

Minutes of the Parent Voice meeting – Thursday 15th January 2015
Held in The Barn Cedar Studio

1. Welcome and introduction

Mr McIntosh (Deputy Headteacher) welcomed parents.

2. Minutes of last meeting and action points

- **School dinners (also an agenda item this time – see item 3)**

Regarding dinner choices, Mr McIntosh had found that the accuracy of teachers' recording was not considered to be a problem. The ParentPay system in place for our school could not, at this time, be set up to record the actual dinner choice for each day a school dinner was requested. This may be possible in the future and will be considered when ParentPay has been well-established. Mr McIntosh confirmed that the school would prefer not to institute the same system as in the infants whereby paper slips are used to record dinner choices which are completed on a weekly basis. Part of being a Junior was taking more personal responsibility for yourself and we did not want to do anything that encouraged less. However, it was not ruled out altogether and Mr McIntosh would make available similar slips as used in the Infants for those individual parents who would really benefit from such a system. These would be placed in the reception area in the letters/magazines/notices rack.

School dinner menus were available in all classrooms and also now go around in the morning register to enable teachers to respond to any questions about the day's menu.

- **ICT issues**

The possible new arrangement for 'renting' a minibook or tablet from Year 4 onwards discussed at the last meeting was not yet fully researched or ready to propose to parents. A great deal of discussion was had again about the idea; feedback gained from some parents had not been in favour of such a scheme and it very much depended upon price as to whether some parents would be interested in supporting it. A question concerning the reason the school has had such a scheme in the past was raised and Mr McIntosh explained that it was an innovative programme in which parents could support the extension and provision of ICT in the school as funding for such was limited, as in any other school. Mr McIntosh was keen to stress that no child was ever at a disadvantage by not having their own minibook – lessons using ICT would not be planned or delivered that could not be adequately supported in a fair and equal way. However, an increased access to ICT through the scheme enabled this to occur in a class more frequently and to be much easier to manage in co-ordination with the other two classes in a year group.

3. School dinners

Mrs Bruni-Ebdon (former Infant School Governor and representative on the group tasked with reforming school dinners at both schools) had conducted a survey with groups of pupils from the Junior School concerning their opinions about the new school dinners. One group was made up of children from all year groups who did usually opt for school dinners and one group was made up of children from all year groups who usually did not.

Mrs Bruni-Ebdon would be producing a summary report of her findings, but gave a brief outline of the main points:

- Take up of school dinners has increased since the new supplier had been in place. Now about 170 pupils have school dinners each day.
- Children who usually took school dinner had noticed a positive difference in the quality of the food. They liked the variety of the menu and the fact there was much more choice now. They also thought it was a good idea and more grown up to use proper plates and cutlery instead of the trays formerly used.
- A couple of problems were identified; sometimes the caterers had run out of certain meals and this was disappointing to the children who had ordered them. Another was that some children found it difficult to physically manage all the different elements of their dinner now that trays were not used.
- Children who usually did not take school dinners outlined some of the reasons: they did not like the choices on offer; they preferred having sandwiches; they ate a hot meal at night and didn't need one in the day, etc. They were not particularly open to the idea of giving school dinners a try.

A question was raised about the possibility of setting up ParentPay to allow a single dinner payment to be made as opposed to the current need for a minimum £10 payment to be made. This would help families of pupils who only ever had school dinners on special occasions such as Christmas lunch. Mr McIntosh would find out from Mrs Paddon and report back.

4. Head teacher's holiday homework

Mr McTaggart had received many responses to his Christmas homework and was presenting the photos as a slide show on the monitor in the entrance hallway, he had put some up on the school website and he was making a photo book containing all the photos that had been submitted by the requested date.

5. Houses

A system of grouping our pupils into Houses had been investigated and was being finalised for launch at the end of the spring term, ready to start in the summer term. This would be a joint venture with the Infant school, who were keen to work with us to develop something we believe will benefit the children across both schools. The aims were to promote teamwork and cross phase/age collaboration, develop healthy competition, enhance a positive climate for learning and encourage individual and corporate achievement in all areas. House names had been derived in consultation with

both schools' school councils and would be revealed before February half term. Children would also find out which House they would be allocated to. A reward points system would be connected to the Houses, while also continuing with method of recognising individual success such as 'Star of the week' and the various commendations that our pupils currently work towards.

6. Clubs

Although it was early in the term to discuss the success of clubs so far, Mr McIntosh wanted to publically thank parents who had offered to run clubs which had got off to a great start. Spanish club, led by Mrs Whitehead, was very popular and had begun in the second half of the autumn term. Italian club, led by Mrs Bruni-Ebdon, would be starting this term and there was already a long list of interested pupils who had signed up. These clubs were a direct result of suggestions made at Parent Voice, and Mr McIntosh was thrilled that such a positive outcome for the children had been made possible.

A question was raised about football club taking place that week on the playground due to the field being very wet. A parent queried if this was safe to take place on a hard surface such as this? Mr McIntosh would find out about the risk assessment and feedback at the next meeting.

7. PTA donation

Mr McIntosh highlighted the good work of the PTA and announced the recent donation of £1500 to each school. It was very likely that our allocation would be spent on equipment and resources for the playground and/or field.

8. Dates/Events

Mr McIntosh outlined some forthcoming events and dates, including Parents' evenings.

9. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting would be in The Barn on **Tuesday 10th February at 9am (refreshments from 8.45am).**

PLEASE NOTE: the date set at the meeting has needed to be changed due to the unavailability of The Barn. It will now take place on Thursday 12th February at 9am (refreshments from 8.45am).

Mr McIntosh thanked parents for their attendance and reiterated that any requests for agenda items could be made to him in advance.