

## Meet the Governors meeting on 4.11.14

### Present

Shirley Coulter  
Myriam Groessens  
Claire Small  
Lisa Hooper  
Mr and Mrs Waterhouse  
Mr and Mrs Mitchell

MG introduced herself and Shirley to the parents and on request of one parent named the other governors on the committee. MG went on to explain the different type of governors and set up of the Values and Quality Committees.

MG invited questions or comments from the parents present.

1. A parent expressed some frustration with short notice being given to planned activities and or things that needed to be brought in. As working parents it is often difficult to get things in time or organise own commitments quickly for their child to be able to attend events. All parents were aware of the weekly sheet and found this very useful. Not all parents were aware of the option to have this e-mailed to them though but were happy to express their interest via Mrs Delaney to be included in the future.

*Sometimes events are arranged at short notice but again we do try to offer longer notice if possible. We understand that this is not ideal but as we offer so many extra opportunities to our children there will always been some problems in this area and we ask for your understanding. Please ensure that we have your up to date email address if you wish information to be emailed to you. This not only saves us money on photocopying costs but also saves time.*

2. One parent had experienced difficulties with cancelled events which she was not notified about but another parent had different experiences and was pleased with a text she had recently received about a cancelled event. Most parents present thought texting was a valuable option to aid communication.

*Obviously we try our hardest to contact parents with texts if events are cancelled however sometimes the timing is out of our control.*

3. None of the parents present were involved with any of the existing Facebook pages and there was a mixed feeling about its usefulness as a tool to improve the sharing of information.

*We are still considering our best ways to communicate with parents. Facebook at this point is not in use but the governors are reviewing the website and better ways to pass information to parents.*

4. In general parents were extremely happy with the opportunities their children are given throughout their time at Ash and a Year 6 parent commented it was a “great school”.

*I am delighted with the positive feedback and support expressed for the school at the meeting. I encourage parents to complete the form on the Parent Link site which is viewed by Ofsted. There is a link on our website if you wish to complete the form.*

5. A parent commented that the way to sign up for parents evening in the lower years can disadvantage working parents and preferred the slips, used in class 4 and 5 with an opportunity to indicate preferences which was seen as a fairer system. She added that she had found a sheet used for signing up for an activity of their child's choice for art week useful and wondered if a similar sheet could be used for signing up for clubs at the start of the year to ensure their child signs up for a club that is feasible for them to attend and doesn't clash with their own commitments or arrangements of people they rely on for picking up like grandparents or child-minders etc. (Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell left the meeting at 7:00 pm).

*We have discussed the signing up system for parents' evenings in the lower part of the school. At this point for parents' evenings in the spring term we will continue to use the signing up system in KS1 but we are reviewing the process. We are happy for the signing up for clubs sheet to be sent home to help parents. When clubs change in the summer term then we will advertise the changes and send a copy with the signing up sheet to parents. I must stress though that some clubs are oversubscribed and therefore groups may have to be allocated.*

6. A parent asked a question about assessment and was surprised to hear her child had “sat exams” at the end of Year 4 and wondered if this was a form of SAT's or other assessment and whether this was how they were graded. MG explained children are being assessed in various ways throughout the year and the tests are part of this. A parent, who is a teacher herself, confirmed this. MG asked if parents would be interested in “Assessment” as a topic for an information evening like the school has run before on topics like the teaching of Maths and Reading. All present thought this was a good idea.

*Children are assessed in different ways in all year groups. At the end of Y3, 4 and 5 the children completed optional SATs as part of the assessment in their year groups. This is used to support the other teacher assessments which are taking place. Each child's progress is tracked across the school to support planning and provision.*

*Parent information evenings are planned for next year. As there are many changes taking place with the curriculum and assessment, I intend to hold an evening later next year to ensure that parents are well informed about the changes. I cannot do it any earlier as we are currently working with the local federation to organise the systems that will be in place from next September.*

7. A parent mentioned that her children are complaining of being hungry on a regular basis when they have school dinners and wondered whether portions are big enough. MG explained this had previously been fed back to the provider by the school but agreed to feed this back again to the school.

*New statutory guidance will be in place in the New Year concerning portion sizes for hot school meals so I hope this will overcome the problems expressed. If teachers are aware they do try to inform parents if their child has not eaten their food provided at lunchtime.*

8. A parent asked about the time frame for classroom for year 5. Unfortunately MG did not have up to date information about this.

*The new classroom is now up and running and the blinds have been fitted.*

9. A parent asked whether the school had been consulted in the traffic calming scheme and or the recent speed camera. Another parent and Shirley remembered the meeting that was arranged with the council at the time and that the decisions had already been made with little regard to the effects on the school.

*We were consulted about the traffic calming and did express concerns about the planned actions outside of the school. However this was not acted upon.*

10. Another parent asked whether the relationship with the landlord of the pub had improved since the letter about parking had been sent out. MG explained she was not aware of any recent problems.

*Things seemed to have improved concerning the use of the pub car park. We inform them if there are any events on and request that parents respect the parking guidance.*

11. The Early Birds club was generally regarded as a very positive development and some of the parents present made regular use of it. One of the parents expressed an interest in a similar after school club but MG explained no funds were currently available for this and henceforth no plans for this to be set up in the immediate future exist.

*The Early Birds club has been very successful and I am pleased that it is of use to parents. At this point there are no plans for an after school club but it is something that we can consider in the future if there is demand for it.*

12. The same parent mentioned that the opportunities her son has been given, especially in sports, have greatly benefitted him and he loves the school. She went on to say that the use of the minibus for these events makes it much easier for her son to attend but understood this was not always possible.

*We do use the minibus when possible for sporting events but this does rely on drivers being available.*

13. Money contributions for various events and charities sometimes felt like a lot of money to some parents to contribute in a short space of time and a parent wondered if the school could be more discriminate in which charities to support and questioned if there were too many residential on offer.

*The timing of major charity fundraising is out of our control and, although we are selective, I do understand it can be challenging when they are close together. We do try to inform parents with good notice of events which are likely to be more expensive, such as residential visits on offer involve one in Year 3 and 4 to Kilve Court then two in Year 5 and 6. I think it would be a shame to change the number on offer as they are important experiences. We offer two during Years 5 and 6 as some parents do not wish to take up the opportunity for their children to go abroad and it seems unfair for the children not to have the chance for a residential closer to home. We have always received positive praise and comments on the range of residential visits on offer, but if there is a feeling that parents do not want us to offer so many then this will need to be discussed by the governors.*

14. A parent wanted to express an explicit “thank you” to Mrs Delaney for always replying promptly to her e-mails.

*I have passed on thanks to Mrs Delaney for her hard work and commitment in liaising with parents.*

15. MG questioned whether the parent who is a teacher in other schools had any good tips or ideas that had been useful in other schools. A defined cause for money raising events from PTA was mentioned. One of her schools, who wanted to purchase I-pads, had an I-pad-ometer to show the funds raised so far and the target. This had proved very successful and had even attracted some cheques/ cash contributed for large sums- up to 1,500 pounds on one occasion! Children had been involved in writing to parents in the past and a possibility for the school council or other children writing to parents to try and get more involvement from new parents in Ash Association was thought worth considering.

*I have discussed with the PTA about advertising what the money is being raised for and they agreed it was a good idea. The children do already write to companies for prizes for the May Fayre, so I do think it would be difficult to extend this action.*

16. The parent also remembered that in the past the drawing of raffle tickets for front seats for performances was a successful way to raise some money for the school and also seemed fairer to parents who could not come in early to queue up for front seats.

*We are not aware of this system ever being used to get the front seats for performances. I will discuss this further with the PTA and staff but we have no plans to do this for the Christmas performances. At the leavers’ evening in the summer, we do reserve seats for Year 6 parents in the front rows.*

17. The same parent asked if there was any consultation meeting with parents regarding the new SENCO arrangements. She had led a meeting for 6 schools at the same time as previous attendance from parents at separate events had been very poor.

*There are no plans to do a presentation evening to explain the changes on the SEND funding. All of the information is available on the school website and also the SENCO is speaking to parents involved at their meetings.*

*There will be an opportunity for parents to attend a lesson on SPAG – Spelling and Grammar on 15<sup>th</sup> January (further details to follow). There was very good feedback last year about this opportunity so we will be making this a regular event.*

Myriam Groessens – Vice Chair of Governors