

Overdale Junior School Parents' Forum

Minutes of Meeting Tuesday 23 April 2013, 9.10am

Present: Mrs J Hart (Headteacher), Mrs K Cooper (Teacher), Mrs V Ball, Mrs R Higgins-Jones, Mrs S Vaghela, Mrs Y Dassu, Mrs K Askew, Mrs U Hamzaoui, Ms L Marsden, Dr S Vallance

Apologies: Ms S Sturgess (Governor)

1. The minutes from the last meeting were approved. They are available on the Parents' Forum page on the school website (within the *Parents' & Pupils' Information* section).
2. Mrs Hart shared the School Improvement Headlines, from the School Development Plan (September 2012). Nationally, the target is for KS2 pupils to achieve 12 APS (Average Point Score) – Overdale Junior School's key priority is for all children to achieve 14 APS (equivalent to 7 sub-levels) in English and Maths.
3. Mrs Hart explained about the school's *Assessment for Learning* (AfL) policy, which includes the 'traffic light' system used in class. Children have coloured cards (red, yellow, green) which they can display on their desk throughout lessons to indicate whether they need more help from the teacher on a particular subject. The traffic light system has been running in Year 4 and will be used across all years. Parents present asked for information about the traffic light system to be made available to all parents.
4. There was a discussion about Active Learning. The children are involved in project planning and are enabled by the creative curriculum. Forest School encourages team work and risk taking in a safe environment, and children can see through this broader learning opportunity how skills transfer into the more formal classroom setting and fit into the wider world. Some children's behaviour changes noticeably through Forest School and they take up leadership roles that they wouldn't in the classroom.
5. The school's policies on *Teaching & Learning* and *Assessment for Learning* are available on the school website.
6. The school has secured new funding for PE and will have an Advanced Skills Teacher in PE next year. All children have PE every week – swimming lessons are an additional PE session in the summer/autumn term.
7. There was some discussion about parental involvement, collaborations with the Infant school and local senior schools (Sir Jonathan North Community College and The Lancaster School).

8. It was felt that there needed to be some attention paid to encouraging boys to participate in clubs and activities such as street dance. There was also discussion about the low take-up of places at the Big Cook Little Cook club, which is an invitation only club targeting children who have been identified in Food Routes sessions as reluctant to try new foods.
9. A draft parental survey was reviewed: it had 20 questions spread over themed sections on 'Education', 'Impression', 'Communication', and 'Participation', with graded answers from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It was felt that the survey was too long and that it should be more focused. Discussion ranged around whether the survey should be on paper or online, should it be anonymous, who will analyse the results and what will happen after that? It was concluded that:
 - The first questionnaire should focus on communication and participation issues, as they are felt to be key to improving parental engagement.
 - There should be a deadline for responses.
 - Respondents should be able to remain anonymous if they wish.
10. This led to a discussion about school communications in general: parents feel that they don't always know what goes on in school. Should consider:
 - Sending Year 2 parents at the Infant school information about 'what to expect' when children start at the Junior school – managing expectations;
 - Raising the profile of the school website – send out a flyer to parents;
 - Encouraging greater parental involvement – open afternoons/evenings, Parents' Forum, open door policy;
 - Clearer information about homework;
 - Spreading the message about the changes that have taken place – creative curriculum, enrichment, traffic light system used by pupils, rewards system etc.
11. A short discussion about school dinners took place. Some parents felt that the menu did not always reflect OJS's Healthy School status. It was explained that school catering is undertaken by a City Council firm – meals are planned by dieticians to a specified nutritional formula, but ultimately the children make their own choices from the selection of items available.
12. Other suggestions made at the meeting:
 - Producing a 'what's for Tea?' booklet with ideas (or recipes?) from parents and children. Perhaps PA could be involved?
 - Inviting a local chef (known to Mrs Higgins-Jones) in to school to run sessions with the children on 'unusual' foods.
 - Sell OJS aprons (c.f. swimming caps) for Food Routes use.
 - Approach PA about purchase of new stools for kitchen/DT room.
13. Immediate actions arising:
 - (i) Review the draft questionnaire and bring suggested questions to the next meeting.
 - (ii) Prepare a flyer about the website for Junior parents, explaining what they can find on the site.
 - (iii) Ask PA about funding the purchase of new stools for the DT room.

**Date and time of the next meeting:
Tuesday 7 May, 9.10am**