

Minutes of Pixmore Parent Forum Friday 14th October 2016

Present:	Mia, Rebecca, Damian, Alfie	- Year 6 school councillors
	Catherine Dock	- Parent and Governor
	Rory Dock	- Parent
	Kath West	- Governor
	Hilary Kemp	- Parent and PSA representative
	Daryl Heath	- Parent
	Alan Mann	- Parent
	Ruth Mann	- Parent
	Jessica West and Lucy	- Parent and child
	Amanda Thurman and son	- Parent and child, Governor
	Sarah Kazer-Roberts and Sophia	- Parent and child
	Lynette Brooks	- Parent
	Lena Whitaker	- Parent
	Cathy Turner	- Parent
	Carol Smith	- PSA representative and MSA
	Anne Marie Kennedy	- Family Support Worker
	Sue Willans	- SENCo

Agenda:

- Welcome - refreshments – bacon butties as promised!

Settling into Pixmore and new classes

- How has your child settled this year?
- What has gone well?
- What could have been better?

Lunchtime arrangements in school

- Carol Smith will talk about the organisation at lunchtime and answer questions

PSA

- Information on our PSA, what it does, and how to join

Reporting to parents

- How we report to parents and links to learning

Social media

- How to contact school to let us know what we do well/need to do better and what to do when you have a concern
- eSafety – update on policy – your views – does anything need to be added?

Welcome and introductions: It was great to see everyone at the forum.

Thank you to all who attended; your views matter, and we always take them seriously.

Settling into Pixmore and new classes

- SW introduced topic and explained the importance of good transition arrangements to help children to settle and the value attached to this by Pixmore staff.
- Transition arrangements explained, including enhanced transition for children with additional needs.
- Transition arrangements always under review and comments from parents invaluable in informing what works and what doesn't, and what needs to be changed.
- SW explained how children are asked how they have settled in and that individuals are also 'interviewed' as part of pupil voice to gain their views on how well they feel they have settled and whether there are any difficulties.

Comments:

- Good transition from Hillshott to Pixmore and children have settled well and are happy
- Good transition from Pixmore to secondary schools – good communication and information sharing
- Year 3 to 4 meet the teacher not so good this year as information was inconsistent and changed depending on who you asked causing confusion – information letters changed – other parents noted that this isn't usually the case and only seemed to apply to the one year group.
- One teacher leaving so she wasn't available for meet the teacher – could another time be arranged please to see teachers who are leaving?
- One school councillor noted that: "We were all a bit jumpy about moving up."
- Some children struggled a bit with moving from one to class to another, but they're okay now
- One child with additional need could have done with more visits to see his new teacher before the end of term.

Parents feel generally happy with the current arrangements and there were no comments regarding any changes to inform future transition periods.

Actions:

SW to share information with AE and SLT to ensure there are opportunities for parents to meet with teachers if similar situations arise in the future

Lunchtime arrangements

Carol Smith (MSA) explained how lunchtimes are organised at Pixmore, including management of lunches and the playground:

- Lunchtimes choices – vegetarian, meat or packed lunch options – taken by teachers at registration
- Children have trays in either red or green to denote hot lunch choice
- Yellow lunch boxes for packed lunch option
- Care plans and advice in kitchens and staffroom for children with allergies – accommodated where possible – Pixmore is a nut free school
- **Question:** How do you monitor that?
- **Answer:** Very occasionally a child will come into school with a food product containing nuts; if this is noted, a message is sent to all parents reminding them that Pixmore is a nut free school.
- Staff encourage children to eat and keep an eye on what children are eating to ensure healthy choices
- Children attending lunchtime clubs are allowed to go into lunch early and most have stickers to let lunchtime staff know they are attending clubs, or staff have list of children attending.
- Children are not allowed in the classrooms unsupervised at lunchtimes

- There are staff in the dining room and covering all areas of the playground to ensure the children are safe. Incidents on the playground are now dealt with on the playground by either MSAs or key workers with possibility of talking the issue through, or time out on one of two time-out benches in the Year 4 and 5 areas.
- School councillors talked about Playground Buddies and their role in supporting children 'when they are lonely or have a problem.'
- Anne Marie Kennedy explained the role of key workers in helping children who struggle to manage their behaviour on the playground and in supporting the MSAs at lunchtime.
- Key workers work on a rota so that there are always key workers outside.
- School councillors explained about Brunch Club
- **Question:** What happens when it is raining?
- **Answer:** When the weather is very bad, the children stay indoors playing games in their classrooms, supervised by MSAs and key workers, who are assigned to classes and remain with the children throughout.

PSA

- Hilary Kemp explained the role of the PSA in holding events to raise money to buy things for the school. She gave examples of what has already been purchased, including class laptops, the shade sail on the top field and gym equipment, Year 6 leaver's books, amongst other things. Events, such as school discos are also held specifically for the children. All funds go straight into school.
- There are parent and teacher members and Hilary thanked school staff for their contribution to the PSA, including 'DJ Willard'
- Parents were asked to contact school if they would like to join the PSA or put their names forward to help at specific events – any help is welcome.
- SW thanked Hilary and the PSA for their significant contribution to raising funds for the school to help buy equipment, which would be very difficult otherwise.
- **Question:** Who do we contact if we want to help the PSA?
- **Answer:** Give your details to the school office or email them at admin@pixmore.herts.sch.uk

Reporting to Parents:

- SW explained the current system of three parents' evenings a year coinciding with reports being sent out reporting on progress and attainment following assessments in school.
- First parent's evening in October – short form given to parents on the evening acts as a discussion point for how children are settling in and asking parents for comments and views.
- Children are allowed to attend and can contribute to the discussion, although if parents wish to discuss issues privately, this is possible too
- Main report in the Spring Term, followed by Parent's evening – more detailed and includes all subjects and aspects of learning - notes whether children are on track, above or below age related expectations – progress important.
- Final, shorter report in Summer Term with progress and brief summary comments – shorter meet the teacher style parent's evening following this.
- Children with additional needs often have separate meetings as these may take longer.
- Parents can always speak to their child's class teacher in between parents' evenings to discuss concerns – open door policy – either make an appointment via the school office or email if you aren't able to catch your child's teacher. Staff also on the playground before school to discuss issues, which can be passed onto relevant teachers.
- Parents like the online appointments system – works really well, especially if you have more than child in school.

Question: The letter that accompanies the Summer Term report says that parents can come in to speak to their child's class teacher 'if they want to'. Parents feel that this means they don't really want parents to come in – is this right as not 100% clear?

Answer: SW explained that parents are welcome to come in, but that some parents feel they already have enough information about how their child is doing and don't feel the need to come in for the last one. This gives parents the option, but parents are very welcome to come in to see their teachers at this parent's evening without feeling awkward about this.

Action: SW to speak to AE and SLT about the wording on the letter accompanying the final report of the year to clarify what this means and the message it may send to parents.

Social Media

- SW shared the new Hertfordshire model eSafety Agreement for pupils and asked for parents' comments on this to see if anything needs to be added – noted that nothing will be removed as this is the model policy.

Question: Do the children have their own email addresses?

Answer: No (SW checked with CP), this is a model policy and this is in case they do have one, as in some schools

- No queries or comments – no concerns about content or additions
- SW discussed social media, particularly in relation to safety and well-being of children in the first instance and the importance of parents being aware of what their children are doing on smart phones and computers.
- SW shared recent incident in relation to 'Clown mania' at countrywide level and explained why the assembly had been held in school to highlight the level of sharing of grossly inaccurate information between the children on the day in question, which had led to children being upset in school and this disrupting learning. The assembly effectively nipped the issue in the bud very effectively.
- Negative comments made on social media, particularly the unofficial Pixmore Parent's Group (not linked to the Pixmore PSA group as noted by Kath West) about the assembly. Parents present were advised that before posting complaints directly on social media, they should at least have contacted the school to raise such complaints and given the school some reasonable time to explain its position or defend itself. Pixmore staff are approachable and parents should feel comfortable coming in to discuss issues, positive or otherwise.

Question: Who monitors the site and manages unhelpful or potentially abusive comments? Who set this up?

Answer: No one monitors the site. There have been some very unhelpful comments where parents have expressed themselves without realising the potential impact. Name of parent who set up site noted and school to contact to see whether filter can be applied.

- It was noted that freedom of speech is important – all agreed. However, Catherine Dock, speaking as both a parent and school governor noted that Pixmore school staff and governors have worked hard to raise its reputation and Pixmore is now a 'Good' school. Unhelpful comments give a skewed view as positive and balanced comments don't seem to be so forthcoming. Catherine encouraged parents to post positive comments too.
- School will continue to try to encourage the local press to publish positive articles about all the good work that goes on in Pixmore and the children's clear enjoyment of their experiences.

Question: Is there a lock-down policy for dealing with emergency situations?

Answer: SW noted that there is a policy and that emergency procedures are in line with policy. There are regular fire drill practises. Most school doors can't be opened from the outside without a key. There have been two occasions noted by SW, when security needed to be tightened, including securing doors and monitoring exits. This happened without incident.

Action: SW to discuss comments with AE, SLT and Governors

SW thanked everyone for attending, including extra praise and 5 house points for the Year 6 school councillors who did an amazing job serving refreshments and contributing actively to the meeting

Next Parent Forum: tba