



Bridestowe Primary School – With Respect and Ambition We Flourish Together

25/11/2021 – 09.15

Parents forum minutes

In attendance:

Adam Hill – Principal

Anne Taylor, Kirstie Floyd-Walker, Helen Proctor – parents.

Adam Hill opened the meeting and thanked parents for attending.

Adam Hill outlined progress so far this term and plans moving forward into the spring term.

- School had returned in September with some caution around Covid and potential impact
- AH's ambition is to return to 'normality' as quickly as possible whilst ensuring the safety of children, staff and the community. The school has restarted:
 - Visitors to school including Clive Pig, Road safety workshop, police dog visit etc.
 - Trips out of school including upcoming Theatre trip, visits to the village, remembrance and Harvest celebrations.
 - External teachers including Mr Pugh (PE), Madame Jordan (French), Rob Taylor (Forest school) and, upcoming, Mrs Joliffe (Music)
 - Open the book assemblies and whole school celebration assemblies and singing.
- The school plans to restart (with thorough risk assessments in place):
 - Inter-school sports including Cross Country, Football, Netball, Rugby etc.
 - Regular (half termly) visits or trips for all classes
 - Swimming (after Christmas)
 - Re-engaging with volunteers – who would need to complete the volunteer application process.
- AH stated that some elements of enrichment – such as one to one music lessons – were proving harder to resume as the teachers had found other employment during the pandemic but AH was still pursuing this.
- AH shared that staff absence had been a significant issue this term with just under 50 working days lost to illness such as colds and flu-like symptoms. Parents were surprised at this number and commented that they had not noticed – signifying that the school had done a good job of covering the absences.
 - AH stated the school was actively trying to avoid using supply teachers for the following reasons:
 - Quality of supply teachers was hugely variable
 - Availability of supply teachers was reduced as many have found other employment during the pandemic
 - They are very expensive.
 - AH praised the staff team for working together to provide the best for the children in challenging circumstances and that the children's experience had not been affected.

- A question was raised as to why the school had not participated in the recent Cross Country event at Castle Drogo. AH explained he had not be reassured by the events organisers of the safety of the event in terms of marshalling and supervision. AH assured parents that the school would be engaging in competitive sport and had signed up for an upcoming event in Simmons Park.
- A question was raised about the security of the school site. AH assured parents that plans were in place to replace the gates/fencing around the school field and forest school which are old and not fit for purpose.
- A concern was raised about the quality and quantity of school meals including the communication around changes. AH stated communication had not been good enough and this had been fed back to Steve Parr, the executive Chef. AH explained that the Devon Norse contract had come to an end in the summer of 2021 and kitchen staff had become Trust employees. From this September, Mr Parr has been employed to overhaul catering to ensure we are offering fresh and locally sourced food cooked from scratch – not frozen and heavily processed foods. To achieve this a ‘Starter’ menu has been created which will be adapted and developed over time. Concerns around Meat-free days, high carbohydrate meals and regular salad was raised. AH assured parents feedback would be passed to Mr Parr. AH stated he believed the meals were of far better quality to previously and the portions were adequate. AH was asked what sides came with sandwiches. AH responded he believed it was baked beans and carrot/cucumber. AH was asked where the yoghurts are sourced. The country of origin of the current brand is Germany. This will be reviewed as the school wants to provide local produce.
- AH thanked the parents for their time. Meeting closed at 09.45.
- Date of next meeting: Thursday 13th January – 3.15pm.

Mr A. Hill – Principal

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