

Parent Forum Minutes

**15 January 2018 at 7:30pm, North Wing Hall
FORTISMERE SCHOOL**

Welcome and Introduction

- Zoe Judge, Acting Co-Headteacher
- Jo Davey, Acting Co-Headteacher
- Mark Chapman, Chair of Governors
- Wendy Sloane, Vice Chair of Governors
- Miriam Clark, Head of Fundraising and Development

Please note new email address for Parent Forum: parentforum@fortismere.school

2. Ofsted visit feedback (Zoe Judge)

The recent unannounced Ofsted visit was a broad inspection to ascertain the effectiveness of Safeguarding. Inspectors looked at the site, security and Safeguarding policies, met with the Safeguarding team, with students and with staff, including the co-heads. They spoke to a variety of students, including those who had been previously excluded and those with SEN and/or disabilities, to see how safe they felt in the school. The school could either be judged effective or ineffective and the overall conclusion after this visit is that Safeguarding is “effective”. We are especially thankful to Safeguarding Governor Pat Dugdale.

3. Mobile Phone Policy update

One year on, a look at how things have changed. The most challenging use of mobile phones was the hoax call we received. Parents asked if students could hand in phones in the morning or if they could be allowed to use bricks in school, which the Archer Academy allows – but they have lockers for every student. The policy must be manageable for the school to handle, and is still being looked at and revised.

4. Feedback from parents on Fortismere School Website, in preparation for upcoming survey

Do parents find the current website navigable and user-friendly? Comments were:

- It is difficult to see the dates for events – they do not jump out at you
- Hard to find information for contacting staff unless you are very familiar with the website
- Difficult to find information about exam boards, after-school activities
- Not very user-friendly – no search function on the mobile unless you turn phone sideways
- Prefer drop-down menus
- Lots of great info on site for Yr 9 options
- Not intuitive, with subject headings hard to find
- Font looks like a “prison font”

- Parents willing to form Working Group to discuss this

5. Fundraising (Miriam Clark)

There was a 4% gap between per pupil funding the school gets in from Haringey and what was spent in 2016 and Fortismere was not spending any more than other schools in Haringey. We are looking at ways to close the gap, including corporate links and funding, parent donors and working with alumni. We also, as we have charitable status, have gift aid and get a lot of support from the FSA. Fundraising at the school differs from the FSA fundraising in that we are focused on donations of £1,000 and above and the FSA mainly raises funds from events. We held a very successful alumni event for Old Creightonians in December and hope to have a picnic in the summer, and are launching an alumni newsletter called "Over the Hill". Major donors will be given Fortismere Founder status.

Parents suggested it would nice to hear back what happens to their voluntary contributions – info will be published. Also it would be helpful to have an explanation of why we need the money- much is not centrally funded and has to come from the existing budget, such as pay rises, the apprenticeship levy and pension funds. Parents would like to be informed in a user-friendly way to get a clear picture.

6. New topics for discussion (as suggested by parents):

- High teacher turnover and very high number of cover teachers every week. Learning outcome in these lessons generally seems to be fairly low. Can cover teachers can be briefed in more detail about what the class is supposed to be learning?

A: Fortismere is working hard to fill unfilled vacancies. We want best quality teachers. It's a buyer's market and we are a victim of our success as teachers want to stay, meaning young teachers look elsewhere if they want to be promoted. Also expensive area and expensive to travel. There are strict pro forma guidelines for cover and presently several people on maternity leave. Will look into how to minimise disruption. It would be great if parents could feed back any information they receive about cover teachers directly to Heads of Department.

- Could children eat their lunches in the big halls in North and South (or would this involve too much re-arranging of furniture - and cleaning afterwards)? And children last in queue do not always get hot meal.

A: Will talk to catering about meals running out. Halls often booked for drama, exams etc.

- Is school lunch takeaway packaging biodegradable/environmentally friendly? And why do you offer food such as muffins, popcorn and fizzy drinks?

A: Yes. We are a Healthy Eating School and all food meets guidelines for sugar/salt content.

-The vertical tutor system is excellent. Would it make sense to have a teacher responsible for each of the teaching groups (at least in the lower classes, maybe Y7-9)? If there is an issue in the actual class, the group in which children spend most of their learning time, there is nobody who is in charge. This could be anything from bullying issues to cover teacher problems.

A: Ms Allaway oversees the VT system, and this is currently not possible. Might be worth a look in future to revisit the VT system and look at how it is working, to see if the pros outweigh the cons.

[Ms Judge and Ms Davey to leave]

7. Brief update on Headteacher recruitment (Mark Chapman)

The deadline for applications is this Friday and the shortlisting process will be on Monday. We hope to formally announce the appointment in early February. We are looking for someone with both hard and soft skills, who will build on the school's excellent reputation and is comfortable with our ethos.

8. Date of next meeting: Next School Info meeting: Monday, March 5th – topic: homework?

9. Other topics/AOB:

- Last School Info Meeting: Monday, July 2nd. Topic tbc
- Next School Info meeting on Go4Schools will be held January 23rd. Hope to see you there!

10. Date of next Parent Forum:

Monday, May 14th, 7:30pm. Governors' surgeries: 6 – 7:30. Venue tbc.