

## Parents Forum Meeting – Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November

Present:- Jayne Grundy, Steve Creed, Rachael Richardson, Kirsty Logan, Karen Ball, Clare Griffin, Bernadette Brooks, Hannah Bishop, Jo Aldridge, Charlotte Atkins, Jo Eastment, Lynne Dyke, Laura Field, Nicola Stevens, Stacey Drakeford

Apologises (email comments received): Fran Tarplee, Chris Roddie

Clerk: Claire Porter

### Matters Arising

1. Parking:- Banners have now been put up outside school and will be changed termly to discourage parking. PCSO Andy has been around school during several drop off and pick up times but little improvement has been seen. The building work at The Star will be completed this weekend so this will make a few more spaces available. We have tried our best with delivery drivers and we have seen an improvement in this but we are still having occasional issues, the planters on the pavement have helped. JA advised that there are always spaces available at Haling Dene as well as other spaces around the village. CP requested again that the disabled spaces are not misused as we have one child with a blue badge and the potential of another being required in the near future at drop off and pick up times. JG requested again that parents do not park outside of marked parking bays as this is putting the children in severe danger.
2. After School Clubs:- As requested at the previous meeting the nights are changed on a half termly basis so children who attend clubs out of school can also join in with school clubs.

### Agenda

1. Anti-Bullying Policy:- Our school policy is reviewed on a 3 yearly basis and is consulted with both parents and children on each renewal. Mrs Probert has recently reviewed the policy and JG read the new policy to parents present at the meeting, it can also be found on the school website. JG explained the definition of bullying. Parents happy to agree with the policy and after consultation with school council agreed for it to be forwarded to governors.
2. Cursive Writing:- JG read to the meeting an email she had received from FT regarding her concerns with cursive writing being taught at St Michael's. JG advised parents present that the National Standard for children to achieve age related expected progress at Key Stage 1 SATS they need to show flicks and kicks in their writing, if they are unable to do this they will only be graded as emerging. She advised parents that if we don't start children writing with cursive writing in reception or even nursery in some cases children would not be at the required level as set by the government. If we do not follow the government guidelines then the achievement of children at St Michael's would be lower than the national standards which would lead to the school being classed by Ofsted as "Requiring Improvement." KB advised that she did not agree with several points raised in the email and does not feel that if her child had not started cursive writing in reception she would not have achieved the exceptional handwriting levels her child, now in year 4, is producing now. JE stated how much cursive writing had helped her child to learn. Children with dyslexia learn to write easier with cursive writing for example they do not mix "b" and "d", without this style of writing being taught from EYFS the school would not be able to have achieved full dyslexia friendly status. HB stated that her child was in reception and she did not agree with the comments that children in reception class were getting upset and struggling with the form of writing and she fully supports the teaching of cursive writing. Parents asked when children started joining writing and she advised this was when they started to learn sounds such as "sh" and "ch." NS expressed concern about the transition from reception and year 1 and the dip in standard of children's handwriting. JG explained that this was a usual thing to happen due to the increase in amount of writing

children are expected to do but advised that this is always a short term decline and that an improvement is soon seen once the children become used to the work levels.

A cursive handwriting workshop for parents was suggested including the YouTube clips that the children use in class to learn the letter formations. JG said she would ask Miss Postle if it could be covered next week within the phonics workshop.

SD advised that her child was struggling with the concept of reading books and phonics cards not being in cursive font but then her writing expected to be so. KB advised that all kinds of fonts are used in many different ways and she had recently had to explain to her child about the different "a's" in a reading text to her younger child.

JG advised parents that she would arrange for word cards to be changed to cursive fonts.

JG advised that she wants to do the best for the children at St Michael's and would like them to be able to at least achieve age expected if not greater depth at the end of Key Stage 2, therefore she is not willing to reconsider the writing style taught as this would be doing the children and school a disservice.

3. Charging for Nativity Plays:- Emails had been received from FT & CR regarding charging for Nativity plays. JG advised parents that the decision had been made to charge for the performances as school budgets were getting tighter on a yearly basis and schools were having to provide more and more for the children out of their individual budgets.

For each play that is put on for parents we have to purchase a performance licence which covers the music being copied so it can be practised in each class, this licence would not be required if we just performed to pupils and staff, something that we would not want to revert to. School provides and purchases part of costumes as in the past parents had been requested to purchase full costumes and some parents had bought flamboyant expensive costumes which other parents could not afford to buy and we would prefer all children to look similar. Additional money from the ticket sales will be put to the school fund to provide activities and trips for the children. Examples of the trips this is used for is the Year 3 trip last week to Lichfield Cathedral, which parents were not asked to contribute to and the imminent Year 2 trip to see Michael Rosen. Money will also be used to purchase merit prizes as due to the increase in number of children and the decline in numbers of parents supporting the coffee mornings we are currently looking into whether this incentive can continue. CP advised that cutbacks this year included things like Christmas Crackers not being provided with the Christmas Lunch, it is things like this that St Michael's would like to continue funding for our children from the school fund. JG advised that she was disappointed that parents were questioning what money is being spent on as school staff are accountable to governors on their expenditure and not parents.

Ticket numbers for plays was queried and JG advised that they were restricted due to Health & Safety regulations and she had to ensure that if an incident happened the children and people present at the event would be safe. Parents asked if children could attend without a ticket and they were advised not, children in school would see the dress rehearsal, this would be confirmed to all parents on the bulletin.

#### Any Other Business

SC stated that he felt that the government were making the job of a headteacher extremely hard and he would like to thank Mrs Grundy for all the hard work she does for the children at St Michael's and what a grand job she does.

Data Protection – JG advised parents that new regulations come into effect in May 2018 which will greatly impact schools and the information we hold. She will be asking parents to cooperation with the new regulations.

Climbing Wall – KB thinks that the new wall looks fantastic. NS asked if this was just for the older children, CP advised about the new sports wall which had been installed on the top playground at half term with sports funding and asked parents to have a look at the fantastic new equipment which was being put in place for the children.