



Parents' Forum - Tues 29th April 2014 - 6-7.15pm

"Reporting to Parents"

Discussions

The main priorities for parents are that reports are personal and they show how well their child is progressing in their learning. Most parents look at personal/general comments first!

Comments about examples of copying & pasting with sometimes incorrect names and gender (he/she). When explored most parents had experienced these errors.

In the past some reports seemed particularly formulaic and computer generated. These were not popular.

Discussion about 'levels' and 'outcomes' and what they actually mean. Perhaps schools sometimes forget that parents often don't understand these terms and expectations. 'There's a lot of assumed knowledge'. Parents often don't know or understand. This was particularly clear for parents when their first child enters Reception.

One parent raised concerns about teachers' workload in writing reports & suggested that parents' evening were sufficient.

HT explained statutory requirements for reports to parents & suggested that an option in the future might be more regular (termly) progress updates with brief targets rather than one longer end of year 'wordy' written report. These progress updates could then be reviewed and tied in with discussions at parents' evening meetings. This idea was popular with parents. Could reduce teachers' workload & improve effectiveness of home / school relationship & pupils' progress.

HT explained focus must be on making reports effective in informing parents & supporting children to improve. Comments suggested parents felt such updates might allow teachers and parent together to 'nip issues in the bud'. HT emphasised that this was not currently a proposal but might better serve parents needs and children's learning progress.

Conversations around Communication

Parents recognised there is a wide range of information available about the school though some had had trouble finding what they were looking for. Texting service clearly very popular. Newsletters seem to be accessed less when online.

In discussing learning, HT suggested that a start of the year meeting for parents with their child's new teacher might help to answer simple questions, lay out the year ahead & be the start of a relationship with children's new teacher. This suggestion was generally well received as was the suggestion that a letter ahead of the summer holidays explaining new class routines from day 1 in September. There is clear anxiety around the uncertainties of new arrangements, routines & expectations. This is particularly heightened when children move from infants to juniors (Year 2-3).

Possible Outcomes

- Review of in-year progress reporting including where the existing report process fits in;
- Distribute our Monthly Newsletter on paper to all parents to increase readership & awareness;
- Introduce parent meetings with new class teachers in September;
- Write to next year's parents in July prior to moving up;

- Look at layout & accessibility of website;
- Look at effectiveness of communication channels to avoid information overload;
- Look at updating Home School Agreement & re-issuing each year to reaffirm expectations;
- Ensure all parent receive paper copy of topic webs. A significant number of parents did not receive them this year!

Possible Future Themes to Explore

- Communication
- Parental support / building community
- Homework / Home Learning