



TERMLY PARENTS FORUM - IMBERHORNE SCHOOL

Meeting Minutes

Date of Meeting : Tuesday 4th March 2008
Present: J Ford (Headteacher), C Keating (Head of KS4), B Darvill (Chair of Governors)
Members: A Joyce, A Gunter, B Becker, C Williams, G Thompson, J Hochkins, J Forbes-Kiely, J&T Avis-Smith, k Probert, L Scotcher, M Calvey, D Reed, P Starr, P Jacobs, S Johnstone, P Steers, S Bassett, T O'Donovan
Also Present: A Shillinglaw
Next Meeting: TBC

1) Welcome and Introductions.

2) Rules of Engagement

- Open discussion to inform strategic planning and set priorities for school improvement.
- To raise and discuss general issues of concern but not specific issues related to any particular student, family, teacher or department. (Parents should approach their child's Head of year, Head of Key Stage or the Headteacher privately to raise concerns of this nature).
- Although many strategic developments arise from dissatisfaction of existing procedures or provision, the emphasis of the forum is to be positive and constructive.
- The outcome of the forum will be presented to the Governing body and published on the website and via Contact.
- Issues for discussion should be raised with the Headteacher prior to the meetings. Any new issues raised will be tabled for the next meeting.

3) 'Parents priorities' exercise.

This exercise was given to members of the forum by Mr Ford to determine parents' top priority when asked about the wellbeing of their child.

During this exercise the following priorities were identified and discussed:

- a. Happiness of Pupil
- b. Developing Potential
- c. Quality of Teaching & PSHE
- d. Developing self confidence and esteem
- e. Exam results and access to computers/facilities
- f. Communication between school and parents

There was considerable discussion about the use of computers for homework tasks with concern raised about students who may not have broadband internet or in some cases no internet access at all.

Action: It was agreed that the school would come back to the forum for further discussion of this difficult issue but there was a consensus that staff should not be discouraged from using ICT as this clearly is the way forward rather that solutions should be found to improve access for all students.

4) Discussion

A discussion from the priorities exercise was held with various priorities being identified by parents as above.

5) Homework Policy

There was a general positive response to the introduction of Independent Learning Projects in KS3 and the reasoning behind them. Nevertheless there were some concerns raised:

- The marking and feedback for the later projects is taking some time and this delay reduces the motivation of the students.
- The first projects were met with great enthusiasm with the work being celebrated. Parents were worried about losing momentum on this.
- Some parents were worried that not all teachers seemed as enthusiastic as others.

Independent learning resources being introduced at KS4 & 5 were explained although they are currently at an early stage. Parents were asked to give feedback on these as they are introduced.

Time did not allow a discussion about how we get students to do their homework and this will be discussed at a later date.

6) Advance Notice for School Trips

Parents requested that some form of advance notice be put in place at the beginning of the term (for each year group) to list the names of forthcoming school trips. This would help parents and students choose which trips they really want to go on and to help with the funding process.

Action: Mr Ford is currently preparing a trips overview to be published for parents at the request of the governors.

Parking & Safety Issues

Problems with parents dropping off students in main car park and safety issues at the end of the day in particular were discussed. Mr Ford confirmed this was also a matter that was under discussion with various proposals being formed for the governing body. One parent asked if more could be done to persuade Windmill Lane as a 'one way street'.

Action: Proposals to be discussed at a future meeting.

Discipline

Parents wanted to know if students are all dealt with in the same way regarding discipline. Mr Keating said there were guidelines in place and that as a general 'rule of thumb' we aim for consistency, but every case is judged on its merits. Mr Ford said that there will always be variations between teachers as each will have their own teaching style, but there is an expectation that staff follow school policies.

School Website

There was considerable praise for the school's website but a request was made that all letters appear on the letters archive as there have been occasions where letters have not been available on the site.

Action: Mr Ford agreed to look at systems to ensure that all letters are published on site.

Lunchtime issues – food and queues

Parents are concerned their children are going without hot dinners due to the long queues at windmill lane.

Action: Reduction of queues to be looked into by Mr Keating. Governing body to look into the card system to reduce waiting time.

How to contact teachers email etc

Parents asked if there was a particular point of contact when they needed to speak/contact a member of staff.

Mr Ford said that the first point of contact would be the Head of Year. There is a member of the support staff who will be available if the Head of Year is teaching; Contacts are: Sarah Thayre (KS3) and Lisa Miles (KS4). Heads of KS may be contacted if it cannot be resolved with the Head of Year.

903 bus service to West Hoathly

A recent problem with the 903 service on the day of the early closure was discussed.

Action: Parents asked to contact Sandra Cook at windmill lane with any concerns regarding buses.

7) School Development Issues for consultation at future agendas may include:

- Extended schools provision
- Developments in the key stage 3 curriculum
- The introduction of learning to learn
- Specialised diplomas for students aged 14-19
- Curriculum innovations under discussion
- Parental involvement in their children's education

8) The Governing Body

The Chairman of governors briefly explained the role and composition of the governing body and mentioned that there are currently vacancies for parent governors. He also thanked members of the forum for their attendance and valuable contributions.

Mr Ford asked for feedback on the style and timing of the meeting. It was agreed that future meetings should last from 7 – 8.30pm.