



Brookhurst Parents' Forum

Combined minutes taken from both morning and evening meetings.

21st September 2015

Present:

Angela Stanton (HT), Mark Hughes (DHT), (Penny Hawkins (5 and 6), Katherine Snell (2,4 & parent governor) (3), Indi Kalm (5 & 6), Claire Cobbold (F & 4), Sana Ilyas (F), April Harris (2), Tina Swanson (1, 3 & 5), Kelly Savage (F & 2), Becky Hart (F), Andy Daniels (5), Karen Mothersdale (2, 5 and parent governor), Simone Veron (2), Clara Jorgensen (1) Claire Duhoze (F, 2 & 5) Sukininder Singh (F)

Agenda

1. Feedback on Sports Days and the Summer Fair

Feedback from last term's Sports Day and Summer Fair was extremely positive. All comments focussed on the improved format for sports day. All children participated in the races, communication on the day was clear and the 'live feed' to enable parents / families unable to attend to keep abreast of race results was really appreciated. The use of balls to represent the progress of the school houses was also acknowledged as a fun and informative approach. The forum acknowledged the time spent by Mrs Archer and Mr Daniels in creating the new format.

Feedback on the school fair was also very positive with the 'Friday after school' timeslot welcomed. The number and variety of stalls, games and food and drink options, as well as the lovely weather proved to ensure that the event was really well attended. The hard work of many parents was acknowledged but particular appreciation was given to Sarah Marr and Natalie Carroll who lead the event.

2. The Role of the School Governor

Parent Governors: Catherine Snell and Karen Mothersdale spoke to the group about the role of the parent, which a summary is detailed below.

Brookhurst governing body is made up of 16 volunteers: 6 parent governors, 3 staff govs (plus head teacher) and 6 others from different backgrounds, including business, education and one county councillor. The governing body's role is to provide the strategic direction for the school and to hold the school accountable. It sets the aims and objectives for the school, and the policies to achieve them and evaluates the school against them. It also manages the school budget and makes decisions on staffing levels and how funds are spent. Governors don't get involved in the operational management of the school (i.e. the day to day running).

Parent governors are elected by the parents and stand for a 4 year term. The parent governor role is not different to any other governor, but what they bring is the parent's viewpoint. They act as the parents' representatives although they are not a lobby group, and it is not a forum to discuss or focus on any issues to do with their own children.

The aim is to have a cross section of skills across the group so that they can act well as a team and cover most issues, such as finance or health and safety. Each governor has a link area to focus on as well, which might be maths or literacy, assessment, safeguarding or SEN. They come in to visit the school to understand more about how it operates to help make decisions. If parents ever need to contact governors, all their names are on the school website. They wouldn't get involved in individual matters though and it is recommended that you speak to your class teacher or Mrs Stanton or Mr Hughes if you have any concerns.



There are 4 full governing body meetings a year and also sub committee meetings once a term where they can deal with matters in smaller groups. There are also further special meetings from time to time if there is a particular issue which requires more attention.

3. SAT's Results

Miss Stanton informed the forum on last year's SAT results which were higher than the national average in all subjects. In particular, the high numbers of pupils achieving level 6 in maths was acknowledged. The SAT results can be found on the school website under 'About us'.

4. New School Curriculum

In light of national reform of the school curriculum across the key stages, Miss Stanton introduced the changes and impact for Brookhurst school. The aim of the initiative is to slim down content and provide greater depth of learning for the pupils. The new curriculum doesn't tell teachers how to teach but concentrates on the essential knowledge and skills that every child should have. Brookhurst will be able to shape the curriculum to suit the needs of the children, which was welcomed by the forum.

Changes in the new curriculum are that children will be expected to learn more at an earlier age, for example:

- In maths, children will be expected to know their 12 times table by the end of year 4.

Other examples of changes are that:

- History more chronological ,
- English will have more emphasis on spelling and grammar and more Shakespeare.
- ICT – will now called computing and will introduce coding to pupils.

Implications for current pupils are that some children will now find that they assessed as performing at a lower level than previously. Miss Stanton stressed the point that it is not the child's progress that has changed, but the assessment tool being used to measure this progress.

The other change is the removal of levels from the assessment framework. Interim frameworks for teacher assessment have been issued (last week!) to the school for reading, writing, maths and science to be used at the end of KS1 (year 2) and KS2 (year 6). Children will need to meet ALL the statements provided within each standard, in order to achieve the standard given.

There are three standards:

- Working towards the expected level
- Working at the expected level
- Working at greater depth than expected

This change in policy and the perceived challenges was discussed. A lack of possible resources and potential up skilling for some teachers was acknowledged as areas for attention. The forum requested that the school keep parents informed of impact of these changes, particularly the reporting of pupil achievements. The forum also asked the school to consider how helpful parents can be in addressing any challenges.

More information can be found at the DoE website

Parents' Forum



5. Other curriculum related topics

- Miss Stanton also stated that Brookhurst school is currently exploring the possibility of becoming an Primary Academy. This will be discussed at the next meeting when more details are known.
- The forum were also interested to hear that last year's pilot in year 5, where pupils use one writing book for combined topics (with the intention of improving pupil's presentation and teacher's feedback) has been rolled out across the school.
- The Home School agreement will go home with all pupils next week to be signed and returned.

AOB

A couple of parents expressed concern in how often their children were being offered cake as a pudding option at lunchtime and therefore were concerned about the high content of sugar being offered. It was agreed that the school would explore this issue with the County Caterer who have provided the following response.

Our Menus follow the School Food Standards as issued on 05.01.15.

The section dealing with food high in fat sugar and salt states that no confectionary, chocolate or chocolate coated products can be served. Desserts, cakes and biscuits are allowed at lunchtime. They must not contain confectionary. We abide by these guidelines. Our cakes and biscuits are homemade and the recipes use the least amount of sugar possible so as not to detract from the overall quality of the product. We use cocoa powder and try to incorporate fruit, oats, wholemeal flour, grated carrot and beetroot into many of the desserts.

The standards require fresh fruit to be served daily and a pudding containing 50% fruit on at least 2 days per week. We use several dessert recipes recommended on the school standards web site. The aim of the standards is to provide our customers with a varied balanced meal to provide the energy and nutrition they need across the school day.

More information on school food can be found at www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards

The practice of children giving sweets to their peers on their birthday was also discussed, with the conclusion that the practice should not change and it should be up to individual families if they wished to partake. However it was agreed that there is no obligation for families to contribute and alternative gifts such as pencil or stickers or homemade gifts would be welcome.

A parent raised concerns that Y6 seemed to have an intensive period of revision before SATS, followed by a period where they did not appear to do very much formal learning and wondered if it was a missed opportunity to develop or keep existing skills ticking over in preparation for secondary school

Date of next meeting

January 2016 : date TBC

9.00am – 9.50am / 7.00pm – 7.50pm