

West Oxford Community Primary School

Parent Forum Meeting 17 March 2017

Present

Clare (Head), Rebecca (governor), Matt (caretaker), Jo (office), Amit (1), Claudia (4), Andy (chair), Jo (6), Lynne (5), Alice(3), Katie (2)

Homework

Parents had asked for some guidance over the homework that is issued and raised concerns that for some the homework seemed to not be reflective of what had been learnt in class. For some classes it can often take a very long time to complete and has caused a lot of distress which has led to some children being demoralised and switching off from certain subjects.

Clare Bladen will re-issue the homework policy to parents which gives guidance on the amount of homework that will be set for each year and will talk to staff to ensure that it should be a re-enforcement of what is being taught in class. It was recognised that for some students the homework has been specifically set to try to stretch them in a particular area. It was agreed that if homework is to be set it should be marked and any communication in homework books should be acknowledged. It was recognised that the homework set in many classes was appropriate for the age and for all pupils reading to parents was to be encouraged.

School environment

Thanks to Tim Kiggell and Ursula Irvine that with the donation of plants from Robert Moy and top soil from Friends they have rejuvenated the pond area which is looking fantastic.

This month's school value is appreciation and Ms Bladen will be including appreciation of the school grounds and the work put in to maintain them in upcoming assemblies. Unfortunately one of the willow structures has been damaged, these are not suitable for climbing on so please ensure that when in the playground before and after school that parents supervise children.

School have taken advice of an arborist who has confirmed that the sycamore is dead and so this will be removed. We may also need to remove the apple tree when work begins to re-surface the front and side playground areas. The re-surfacing of the playground will cost around £30,000 so we will be looking to raise a lot of money but look forward to a less hazardous playground with a netball pitch. Any ideas and volunteers for fundraising will be great. It is confirmed that only one leaf of the school gate can open with the new maglock.

A parent had raised concerns over the environmental impact of driving children to school and it was noted that we are very lucky that most of the students live very close and so walk to school although we acknowledge that for some parents who live further away this is not an option. Taking part in walk to school week was discussed but dismissed as it was felt that this was already done by the majority.

School Dog

Rafa was originally going to undergo training to be a pets as therapy dog but for this to happen he would need a minder at all times and it would take too much time to gain the accreditation. The question of having Rafa at school was raised if he was not going to be a pets as therapy dog but Ms Bladen felt he still has a valuable role to play within the school.

Ms Bladen is pleased to report that Rafa spends most of the day asleep in her office with a walk in Oatlands Park in the afternoon and has been helping to calm down some children by giving them some time away from the classroom environment.

Some schools have a reward of time with the head teacher and Ms Bladen is looking to introduce this to coincide with walking Rafa as this has been enjoyed by the students who have accompanied Ms Bladen so far. Concerns were raised that some children may be afraid of dogs and therefore may not see this as a reward so this may need to be checked with parents first so an alternative reward without Rafa could be arranged if needed.

Parent Forum members

We would like to thank Andy who is stepping down as the chair of parent forum and are pleased to welcome Claudia to the role. Andy thanked Clare for her hard work as headmistress, he also thanked Lynne for taking the minutes. We also thank Alice for her work as year 3 rep who is stepping down due to new work commitments.

The governors acknowledged they had received concerns over the heads leadership and management of the school. Ms Bladen apologised for not being able to be present at recent parents evenings due to the head attending a head teachers conference so governors were on hand to support parents and staff in her absence.

We would like to invite any parent to represent their class (especially year 3) within the parent forum. Many years share this role so you don't need to be able to attend every meeting they are just once every half term on a Friday morning between 9.15 and 10.30am. The next meeting will be on 5th May, we would love new representatives to join us.

A.O.B.

It had been noticed by a parent that the school was recruiting, Ms Bladen assured us that staffing arrangements would be communicated at appropriate times.

It was asked if Ms Bladen could remind the cleaners that the toilets next to year 1 need cleaning.

The issue of heat in the classrooms in anticipation of a lovely summer was raised and Ms Bladen confirmed they have purchased a number of fans.