

Parent Forum – 15th September 2023

Subjects: Homework & Attendance

Our first parent forum for the academic year was held on Friday and the subjects covered were homework and attendance. The forum was an opportunity for parents/carers to give their feedback and to input into the decision and direction the school takes around these subjects.

Each class was represented by at least one person. Thank you to all that attended.

Homework

All were asked to think about the previous academic year and if they felt the homework set for the children was too much, too little or about right. All were also asked if they preferred homework to be offline, online or a mix of both – this was from a parent perspective **and** what they thought their child prefers.

The general pattern showed the majority thought the amount of homework set last year was about right, with only one saying it was too much and a few saying it was too little. There was a fairly even balance between preferring either paper based or a mix of paper/online. Only one parent expressed a preference for online and a few said that their child's preference would be online.

Feedback/questions on the homework set last year included:

- Who marks the homework? Are parents meant to and, if so, answers are needed for maths. Clearer understanding as to what happens to homework marked by the teacher.
- Some felt there was a lack of feedback on children's homework to the child – some thinking the homework went unnoticed. How could a child's homework be celebrated?
- Asked if there could be a consistency across the year groups – i.e. spellings are on this day, homework to be handed in on x day
- Also asked if there could be consistency in terms of homework being set regularly as sometimes it started off being set regularly but this was not always sustained
- Could homework be tailored to the child's level. Some felt their child was able to complete the homework easily and needed a little more of a challenge.
 - o To cater for this, suggestion was made to have 'compulsory' homework and a set of 'optional extra' tasks that can be completed either on a weekly basis or over the course of a term.
- A suggestion with maths would be to set a number of questions that need to be answered and a set of optional questions that need to be answered in a certain time to see how a child is grasping the learning.
- All liked the homework to be linked to the learning in the classroom and if parents/carers could be trained on how to teach certain subjects the children will be better supported.
- Spellings – to test the children in context of the word – not to just learn how to spell the words but also how to use them.

Mrs Bligh explained the introduction of the golden book. This is where a child can receive recognition for anything a teacher may feel is exceptional. Be it good engagement throughout the day, an outstanding piece of work or considerate behaviour. Homework could fall into this as a way of a child being rewarded for their effort.

Attendance

Mrs Bligh explained that collectively as a school a focus needs to be made on attendance. At the moment attendance levels are low across all year groups and this needs to be addressed.

Attendance levels are a key piece of information the governors ask to be reported on as does Ofsted. But most importantly, a child is missing out on their education if they are consistently having time off school. All recognised that children get sick and this can't be helped, but to avoid booking of holidays in term time when the children already have a lot of holiday time from school.

A discussion was held on how to incentive the children to have good attendance.

- Each week children that have had 100% attendance (that week) get given a raffle ticket and at the end of the term a ticket is pulled out to win a prize. The more tickets you have the more chance of winning. This also means that if a child wasn't in all week for whatever reason, they could try the following week to collect a ticket.
- The class with the highest attendance win a cup at the end of each week. Reward with extra play time?
- All thought it important that the children were asked to input into what reward they would like to work towards. Consider asking the school council.

All agreed that the right incentive needs to be put into place, but not to penalise the children when it is out of their control if they are in school. If they are genuinely poorly they shouldn't feel bad that they were not in. The right balance needs to be struck.

It was asked if the schools attendance statistics be shared with parents/carers and how they compare to the local and national targets. This will give parents context as to where the school is. Mrs Bligh confirmed that the individual letters that were sent out to the low attendance children will continue. It was felt that even with these letters going out – clarity to be given as to why. Also to why certain decisions are being made within the school as it isn't always clear to parents why they are being asked to do something.

Next forum subject suggestions:

All were asked if they had any suggestions of subjects they would like covered in future parent forums. The following were asked:

- Progress made at the school since the Ofsted inspection
- Academisation status and next steps

If you have any comments/input you'd like included in the subjects covered, please email the office. If you have a subject, you would like discussed at a future forum – we'd welcome your suggestions.

The date and subject of the next forum will be announced shortly. The school will consider trialling a face to face evening session and an evening online session to help with working parents being able to attend.