

WOODHEAD PARENTS COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – 1st September 2020

Conducted virtually using Zoom

Parent Council meeting

PRESENT: Scott Jasnosz-Clark (SC), Sheila Moore (SM), Scott Lindsay (SL), Freya Kennedy (FK), Pamela Shearer (PS), Colette Watson (CW), Claire Fox (CF), Matt Hooper (MH), Rachel Miller (RM)

APOLOGIES: Elaine Ferguson

Previous minutes approved with no issues arising

Head Teachers Report

2 key areas of discussion, safe return to school and HMI Inspection

Reopening of School

School is now 3 weeks into safe opening and SC feels things going fairly smoothly. Main thing is the kids are very happy to be back and 0% of parents have chosen not to send their child back to school. Main queries to the school have been about clarifying common cold symptoms and Covid and when it is OK to send their child to school. Jason Leitch has written a letter to all parents outlining the best practice for dealing with sickness symptoms and when children must not attend school, the school has been sharing this with parents on Twitter and the school website as well as responding to phone calls and emails.

SC asking the PC for their feedback on how they feel on procedures and reopening.

SL said kids glad to be back at school and very positive. The fly through videos were excellent at preparing all the children for coming back. SL said he is struggling with nursery drop off due to long queues and lack of consistency due to it being busy and rushed. PS agreed that the nursery process needs to be tightened up.

SM says issue with the queues for the nursery blocking the main walkway to the main school gate which causes a bottleneck in the morning.

SC going to spend the next few mornings monitoring the situation at the entrance and check on ways to make sure that correct entrance procedures at the nursery are always in place especially to do with ordering of lunches and confirming who is collecting the child.

SC asked does everyone feel safe at the entrance and exit time.

PS feels the children and parents aren't distancing enough from other parents and parents should be encouraged to spread out around the playground more as opposed to clustering at gates etc. SC says he will continue to remind parents to spread out more but it was agreed that this can only be done by encouraging parents rather than make it the responsibility of the children to be more independent. SC points out the transient passage is OK so its fine if parents are passing thru bottlenecks, as long as there is no standing about in those areas for a prolonged time which he feels isn't happening.

Entry working well. FK commented that its good that the children are able to go straight to classrooms at 8.50am as opposed to standing outside in lines like some other schools are doing, even in bad weather. SC commented that this is entirely down to the goodwill of teachers, they are

not being made to start early, the PC acknowledged that this is much appreciated by the parents of the school.

SC asked if any issues with the daily workings of the school using the new procedures.

All parents on the PC agreed that the children have settled so well and they have been delighted that concerns they might have had with worries or nervousness at returning did not materialise.

SC said that the teachers have been trying to make it as normal as possible, and that teachers have been asking him how they can safely do what they do within the new guidelines. SC cannot praise the teaching staff enough, no teacher displaying anxiety, nobody has queried the procedures required and they have all put the children first, SC asked RM to pass this on. SM also asked RM as the teachers representative on the PC to pass on the thanks from the PC and parents to all the teachers for their hard work and to let them know it is much appreciated.

SC pointed out that although school trying to return as much to normal they would not be trying to add any additional activities such as afterschool clubs etc. The school has also made the decision to postpone numeracy week as this would not be possible following the current guidelines.

SL asked about the extra costs of cleaning and hand sanitiser etc. SC has said no, it is not paid for by the school and does not impact at all on the schools budget. SC took this time to say how impressed he was with the SLC authority, how they issued guidance and listened to the HTs and schools. Very clear timescales and authority trying to take the pressure off the school and putting the children first.

SCHOOL HMI INSPECTION

At this point the PC have seen the report, the schools response and Elaine Fergusons letter as a PC representative.

The HMI report was originally seen by SC and was challenged by SC with the full support of the SLC authority. The schools complaint was upheld and the original report was challenged and this challenge was successful, however SC still has some concerns.

SC has highlighted the whole report for the staff and the PC, divided into colour coded sections with positives, things that can be worked on and negatives. SC feels that looking at the whole report it should have been a "good" award and not "satisfactory". SC feels that looking at the report broken down that it is an overall positive report and SC urged the PC to look at other reports issued at the same time and compare other schools given a satisfactory grade to allow a fair comparison. A number of points raised in the report were changed due to the challenge made by the school however there are still numerous issues in the report that SC completely disagrees with. One example given was raising attainment, SC said the reports criticisms of the schools work in raising attainment were unfair and wrong in his view. The statement was based on a small focus group of children within the school, a very small percentage of the whole school, which did not give a clear picture of the school and the work it is doing. SC pointed out that the report was a very narrow look at the school.

When looking at the suggested next steps for the school SC showed that although there were clear steps highlighted, there weren't a lot of them, and most of them actually fitted into the programme of work the school was already doing.

The school is not dismissing the suggestions even though they felt the assessment was not fair, its nothing major and nothing that the school sees as a problem. It's a clear statement about building consistency and gives a clear next step.

Reaction of Parents

MH (who is a teacher himself) has been through HMI and felt the report had a lot of positives. MH urged SC not to dwell on the satisfactory grading and to look at the positives and move forward from this, he also said that it should be seen as a positive that the school will receive no further checks or inspections but he understood the frustrations expressed by SC at the outcome,

PS says that as a parent with no background in education it didn't read well but thanks SC for explaining the background to the report and the challenges SC and the authority had faced to challenge grievous concerns with the inspectors and the original report. FK commented that most school parents with children in higher classes in the school like herself can see for themselves the improvements to the school in the last few years and would read the report and be able to see for themselves areas that they know the school are good at, and where the improvements are being made already.

SC said that although he must accept the evaluation of the Inspection the PC can discuss the results and challenges with the wider parent body to highlight the process, how SC fought to get it changed and how supportive SLC were to challenge the conduct of the inspectors in the school.

AOB

Next meeting must be the AGM which requires the parent body to be invited, SC has suggested advertising additional posts to the PC, currently 5 vacancies, and then allow those interested in watching the AGM to apply to him directly to see if its feasible to allow this to happen virually, this will depend on numbers interested an attending which in previous years has not been anyone outside the PC. FK to put a notice in the press to note the AGM date and SC will use newsletter and twitter.

Date for AGM and next meeting 6th October

then meetings on first Tuesday of the month 1st December, skip January, 2nd Feb, 2nd March, 4th May, 1st June