in many schools) to convert into a ‘reading bus’ by having one deck full of books and the other deck as a comfortable seating area for the children to read during their lessons or break/lunchtimes. DC also explained that almost all teachers have received training on a digital reading platform we use called ‘GetEpic’, which provides pupils of all reading ages and interests with thousands of books to read online. This is a free tool for pupils to access during school hours, however there is a payment option available to parents if pupils want to access it at specific times outside of school (please note, this is also available for free at certain times outside of school). DC also explained that the school purchased over £500 worth of books last year.

Action – DC to share the ‘GetEpic’ information with the literacy co-ordinator and monitor if all classes have set their children up on GetEpic. If not, pupils will be set up with access within the next few weeks and parents will receive their children’s class codes. DC to check with the literacy co-ordinator if all pupils have been allocated books and a reading record. DC to check if all pupils have received cards to the town library. AC stated that she will be happy to share the bus idea with the PTA and HWL in the next PTA meeting in order to discuss costs and logistics to see if this is a realistic option or if parents can think of other ideas to create a school library.

Home learning – A parent commented that their child had not received their home learning menu for either term since September. They stated that only one piece of home learning had been sent home, but this was not in the ‘menu’ format. Another parent commented that some of the home learning menus have too many digital aspects to it. Another comment stated that there are sometimes too many options and that parents need to help their children with too many of the tasks. DC explained that the home learning policy is available on our website and that all classes should be sending home a home learning ‘menu’ of activities each half term. The tasks should be an extension of what their children have learned in class, therefore there shouldn’t be a need for too much parent input. The home learning menu contains a ‘P.E.A.S’ column with specific activities for parents to support their children with (these are usually fun activities such as crafts, watching a film together linked to their topic, etc). Reading and times tables practise are a continuous expectation, but children only need to complete a minimum of 4 other tasks within the half term.

Actions – All staff will send their home learning menus to DC in digital format every half term in order to share on the school website to ensure that parents/children always have access to them. All pupils should receive their menus during the first week of term, so please contact your child’s class teacher in the first instance if your child hasn’t received them. Staff will monitor their menus before sending them home to ensure that they are not too digitally focused (or at least can be done in another format even if they are digital). DC to send a survey to parents in January to find out what they expect from homework and how often they’d like it.



P.E.A.S (Parents Engaged Actively in School) calendar – DC explained that despite having prepared a detailed calendar of events and a range of workshops for parents, the workshops are poorly attended. Parents stated that they really like the range of workshops available to them and would find them very useful if they were able to attend, but many parents struggle to attend due to their working hours and other commitments. Parents stated that they'd be more likely to attend if the workshops were outside of school hours.

Action – DC to review the P.E.A.S calendar for Spring and Summer events in order to see if the timings of any activities can be tweaked to accommodate after school sessions.

Safeguarding – fence/wall climbing – A parent stated that pupils are at risk of injury by climbing the wall and fenced area between the KS2 yard and the field when pupils are dismissed after school. The parents stated that these are pupils of all ages and that their parents are often in close proximity, but they don't always intervene. This is particularly dangerous as there's a steep drop to the field on the other side of the yard, as well as raised bars on the fence which pupils could slip and fall onto. DC explained that once dismissed from classes, pupils should be going straight home if they're walking by themselves, or stay within close proximity of their parents to supervise their behaviour. The climbing frame on the field is not to be used by pupils after school hours, particularly if not being supervised by a member of staff.

Action – DC to ask Mrs Luff to remind parents in the next newsletter that pupils climbing the fence/wall is prohibited, as well as remind pupils during assembly that they should not be climbing and should be staying with their parents. In the interim, DC to ask the office to text parents to ask them to supervise their children and prevent them from climbing and playing on the wall at the start/end of the day.

6. Questions from other parents.

Why was there no full concert production this year?

DC explained that having considered previous feedback from parents and staff, we have decided to do a full production every 2/3 years. Parents have previously commented that this is an expensive time of year, which can be more expensive when parents have to buy costumes for a production (which is why we limited this to Christmas jumpers and scarves/hats this year as many pupils already own these). A full production is also very time consuming to prepare and takes away from other learning opportunities in the curriculum, leaving gaps in children's knowledge and skill development. Having consulted with other schools, a full production every few years with a carol service every other year seems to be common practice. Despite this, both the afternoon and evening carol performances were sold out this year and comments from parents were extremely positive, both in person and online. This success continued as the video of the Y5/6 performance has received 1,000 views within the first 24 hours.

Are we doing Christmas Jumper Day this year?

Action – Yes, the office texted parents to confirm that children could wear Christmas Jumpers on the 13th December, as well as bring a £1 per pupil to donate to Save the Children.



What do Estyn do and what do they look for? – Estyn are the education and training inspectorate for Wales, inspecting the quality and standards in education. Estyn also publicises good practice based on inspection evidence. Our last inspection was in October 2013 where we were deemed to be a ‘Good’ school. It’s likely that our next inspection will be within the next term or two.

Why do pupils in Years 1 & 2 come home so dirty and muddy (question raised on behalf of another parent)? In addition, a further comment was made by the parent that the flower bays on the Year 1 and 2 yard are a safeguarding hazard as they’re falling apart.

Outdoor learning is a key aspect of the Foundation Phase. The outdoors is the ideal environment for experiential learning because it offers unique opportunities to be creative, to move around, to be noisy and to take risks. The outdoors is full of special stimuli such as weather, smells, sounds and textures which can enrich and enhance a child’s learning environment. Being outdoors enhances all aspects of children’s development: social, physical, creative, cultural and personal. Further information can be found in the Welsh Government’s ‘Foundation Phase – Outdoor Learning Handbook’.

DC explained that pupils should receive regular opportunities to develop these skills across the Foundation Phase classes and that pupils are supervised during these periods. Parents with pupils from Nursery to Year 2 are welcome to send their children in to school with wellies, raincoats and waterproof trousers, or a change of clothes, in order to avoid getting their clothes too dirty. We will monitor to see if there are any other reasons for the muddy clothing.

Action – DC to investigate if the school or PTA can purchase class sets of wellies, raincoats, waterproof trousers, etc. Mrs Peters to reinforce expectations about a change of clothes and outdoor learning in the next Foundation Phase newsletter. Mrs Luff to carry out a risk assessment of the Year 1 and 2 yard, particularly with regards to the flowerbeds, as well as liaise with the caretaker to see if they need to be removed or replaced.

Can the council give the car park (next to the football pitch) to the school to manage due to the issues at pick-up and drop-off times, as well as the limited space in the staff car park?

DC will raise issues with the car park in the next Governor meeting, but explained that we have direct contact with the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) if/when issues arise. Parents are asked to park responsibly in the car park and to be mindful of their speed and parking due to the amount of children and parents who use it. DC explained that the Governing Body looked into the ‘Safer Routes to School’ grant last year and we’ll be investigating this further this year. If the grant goes through, we may be able to get a safe pathway created to bypass the car park.

- 7. Parent Voice** – We’d like to remind all parents in the school that we value their opinions and ideas at any point. Please feel free to discuss your thoughts with schoolstaff or the Parent Council representatives, or visit the Parent Voice page on the school website if you’d like to leave any feedback – www.richmondpark.amdro.org.uk/home/information/peas/parent-voice/
- 8. Next meeting date** – Wednesday 22nd January 2020 @ 3.30pm in the school meeting room.