



# Parent Forum

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2017



## Leading today's meeting...

**Mr Stock**      HEADTEACHER

These minutes are a brief account of the discussions that took place at the meeting. If you would like further information feel free to ask a member of staff or turn up to the meetings to get the fuller picture.





# Thumbs Up!



So pleased the school are now focusing on handwriting... my child's work was unreadable and now he is confident to write because we can all read it!



# Lets discuss... (1)



## **Assessment Quadrants – Reporting progress and attainment to parents**

- “Testing in Year 1?”

There is testing in Year 1 for Phonics. This is because the DfE have said that all Year 1 pupils must be assessed for phonics knowledge. Results for literacy and maths in Year 1 will predominantly be gathered by Teacher Assessment (similar to EYFS). The teacher reaches a judgement using evidence seen in lessons and through questioning.

- It all sounds so serious?

Schools should be reporting performance. However, we have previously not been giving out this information. It is important that parents have an accurate indication of how well their child is doing. It means parents can challenge teachers, teachers can explain how they are supporting the child at school, teachers can explain to parents how they can help at home and in general parents can track the progress their child is making.



# Lets discuss... (1)



## **Assessment Quadrants – Reporting progress and attainment to parents**

- What is the purpose?

### Why now?

The question about whether parents receive good information about their child's learning is on the OFSTED questionnaire. We feel that the assessment in school is now more accurate and so we feel now is the best time to start reporting this to parents. Last year, feedback from Parents Evening was that parents wanted some more substantial information rather than just being told their child is polite and friendly.

- I just want my child to be happy, I'm not interested in assessment.

We want children to be happy too! Testing, however, is a fact of life! Children are going to be tested throughout their life. We have a duty to provide the children with these challenges and ensure they are confident to tackle tests. If we didn't we would be doing them a disservice.



# Thumbs Up!



My child has really settled well in to Year 3. Mixing the children has actually created a calmer class for my child.



# Thumbs Up!



Thank you for your honesty regarding the proposed mix from Year 3 to 4. I am pleased that the school didn't proceed with the mix when it wasn't working.



## Lets discuss... (2)



### **Removal of reading book logs in Year 3 and Year 4**

- “What was the rationale behind the decision?”

Wealth of evidence to show that they have very little impact on children’s reading in Year 3 and Year 4. It has become a bureaucratic process which has little educational value. The school has limited support staff in KS2 therefore the task of completing the reading diaries and checking these diaries becomes the responsibility of the teachers. Checking diaries has no impact on children’s reading ability. At Rushmere we want our teachers to spend time teaching the children rather than writing in reading diaries, which may please parents but having very little value educationally.

- “Why isn't my child heard read in Year 3 and Year 4?”

The focus in Year 3 and Year 4 is different. The focus shifts from decoding to comprehension and a large proportion of these skills need to be taught. We teach reading for 30 minutes every single day, that is additional to the reading that takes place in literacy lessons. For a teacher to hear every child in their class read 1:1 for 5 minutes would take an entire morning. There is also very little evidence to suggest that 1:1 reading in KS2 is more effective than whole class teaching of reading.





## Lets discuss... (2)



### **Removal of reading book logs in Year 3 and Year 4**

- “I am struggling to get my child to read at home without the reading log.”

Whilst some parents believe the reading log helps to get their child to read at home, we want our children to read because they want to read, not because the reading diary is saying they need to. Other parents have praised the decision to remove the diary as it has allowed their child to be more focused on reading rather than the reading diary.

Reading diaries work well in KS1 as there are multiple adults in the classroom to support the children with their reading and to cross check these diaries on a daily basis. KS2 does not have the same capacity nor would it be impactful for teachers to spend time checking / commenting on 30 reading logs. Especially when, on average, only 40% of the parents use them effectively. The other 60% use them erratically which means they have to be checked even though they are not really being used regularly.



# Thumbs Up!



I am pleased the school is considering ways to reduce teacher workload. I want teachers teaching my child rather than writing about it!



# Issue raised / Item to be discussed (3)



## Academisation

- “All the other schools in Ipswich are becoming Academies what is happening at Rushmere?”

Only 7 or 8 schools in Ipswich (excluding faith schools) have yet to become academies. There are few left which long term could affect our ability to create our own Multi Academy Trust (discussed in the meeting)

- “What are academies?”

Schools which are not independent schools or private schools but no longer under Local Authority control. Becoming an academy comes with some freedoms, e.g. choose your own curriculum, set your own term dates, receive money direct from the DFE rather than the Local Authority who take a cut of the money before giving the school the rest.

- “What are the options? What are the benefits?”

The benefits are some of the freedoms. There are however lots of logistical challenges and the school is currently weighing up the pros and the cons of academisation.



# Lets discuss... (3)



## **Academisation - Options**

The school is currently investigating the following options for academisation. Whilst the Government have no longer said that schools must become academies they are encouraging schools to convert. The options currently being discussed are:

- Join an academy chain;
- Join an existing Multi Academy Trust MAT;
- Create a new Multi Academy Trust with other schools ;
- Become a single school MAT and support one other school;
- Stay as we are... but potentially limit ourselves if we have to academise in the future.

The school is at a very very early stage. More information will be shared with the parents in the coming months.



# Thumbs Up!

The school photos this year are definitely an improvement on last years. My child is looking at the camera and looks really smart.





# Lets discuss... (4)



## **School Development Plan Priorities 2017 - 2018**

- “What are the school’s priorities for the next academic year?”

School development plan priorities are stored on the internet. The school’s main focus is to continue to achieve results at or above national whilst also developing the consistency of teaching and learning across the whole school.

- “Why have spelling and handwriting become a focus ?”

Analysis of results from KS2 and KS1 reveal that the school is weak in these two key areas. The SLT also believe that these skills are important to develop regardless of the tests. E.g. Handwriting – if children can write and join with ease, writing becomes a pleasure leading to more creative writing.



# Thumbs Up!



I know the school cannot control what happens outside school but I am pleased that the school is trying to improve the traffic situation for parents.



# Thumbs Up!



Love the parents evening booking system. So simple and straightforward. I am a working Mum and could never get up to the school to sign up. Now I can. Thank you.





# Lets discuss... (5)



## OFSTED

- “Was the school pleased with the inspection report?”

Yes. It was very positive. However, we are not complacent, there is still too much work to be done. The areas for development we knew before the inspection started and were already starting to work on addressing them. The result of the inspection matched to the schools own self assessment.

- “What is the long term aim?”

Set out in the Operation Outstanding booklet. ‘Outstanding’ in EYFS by the end of the academic year with ‘Outstanding’ gradings in all other areas within 3 years.

- “Has the school started work on the areas for development?”

Straight after the inspection we continued the work we already started around those key areas for development.



# Thumbs Up!



I was nervous about phonics and Year 1 but my child is loving it. He is improving so quickly and has settled in so well. Thank you Reception for getting them ready.



# Lets discuss... (6)



## Traffic outside the school

- “What is the school doing to improve the traffic situation outside the school?”

School will trial the voluntary one way system and a number of other initiatives to improve the situation. The traffic committee meet regularly to discuss the ideas and will gradually implement them over the next few months.

- “How can I be involved?”

Make contact with Mr Smith and he will be able to tell you when the next meeting takes place. There is also a web form on the Parent page of the website which goes straight through to Mr Smith.

- “What powers does the school have on the roads outside the site?”

None! The only power it has is the ability to possibly influence habits of parents who are driving / travelling to school by car.



# Thumbs Up!



Thank you for recognising other charities rather than doing the same old children in need and comic relief stuff. Can we look at Globals Make Some Noise next year?