

PARENT FORUM MEETING MINUTES
(23rd October, 2019 : 1st of academic year 2019/20)

Head Teacher	Mr Dominic Bedford	Apologies
Deputy Head Teacher	Mr Alex Sallis	Julie McConnell
Nursery	No attendees	Katerina McAllister,
Reception	Caroline Pickering, Paola Sawle	
Year 1	Laura Donnellan, Jenni Scott	
Year 2	Louise Giles, Emma Taylor	
Year 3	Anita Jenkins	
Year 4	Shirin Stewart, Claire Brennan	
Year 5	Lynda Archer, Clair Broderick	
Year 6	Karen Roache	

INTRODUCTION

To bring new parent representatives up to speed, and in order to hold fresh in our minds - the core purpose of holding such meetings, those present were taken through the terms of reference and the core aims of the meetings.

Terms of Reference

- To provide an additional channel of effective communication between the school and parents / carers.
- To meet termly with at least one member of the senior leadership team
- To discuss appropriate matters of 'whole school' business, and not individual concerns

Aims & Purpose

- To support and promote children's learning
- To gain parent / carers views to inform school decisions
- To make plans to support the school to develop and improve outcomes for children
- To gain support from parents and encourage them to be active members of the school community
- To consider and discuss general school matters raised by parents, through their class representative.

SCHOOL UPDATES

Pupil Outcomes 2019 (a breakdown of results)

St Adrian's pupil outcomes were better than St Albans District, Herts County and national results for:

1. Reception exit
2. Year 1 phonics outcomes
3. Year 2 exit data
4. Year 6 exit data

These are the four areas of official reporting.

- The attainment in Year 6 put us in the top 5% of schools nationally.
- The progress for Year 6, through the key stage, for Reading and Maths as measured by SATs outcomes put us in the top 7% nationally.

Club Kidz: Breakfast Club / After-school Club

Numbers attending are steady and slowly increasing. Whilst the school had no involvement with the running of either the breakfast club or the after school club, Mr Bedford does check in on the pupils from time to time and is very happy with the stimuli provided, the food, the split of outdoor play v indoor play etc being undertaken by Club Kidz.

Chrome Books

Mr Bedford praised the significant contribution made by the PTA to the purchase of new Chrome Books for use in school and confirmed that the school has now also converted all old laptops too.

This brings the number of up to the minute, pupil facing computers at the school to **64** which is absolutely fantastic.

Governors Information

The School Governors will soon write to all parents with details of our annual Governor's Information Evening to which all parents are warmly invited. The Governors will, for example talk us through proposed changes to the Ofsted Inspection Framework and will talk through rich and broad nature of our primary curriculum.

Safe-guarding

Mr Bedford spoke of planned changes to tighten security to the entrance lobby by the main office and of proposals to have a magnetic release mechanism similar to that currently used on the main door to gain access via the side gate to nursery, at nursery pick up times.

NURSERY HOURS

The following is copied from meeting minutes of 8th May 2019.

Increasing the provision of Nursery hours to 30 hours is not something the Board of Governors are considering at this time.

It is felt that with an increase in hours comes an increase in costs (staffing, electric and gas etc), and if we fail to get the numbers then those cost increases would still apply. The school would also be legally obliged to provide a "chill out" rest area for pupils – space it does not currently have.

The school also feels that it cannot compete with the commercial nurseries that are better placed to aid working parents by offering a more compatible range of hours, 50 weeks of the year as opposed to the school's available 38 week year.

Mr Bedford added to this, informing the Forum that even with funding 80% of 30 hour providers report that funding provided does not cover costs.

GOLDEN MILE

A question was raised regarding the fact that children continue to take part in outdoor play, or the Golden Mile, in wet weather conditions. Parents were particularly concerned about the foundation stage and infants returning to class in wet clothing.

Mr Bedford wants to assure parents in these age groups that no child will run an actual mile (that's 8 times around the field) in wet weather; and that when children are caught out in wet weather that they are helped out of wet clothes and not left to steam as spare uniform clothing is available.

He talked through the importance of outdoor play and its potential for aiding learning in the rain (developing language skills around the weather, looking at rainbow colours in the puddles, how plants and vegetation grow, how water freezes, playing with sand and so on).

Parents are asked to ensure that they send children in with welly boots and raincoats in the winter months.

AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS

Mr Bedford spoke about the difficulties faced in getting people to "volunteer" their time to help run after-school clubs and acknowledged the many teachers who already are involved in providing "free" after school clubs on different days within the school, on their free time.

In addition to the adults required to host additional clubs, is the big issue of space, then the relevance of a club attended by all age groups from reception to year 6, with both the younger and the older kids not being stimulated effectively.

We have 1 playing field and a long standing commitment to school football and the football practice provided by Football Futures. Indoors – the same thing. The hall is used already, and split now to facilitate the Club Kidz run afterschool club, while space needs to be left for those severe wet weather days.

Finally – there is the issue of numbers. Clubs can't run if the attendance numbers are low.

It was widely acknowledged that there is a wider variety of Clubs already in place this year. Mr Bedford does however encourage parents to approach him should they wish to host a particular club that would benefit the school.

If any parent has a suggestion then please get in contact direct or let your Parent Forum Rep know and they will pass on the details.

MUSIC

A question was raised about the possibility of the school providing a wider range of "classical" music. Suggestions included piano or violin lessons. Mr Bedford acknowledged the half hour each pupil spent in music every week, with hymn practice; not to mention the extracurricular music provided from in juniors from year 3 – 6 with guitar and recorder practise.

The SLT pointed out that even if they were to facilitate private lessons at the school, the cost of doing so would not be any cheaper than if parents sought private lessons themselves. It would also raises the problem of sufficient uptake; and it was pointed out that such lessons taught in school time would come at the expense of school learning.

Should any parent be available to host an after school club (for which they could charge) then please contact Mr Bedford.

HOMEWORK

Parents asked if homework could be issued on a Thursday evening so that it could be undertaken immediately on a Friday, helping parents and pupils to complete their homework over the weekend.

Mr Bedford explained that this would not be possible; explaining that as homework is handed in on a Wednesday it was too much to expect teachers to turn 30 sets of maths and English books around overnight. He also highlighted that the reality of teaching was that teachers very often changed their minds about what homework to set for pupils as its is influenced by factors including what the children were understanding or not understanding in the course of the week, or whether he/she could move on and have the children take a gentle look at a topic that would be coming up in the following week.

He pointed out the importance of homework and the importance of the “home” element of homework as a chance for parents to truly understand where their children’s learning was at. He also pointed out the importance of time spent on homework within primary school, as key preparation for what would come to all children from year 7 when they switch to secondary school.

SCHOOL MINIBUS FOR SPORTING FIXTURES

The following is copied from meeting minutes of 8th May 2019.

While it was acknowledged that working parents occasionally struggle to get their children to proposed sports events during work hours, Mr Bedford explained that it was not something the school could get involved in organising.

Were the school to become involved in organising the safe passage of pupils to and from events then it would have to organise and pay for DBS checks on all adults, it would have to provide insurance (because the volunteers would be representing the school).

Mr Bedford has spoken with the Heads of both Marlborough and St Columba’s schools and it was found that whilst this might be possible on occasion, it would offer no consistency as there would often be a clash of usage times. Mr Bedford asks that parents consider organising this themselves.

Mr Bedford and Miss Bowen will look at a sports team app to help facilitate a smoother communication of sporting fixtures which will help parents to organise lifts among parents definitely attending.

SWIMMING (can pupils walk to and from swimming?)

Following discussion it was agreed that this could not be undertaken, now or in the future. The issues highlighted included the fact that there were too many dangerous roads to cross; that pupils would be walking in all weathers with wet hair; that it would take too long for children to change and walk up the hill to school; that even more parent volunteers would be required to attend.

PARKING OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

Please parents, we are reminded to park sensibly, sensitively and courteously at all times.

Parents are encouraged to make use of the church yard too as it is currently under-utilised.

CHOIR

As with the responses given to the sections regarding after school clubs and music lessons – please note that should any parent wish to volunteer to run a school choir, please contact Mr Bedford.

COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHERS

The committee discussed the possibility of having a direct means of communication with the school. Mr Bedford requests that the status quo be maintained and that all requests for contact with the teachers be made via the school office, as is the norm.

SEX EDUCATION

A question was asked about forthcoming plans by the Department of Education to facilitate “Relationship & Sex Education” within the curriculum from September 2020. Specific to St Adrian’s, as a Catholic faith school, this would be delivered within the framework of the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Mr Bedford pointed out that the Catholic Church was at the forefront of this and was working in tandem with personnel at the DoFE. Parents do not have the right to withdraw pupils from relationships education. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from some aspects of sex education. This does not include what is taught as part of the science curriculum.

The school is currently working on its curriculum content by school year and there will be a consultation with parents before this curriculum is implemented.

MUDDY BOOT SCRAPER

Approved ! Mr Bedford will look to provide a muddy boot scraper to help children clean their boots as they come off the school playing field.

AOB

Nursery Lunch Club, Merit Points and Separate Mass for 1st Holy Communicants – are all points covered in previous parent forum meetings. They were not discussed at this meeting as the points raised came in too late for inclusion on the main agenda and the Forum ran out of time. Consideration will be given at the next meeting.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 22nd January at 2.00pm.