

Parents Forum

The March C of E School – 30 June 2015

Topic – Christian Ethos and forthcoming SIAMS inspection

Attendees

Chair – Mr Jackson (Deputy Head)

Topic Leader – Mr Edgington (Headteacher)

Governor Attendee – Mr John Proctor

Parent Governor Attendees – Mr Ashley Hatton

Parent/Carer attendees – Stella Aldred, Kayleigh Woodhorn, Vanessa Bennett, Rachel Bryan, Sally Taylor, Boo Chapman.

Minutes – Rachel Bryan in the absence of Gael Emmett. Thanks were expressed to Gael for her thorough minute keeping of previous meetings.

Feedback from previous meeting:

Discussion took place on whether we should revisit SIP following last meeting. It was felt by parents that this is a crucial document which we were given sight of at the last meeting, this didn't allow much time for consideration and reflection. Agreed that we would revisit this in the Autumn term.

Effectiveness of Parent Forum:

There was a general discussion on the usefulness/effectiveness of the parents forum generally. Parents felt that it 'gave insight into the workings of the school', 'it's a good thing to have' and generally it was felt that the format works. JP stated that it was a vital opportunity for Governors to pick up feedback.

The accessibility of the forum was discussed:

Probably no 'right' time for all. Possibility to trial different times in the future (e.g. immediately after school) but not for the next autumn term as there are already enough changes to factor in. Very dependent on the time the deputy head can give (generally Tuesday pm). Agreed there needs to be opportunities for those not able to attend to ask questions. Email submissions are possible. Subject matter of each forum to be chosen in advance, and clearly advertised. Parent attendees would like info sent out prior to meeting so all have chance to read, digest and form views/questions – SJ agreed this could happen from Sept. AH asked if there could be a better balance of the time between info giving/presentation and open discussion. Agreed this could be looked at but can vary depending on subject matter.

Topics going forward:

Suggestion box could be used?

AH has received feedback from parents that they would like 'discipline and behaviour' discussed again. Also after school clubs.

RB suggested parents would need to know what 'system' would be replacing the current SATS levels.

SIAMS inspection and Christian Ethos.

PE outlined what the SIAMS inspection is and how it will take place.

There are four key questions that the inspectors will ask:

- How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?
- What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?
- How effective is the Religious Education? (in VA schools and academies)
- How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

For further information, go to:

www.churchofengland.org/education/church-schools-academies/siams-school-inspections.aspx

The inspection for SIAMS is likely to be in October. PE is the head of collective worship and Miss Coyne is the head of RE.

The inspectors will be looking to see if our Christian Ethos permeates through all we do in school. They will look for visual evidence such as our mission statement displayed as you first enter the school, the Cross in the hall, reflection areas in each classroom, the prayer space.

They will be talking to children and staff, and parents are asked to complete an evaluation form for the school. This is the section 48 form that has recently been sent out. The response hasn't been too bad but more responses would be good. Agreed class reps would email out reminding parents to pick up a form from the school office.

PE ran through the evaluation of the responses from the forms received so far. Some comments made are of a general nature, not specifically about the Christian ethos. One parent had commented that the school had 'been teaching creationism'. They would be invited to talk to an inspector. Some comments were around a perceived 'conflict' between the rights of the child and the Christian ethos. PE clarified this, explaining that actually they compliment each other. Rights are innate for all, if we respect those rights, it gives rights to others.

Some parental comments on the forms were concerned with the position for those with no faith in the school. The forum attendees expressed a hope that those choosing to attend the school who weren't Christian, would at least be supportive of our Christian status. AH commented that most parents probably share Christian values, they just may not choose to be Christians. PE informed us that there have been some occasions when parent/carers have been heard

openly expressing contradicting views to the children. All felt this would be confusing for the children, and undermines the teachers authority to some extent. VB suggested that some work may need to be done with potential new parents who are picking up the prospectus and looking at the school. At this very early stage they need to understand the choice they are making for their child. VB also asked if the school felt there was enough framework for others to express conflicting views appropriately. All a fine balance as the Christian ethos should and does permeate the curriculum, 90% of assemblies are Christian themed.

The second question asked by the inspectors is around collective Worship. The forum discussed the wish of parents/carers to have more opportunity to worship with the children, and to encourage more parents to come along to a Church service or faith based event, that they wouldn't normally wish to attend. Discussion was around breaking down perceived barriers to what Church maybe like. BC would like to see the opportunity for parents to attend Harvest Festival services, even if this means doing two services (KS1 & 2) to accommodate all who want to attend. The parents felt that the services at St Peters, attended by 2 classes at a time, were lovely. However they were always poorly attended despite previous attempts to tempt people in with coffee, croissants etc. SA suggested that getting the children more involved would bring parents in e.g. readings, small dramas. This view was supported by others, however PE advised that Fr John had emphasized the need for children to have quiet and prayerful time and space in Church, and that it shouldn't be about a 'performance'.

BC felt that tackling some of the 'barriers' might encourage more to come to the Eucharist services in school. ST suggested that parents should be encouraged to attend the key Christian festivals: Harvest, Christmas, Easter. PE advised that the Christingle is a very special service that parents shouldn't miss. KW asked that the school ensure all dates are published well in advance for working parents to arrange time off work.

PE asked that forum members email in comments on the Christian Ethos and teaching in school.

The forum asked what the course of action would be if the school's inspection didn't go well (although it's anticipated that this won't be the case). PE advised that Church House would send in a team to work with the school, there would be inset day training for staff, and the management team would visit a local school that was performing well in terms of their RE and Christian ethos.

AOB

BC asked if the TAs for each class next academic year are known yet. SJ advised the children will find out tomorrow as part of their transition day.

Thanks were expressed to PE for his help and support with the Forum. This was also the last meeting for VB and thanks were expressed to her for her help and support to the school over the years.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 29 September.

Topic for next meeting: Revisit of SIP.