Minutes of Parent Forum meeting

8th March 2012

- **Introduction and sharing of policy and code of conduct**

Parents were welcomed to the meeting and given a brief overview of the aim and focus of the parent forum group – a tool for improvement and a group who work together in partnership with the school and the staff to move the school forward.

All parents present received a copy of the parent forum policy and signed a code of conduct, agreeing to become members of the group and work together in a positive way.

- **Parent/school agreement**

Parents were asked to spend a couple of minutes looking over the proposed parent/school agreement drawn up at the full governors' meeting. Groups were asked to raise any issues or add any additional points. One group suggested including a point on encouraging a healthy lifestyle and diet at home.

- **Sharing of parent questionnaire**

Parents were asked to spend a few minutes looking at the responses of the recent parent questionnaire. The main feeling from parents present was shock that more people had not returned the questionnaire.

Feedback was given from school on what has already been done to address some of the main concerns raised by the questionnaire. This is outlined below:

Qs. 11, 13, 18, 19 and 20 – work has gone into parents' evenings to ensure that parents are now aware of the level their child is working at and the targets they are working towards.

Q 24 – Mr Beaumont has sent a letter out regarding homework to address the issues raised. A copy of that letter is available on the school website.

Qs. 51, 52, 54 and 55 – The parent forum is now in place to address parent involvement and parental voice in school.

- **Introduction of topic**

Mr Wright introduced himself formally to parents and introduced the topic of the evening, which was communication.

The topic of communication was split into 4 areas.

1. Communication by letter, website, e-mail, parent mail etc
2. Daily communication (face to face). For example, at the office, with the teachers and head teacher on the playground and around school.
3. Weekly communication via letter, parent mail, newsletter, class newsletter etc

4. Formal communication, such as parents' evenings and reports.

Mr Wright was keen to point out that Buckton Vale is now doing what is typical of, and in some cases more than, other primary schools in the area.

- **Task 1**

For the first task, parents were asked to work in groups on one of the areas of communication mentioned above. Parents had to think of what was working well for each area, which aspects they thought were so-so and what needed to change. They recorded their thoughts on post it notes.

- **Feedback from task 1**

The smaller groups fed back to the whole group after each part and the main findings are recorded in the tables below. Many groups overlapped and discussed similar problems/issues.

	Communication by letter, website, e-mail, parent mail etc	Daily communication (face to face)	Weekly communication	Formal communication
What's working well	Parent mail – receiving texts and e-mails to remind us of main events. Some aspects of the school website are good Being able to contact some teachers by e-mail	New format of the newsletter is good but do we need a paper copy? New office set-up is more secure Text messages Some teachers are easy to contact via e-mail	Weekly class newsletter is positive Pictures and information on the website are good, particularly for reception class. Lots of information available on the website Homework and home school books have improved	Recent parents' evening format was much better. Targets and levels reported to parents Good that teachers are finding out about the children's interests outside of school

	Communication by letter, website, e-mail, parent mail etc	Daily communication (face to face)	Weekly communication	Formal communication
So-so	How up to date is the text messaging database? Have school got all	Not easy to meet teachers, unless you spot them at the end of the day.	Are the school values necessary on every weekly newsletter?	Maintaining the consistency of parents' evening should now be a priority – the tick sheet used in some years, eg. Year 2 was excellent but the

the correct mobile phone numbers? Not all parents are getting the text reminders. Not all e-mails are replied to Not easy to contact the TAs, if you should need to ask them anything	Informing parents of changes to after school clubs needs to be improved Childminders are not contacted with regard to changes to clubs. **School said that the responsibility for this lay with the parents. The childminders asked if their own children's names could be added to every club so that they received all of the information.** If a child is absent and school hasn't received a message as to why, is there a time limit when school would get in touch with parents to find out where they are? **Mr Wright informed parents that a revised attendance policy is being put in place which is of high importance and that this will be checked.**	Some class pages on the school website are not updated regularly, and some not at all. Some inconsistency with regard to e-mailing teachers. Communicating any changes to the teaching staff for a particular class for the coming week was an idea that was suggested	approach was inconsistent across the school. **Mr Wright pointed out that the same core information was shared across the classes, the format it took simply varied.**

	Communication by letter, website, e-mail, parent mail etc	Daily communication (face to face)	Weekly communication	Formal communication
Needs Change	All class pages on the website need to be updated regularly All e-mails sent to teachers need to be acknowledged	Teachers need to be more approachable -the pencils are seen as a barrier that the teachers stay behind. There needs to be more presence of the SLMT on the playground on the days that Mr Beaumont is not in school. More feedback on the after school clubs – what's happened and how are the children getting on? Introduction of a reward scheme – positive postcards or certificates were suggested Improvements needed to how reception is run. The phone is often not answered and it needs staffing before and after school. Parents should be informed when a teacher is absent Signing in for assembly causes queues.	All class newsletters should be on the website – not all of them can be accessed on there. Could there be some level descriptors put on the website so that parents know what the levels mean for their children and how they can help them to move on? Parents would like to know what children should know by the end of a year in preparation for the next class.	Ensure consistency of parents' evenings and reports throughout the year groups There should be support offered for parents' evenings for NQTs, new teachers and younger teachers There should be more formal observations of the children.

- **Task 2**

Parents were then asked to think about how change could be brought about. Parents took the issues they had said needed changing and thought about how these things could be implemented and the factors that could limit their success.

Parents recorded all ideas on large pieces of paper and handed them in.

- **Development of a vision statement**

Each group then completed the following sentence:

At Buckton Vale Primary School we would like to see.....

This is what the groups said;

- A more equal and balanced website
- More consistency – communication from every class every week and answering e-mails
- Parents' evening and reports more consistent – longer appointment times spread over more days
- A more efficient reception with staff dedicated to attendance
- A reward scheme for pupils

These statements were then collected in and will be taken forward to the governors and staff at the school for implementation.

Time of meeting 6pm-7:50pm