



## LAKE FARM PARK ACADEMY

### Minutes of Parent Council 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015

Mr Horsman thanked parents for coming to the first Parent Council Meeting this term. He explained that we are hoping to make this a success this term so that parents have a constructive input to the school and its development. Therefore, it was pleasing to see a good turn out here today.

Mr Horsman outlined the agenda for the meeting, which included explaining what a Parent Council is, and how it can be a success. We will then briefly discuss the Academy Development Plan, and answer any questions you may have. Miss Austin will talk briefly about her role and the work with families, before we discuss fundraising and social opportunities, and then finally any other items that parents would like to raise.

#### **What is a Parent Council?**

It is drawn from the body of parents of children attending the school, and it is an opportunity for parents to come together, share ideas and to put forward their views, and to develop a positive partnership between the school and families.

#### **How could it make a difference?**

There are benefits for the children, in that they will hopefully achieve better because parents are involved in their education, and any concerns can be resolved quickly because parents have a positive relationship with the school.

The benefits for parents are that they can share their ideas, and get the support and advice they need to support children with their learning.

The benefits for the school are that we have a better understanding of the views and needs of parents, and that the parents are involved in all aspects of school life to promote a positive partnership.

#### **Purpose of the Parent Council**

The idea is that parents act as an advisory body, with the Academy Council (governors) as the final decision-maker; it is not a forum for individual complaints, but instead there should be a constructive ethos from all parents to use the meetings wisely.

The meetings will run informally, and will be organised by the school. All parents are invited to attend, and we would aim to build a council up to have a wide representation for it to work effectively. The meetings will usually be once per term, and will be held at different times during school hours, and evenings, so that there is the opportunity for all parents to attend.

## Academy Development Plan

The Academy Development plan is a working document that is used to monitor progress and ensure target areas are met. It is a key document for the school, and it outlines the priorities and areas for development over the coming year.

The aim of the plan, is to raise the quality of education that the academy offers to its pupils.

It is a large document, but Mr Horsman talked about a few of the main targets for the school:

- Attainment in Communication & Language is at least in line with the national average, and children of all abilities are effectively challenged, whether they are a low, moderate or high achiever.
- Attendance is at least 95%; this is the new government target, which put into perspective, means that if a pupil has just half a day off a week, their attendance will be at 90%; 80% attendance equates to a full day loss of learning per week.
- Pupils have opportunities to take on extra responsibilities; these will include the likes of classroom monitors for specific subjects, as well as pupils given the opportunity to take the lead in a variety of other areas, such as with the sports coach at lunchtime, and in the dinner hall.
- Membership of the Parent Council increases; as the school grows, we would like to have an increased number of parents this term as opposed to last term, and I am happy to see a good number of you here today, so thank you.

Mr Horsman then asked Miss Austin to talk about her role. She explained that the Pupil & Families worker is there as a support for both parents and pupils. She can offer support and guidance with parenting issues and concerns, as well as behavioural and personal concerns or worries.

Miss Austin is also able to offer parents appointments both in school as well as home visits, and want to ensure that all parents feel that I am approachable at any time.

She has a broad knowledge of the support services in Hillingdon, and am able to make referrals and signpost families to additional agencies where necessary, and if she doesn't know, she will find out!

Miss Austin explained that another aspect of her role is to monitor the behaviour systems in place and ensure that there is a consistent approach across the school, including break and lunchtimes, as well as the breakfast and after school clubs. This gives pupils the security of knowing the processes for both positive and negative actions and behaviours, and the consequences for these.

She ensures the welfare and happiness of the children, and regularly checks in with pupils throughout their day, so that they too know they can discuss any concerns with me, as well as completing restorative sessions with pupils where they may have been upset by another pupil or had a falling out with a friend, and these sessions quickly diffuse these instances preventing them from creating any

atmosphere, and helping the pupils to recognise the impact of their actions on others, and how to move forward positively.

Miss Austin discussed how she monitors attendance, and likes to swiftly address any issues that families are experiencing that may be impacting their ability to ensure that their child attends regularly, as the aim for the school is to ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to thrive in their own right and achieve the best of their ability.

Due to brilliant feedback from the Adult Education forms that went out to families, Miss Austin was able to meet with the Manager of Hillingdon South's Children Centres, and discuss with her the need of the families at our school and within the local community, this enabled us to look into the ways in which we can begin to meet these needs and offer training and support from various outside community agencies within school or signpost on with support.

Direct links with Barra Hall Children's Centre give us a pathway to a variety of services -

- Parent workshops that will include - Behaviour, Healthy Eating/Brush for Life, Potty Training - unfortunately there will not be a crèche facility, however these workshops will be during school hours, offered both am and pm depending on the need.
- All under 5s will be encouraged to attend Barra Hall Children's Centre, to access early intervention services; those already in Nursery will have the opportunity to be referred in by Miss Austin to Language4Life, parent and child sessions, as well as Attention Hillingdon - 6wk course child and parent, 45min sessions, where by if it is identified that there may be further health and development concerns, the Inclusion Team will be contacted who will come in and complete an assessment, and if required, a referral can be made direct to CDC by the inclusion Team
- Direct Links with the Community Adult Education Team, means that will we be able to offer the ESOL courses as well as the possibility of Literacy and Numeracy.
- Direct Links with an organisation called REAP will also mean the possibility of being able to offer further English courses with the chance of becoming a translator as the next step in their programme

The school is currently looking into childcare courses at an introduction level, with the opportunity to continue on to level one, giving access then to further education in part-time college.

Miss Austin emphasised that whatever support it is that you may need, please just ask.

### **Fundraising and Social Opportunities**

Mr Horsman explained that he wanted to finish by discussing fundraising and social opportunities.

This is something that we didn't do as regularly as we would have liked in our first year, due to the fact that fundraising events take a lot of organisation, so the need to have support from the parents is crucial. Social events is another one that would be great for parents to get involved with, to create a greater sense of engagement, and to give parents the opportunity to meet up. Does anyone have any ideas?

One parent asked if the school could organise a Sports Day, with parents joining in too. Another idea was a Bake Sale straight after school, maybe for Children in Need this November. Other suggestions included a Film Night, a Disco and a Culture Fayre. Also the afternoon tea is accessible for everyone, a Tuesday would be good.

Mr Horsman agreed with these ideas, explaining that we will definitely hold a Sports Day next year, and the film night and bake sale are great ideas, and relatively easy to set up. A culture fayre would be great, but that is where the supports of the parents would be key, as these events take a lot of organisation, so the idea would be that the parent council take a firm lead on the bigger events.

It's difficult to get a weekly meeting that all parents can attend, so we may look into adding another session in the future maybe once a month on a morning.

### **Other Discussion Items**

Mr Horsman asked if parents regularly use the website, and what they thought of the content. One parent said that they have used the website to access the menu, but it would soon be out of date. Mr Horsman explained that the new menu will be sent out after half term; the current one runs to the end of the week. Another parent said that they have found that the worksheets are really useful, and the 'How to Help' section. Would the photo section be updated? Mr Horsman explained that new photos are due to be uploaded.

A parent asked if the children are wearing their jackets/coats at lunchtime. Mr Horsman replied that the children are always encouraged to wear their coats at lunchtime, particularly when the weather is colder. Some need reminding not to take them off when they are outside.

Another parent requested that other parents write letters to the local authority about the car park, as the situation is difficult, and potentially very dangerous. One parent had already written to them, and intend to keep writing to them. Mr Horsman explained that he had met with Hillingdon Green Spaces to promote and encourage the walk across the country park from Dawley Road Car Park, as this is only a 6-7min walk. The council have agreed to provide a new pathway to allow parents to come straight across to the school from the park, as currently you have to walk round. We did also send out information about a walking bus, however the response was not great. It is more about trying to change people's mind-sets, as the catchment area is less than 1.5km, so the majority could walk. In addition, there are no parking restrictions on Botwell Common Road, so there is a lot of off street parking available around the school.

Mr Horsman finished by thanking attendees for their time this afternoon; the minutes from this meeting will be available on the website. He encouraged parents to consider taking more of a lead role with the Parent Council and rounding up more parents going forward to attend.

Prior to the next Parent Council meeting after Christmas, a request for agenda items will be sent out, so think about anything you may wish to discuss.