

****DRAFT ONLY****

Grazebrook Parent Council
24/03/2017

Chair: Sophie Sanctuary (Purple, 2G, 4B)

Present: Paivi Vahrelainen (Reception Orange), Lucy Dowd (Nursery/1G), Jenny McCoubrey (2B), Joslin Morrison (5G), Matthew Jeary (4B), Anna Hymas Wright (4B/6G), Andy Prentice (1G), Mark Higham (1B), Ivana Vidakovic (Reception Orange) Kate Ford (Reception Purple, 3B, 5G)

Apologies: Abi Meats, Diane Hamer

The order of business was modified to cover the most important points first.

1. Junior Road Safety Officers

Bev explained that there were concerns around road safety, especially at the junctions of Yoakely/Graying Roads and the top of Lordship Road.

She explained that the school is trying to raise community awareness around the issue of road safety.

The PC watched a video presentation showing the work of the JRSOs and urged parents to show an interest and talk to their children about road safety.

Charlie, Dristi, Jocelyn and Jake, Grazebrook Road Safety Officers presented to the Parent Council and explained:

- They were in Year 5 and had been speaking to the younger kids in the school about road safety
- The school had held a WoW (Walk on Wednesday) assembly encouraging children to walk to school each Wednesday.
- The school had run a competition for the WOW badge
- **They asked for help from the PC gathering questions for the adults for a consultation the school is running on road safety**

Bev reiterated the request: **Please can PC members think of questions to ask families in the consultation.**

2. Future financial implications for the school

Jess Hutchison set out the financial implications of funding changes for Grazebrook:

JH said that there was nothing concrete to let the parents know about at this point but wanted to prompt a discussion about the reality of cuts to the school budget that are going to come.

She explained that schools had been relatively well cushioned until now, but that due to the 'Fair Funding Formula' (the recalculation of central Government budget to schools) and the increased costs, as a federation there is no doubt that the budget will be "reasonably compromised as compared to how it was in the past". There will have to be cuts to some activities – there is no alternative. JH said that she is protecting "what we might call frontline services" ie. what is key to children's education.

JH said that she will be maintaining teaching staff levels but she might have to make savings on some of the additional provision that isn't curriculum provision

There will be communication with parents on this about what may be cut and asking parents to make some contributions. Eg. School meals – costs are going up. They were being subsidised quite heavily until now.

A question was raised about whether there are any other areas being considered for cuts.

Again JH emphasised the principle that she would like to minimise the impact to children across the board, but some examples of activities that won't happen going forward are:

- The Yr 6 Chessington trip
- A whole school end of year trip. Even with help from the PSA this costs thousands of pounds – much of the cost on coaches.

Matthew Jeary said that the 'Fair Funding Formula' is complicated – and it needs to be broken down so that parents understand why the school is in this difficult position.

A question was asked about music and whether that might be cut?
JH made it clear that music is core to the curriculum so it will be protected.

A question was asked about whether PSA money could be used towards activities. JH said at the PSA have been active and fantastic and that the school is incredibly grateful to them. She said it may be that the PSA try to raise the level of fund raising.

Some other ideas were suggested:

- The PSA may raise more money by focusing on the areas that parents are really keen on eg. Creativity.
- Might some parents be asked to pay more towards school meals to subsidise those in the school unable to pay?

JH pointed out that there was a wide range in the scale of home income, and that there are those on relatively small incomes who don't necessarily qualify for free school meals for example. Expecting them to pay more wouldn't be fair and the school can't begin to start asking for income-based contributions.

JH said the school is actively looking at what can be accessed for free – and at what the school can generate money from. eg. Hire of the hall.

JH also pointed out that Grazebrook was part of the Federation which has income across 3 schools. Grazebrook benefits from the other two which are in less affluent areas and as such receive greater government funding.

3. Children's mental health and wellbeing

The following question was asked: does the school have a therapist for those children who might need mental health support?

JH responded: The school does have a school therapist who works across the federation. Her time is limited with us and that's partly down to funding. She is placed where she is needed.

Within the school there are staff trained as 'learning mentors' – this is someone who helps children to get over barriers to learning – this may involve emotional issues, school attendance.

An idea was suggested – that there have been in the past charities able to provide a ‘drop in’ session for children for example ‘Place2Be’

JH responded that when children talk to adults in school and express issues of concern, the teaching staff will try to find a ‘trusted adult’. This is something most children will have.

MJ said he’d been to speak to the school council as part of his role as parent governor. And he’d spoken to the kids about pastoral care – asking them ‘who do you go to?’ Mr Smith is going to do more work with the School Council on this issue.

A parent suggested that the ‘Playground friends’ initiative had been a good thing.

MJ said the Place2Be no longer exists. **MJ agreed to look into opportunities there might be by leveraging charity/trainees.**

[NB: Post meeting note: Place2Be does still seem to exist. Website here: <https://www.place2be.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-schools/primary-schools.aspx>]

The PC discussed ‘Mindfulness’. JH said it’s on her radar and she will explore it, looking at how to bring wellbeing in to the school. The challenge is fitting it into the school day.

One parent suggested considering ‘The Daily Mile’ – and said Hackney was keen to roll this out. This started in a Scottish school and involved getting kids to have 15 minutes a day when they walk around a track on the school grounds.

LD said in Cornwall schools do ‘Wake and Shake’ which is 10 mins at the beginning of the day.

KF said it was good to hear that school is thinking around this area because a lot of talking about the importance of children’s mental health it in the press etc.

MJ said with the Child and Adult Mental Health Services being cut prevention is really important right now.

JMc said many parents in year 2 are still concerned about lunch time supervisors and behaviour management of children when lining up. Many parents believe there could be an alternative to children missing their break the next day. Particularly as those who are missing break are most likely to be those who could benefit from running around.

JH added that the school was going to bring in a greater focus on behaviour with a particular focus on manners. This will be done by raising awareness of green points.

SS said that the kids enjoyed positive rewards from green points eg. Time to play in the World Garden.

4. Snacks in Our Space / School Dinners

MJ responded to the question about whether the snacks at our space were healthy by saying:

Snacks are generous for kids as for some this is their only meal of the evening.

JH said the school is looking at food across the day – taking into account that some children have breakfast, lunch and snacks at Our Space at Grazebrook. The school is trying to link this up so that the options at those three points are diverse.

JM (who is a trained nutritionist) offered to advise on this.

MJ said that a questionnaire will be going from the school council to all the kids asking about school meals.

JH reiterated that menus were available on the school website.

5. ICT Suite

JH said the IT Suite has been pulled out and is now a classroom. She reassured parents this is not in preparation for a bulge class – it's an additional classroom used for activities like Read, Write, Ink.

The reason for this change is that the children were not using the ICT suite. There is now greater opportunity to use tech now in school as ipads and other tech is based in the classroom and used daily.

The school will be receiving new laptops during the Easter holidays.

6. Feedback on internet safety workshop

KF said there had been positive feedback about the NSPCC internet safety workshop that had been held this term. There was a decent turn out and a sense that many parents, whatever the age of their children, were grappling with how to best manage their children's online life.

There was a request for the school to run more such things to support parents. JH said there were plans for further events on internet safety.

6. School Uniform additions

There have been requests for school caps. JH said the school can't make caps compulsory. The uniform policy is a Governors' policy so changes have to go to them for consideration.

There was also a request for branded woollen jumpers & cardigans.

7. AOB

An idea was mooted about whether it was worth charging for the Tuesday morning parents' PE. JH said that so few attend, she wouldn't want to put people off by charging.

IV said there had been some cancellations at after school clubs when teachers hadn't turned up and parents hadn't been told with much notice. Could parents be told in advance in these circumstances?

JH said the school does try to let parents know in advance of any changes to after school clubs.

A question was asked about whether results for tests were being read out in class. JH said this shouldn't be happening – and that she would follow this up.

JH reminded parents that small issues can be passed to her via email (via Abi, PC chair) so they can be dealt with quickly rather than waiting for the next meeting.

The main meeting was wrapped up and JH left.

11. Parents Talents

This was discussed after JH had left the meeting.

Earlier the broad principles were set out:

The PC will take responsibly for compiling a list of parents and their talents/ experience that they may be able to offer to the school – from professional knowledge (eg LD is a yoga teacher, JM is a nutritionist).

This would be a way of enhancing the curriculum.

JH is grateful to parents who are willing to give their time and is keen to make this idea work but said it's important for parents to be really clear about what they can really offer – and for parents to be careful not to overcommit.

It was agreed a note on this would go in the Newsletter – and that the school could look at rolling this out after May.

The PC agreed to send out a letter to parents regarding, sharing skills and knowledge.

Actions agreed:

JMc has already drafted a letter which SS will forward on to JH for approval.

SS - to set up generic email for parent's council for the responses.

AP - offered to compile a list of parents' data.

SS and LD - offered to liaise between school (JH) and parents to arrange suitable times for workshops etc.

The PC agreed that more support maybe needed depending on number of responses.