

Parent Focus Group

24th May 2022

Year 6 discussion

Attendance: 9 x Parents, KS, HM, SH

Overarching reason for the focus group was response to a letter sent out in April in relation to behaviour of year 6 children to which there had been a very mixed response. HM/KS explained that they had observed a decline in behaviour in a small minority of children which had caused a really very unusual ripple effect across the entire year group. The letter was a means to seek support from parents in managing this

Some parents felt as though the letter white washed the whole of year 6.

KS acknowledged it was a very unusual step to send the letter but had never seen this type of behaviour before

Parent asked what work had been done to unpick why these behaviours were occurring in the first place. Discussion around impact of Covid, the difficulties of staff departures, anxiety re secondary transitions, SATs pressure etc. and how this will have affected the children

Action – Follow up with parents/signpost to some of the work around curriculum for reconnection, transition preparations, specific interventions etc.

One parent felt that there was not enough done to reward children. Discussion re Class Dojo points etc. One parent felt stickers would be appropriate. Discussion around preparation for secondary school and how different it will be there where rewards are not offered in the same way. SH suggested to parent that if she has a specific query regarding the way in which her own child responds to reward, perhaps discuss with class teacher as all children are different and they won't all need stickers. HM spoke about the importance of intrinsic motivation.

Parent requested dates for Yr 6 production – advised these will be during w/c 11th July and made available after half term. School are already aware of event at TLA that week.

Parents raised concerns that there is not fair opportunity for children to be involved in activities such as the Yr 6 production and that children felt it was very much “a given” as to who would get the roles.

KS/HM explained process re auditioning/casting etc which is led by the Yr 6 teachers. All children welcomed and encouraged to audition.

In many cases this is not always as “lead character” as there are many roles to fill.

Mindful that not all children want to be on the stage in a leading role.

The production is a team event with many roles both on and off stage all of which promote team work.

Possible Action – Parent suggested there may be a way moving forward to split the lead roles so that more than one child can be cast on different days etc?

One parent felt that the less confident children do not get encouraged to partake in school activities and often get overlooked. Example given of learning all of the lines for the lead role off by heart but

not being picked. Upon further discussion, emerged children can, on occasion, also feel overlooked for things such as assemblies, cow bell etc. leaving them feeling very disheartened when it takes a lot to “put themselves out there.”

Possible Action – Could there be some kind of “tracking system” to be able to monitor the times that each child partakes in such activities over the course of their school career, to ensure all children have equal opportunity to flourish – particularly those who are less confident?

Communication – HM discussed ensuring respectful communication with everybody.

Mention of following complaints procedure where appropriate

Discussion around some concerns arising from lack of communication in regard to year 6 residential. One parent’s class Dojo was not working and so she was not able to see any messages/updates which was problematic as there was a change to return arrangements. Parents raised concerns that the information regarding who the children would be sharing a floor with was inaccurate and also that they had not had a hot lunch which they were supposed to have. One parent stated that this was very problematic for her child as she had made school aware that he will not eat packed lunch. Parents generally concerned re the lack of communication in general which caused an escalation in feelings.

KS advised that there had been an unexpected issue with the coaches and a mix up with times. This did unfortunately lead to having to leave earlier and missing the hot lunch which was unfortunate but could not be helped. All information was made available on class Dojo.

One parent raised concerns the portions were too small. KS advised Mr Strong had raised this on day 1 and the kitchen said all children could go back for more portions. Another parent advised she was aware this was the case as her child mentioned this to her and he had been having more than one portion.

Some parents feel as though communication in general is not open or transparent enough. They can feel discouraged from exploring appropriate routes for support/concerns etc. One parent spoke about a personal situation.

Possible Action – due to time running out, suggested we would reconvene to explore further some of the areas we were not fully able to explore in this meeting and also meet with parents separately to discuss individual concerns

Follow up meeting – June 17th 2022

Continuation of discussion in regard to the confusion around coach times/lunch for the residential. One parent commented that they felt the school were already aware prior to the last day that they would be leaving early and did not communicate this to parents. The reason for believing this to be the case was that children had been asked what they wanted for packed lunch the day before. KS explained that they were aware there was a possibility there would be an issue with a coach so were making contingency plans whilst they awaited confirmation. They communicated to parents as soon as they knew for sure what the plans were.

Query as to whether year 6 teachers have stopped using Class Dojo as not received any in either class for over a month

Action: HM to ask year 6 team about this

Discussion around communications not always being easy to understand and often leading to more questions. Example given that the sports day letter did not make it clear that year 6 had events. Wording felt ambiguous. General consensus that this can be the case with letters etc.

Action: HM to consider how to ensure communications are clear and not confusing

Parents requested that communication is given as early as possible around cancellation of clubs. This can lead to childcare issues otherwise. KS explained that there is a policy in place that clubs must be cancelled/parents informed by 1pm. There is the odd accession whereby clubs are cancelled later due to sudden unexpected staff absence and cover can't be sought, but this is very rare and all efforts are made to ensure this does not happen

Discussion regarding schools desire to provide a wide range of activities for children and recognise the difficulty in allocating places as clubs are always so popular and over-subscribed. It is an ongoing challenge to ensure equal opportunity and a big focus of the school.

Parent reiterated how important it is that less confident children have the opportunity to take part in a variety of different things – discussed again the notion of having a tracking mechanism for each child throughout their school career to ensure equal opportunity

Possible Action – HM considering if there is a way to make the selection process for clubs more transparent for parents so that there is a clear understanding of how places are allocated

Discussion around year 6 transition. HM explained that due to the pandemic, the priority currently is making sure that all children are secondary ready. Therefore, focus is very much on curriculum coverage, which may have an impact on other areas. School and home need to be working together to ensure that the last few weeks at Summerlea are a positive and happy experience.

Question raised re transport and arrangements for the year 6 transition day. HM explained the secondary schools will make contact to discuss arrangements, but children do not come to Summerlea first on that day, and families make arrangements for their child to go to and from secondary schools.

Discussion re different transition arrangements for TLA and Angmering, with parents sharing information based on experience and what they have been advised by each school

Parent shared TLA “consequence ladder” and felt it important children are made aware of behavioural expectations when at secondary school. KS explained that transition work does cover behavioural expectations, amongst other things.

Action: HM to share documents with VG who is currently reviewing Summerlea Behaviour policy, to see how it aligns

Parent stated they feel need to support children more with expectations around homework etc. ready for secondary school. KS explained that discussion is had with children around this and looking at time management/organisation.

Parent asked what the run up to transition now looks like in terms of activities/timetables. HM explained activities include things such as production/rehearsals, bikeability “catch up” sessions for those who missed it and swimming top up. Also just had a very successful aspirations week. Foss are funding a day of fun with Premier Education and there will be the year 6 leavers’ assembly.

Discussion regarding leaving arrangements – one parent suggested biodegradable confetti cannon and will send HM a link, though concern re the debris that will be left. Motorcade was discussed but is not being pursued.

Parent asked if we can have a return of the “dates list” as this was very useful

Action – HM to look into distributing this list again moving forward

Question – when do we find out SATs results? July 14th when annual reports go home.

Parent suggested it would be good to have SATs revision materials immediately after Christmas to give more time. HM advised Mrs Galpin had already reflected on this and will be holding the SATs meeting much earlier from next academic year.

Parent questioned why children still have elements of the curriculum to catch up on – is this due to COVID? HM advised that yes it is. Further question regarding if children have caught up generally across the school? HM advised it is individual to each child.

Parent questioned why year books will not be given this year. FOSS member explained that with a lack of fundraising opportunities due to COVID, money simply is not there to fund this – it is their biggest overall expense. HM also explained it takes a significant amount of time and effort for the teachers to organise. As such FOSS decided it would be more appropriate to fund the activity day. In response to consultation with year 6 pupils – the majority of whom wanted an experience. Discussion re option for parents to fund individually moving forward if they wish.

Foss are struggling with volunteers

Possible action – HM to share in newsletter that FOSS are looking for volunteers