

Parent Forum No. 10 held over Teams at 2pm on Monday 10th January 2022

It had been decided to try an afternoon rather than morning time for the online meeting, as previous turnout in the morning had not been very high. Two parents attended today and so it was suggested that Mrs Collins send out a short parental survey to ascertain the time most parents would be available to attend the next Forum.

Attendance

Mrs Gage explained that Attendance is an issue which Ofsted has highlighted as being of great importance because during the pandemic, children have been slipping from view and it is a grave safeguarding issue as well as being vital to the best educational outcomes for children. Children learn best in school and if children have variable attendance, their need for catch up time has an impact on the other children in their class. Mrs Collins then talked about the school's Attendance Policy, which is modelled on the Essex Local Authority model and which has changed little over the years. Partly owing to the pandemic, however, attendance figures have become more worrying, and it has been necessary to contact some parents, either by letter or in person, to draw attention to the attendance record of their children and to offer help to improve the situation, as is stipulated in the policy. One of our parent attendees said it was actually very useful to see the attendance expressed in percentages as it put the figures in a much clearer context.

Mrs Collins intends to send out the policy to all parents and will welcome feedback from parents and carers as part of the approval process.

Homework

It is always possible to find some parents who would like more and an equal number who would like less! Mrs Collins recently discussed the subject with the School Parliament to gather the views of the children. Our parent attendees thought there was a good balance, with the interactive elements being very enjoyable and overall maths feeling harder than reading to carry out. Mrs Collins explained the aims of homework are to support and embed the basics, reading at home being the most important, and then to practise what the children have done in class. Purple Mash provides creative activities in all subjects and Spelling Shed and TT Rock Stars allow children to stretch themselves as much or as little as they can manage. The Homework Policy is on the school website.

Communication

With time to spare, Mrs Gage asked the parents what they have found most challenging in the last two years. We talked about online learning and the different methods. Mrs Gage mentioned how fortunate we were as a school that Mrs Collins had pioneered Tapestry throughout all year groups before the pandemic hit. It is more often only used for the early years. Some parents would have liked a solid 9.00am-3.00pm presence online, as was more common at secondary level. Mrs Collins explained how much more tired children became learning online, without the ebb and flow of the class situation and the mixed approach allowed children to learn at their own pace and explore other learning experiences at home whilst still having direct contact with their teacher at specific times.. Also, during the second lockdown, teachers were both in class and online or at home with their own children so there were many complicating factors.

Mrs Gage asked the parents whether they found the school's communication processes had improved. It was thought there may have been one occasion when clearer communication could have calmed a

situation, but in fact as soon as Mrs Collins was made aware of the problem, she was able to alter a system to improve matters. Her presence in the playground at the beginning and end of the day was highlighted as really helpful and Mrs Collins reiterated that she would always welcome any queries from parents, either in person or using the Head@felsted-pri.essex.sch.uk address.

Sincere thanks to the parents who attended the meeting.