

PARENTS FORUM – MEETING minutes
WEDNESDAY 29TH JANUARY 2020 – SCHOOL LIBRARY, 9am – 10.15am

Attendances:

Mrs Chua (head teacher), Karen Ortiz, Jean Earle, Elena Lowish, Jasmine Yue, Vladka Thwaites, Tamara Pekelman Derian, Emily Laino, Jennifer Currie, Suzy Kruger, Gillian Templeton, Rose Izimova, Nahida Khan, Iryna Grant, Michele Lyons, Hira Lari, Tessa Clarke, Laure Boizard

Apologies: None

1. Introduction and purpose of the Parents Forum

- Mrs Chua welcomed all parents to the Parents Forum and summarised its aims, as follows:
 - (a) to share the school vision with parents (as per the recommendations in the recent SIAMS inspection report). Mrs Chua said the school vision is deeply rooted in the Biblical teachings of Matthew 7:7 and can be found, together with the 50 words that go with it on the school website; and
 - (b) to create a better partnership between the parents and the school, and to share information.
- Mrs Chua said that the aim of the Parents Forum was not to raise concerns about individual children.
- A Parents Forum section has been created on the school website that contains much information for parents and will include the minutes of the Parents Forum going forward.
- The aim was to have 3 meetings per year (one per term).

2. Election of a Chair and a Secretary

- Mrs Chua said that she had set an agenda for today but going forward this would be set and led by the Parents Forum. She invited parents to nominate a Chair and a Secretary. Rose Izimova and Elena Lowish were both nominated and seconded to be Chair. The two nominees then left the room and following a show of hands, **Rose Izimova was elected the Chair. Elena Lowish agreed to be the Secretary.**

3. Letter from Nick Gibb MP (Minister of State for School Standards)

- Mrs Chua shared a letter from Nick Gibb MP to the school dated 20 January 2020 congratulating the school on the very high level of progress that pupils showed in their reading, writing and Maths KS2 SATS last year, putting Hampden Gurney in the top 3% of primary schools in the country. The letter recognised the hard work and commitment of Mrs Chua and the whole staff team.

4. SIAMS Inspection Report

- Mrs Chua reported briefly on the recent SIAMS report on the school's RE provision. Although the school was aiming for the top grade, it was very happy with the Good grade, and the report recognised that the school has lots of positive elements. The school is already working on key areas of development referred to in the report.

Minutes prepared by: Jean Earle

Minutes approved: _____

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5. Clean air quality

- Jasmine Yue, a parent, was invited to give a presentation on clean air quality. She introduced herself as a Clinical Research Fellow at UCL and a doctor. She explained what air pollution is and showed a heat map of the area. She reported that, according to 2013 data, the school is in the top 20 of most polluted schools and she thinks it's probably in a worse position now particularly with the constructions works opposite.
- She explained that air pollution causes lung problems and stunts growth and London children are particularly affected. A UNICEF paper cited structural damage to children over time, similar to neuro-degenerative diseases.
- Mrs Yue proposed that we create an Air Quality Action Plan and involve stakeholders (including parents and staff) to raise awareness about these issues and take appropriate action. Ideas discussed included:
 - Putting in place artificial trees that can absorb pollution, or else planting low maintenance plants (though it was noted that the indoor plants at the school had mostly died).
 - Checking air quality.
 - Installing air purifiers (initial outlay of £300-£800 per unit, plus average running cost of total £1200-£1800 for 8 purifiers).
- The parents showed much enthusiasm for taking immediate steps to tackle air pollution and it was noted that parents would be very happy to contribute financially to this cause, including to purchase air purifiers. Mrs Yue said she would share with parents her presentation.
- Mrs Chua noted that she had recently done a walk through the school with an official from the local authority to explore what measures the school could take to combat air pollution. She emphasised the importance of taking measures that would have a real positive impact for the school, having noted that another school in the area had been given funding to plant lots of plants but that had had little positive impact.
- It was noted that the construction site across the road smells and that the construction company should be asked to contribute towards the costs of air purifiers for the school and take other action to support the school to combat these issues.
- Mrs Chua asked for a show of hands to form an Air Quality Action Plan working party to work through these issues. **Jennifer Currie, Emily Laino, Suzy Kruger, Gillian Templeton and Vladka Thwaites all volunteered to be on this working party.** It was noted that the Premises Committee of the School Governors (led by Anne Larkey, a governor) was also liaising with the construction company and the Portman Estate on similar issues, so it was important for the working party of the Parents Forum to work in a joined up way with the Governors.
- **It was agreed that the Working Party would need to liaise appropriately with Mrs Chua and Anne Larkey on all relevant matters (such as how best to approach the construction company for support and who was best placed to do so) in order to ensure a joined up approach.**

6. New Curriculum Resources and Expectations

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- Mrs Chua reported that there was now a new Science curriculum in place (using the Science Bug programme).
- For Maths, the school is considering two options for Maths books. The issue is that due to the high standards in Maths at the school, the books are not challenging enough. One of the options, Maths No Problem! scheme of work costs £4,000 to buy the books for the whole school (to be half-funded by the government) as a starter set followed by £3,000 per year to buy new work books for the pupils. This could be far too expensive for the school to purchase on an annual basis. In addition, staff did not feel that the scheme will be able to meet the needs of the Upper Junior classes.
- In the meantime, school has subscribed to an online Maths scheme, the White Rose, which will provide some supplementary resources for the school until we have decided on the best way forward to source out a scheme that will meet our curriculum design. Mrs Chua will provide an update on the decision made at the next Parents Forum meeting.
- Mrs Chua reported that the new national curriculum that came in in 2014 was about mastery of children's learning, looking at the whole curriculum and not just at Maths and English. The new Ofsted Inspection Framework (that came in in September 2019) now also focuses on 'deep dives' into the curriculum. The rules around frequency of Ofsted inspections are set to change, meaning that Outstanding schools like Hampden Gurney will no longer be exempt from inspection. Given the published statistics showing the school's high standards in English and Maths, Mrs Chua reported that Ofsted may look to see if this means that the school's whole curriculum has been narrowed to achieve this. Therefore deep dives by Ofsted into non-Foundation subjects are expected.
- Mrs Chua reported that the school had commissioned the local authority to give the school a 'health check' on 12 February, akin to a 'mock Ofsted inspection'.

7. Parent Survey Outcomes

- Mrs Chua reported that the results of the latest parent survey have been collated by Miss Eva Valverde and will be going up on the school website shortly. One of the issues on which parents have strong views is homework. The following issues were noted and discussed:
 - Volume of homework for some year groups can fluctuate.
 - Parents preferred to have homework issued on the same day of the week across the school. Thursday or Friday may be better.
 - Marking of homework – due to staff capacity issues, it is a challenge for the staff to mark it all. It was also noted that the children's output is always better when parents are engaged in supervising the homework. Perhaps some homework could be marked by parents at home such as Maths.
 - Some parents said it would be helpful for the teacher to tell them what teaching method was being used in say Maths so that the parents could use this with the children when supervising homework. Mrs Chua said that it was important to use different methods of teaching.
- **ACTION: Mrs Chua said she would:**
 - **Speak to the teachers about fixing one particular day in the week to issue homework.**

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- **Consider providing answer sheets to parents so they could mark their children's homework.**

8. Staffing resources and how parents can help

- One parent asked whether there had been staffing issues at the school. Mrs Chua said that last term there were not enough staff which had an impact on pupil progress and attainment. Fortunately, this term has been able to recruit a full-time support teacher (Miss MacDonald), thanks to funding from the Hampden Gurney School Foundation Trust. This has proved incredibly helpful.
- One parent asked how the parents can help the school more with their time. Supervising reading in school was identified as an area that parents may be able to help with. **ACTION: Mrs Chua said she would explore this further with the relevant staff members.**

Due to restrictions in time, Mrs Chua said the school lunch review and home/school communication would be discussed at the next meeting.

Date of next meeting to be agreed with the Chairman and Mrs Chua, and parents notified in due course.

Meeting ended at 10.15am.

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Minutes approved: _____

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