

Parents' Forum Minutes –21st of May 2015

Gifted kids program (reception and Y5). *Does the school have a gifted and talented program? If so how is it organized?*

The school does not have a gifted program as a parallel program to the school, but has always provided opportunities for the gifted and able children to push themselves further. This is led by Ms McCarthy (Y6 teacher). Unfortunately, the previous Hounslow lead on this who organized maths and debating competitions has left and so the Hounslow-wide program has ground to a halt. Ms Taylor explained that she and the other local deputy heads discussed this recently and have a plan to resurrect the gifted and able programme. She also reassured us that the leadership team monitor and track every GPPS student's progress individually and individualize the childrens learning plans. The parents welcomed the opportunity for the leadership team to explain how they track individual students over time.

Additional question: What is the school policy is and practice around streaming (whole classes)?

The school does not have a policy to stream classes as they view this as counterproductive and the evidence supports classes of missed ability, particularly in the younger ages where children develop at different rates. However, children are divided up in classes according to their ability, especially in maths and literacy. This is to allow teachers to work at a different pace with students of different abilities. These are not fixed streams and children can move between tables within and between years. Every attempt is made not to make children over conscious of levels.

Early Years and Key Stage 1 (Nursery, reception, Y1)

There is concern that there is a loss of knowledge and expertise in the early years and key stage 1, as a result of several very good teachers departing at the end of this term; teachers who have likely helped move the school from 'good' to 'outstanding.' How will the recruitment process work to replace this experience and ensure the early years remains as strong as it has been? How will continuity be ensured, with both a change of head and deputy head and loss of the early years and KS1 leadership team?

The school is aware of the anxiety around change, and there may be more to come. Miss Alvey has been appointed Phase Leader for KS1 from September. She will ensure the continuity with Grove Park outstanding-ness. Mr Thompson assured the group that the out-flux of teachers is not an indication of trouble in the school it has been mainly the result of the need for teachers to move for career development as well as to improve their living conditions by working closer to home. The school has been looking for replacements and the new head teacher is also involved. The new head also comes from an outstanding school and so knows what outstanding looks like. He has already met with all the teachers and the children. He has many innovative ideas and will energize the school. In many ways it is exciting for a new head-teacher to start with new team that he has been involved in selecting. The leadership team wants us to remain reassured that the spirit of Grove Park will remain very much alive and any new teacher who is chosen will fit into the Grove Park family. There was acknowledgement that the cost of housing in London, and Chiswick in particular, is a challenge to keeping good teachers over the long term.

Changes in the leadership team (all years)

Similar anxiety around the loss of both head teacher and (temp) loss of deputy head, how will continuity and institutional memory of what makes Grove Park special be sustained? What can parents and this forum do to support the transition? How we can keep the Grove Park spirit alive through all this change?

Mr Thompson will be with us until the end of the year. He has met with Mr. Jones, the incoming head, several times to ensure a smooth handover. Mr Jones has visited the school and the children and has been closely involved in planning for next year as well as selecting new staff. Ms Taylor is only off until January and will remain in close contact with the school throughout. She is the backbone of the leadership team and will be key to maintaining continuity. Leigh asked us what we thought make GPPS special. The consensus from the parents was the strong sense of community and a friendly and approachable staff. The parents can help through supporting this openness and the active engagement between the school and the parent body: Specific institutions that support this and we hope continue are the Parents Forum, the parent governors, the PTA, the newsletter, assemblies, Friday workshops and the presence of staff and leadership team in the playground during drop off and pick up. Parents also really value the weekly class updates from teachers. Thought it was noted that this did not happen in all class years.

SATS changing and classes bigger (Y5)

Does the school have any further information on the new format that SATS will take? In your experience what is the impact? This is the first time that year 6 will be at full capacity at GPPS, what will be the impact on teaching in Y6?

Ms Taylor updated us on several changes to Key Stage 2 SATs: These will now be marked from 80-130 and levels will no longer be measured or reported. The level 6 paper has been removed and is no longer an option. Key Stage 1 SATs papers will replace the current in house teacher assessment. These results for the school will be published in much the same way as the KS2 SATs are.

Introducing the new Head teacher (Y1 and Y5)

Its great news that the new head teacher is coming to meet the parents in the next forum, however, for those who cannot make

the forum can we have perhaps a ½ page in the newsletter introducing himself with a headshot?

The new head teacher has visited the school and met with many of the children. He has been actively engaged in decisions for next year including recruiting new staff. He will be attending the next forum to meet the new parents.

Group punishment (Aktiva) (reception, and Y3)

It concerns the after school football club for year 3 on a Thursday. Two children were misbehaving and the whole group was punished as a result and not allowed to play a game and were made to color in football jerseys instead. This has happened repeatedly with the same individuals being disruptive and yet they continue to be allowed to join the club each term. It seems unfair to punish the well-behaved ones too. Can we have clarification on the school policy towards group punishment for individual behavior? Can this policy also be implemented within the after school clubs?

Mr Thompson explained that group punishment is definitely not school policy. Any club that is conducted on the school grounds should adhere to the overall school philosophy and policies on discipline and this will be communicated to Aktiva.

Missing named uniforms (Y3)

Y3 are constantly losing items of clothing- including coats, despite being labeled. Maybe this is something about transition into KS2 and becoming more independent, however, can the school think of ways to ease this transition and reduce lost clothing?

Y3 teacher is aware of this and has introduced caring for clothing and belongings into his teaching.

Summer t-shirts (all years)

Why have you stopped selling the boys blue summer t-shirt with the logo on? It was great summer uniform for boys.

This change to the uniform was introduced by Mr. Cornelius as part of his drive to bring uniformity to the GPPS look. As we are on the verge of having a new head teacher, Mr. Thompson is reluctant to make any new decisions about uniforms.

Halal Food (Y2 and 5)

Other schools in Chiswick (Cavendish and Hogarth) are providing Halal food to Muslim children in the schools. Why can't GPPS give Muslim children an option of having halal food when all other schools are offering that choice?

Vicky updated us on the progress towards having a Halal option on the menu. She explained that the reason this had not been introduced this year was two-fold: Firstly, DS catering, who were new to the school had suggested that they couldn't provide halal options as an additional meal option, and only as a replacement option, i.e. all the meat dishes would have to be halal. Secondly, there was the pressure of numbers, given the introduction of free school meals to all early years and KS1. Both of these issues are no longer a barrier, as we have a new caterer and the school now has the experience of catering for more children. Vicky has been in discussion with them and hopes to have further discussion re. halal options for the next academic year.

Music (Y2-Y5)

It is great that we music provided through Hounslow, however, a) there is very little feedback on how the kids are doing, and b) no performances of their work. Can there be some feedback from the teachers? Can there be occasional performances in assembly?

Vicky explained that all school managers across Hounslow have expressed concerns about quality of the music service provided to schools in Hounslow and have communicated this to the council. It is hoped that they will give us an update and action plan as to how this will improve.

Traffic at the back (Y1 and Y5)

Congestion at the back seems to be increasing again, with several incidences of dangerous parking. Given the assessment of the impact of expansion on traffic was done on walk to school week, can the school ask the council to revisit this in view of the fact that the school is less than halfway to full capacity?

Mr Thompson and Brian are in full agreement. Unfortunately, there is little the school can do to enforce traffic regulations. It is up to the parents and the neighbors to persistently raise this with the council and the local MP Ruth Cadbury.

Aktiva (all years)

Can we revisit the action plan from the Aktiva meeting and see where we are at this point in time?

Vicky has asked them to come back and meet with parents and she will let us know when.

Final thoughts (all years)

The early year parents were concerned that they really rely on the communications from teachers to know what is happening in the class. They would prefer to have weekly updates. They also requested that the children read with a teacher, and not just parent volunteers, at least once a week.

Next Parents' Forum 25th of June 9 am in the school café