



Parent Council Minutes – 04/02/2022

Welcome and thank you for attending.

Mrs Holman started by welcoming Miss Pye (English leader) and Mrs Woods (Phonics and Early Reading leader) to the meeting.

Matters from the last meeting were briefly discussed and it was confirmed that all phonics letters re parent workshops have been sent and received by parents in YR.

School improvement – A review across all three schools was carried out last week with an Early Reading focus. We are pleased that children are achieving so well and have good resources, teachers and opportunities at Loose and in the Trust.

Reading - The main subject of the meeting today was to discuss how we teach reading at school.

Year R – Reception children spend their first term learning the single sound letters and then on to diagraphs. They cover all of these sounds across September through to December. Once grasped, they then move on to learning the two letters that make one sound.

The children then move on to reading books with an adult at least once a week. Sounds assessments are made each time the children read and lots of recapping is done to improve their knowledge. Focus is made on certain sounds within text and then teachers can recognise which children still have problems with any letters/sounds. The children undergo a constant assessment so that the teacher is sure that all phonics are embedded. There is a focus on a Friday with 'Tricky words'.

Year 1 – Children read at least once a week to the teacher / TA – independent reading/looking at books is encouraged. The teacher reads to the whole class and discussions are held within the group usually on a Friday. The children get a chance to talk about their understanding of the story and recognise words with different sounds and tricky words. At the end of the year an assessment is made (Y1 national phonics screen) and following this any weaker points are addressed. Ongoing assessments of phonics assists the teacher to know which book an individual should take home. Books are changed at least twice a week and the teacher encourages a child to read a book more than once to improve fluency with the reading and improve their understanding of the story.

Year 2 - We then moved onto Miss Pye who explained that the second strand of reading is introduced in Year 2. This means that both decoding (word recognition) and comprehension (general understanding of the text) are covered. Decoding is where children use their phonic knowledge to blend letter sounds in order to read whole words. The early comprehension skills of vocabulary and inference are introduced in whole class reading sessions led by the class teacher. Routine 1:1 reading is continued as in all previous years with each child being heard reading a minimum of once a week.

Home reading books are changed twice a week and coloured bands are allocated according to children's ability to retrieve taught phonic knowledge when reading words. Children who did not pass the phonics screening receive additional support in interventions with supporting adults to address any knowledge gaps and are reassessed.

Years 3-6 - Guided reading sessions are taught three times a week in all KS2 classes. Books for these sessions are selected by class teachers to ensure children are accessing high quality texts which challenge and engage them.

The children move further on to comprehend texts in guided reading. The Viper strand techniques are used, this stands for: Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrieval and Summarising. Children are asked, what do they think is happening in the story and all other aspects of breaking down words, sentences etc.

Incentives - Parents had emailed in asking about the incentives that the school offer for reading. Miss Pye explained that we have a **vending machine**. A book is offered to a child who has been chosen for showing the most improvement, a child that has come on in leaps and bounds with their understanding and fluency and one child is chosen from each year group each term. **Bookmarks** have been introduced as another incentive for the most points collected. The points total are agreed within a class and any points accrued from a term are rolled over to the next term. Film and popcorn afternoons are another incentive for a Friday golden time. The children have recently enjoyed this in Ruby class.

Phonics scheme and book bands – Many staff have completed Sounds Write training. This will be disseminated further in summer terms for full application in September 2022. We use colour coded books which are given to children which indicate their level of reading and understanding. We encourage a child to have one of these books at home to read as well as their own so two books are welcomed.

Questions and Answers:

Ideas sent in from Opal reps, suggestions will be looked at, thank you very much for these, confirmation that two books were recommended. If your child is a 'Free Reader' then one book should be from the class book corner and can also pick one from their own book collection at school or from home. Parents need to advise the class teacher if they do not think their child is being challenged enough with the books they take home. We do have many strong readers in the school.

Parent asked if year 2 weekly reading is still happening and confirmation was made that it is. Reading records for each child can be looked at by a parent / shared at parent evening to see how children are progressing.

Parent volunteers are welcome back to school now so please confirm this to anybody that used to come in for reading with the children. Please ask them to contact Mrs Garrett again if they are free via the office.

What is guided reading? This is where the teacher reads to the whole class and asks questions and leads a discussion with the children, not one to one reading. It can also be group (guided) reading

where a text is analysed or aspects of text looked at for deeper understanding and meaning. It is often how reading is taught by a teacher or TA and is not hearing / listening to readers.

What is the Learning Journal for? This is ideally for parents to advise the teacher what and when their child reads at home, any messages regarding going home arrangements or if their child is leaving early for an appointment. These are just a few examples. Mrs Woods said that she prefers to speak one to one with a parent about their child rather than relying on the learning journal book but each teacher is different. **Action – year groups to share their expectations with parents so these are clear.**

When will **cycling proficiency** be back? **Action - Mrs Monksfield / office team will look into this to see what is on offer this year or in subsequent years.**

Learner of the Week assemblies will be starting again on a Friday morning from next term. Parents will get notified on a Wednesday inviting them to attend if they are available to.

Emissions - One parent wanted to raise the issue of cars still being left running whilst parents are collecting their children. Mrs Holman explained that we have had some children from our Eco Council out in the mornings to remind drivers of how and where to park as well as other eco issues. A parent mentioned that she had seen posters around another school saying 'No Idling' around school sites. Maybe we could look to see if there are any council posters that we could put up around our gates? **Action - Eco council to look into purchase of such signage.**

Parent messages - Query about messages to pupils in school day from parent eg if running late. Confirmation that a call to the main office is required no later than 2.30pm in the afternoon if a parent is running late for collection. Unfortunately leaving it much later than this means that we cannot guarantee a message can be passed on as we have a very busy office with messages often to go to 21 classes across a large site.

School trips – We have some booked already for this year. Parents will be notified accordingly as and when they are going to happen. The year 6 residential trip is planned (outside / camping) and the choir will be starting up again to go to the O2 on the postponed date in May 2022. The school council are going to London (Houses of Parliament) and Y5 to Cornwallis to see their production.

RCP – Unfortunately Mr Woods is still unwell. Kent Highways have confirmed that they are not in a position to supply us with anyone to cover at the present time. We are doing our best to use our trained members of staff but this isn't always possible with the current staffing levels. These staff are usually to cover short term or day absence only. Untrained staff are not insured so this is not an option.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday 18th March 2022 2.30pm to 3pm and we are hoping for this to be in the Staff Room on school premises.