

Minutes of Pixmore Parent Forum of Tuesday 9th December 2014

Present:

Alex Evans	- Head Teacher
Kath West	- Co-Vice Chair of Governors / Chair of School Improvement Committee / SEND Linked Governor
Ian Hamilton	- Chair of Governors
Craig Nicol	- Governor/Parent
Sue Willans	- SENCo
Tracy Coates	- Parent
Rachel Toddington	- Parent
Mrs. Lancaster	- Parent

Residents:
Julia Franklin, Dee and Daisy Levett, Maureen O'Neill, Tina King, Val Ireland

Apologies: No apologies

Agenda: Improving safety along Rushby Mead for families and residents
Home learning

Improving safety along Rushby Mead

Mrs. Evans welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. She introduced the first topic of improving road safety for all Pixmore families and residents of Rushby Mead outside Pixmore School. There has been a long-term problem with inconsiderate parking, and dangerous driving and parking, which is not getting any better in spite of requests from school asking for co-operation and consideration when dropping off and collecting children. Further, drivers have been rude to both residents and staff when challenged about their parking or driving, which makes people reluctant to say anything. Although residents can call 999, there is little that can be done and nothing if the parking is for less than 5 minutes and they can't issue a ticket. Residents can record car registration numbers. If the same registration is noted 3 times, the Police can visit to talk to the driver.

Residents were invited as they are directly affected by the problems; some have complained to school, and some have witnessed dangerous and inconsiderate use of the road by car owners. There have also been a number of near misses involving children. Pets have been killed on the road too. It was agreed that something needs to be done about this.

Mrs. Evans explained that she is in the process of revising the Pixmore School Travel Plan and recently attended a course with Craig Nicol, a parent of children at the school and governor at the school. Suggestions had been made at the course, including involving the children in creating a safer environment for their journey to and from school. Those present were asked to consider the main issues and concerns, as well as possible solutions.

Issues and concerns:

- Inconsiderate driving by parents, including blocking driveways and parking on white lines, restricting resident's access and often causing traffic to stop as passing points are limited by parked cars.
- Some parents park very early before the start/end of the day
- Some parents park on the opposite side of the road or in the vehicular access/entry points and drop children off without getting out themselves
- 'Boy racers' – using Rushby Mead as a race track/cut through
- Some parents leave buggies across entrance and exits to school
- Narrow vehicular entry and exit from school grounds with restricted view (planting)
- Cars park too close to the exit onto the Baldock Road where there is restricted visibility – several near misses
- Yellow lines not on parking side
- Inconsiderate pupil pedestrians
- Nowhere safe to cross the road and no provision to make crossing safe
- Cycling on pavements
- Scooters – children not looking where they are going
- Children stepping into road
- School gates – can't physically get into school easily – blocked by mums/children chatting – pinch point
- Coaches parked on road blocking it when collecting children for school journeys
- Increased requirement for parking on road for pre-school/scout hut
- Narrow footpath on school side – children step into road

Possible solutions:

- Look at school grounds – consider changing entry/exit points to single entry and exit and widen – re-configure (cost implications and planning)
- Widen the path on the school side by cutting back the hedging
- Use some of the grounds around the scout hut to create safer drop-off parking spaces
- Better maintenance of trees and hedges
- Request conversion to on-way street or traffic calming measures
- Residents' permits
- Safe crossing zone
- Safer crossing routes
- Parent parking at local churches
- Request highways review
- Reduce speed limit to 20mph.
- House points for children who walk
- Children as traffic wardens? Use of stickers/leaflets to place on cars parked inconsiderately.
- Encourage use of walking bus and increase number of days available

One resident noted that permits are expensive and make it more difficult for legitimate 'guests' to visit, such as family. It was agreed that residents, parents and school need to work together if things are to change.

One resident noted that if residents and/or parents produce a petition, this would be seen as one complaint even though there would be more than one signature on the petition. It was suggested that individuals need to write letters with their specific concerns as these would be treated as individual complaints or concerns and have more impact.

Mrs. Evans showed a map of the local area which defined areas that pupils travel from. She said that 65% of children were walking to school when the plan was produced and that more children are walking school now than ever before. She suggested that although we need to ensure that those who travel by car do so safely and courteously, ideally more children could walk if it was felt their journey could be made safer.

She went on to describe the proposal to use children as 'traffic wardens' under supervision. They would be supplied with 'tickets', which they could put onto cars that are parked inconsiderately or dangerously. Parents would be given the opportunity to sign up to a Parent Pledge where they agree to be considerate about their driving and parking around school, and would display a sticker on their windscreen to this effect. It was agreed that this is a good idea and worth trying. One resident commented that using the children is a good way to mediate.

Question: Can residents have a supply of 'tickets' to put on windscreens?

Answer: Yes, if you want to. It's a good way of engaging residents and their neighbours, and spreading the word.

Question: Has anything eased the parking in the past?

Answer: There were fewer cars before

Question: Can anything be done to make it safer for children to walk to school?

Answer: It is hoped that this can be looked at as part of the review process. Parents commented that if parents felt it was safe for their children to walk to school, they wouldn't necessarily drive them there. There is a lollipop lady and crossing in Pixmore Way, but nothing along Rushby Mead so parents are reluctant to allow their children to walk as they don't feel the journey is safe.

Mrs. Evans thanked residents for their interest and said she would let them know the outcome of the consultation.

Home Learning:

Mrs. Evans introduced a new aid to home learning called Espresso, an online programme which the school now has a license for. She explained that it covers all subjects and that children will be able to use the site school and home. She reassured parents that the site is safe and the resources designed to be fun and interactive as well as having clear learning objectives linked to work at school.

The children will have user names and passwords and parents were asked to encourage their children to use the site to support their learning. Further details will be sent home soon.

Parents thought this was a good idea and felt their children will want to use the site.

Parents said that it would be useful if someone could show them how we teach maths in school as things have changed since they attended school. This makes it difficult for them to understand how to help their children as they don't want to show them in a way which conflicts with what the children are learning in school. Mrs. Evans acknowledged that this is a problem and put forward the idea that teachers could produce short video clips to demonstrate methods. These video could be advertised to parents and put on to the website for parents and the children to reference when they need to. Parents present thought this was a good idea and felt it would be helpful for them and their children, especially when they have forgotten the method.

Action: AE to speak to teachers and ask them to produce short video clips as suggested. January 2015

Mrs. Evans thanked everyone for attending.

Next Parent Forum: tba