

Parent Forum - 15.11.10

PTA Fundraising

The role of the PTA was discussed – the social element and the fundraising. Are there were other ways that parents could become involved?

Suggestions for consideration were:

- Parents could volunteer to organise an event either in their own homes or at school
- They could help out at a specific event as a one off
- Classes or year groups could organise mini events (coffee mornings/cheese and wine etc) and ask for a donation to the PTA
- Parents could 'pledge' to give time, skills or money to the PTA
- Parents may be more willing to contribute if they have a clear indication of where the money is going – "We are raising money for...."
- There should be some sort of celebration of the achievement once the money has been raised
- Make the most of the charitable status through Gift Aid and Grants

The general feeling was that people would respond better if pledging money was optional and it was kept low key. Offering time, skills or money was thought to be a good way forward. There could be a summary of the year at an Open Evening or the Summer Fair in the way of a display. The school website could also be used in several different ways to support this.

Learning

What would parents like to know in order to be able to better support the learning of their children?

- More informal opportunities to meet the Teacher and the TA. Sometimes parents do not know who the TA is, though they hear their name regularly.
- Open afternoon/evening. This would be particularly helpful as some parents don't feel they know their way around the school. It would also help them with the class split at the end of the year. [*This is planned for the end of this academic year*]
- Parents need 'permission' to write a comment or feedback in the homework book. The children don't think it is something their parents are 'allowed' to do. Could there be some sort of sheet, or comment box to communicate in if necessary. [*We are currently investigating ways to develop the reading diary/homework book to enable dialogue between home and school.*]

The group felt there was an open door policy and that they could come in and ask the teacher if they had any doubts, problems or suggestions.

Homework

Was there any particular type of homework that parents felt was more beneficial than others, that they could do as a family?

- They liked the consolidation of learning done that week in class because it allowed them to see the type of activities and how their child was progressing
- Y4 parents had particularly liked the 3 step homework 'Must – should – could' that their child had been given, as it gave the children options to extend learning if they wanted to
- A glossary of the terms and symbols used in the classroom would be useful (LIM, good choices etc)
- Longer research type projects were seen as a good thing – the children liked them and often didn't need encouragement to do it
- Could children be given opportunities to do optional competitions or challenges at the weekend/half term holidays, in addition to their homework?

The question of homework will always divide parents – some think they should have lots, others feel they should be given time to do other things.

Other Developments

- More competitive sport – One parent mentioned that they felt there could be more opportunities for competitive sport

The ideals behind the School Sports Partnership were explained – this is in the process of being disbanded and the new government has plans to introduce a new Olympic based scheme, which is likely to be more competitive in nature.

- If a child misses the call for their class to go into lunch, what provision is in place to allow them sufficient time to eat their lunch later? Some children find it difficult to go from the intense supervision of the infant school to the greater emphasis of taking responsibility of the junior school. Buddies help to ease this – Year 6 and 3 eat together during the first few weeks of term.

[EB to talk to the MSAs about what happens if a child misses the class call]

Was there anything that Fleetville Junior School could do differently/better, anything that parents could suggest that could be implemented here?

- How parents pay for things – are we trialling the online payment system? The group felt it would be very useful to have an online account where they could see if they had forgotten to pay for something.
[There is currently a Hertfordshire trial of an on-line payment system – watch this space!]
- How was the school day structured and was an afternoon break really necessary, especially if the children were involved in a workshop where time was short?

[JL/EB to discuss with teachers whether we should adopt a more flexible approach to afternoon break]