

Dear Parents

AGENDA ITEM 1

Feedback from Parent Questionnaire and issues arising.

I ran through the feedback from the Parent Questionnaires – “Your Views Count” and “The Parent Attendance Questionnaire”. In addition I told parents of the feedback that I have received from the parents evening that I attended.

Your Views Count showed an overwhelmingly positive view of the school (the positive feedback was consistently in the range of 70 - 80% with neutral response consistently in the range of 10 – 20%) which was really pleasing but we didn't dwell on the positives at the meeting as we were trying to establish what if anything could be done for parents to improve matters.

It appears that one parent has said on the questionnaire that they do not consider that their child is safe at school and the one or two parents felt that the school was not effectively dealing with bullying. A direct appeal is made to those parents to make direct contact with their child's teacher or Mrs Tewley directly to discuss their concerns as this is not a matter that we can assist with in Parent Voice and these responses are very concerning.

The lowest scoring areas on the questionnaire were in the areas of communication. These were “The School seeks my views and listens to my concerns” scoring only 59% positive returns and “The School Communicates with me effectively about my child's progress” scoring 63% positive returns. This led to us focusing on communication as a topic at Parent Voice.

The other scores in the 60% positive range were “The school deals with incidents of bullying effectively” which scored 67% although with parents neither disagreeing nor agreeing and “I think the school is well led and managed” scoring 68%, although with 19% neither disagreeing nor scoring. These scores are not as positive as we would like and I would again appeal to the parents who reported bullying on the questionnaire to approach the school directly. The management of RPA is something that Governors, the School and the Trust will never stop trying to improve.

I then read out some of the comments made by parents on the parent questionnaire. The overwhelming majority of the comments made were positive and I read out (anonymously) some of the positive comments under the head of communication. Parents acknowledged, with a range of parents commenting separately, that they really liked the website, celebration assemblies, drop in sessions, twitter, weekly newsletter, the responsiveness of the school and parents evening.

I read out in full (anonymously) and record below the comments made under the heading of communication that were suggesting improvement so that we could consider these along with any comments made within the meeting. The comments from the questionnaire were;

- Having a meeting with parents every half term or term to go through any concerns they have and help especially if the child has a condition. It is nice working together and not against each other.
 - o Catch up meetings had been scheduled by the school on a termly basis but these unfortunately had not always been well attended. The school have to invest teacher time in putting on these sessions and it takes teachers away from other matters and so there does need to be a demand for these sessions. The school will continue to put on workshops when required. Parents can however request an appointment with their class teacher whenever they have something that they would like to discuss.
- Keeping letters on the school website & texts (having one central place)
 - o Letters and Newsletters are already on the school website but it was discussed that the website could be more user friendly to help parents to find items on the website.
- When calling in to notify of sickness or absence it would be nice to speak to a person and not a machine.

- There is the option to speak to staff available by telephone and absence reporting does not have to be restricted to leaving a voicemail although this is the option available. The staff may be engaged elsewhere during busy periods and this may involve parents having to phone again at a less busy period if they do not receive a call back within a timescale that they need. The message reporting system is in place to support the office staff during what is usually a very busy morning period but it is not intended to stop parents from speaking to the school where they need to or want to.

Suggestions made in person at the meeting were;

- The website needs improvement to make it more user friendly. All of the information is on the website but it can be hard to find and parents find it easier to use facebook or ask a friend.
 - The school are going to review the website to see if it can make it easier to navigate. Parent volunteers are going to be recruited to assist with this task.
- Can parent lunches take place again?
 - It was confirmed by Mrs Tewley that the new catering company will accommodate parent lunches. These will be set up.
- It would be nice for parents to have a blog created and provided by the children.
 - The school confirm that they will look into this.

Feedback from Parents Evening

Mrs Rix, Vice Chair, and I had a Governor's table at the last parent evening. We positioned ourselves next to the catering showcase, not for selfish reasons (although I did really enjoy the sweet potato pizza!) but as were hopeful that is where we would have the chance to see most parents. I did however notice that I saw more Key Stage 1 parents than Key Stage 2 parents although I am assured that all KS2 teachers were informing parents of the catering showcase.

The feedback that I did receive was lovely, warm and genuine. The following questions arose;

- Please can the minimum limit for Parentpay be set at the price of one school meal rather than the £5 or £10 limit of other schools?
 - I confirm that the school have set the minimum payment on Parentpay for one school meal. However, parents using PayPoint instead may find that there is a £5 or £10 minimum amount. These minimums are set by the shops themselves and there is nothing that the school can do about this.
- A number of parents required and requested that the school put in place wrap around care.
 - The school have now put in place breakfast club from an earlier time and will continue to work on wrap around care where there is demand for it. Please make direct enquiries to the school if you have not received letters about breakfast club and if interested in it.

AGENDA ITEM TWO –

Update from Headteacher – School Reports and Marking and Feedback – what changes are being considered and why?

Reports and Parent Evenings

Mrs Tewley, Mr Smith, Mrs Beaumont, Miss Stubbs and Mr Tewley were present throughout the Parent Voice.

Mrs Tewley wanted to update parents about some changes that the school are considering. The school are planning to redesign school reports to focus them on a more personalised feedback report. The school would like to make the report more meaningful for parents and the plan is for the report to spend more time describing

the child rather than the current focus on scoring (although the importance of “grading” was of course discussed and acknowledged).

This is going to be considered further with a view to putting in place an Open Day. The school would like to move towards having a 30 minute appointment for parents at these open days, instead of the current 10 minutes, to meet with their child’s current class teacher with their child’s new class teacher also present. It is felt that this will provide more time for feedback and discussion and will support in a handover between teachers.

The feedback from those present was positive. Parents present discussed the fact that they do tend to go to the brief summary paragraph for their child first in school reports and would welcome more personalised information. However the parents would want the reports in advance of the open day parent days so that the teacher could go through the reports with them in person. The school will consider this.

AGENDA ITEM THREE –

Catering Update – with sampling to follow. To include Parentpay – a new way to pay for school dinners.

Jack Sturdy, Operations Manager of T(n)S catering, and Annie our very own Headchef were present. After we had had the opportunity to partake of the lovely samples Jack spent some time going around each table answering any individual questions about the food and catering.

In summary we are now able to choose from a variety of local suppliers that means that we can prepare and provide the new menu using freshly sourced ingredients.

The menu was very well received from those parents present and the feedback from children is already extremely positive. They are really enjoying the new menu, they are liking the food and the majority of children really like having plates to eat from instead of trays (although some children do still like the old trays).

Mr Tewley then updated parents on Parentpay and explained the log in process. The minimum has been set so that parents can pay for just one meal at a time if they wish. Parents can continue to pay by cash at the school office for the next few weeks during the handover period but the eventual aim of the school is to be cash free. If anyone has any questions they can approach the school office or you can email any queries parentpay@rowleyparkacademy.org.uk.

Mr Tewley explained that one of the other Trust Schools have already implemented Parentpay and he was pleasantly surprised at how smoothly the transition went. There will be teething problems but the key is for parents to notify the school if they are experiencing any problems.

PayPoint (top up cards) is available as an option instead of Parentpay and if anyone would prefer to use Paypoint instead of Parentpay they need to request a card at the school office.

The feedback from some parents present was (for those that had already logged on) that this was a straightforward process. It is possible to link to another Parentpay account for those who already have a Parentpay account for other children at other schools. The parents who are struggling with logging on are asked to contact the school on the email above.

- A parent asked how the school would know to deduct money from the Parentpay account.
 - o Mr Tewley explained that the same system would remain in place. The preference of children would be taken at register. They currently tell the teachers whether they are having sandwiches from home, sandwiches from school or hot dinners. It is acknowledged that sometimes children do choose the wrong preference. Where this happens parents can notify the school and this can be easily checked and rectified.
- A parent asked whether the tuck shop would be included in the Parentpay system.
 - o A very good question as the school hadn’t considered this yet! The school’s aim is to be cash free with all dinners, school trips and other expenses eventually being paid through Parentpay. The school will need to look at tuck shop in particular to bring it into the Parentpay system.

At the close of the meeting Mrs Tewley asked for the opportunity to remind all parents that she remains available to parents and is still very much Executive Headteacher of RPA.

She remains available to parents, along with Mr Smith for KS2, Mrs Beaumont for KS1 and Miss Stubbs, for discussions and meetings. Please do approach her in the playground or do make an appointment to see her if there is anything that you need to discuss.

I hope that you find this letter helpful and a thorough account of the discussions at Parent Voice.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting!

Warm Regards

Kate Meecham

Chair of Governors