

Parent Council Minutes - Morgans Primary School

Meeting: 9th June 2011 – 9am, School Library

Present: Jill Goehringer (Chair), Michelle Wheeler (Vice Chair), Jo Luke (Secretary), Vicki Mitchell, Juliet Hill, Sara Loveday, Sam Amos, Juliet Hill, Anna Brady, Hannah Orton

Apologies: Kate Wilkinson, Karen Evans, Jo Stradling, Mollie Simpson, Tess Gatens

Previous minutes agreed.

Disability Equality Scheme (DES)

Re. actioning the DES document, JG noted that the PC had asked the school to liaise directly with parents of children affected, as members of the PC did not have the relevant expertise. Karen Evans (who works at County in the relevant Department) had also looked at the document.

Action: enquire from relevant parents as to whether they have been consulted.

Extra intake 2012

MW shared the contents of a letter she had received from Justin Donovan, Deputy Director (Chief Education Officer) at Department of Children, School and Families at County, in response to her concerns regarding the extra intake.

Mr Donovan confirmed that the temporary classroom would require an application under the town planning system for planning permission; that the public, including local residents, will be consulted on the building plans, and that the application will include supporting information such as a highways assessment of the impact of the temporary expansion on the local road network, and any mitigation measures that would be required.

Bring a Parent to Lunch

Yr 3 great success. Yr 4 now Thursday 14th July (changeover day for Yr6, when Yr5 will Barton).

Question of the day

The PC disappointed to learn that only one response (re. wraparound care at the Dell) received for the question “If you could ask the candidates (for new Headship) one question what would it be?” However, it was felt that the question had provoked some discussion in the playground, and that the poor response may be due to the fact that parents did not feel that their voice would be effectively heard by the PC itself –see further under **Parent Council revamp**, below.

School Entrance

JG noted that FOMS were believed to be looking at purchasing display cabinets.

Action: SA to talk to Miles Carr, FOMS chair.

Helping children to socialise

Discussed helping those children who find making friends or engaging in spontaneous play difficult, particularly during the long lunch break. The school has in the past used Buddy Benches, where children needing a playmate sit, and active structured play directed by dinner ladies for those children who don't want or need a playmate. Year 6 children have also buddied up with the younger children, to their great enjoyment.

The PC felt that the infant years are an ideal time to help improve social skills, and that all these avenues should be explored again, and put in place if possible.

Action: HO to investigate.

Pamper Evening

Morgans Mail wrongly reported that the forthcoming Pamper Evening was being organised by FOMs, when it is fact a Playgroup initiative.

Action: AB to mail Mr Miller to ask for a correction in Morgan's Mail.

Transition arrangements

Secondary schools to which Year 6 children move have transitional arrangements, so that children can prepare themselves for the jump to Secondary school: Secondary teachers visit yr6, and the children visit the schools for a day. Discussed the possibility of a more proactive role for Morgans, especially since the Year 6 children find themselves with not much to do, except for the Leavers Play, after SATS and the Isle of Wight trip. Perhaps Yr 7's could come back to talk to the children?

Action: SL to talk to staff to see if transition workshop groups would be welcomed; AB to check with her mother (SB SENCO), and Richard Hale, to see what arrangements would feel of benefit.

Post meeting note: further info from AB re. Simon Balle transition arrangements: SEN children in Yr 6 attend three "settling in" sessions at Simon Balle; those with significant problems are assigned linked TAs who work with them in the primary schools, and they have extra visits to SB. Otherwise, teachers from SB visit Yr 6 once or twice to speak to the teachers, the whole class, and to each child individually for 5 minutes. A few years ago SB TAs worked in primary schools on small Art projects encompassing hopes and fears, and looking back at significant achievements, which was apparently very successful (but stopped by SB). Discussed Yrs7/11 visiting.

Mill Mead quite thorough with their transition work, with pupils producing an achievements book attached to the 'Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning' (SEAL).

Richard Hale have a Saturday treasure hunt.

Parent Council revamp

Future of PC discussed, particularly the relationship of class reps to the PC body: does the existence of class reps distract from the profile and usefulness of the PC itself? Agreed usefulness of class reps in part depended on enthusiasm of teachers to use them, and on the personalities involved – not every parent will want to discuss issues with "their" designated class rep. Group felt important that parents should be able to approach any member of the PC. Additionally, it was suggested that the class reps have a higher profile with parents than does the PC itself - despite its greater impact on parents'/childrens' experience of the school. Revamp and possible reform discussed. With the arrival of a new (albeit temporary) Head in September, this is the ideal time to begin.

Suggestions: hold Open Meeting for parents in September; distribute summary of the PC's work/structure before year/end, informing parents that staff attend meetings and that the school asks for opinions; advertising PC meetings, with invitations for topics to be discussed

Action. PC members to consider strategies for raising PC profile, to discuss at the next meeting. JL, MW and JG to have pre-meeting consultation– so PC members welcome to mail/talk to them.

Teacher evaluation

Currently no method of parent evaluation/feedback on teacher performance. The PC was unaware as to the procedure to be followed if a body of parents have concerns about an individual teacher. Individual parents may be anxious about creating difficulties arising for their children or siblings.

Action: Investigate how such a situation should be handled.

Post-meeting note: In reply to a query from Jill, Bob Cinnamon referred to complaints procedure on the website (<http://www.morgans.herts.sch.uk/complaints.htm>) (and in the parent council file binder), recommending that parents use specific examples rather than generic comments. He noted that, once documented, the school must respond formally and this can be monitored. Jo Stradling (Chair of Governing body) recommended that if parents have been to see the teacher and are still unhappy, they should write formally to the head, copying Jo into the letter so that the Governing Body can formally monitor what's happening.

Next Meeting: Monday July 18th @ 8pm – Salisbury Arms