

Minutes - Parent Forum 13.10.23

Attended by Mr West, Mrs Utting, Mr Blow and Mrs Kerr

Agenda: Ofsted's recent visit
 Questions from parents
 Building update
 Parent Reps and their role
 Any other questions
 What is working well / How can we improve

Ofsted visit and report

Mr West explained the format of the recent visit and how it was different to the inspection that the Infants have just had. Ours was to check that we were still a 'Good' school. The inspector also looked at safeguarding and did a subject deep dive in three areas; reading, maths and music.

The report opened by saying:

Burlington Junior is a vibrant, inclusive and friendly place. Pupils enjoy coming to school and make the most of the wide range of opportunities provided. Relationships at the school are warm and respectful. Pupils feel safe and are kept safe.

A parent queried the fact that children have missed so much of their education and asked if this was taken into account during inspections. Mr Blow replied that yes, this was taken into account and that the monitoring visit from Ofsted in December 2020 had directly addressed this.

Questions from parents

- Why do some classes take the 144 x table test immediately and others just practise?

The test is very challenging and a limit of 5 minutes is set, so not all children are ready for it at the same time. It can be demoralising for children to take the test if they're not ready. In addition, a lot of year 6 children take entrance exams at this time and can be as much as a year ahead of the curriculum in maths.

- Can there be more handwritten English homework as opposed to typed?

At the moment there is a mix of practical tasks and work on Google classroom. Google tasks include multiple choice questions which give the child an immediate mark. There are also questions which require longer answers - they are discussed in class. Mr West explained that handwritten work needs to be marked by teaching assistants and this takes them away from work in the classroom, which we want to avoid.

- Google documents/quizzes that are used for homework often give the child a cross even if the answer is correct. Can this be looked at?

Google will mark an answer wrong if it isn't formatted correctly. Mr West accepts that this can be demoralising to children and will look into it.

Building Update

Parents were shown slides of the building site including the new route to the field and the outside toilets. There will be a temporary MUGA built on the existing field for use over the winter months and this will be replaced with turf for the summer.

The steel frame for the new building will go up at Easter with completion of the new building expected in December 2024. Work will then start on the demolition of the CLASP building and new staff car park, which should be completed by May half term 2025.

The role of Parent reps

Parent reps are a useful link between parents and school. Most classes have a Whatsapp group where information can be shared between parents. There are also varied tasks that class reps can also get involved with including year group cake sales, class stalls at summer and Christmas fairs and, if they wish, arranging social activities for class parents.

Parent reps shouldn't be the class complaints department. Parents with individual issues should be directed to the class teacher in the first instance.

Any other questions

- Some parents were concerned that their children are struggling with the mixed classes in year 4 and wanted to know if anything is done to help them. It was felt that the effect of the class mixing on the children is underplayed.

Mrs Utting and Mr West explained that mixing is necessary and it was thought better to do it at the Juniors once the children had had a year to settle in. A lot goes on behind the scenes to mix the classes and we will consider ways to support the children more in future.

- How will it work when the school goes from 4 form to 5 form?

Mrs Utting assured parents that the increase is not going to happen any time soon. When it happens will be a question for the L.A. As we are not an academy we do not have access to extra funding for building projects, therefore the only way to replace our ageing building is expansion. The building expansion is future proofing for when we need 5 forms of entry i.e. completion of the Cox Crescent site.

Parents were given an opportunity to write their thoughts at the end of the meeting and these were as follows;

- What's working well
 - ★ The new Year 4 classes – thank you!
 - ★ Mr West (yes, someone genuinely wrote this).
 - ★ Good communication around building and activities.
 - ★ Good to find out more about Ofsted report.
 - ★ School lunches seem to be going well.
 - ★ Fast feedback on issues.
- It would be even better if...
 - ★ Can we have some information about rules with going to the toilet – every class seems to be doing it differently.
- Next time:
 - ★ Sanctions: What are they? When do they get them? Do parents get informed?

