

Parents' Forum Meeting

Tuesday 6th March 2018 9am

Attended by Sarah Beckett and 6 parents. Thank you to those parents who attended and provided positive and constructive views.

Key Issues raised:

A request for an update on the expansion and the school facilities was discussed

The expansion plans are still being discussed between the Governors and the local authority. We are lucky to have Governors with very relevant planning, architectural and building backgrounds to strive for the best outcomes for the school. We have requested that the Governors share an update for parents.

Our current agreed number of children we are able to have on role per year group is 40, however, the Local Authority have agreed to us having up to 45 during this pre-expansion stage. Some year groups are already full. Parents present agreed that they would be prepared to resist the introduction of mobiles in the interim.

The cramped eating facilities were discussed, particularly during the Winter months when children having packed lunches are unable to eat outside. The kitchen staff cope particularly well with the high uptake of KS1 school dinners due to Universal Free School meals at this age. Compliments were also shared about the cooks who do a good job of introducing children to foods and encouraging them to try new things. The new expansion plans would include improved facilities for dining.

The school has been the home of some Great Crested Newts – a protected species, which need to be surveyed at key points in the year and has needed to be monitored in light of the potential building work.

One parent noticed and appreciated the improving school environment since September – one of our school improvement priorities is to declutter and improve the learning environment. Shared learning areas have, in particular, been tidied and several skips filled with outdated resources and equipment. Until this year, necessary improvements to the physical school have been on hold due to the awaited expansion, but staff have now worked hard to make a planned start on streamlining shared areas. Some of this was done with the help of our Governors, who joined staff in January to help with the huge task.

Sports Opportunities

It was suggested that children are prepared for sports festivals and tournaments by having some lessons in advance to ensure that the children are prepared. There is a programme of sports events to which we send teams. Part of these festivals includes a competitive coaching element. We also take part in any additional sporting fixtures made available to us, where possible. At Marden, we aim to balance the development of competitive sport, providing opportunities for children who are talented in particular sports, alongside involving as many children as possible to increase confidence and participation. Where these sporting events are planned in advance, we aim to offer clubs or incorporate lessons in PE for these year groups.

Mr Cornelius – Consultant Headteacher

It was asked why he had not been introduced to parents and what his role was in school.

The school acknowledged that since his initial start in supporting leaders this year (his role was as a Consultant Head, not an Executive Head), we have not updated parents and for that, we apologise. Mr Cornelius came in the Autumn to support Ms Beckett, Mrs May and our Middle Leaders in leading the school. He was here primarily as a mentor and professional support, not to lead the school first hand. In this respect he felt it best not to be publicly introduced to parents formally, because, from previous experience of carrying out a Consultant Headship role, parents might then turn to him as the lead of the school opposed to the Senior Leadership Team. He was keen to ensure that this did not happen and impact on how parents would interact with School Leaders. Mr Cornelius has been an invaluable font of knowledge and support and the Senior Leaders have shared with Governors how this support has impacted on our practice in school. Since January, he has been in school less regularly, but readily available to provide advice when required.

New Headteacher – Mrs Tracy Thomas

It was asked when parents and children would meet Mrs Thomas. It is likely that this will happen once she has started straight after Easter. Senior Leaders are already meeting with Mrs Thomas to ensure a smooth transition and we will explore with her, how best she would like to meet everyone. This will be announced, once decided.

It was asked if staff structure was likely to change once Mrs Thomas is in post. She has reassured staff that she will start and get to know how the school is currently running first. We are looking forward to sharing our good practice at Marden with her and combining this with the good practice she will bring from her current school.

Bug Busting Day

A query was raised about further Bug Busting Days to encourage the children and families to check their hair for headlice. Combs and information were sent home on 31st January. There are two more national Bug Busting Days: 15th June and 31st October, which we will re-advertise, nearer those dates.

Snow

A parent raised, via email, comments about the school's procedures during the snowy weather last week. Please be assured that, as with any major event in school, all leaders will reflect on procedures and adapt and refine them from what was learnt from the unusual circumstances during the recent snow.

[With many thanks to those parents who contributed to the meeting.](#)

[We really value your support.](#)

[Sarah Beckett](#)

[March 2018](#)