

**Parent Forum Meeting (Spring Term)**  
**Tuesday 18 January at 2pm (via Zoom)**

**In attendance:** Lynne Osbourne (Head Teacher); Emily Turnbull (Parent Governor and Chair); Alison Cheshire (Reception and Year 4); Laura Jacobs (Year 2), Jo Loch (Year 3); Heidi Bolwell (Year 5); Clare Brazil; Jo Tunmer

**Apologies:** Lisa Robinson and Rachel Gribben (Year 6), Sarah Jones (Year 4), Sophie Clark (Year 1)

**Welcome and apologies**

- Welcome to new Reps (Laura Jacobs Year 2) and (Sophie Clark Year 1)
- Welcome also to the parents who joined via Zoom.
- Apologies received as above.
- A huge thanks to Alison Cheshire (Reception and Year 4 Rep) who has recently stepped up to be the new Chair of the School Association.

**Update on actions from the last meeting**

1. ET has started putting together a list of the school volunteering opportunities. LO said that some roles require a DBS check, which costs the school money and involves a lot of paperwork. However, there are plenty of things that the School Association needs help with and ad hoc projects around the school (such as gardening) that don't need a DBS check.
2. Mrs Bates and Mrs Zimet held phonics sessions last term. This term there will be the SENCO coffee morning where Mrs Stewart will talk about some of the services available and how the school can offer support and strategies for a child with an SEND need. This will be open to all parents as the aim is for it to be an informative session. Miss Gray will also be doing an E-Safety talk this term. The maths session suggested at the last Parent Forum meeting won't be happening this term, but possibly in the summer term.
3. LO said that applications for Reception places are in. She thanked everyone for their efforts in promoting the school to prospective parents.

**What's coming up this term:**

The postponed Christingle service took place today.

This Thursday is **Lovely Lunches**, when children are encouraged to order a school lunch.

**Feeling Good Week** starts on 7 February with a Body Positivity theme. LO outlined all the activities planned including trips to the woods, baking and some classes visiting Sunnyside Rural Trust. There will also be workshops run by the Happy Human Project.

There was a question about whether mental diversity would be covered as part of Feeling Good Week. LO said yes and this was part of the rationale behind Sunnyside Trust visits. Mental diversity is also covered in Jigsaw teaching. One parent raised the importance of encouraging

children to have healthy attitudes to food by not labelling foods as good or bad and ensuring that this message was conveyed as part of Body Positivity.

There was a comment that some children in Year 5 were feeling a sense of pressure to catch up. LO said that while there is a catch-up curriculum, the children should feel under pressure to catch up. She will convey this feedback to the teachers and talk to them about it.

**Gagan Mohindra MP** will be coming to talk to Year 5 and 6 on 25 February about being an MP and life in the House of Commons.

**World Book Day** (Thursday 3rd March) will be celebrated by inviting children to dress up as something from the Bible. LO said the idea is to make the costume options as wide as possible so parents don't feel they have to go and buy a special costume just for the day.

**Year 5 Bikeability week** is taking place on week commencing 25 March

**Class Assemblies** are resuming with Year 1 taking place on Thursday 3rd February. Parents of the relevant year group will be invited to attend via Zoom and hopefully in person before too long.

**Science Week** will be on week commencing 14 March and the theme is My Net Zero Community.

**Parent Consultations** will be held on 15 and 16 March and the plan is for these to be in person. The booking system will open at 7pm on Monday 7 March. Parents will be invited to put Post Its up with feedback and suggestions for the Parent Forum to consider.

### **Calls for Volunteers**

Alison Cheshire reported that the School Association has some new Committee members. She has to yet agree this term's activities with Mrs Osbourne and once this is done, Class Reps will notify parents of the forthcoming activities that require parent helpers. Parents can also sign up to help with School Association events on the School Association website:  
<https://www.pta-events.co.uk/northchurchstmarys-schoolassociation>

### **Increasing Parental Engagement**

Discussion about why there were very few comments and questions submitted to the Parent Forum ahead of this meeting. Possible reasons included greater use of class emails by parents to ask questions directly to teachers. It was also suggested that parents may have felt less connected to the school community because of social distancing.

It was suggested that making parents more aware of what the Parent Forum is and does would encourage greater engagement.

It was also suggested that making it easier for parents to ask questions/comments when they spring to mind (rather than just asking them in the lead up to parent forum meetings) would help capture more questions and comments. Ideas included using a Google Doc, having a feedback/suggestions box in the office and asking parents for feedback at the Parent Consultation evenings.

There was discussion about whether holding the Parent Forum meeting in the evening would help increase parental engagement as many parents work during the day and can't make daytime meetings.

**Action:** Emily to prepare text for the next newsletter explaining what the Parent Forum is (ET).

**Action:** Miss Gray to create a Parent Forum Comments Google Doc to go into Google Classrooms (SG/LO)

**Action:** A feedback box to be installed in the office, once Covid restrictions are lifted and parents can go into the office (LO)

**Action:** Post it notes to be provided at the Parent Consultations for parent feedback and questions (LO)

**Action:** Parents to be consulted on whether they would attend an evening Parent Forum meeting (with option to join via Zoom) (ET/LO)

### **Sustainability:**

Discussion about how we as a school community can be more sustainable.

Existing initiatives include the clothing/textiles and printer cartridge recycling bins organised by the School Association. The clothing/textiles recycling bin can be used to recycle any clothing, shoes, soft toys and textiles such as curtains.

Discussion about how to improve reduction in or recycling of plastic packaging such as crisp packets. The cost of providing a crisp packet recycling point at school is prohibitive however soft plastics can be recycled at M&S in Berkhamsted and Tesco in Tring.

Ideas for increasing sustainability included Meat Free Mondays and creating "green" challenges between Year groups and the school Houses.

The Green Team is doing lots of really positive things and it would be good for parents to know more about this.

**Action:** Green Team to include a report in school newsletter about their activities (LO)

### **AOB**

#### **School photos**

LO has spoken to Stanley Baker, the company that does the individual and sibling school photos, in response to some parent complaints. SB have said that they can change the

background to make the photos feel more contemporary. LO is looking at other photo providers to compare quality and pricing.

**Action:** LO to report back on options/packages from other providers at the next meeting (LO)

### **Homework**

A Year 2/4 parent asked whether teachers can give a clearer link between the homework set and the relevant learning objective. Also, there seemed to be only times tables practice set for maths homework for some year groups. LO said she would speak to teachers about communicating the learning objectives and homework links. She explained that times tables practice is key, especially for Year 4 who have a multiplication check coming up in May.

**Action:** LO to speak to teachers about communicating to parents the links between learning objectives and homework (LO)

### **Date of next meeting:**

**Thursday 9th June at 1.30pm (may be subject to change)**

The meeting ended at 3:00pm.