

Minutes - Parent Forum 09.02.24

Attended by Mr West and Mrs Utting

Agenda: Review of points from previous meeting
 Homework
 OPAL
 Budget
 PTA
 Building update
 Any other questions
 What is working well / How can we improve

Review of points from previous meeting

Sanctions in school - how are they used and are parents told?

- Whole class sanctions are not used as they are felt to be unfair and ineffective. It has been made clear to staff that whole class sanctions are not to be used. We try to ensure that the message is reinforced regularly so that teachers joining the school are aware of our behaviour policy.
- We do not call parents for minor issues as we prefer to deal with those on the spot and small issues can often escalate with parental involvement.

Homework

What we want

- We want children to feel appreciated.

What we don't want

- We don't want to swamp teachers with marking.
- We don't want TAs taken away from their class to mark work

What we do

- We share homework with the class so that they can show their work and get feedback from their peers.
- We find that seeing others' homework motivates children to try harder with their home learning.
- Homework on Google Classroom uses a mixture of multiple choice questions and longer answers. Multiple choice gives instant feedback whereas long answers need to be marked.

OPAL

Children at BJS get just over 6 hours of playtime per week and we want them to enjoy it! If the children are happy and busy then we have fewer behavioural problems and we have seen a drop in first aid incidents already.

There is a tendency to think that football will always dominate playtimes but that isn't the case. Many children play football because it is the only choice but OPAL gives them other options.

We aim to have 4 pieces of equipment per child and we use things that we previously wouldn't have considered, such as the fallen tree in the field which would have been cleared away. Instead it will be made safe for children to use. OPAL does require a change of mindset which is a gradual process.

Budget

Like all schools we are feeling the effects of a reduction in funding. We are faring slightly better because we are a big school and are full. Cuts made are often ones that parents don't notice, such as fruit in classrooms for children.

Parents can help by paying for trips, supporting PTA events and paying their school fund contributions. Schools are all looking for ways to save money. Teachers have had much deserved pay rises but these are not fully funded.

The Mayor is funding another year of free school meals so parents are saving over £400 per year.

Building Update

The new building is beginning to take shape. The project is on track and we can now see the steel frame going up which will give us an idea of the size of the building.

We will be gaining a little more space from the Hobkirk House site which will become part of our field and the new school site will mean that playground space will be less fragmented than it is currently.

The whole school will be moving into the new building in January 2025 while the Victorian building is renovated and the CLASP building demolished. Work should be completed by May half term 2025.

Any other questions

- The PTA was discussed, highlighting the many great things that they do, including the summer fair, colour run, Easter egg raffle, disco etc. However, it is always the same people helping and they welcome new people. You can attend meetings with no obligation but it is a good way to help raise money and build the school community.
- Communication needs to be clearer with the email header stating clearly who the message is for. Parents are unable to search the newsletter when it is sent in PDF form. Explained that we cannot send documents to parents in Word format as they can be easily changed. We will look into different formats.

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

- It would be even better if...

Class or year group leaders could come to the start of the parent forum.

There could be an info meeting for applying to Junior school and secondary schools.

How can we encourage more parents to attend the parent forum meetings?

Next meeting Friday 24th May 9am

