



## Holmes Chapel Primary School

### Minutes of Parents' Forum meeting: 26th January 2016

**Present:** H Scott, H Parkinson-Sykes, F Fernando, R Hoile, C Skinner, F Chipperfield, L Ellis, N Moss, L Thomas, N Thompson, A Chapman, C Barratt, S Platt, L Beaumont, M Rowley, S Haigh, J Beattie.

#### **1. Changes to the buddy system**

The buddy system historically worked on a rota basis with Year 5/6 children taking it in turns to look after younger children at break/lunch time. However, motivation dwindled from the older children as the year progressed, so school have devised a new format. All Year 6 children are now expected to take on a mentoring/buddy role and children have been assigned to particular classes. They are actively involved in Golden Time in each of the other year group classrooms (apart from year 5). The new format seems to be working well with positive feedback from both teachers and children. The buddy 'bus stop' is still used at break/lunch time for younger children who may need some reassurance from a buddy or a midday assistant (e.g. if they can't find their friends). Some parents commented that younger children are rushing through their lunch to avoid losing their friends in the playground. Teachers will suggest to younger children that they arrange a meeting place for friends, so that they no longer feel the need to rush.

#### **2. Plans for new playground equipment**

The lower playground will be resurfaced at half-term and playground equipment restocked. A request was made for skipping ropes to be purchased, especially longer ropes for group skipping games. Given the limited space on the playground, and potential safety issues, Mrs Scott felt it was better to wait until the summer term to introduce skipping ropes when children have access to the field. Children are allowed to bring in colouring books/reading books for break time, but they must be responsible for their own belongings. In terms of organised activities, Premier Sports trained up some of the Year 5 children last summer to be 'play leaders'; these children help to arrange play activities for all year groups. In addition, Mrs Wardle now plays with identified groups and individuals to encourage friendships and social skills. Mrs Scott will include details of the time/dates of these organised play sessions in her newsletters.

#### **3. Filming of Christmas performances**

The possibility of school producing a DVD of the Christmas performance was discussed. The cost to have this done professionally (yet to be confirmed) may put some parents off, as well as the fact that there would be less focus on each individual child. It was agreed that filming the dress rehearsal would be the best approach, so that children would not be distracted by parents/siblings, and specifying that orders for DVDs must be placed in advance. It was hoped that having the DVD available would stop parents worrying about queueing up to get the best seats at the evening performance. Holmes Chapel Community Pre-school filmed their nativity this year and sold DVDs, so we could ask them for advice, especially with regards to any copyright issues. An alternative suggestion was to sell photographs of individual children taken at the dress rehearsal. Mrs Scott will look into the feasibility of these options.

#### **4. Access to water during the school day**

Children are encouraged to bring a water bottle to school and to refill it with fresh water each day. Children are allowed to drink as they go in/out to break/lunch, but they are discouraged from continually drinking during lessons due to the potential for spillages on work or disruption to the rest of the class.

#### **5. Streamlining drop-off near to the Year 3 doors**

Congestion appears to be building again near the Year 3 doors with morning drop-off being the most problematic. Late arrivals and parents leaving the playground are blocking the lines of children trying to

enter school through these doors. While parents are of course very welcome to accompany their children into the playground, please can all parents wait until the children have entered school before leaving the playground, or alternatively use the far exit by the pre-schools.

## **6. KS1 cloakrooms**

It was felt that the KS1 cloakrooms are congested with children finding it difficult to hang up their coats/bags. Mrs Scott noted the use of plastic boxes, rather than the pegs, for PE kits and the fact that children are encouraged to bring small bags to school. In addition, children are asked to put their reading folders into their drawers on arrival, so their bags should be fairly empty. Staggering the children using the cloakroom (i.e. sending one table at a time) was suggested as a means of easing the congestion.

## **7. Generic rules for allotment days**

To avoid confusion, it was agreed that children should come to school in their own clothes/footwear on allotment days and bring a pair of wellies to change into. There is no longer any need to bring school uniform in a separate bag. This information will be added to the VLE on future allotment days.

## **8. School Crossing Patrol**

The school is currently without a School Crossing Patrol on Middlewich Road. Responsibility for recruiting and filling the post lies with Cheshire East Council (CEC) and not the school. Mrs Scott, the school governors and one of the parents have written to CEC expressing their concerns about safety on this road, but the reply was that the vacancy is difficult to fill. School are unable to ask teachers to monitor children crossing the road, as they would be liable for any accidents that may occur. School have previously distributed leaflets to parents advertising the role, but no replies were received. Potential new ideas to solve the problem include: a zebra crossing (although this would probably be too costly given the short period of time that it would be needed each day); a rota of parent volunteers to share the job (free childcare from the pre-schools could be a possible incentive); reaching out to the wider Holmes Chapel community via Facebook pages/church and library notice boards; and starting a parent petition to send to CEC.

## **9. Optimising feedback to the Parents' Forum**

The last few meetings of the Parents' Forum have had very few attendees and very few agenda items. In contrast, the individual year group Facebook pages often have discussion threads that would be of relevance for the Forum. The possibility of setting up a Parents' Forum Facebook page to capture these discussion points was raised. However, while this would gather topics for discussion, all agreed that a physical meeting would be best to ensure a representative view from as many parents as possible. Holding fewer meetings with more agenda items was also suggested. Many parents email Mrs Scott directly with queries rather than attending the Forum meetings. Mrs Scott agreed to include feedback from these discussions in her newsletters, if it was of relevance to all children/parents.

## **10. Any other business**

### *Coats at lunch time*

Children who go straight out to play at lunch time, before being called into school to eat, have to take their coats into lunch with them. This is to avoid children going back into their classrooms to hang up their coats (when they would be unsupervised) and to allow sufficient time to get the whole school through lunch. However, it was considered a potential tripping hazard if children leave their coats trailing on the floor when they are eating. Various storage solutions were discussed, but it was agreed that there is not sufficient room or time to store the coats during lunch. Mrs Scott stressed that this has not been an issue to date, but that she will remind the children to hang their coats properly on the backs of their stools when eating lunch.

### *'Next week' pages on the VLE*

Some of the 'Next week' pages are out of date on the VLE; Mrs Scott will ask for them to be updated.