

**Brookhurst Parent Forum**  
**Meeting note**  
**24th October 2012**

Miss Stanton, Mr Hughes, Paul McKenzie (Chair of Governors), Becky Ackermans (Year 1), Laura Fitzpatrick (Foundation, Year 3 and Year 4), Penny Hawkins (Year 2 and Year 3), Denise and Paul Luckhurst (Year 1), Geraldine Parker (Year 5), Rachel Pope (Year 2 and Year 4), Stephanie Rix (Year 1), Vicky Smith (Year 1), Katherine Snell (Year 1) and Jenny Weir (Year 2 and Year 5) attended the meeting.

This is a summary of the main issues and action points discussed. The next meeting will be on **Tuesday 22nd January at 7pm.**

**1. Home learning policy**

The school is producing a new home learning policy, to replace the existing homework policy. A draft version was presented to the group. Attendees welcomed the timetable showing when different year groups would be given homework. The following points were discussed:

*a) Did you consider whether children in Year 1 should be given spelling homework?*

School response: In Foundation and Year 1, the focus is on the development of phonic knowledge (letters and sounds). Year 2 are given weekly spelling homework. In Key Stage 2 the learning of spelling follows the Support for Spelling programme.

**Action:** Year 1 parents to be provided with a list of the letters and sounds that the children have been learning, so that these can be reinforced at home at an appropriate time in their learning. Miss Stanton to discuss with class teachers the most appropriate way of doing this.

*b) How do we know what calculation methods we should use when helping children with maths at home?*

School response: The methods are set out in the school's Calculation Policy which is available on the website (under 'Virtual School Office'). We also discussed the maths evenings that have been run in the past, which give parents an overview of the way that maths is taught. Parents find these very helpful.

**Actions:** School to re-publicise the Calculation Policy, probably via a note in school newsletter. In addition, school will look into running the maths evenings for parents in 2013.

*c) How will home learning be marked?*

School response: Feedback will be given if it is appropriate for that piece of work. A marking system was discussed at the meeting but is still under review.

*d) Is it possible to give an idea of how long children should spend on home learning?*

School response: This is difficult as every child is different. Parents should use their judgement and if they feel it is taking too long, they should talk to the class teacher.

*e) There was a general discussion about the best way for teachers to keep parents up to date about what children are learning.*

School response: Mr Hughes updated us about the new learning platform ([welearn365.com](http://welearn365.com)) which has replaced the previous learning platform. When fully developed and fully operational there will be a virtual learning space for each year group which class teachers will be able to update. Parents felt this would be a useful format for updating all parents about what children are learning in the short term, eg weekly.

**Action:** Miss Stanton is considering how best to keep parents informed between now and the new learning platform being up and running. In the meantime specific information will be sent out via the school office.

## **2. Parent Forum Communications Survey, October 2012**

In July 2012 a small group of parents who had attended a Parent Forum meeting undertook a communications survey on behalf of the school. The key findings were presented at the meeting. Overall these were positive, with a significant majority of parents and carers feeling well-informed about what is going on at school, and about their child's learning and progress. The main issues raised were the use and purpose of the home/school diary; the number of email communications being sent out; and the timing of the school report and second learning review meeting. The Parent Forum Communications Survey report made some suggestions about how these issues might be addressed by the school (see attached report).

**Action:** Miss Stanton and Mr Hughes agreed to consider these suggestions and report back to the next meeting of the Parent Forum.

The findings of the communications survey report were supported by those parents attending the meeting. The key issues discussed in relation to the survey were:

**Home-school diary:** The views of parents at the meeting were the same as those expressed in the survey. In particular they noted that the diary was valued in reception; but its use then tailed off in year 1, which they had not anticipated. The school is going to look at this and propose a revised system which is used consistently across the school.

**Informal communication with teacher:** Parents queried the appropriate way of doing this, if the diary is not the best vehicle. Miss Stanton said that the best ways are either to speak directly to the teacher, or to email. The new learning platform should also help this to some extent.

**Timing of school report and learning review:** Those at the meeting agreed with those respondents to the survey who commented that the timing of the school report is too early in the year, and that it would be preferable to have a mid-year learning review meeting, followed by a report at the end of the year to summarise progress.

**Making suggestions / comments:** The school is considering the best way for parents and carers to make suggestions or comments. An anonymous 'suggestion box' would not be appropriate, but there are options such as a dedicated email address, or an online blog. The school will consider these, and the future development of the website and learning platform may provide a way of addressing this.

Some of the points coming out of the survey are already being addressed, as follows:

**Newsletter:** The newsletter is now putting key information and dates up front, ahead of year group news.

**Website:** Miss Stanton asked for parent volunteers to look at the existing website to identify what needs updating and make suggestions for future content on the new site. Four parents agreed to do this. We are keen to hear from any other parents who might be interested in doing this, particularly those with a web design/content background. If you can help, please let the school office know.

More generally, the updating of the website and the development of the online learning platform should help to address parents' concerns about how they keep in touch with what their child is learning and how they can give more support at home.

**Parent Forum:** We agreed that the website should have a dedicated Parent Forum area. We also discussed the low numbers of parents attending. At the next meeting we will consider whether it would be helpful to have Parent Forum representatives.

### **3. Other issues discussed**

*What is happening within school at the moment in terms of the 'Gifted and Talented' programme?*

School response: The key aim is to ensure that the school does the best for all pupils at all levels, so differentiation (setting work according to children's abilities) is embedded into teaching and learning. No additional funding is available for gifted and talented children. However, gifted and talented children are identified and provision is made when and where possible. There is some maths enrichment work taking place through the Leamington North cluster.