

## Parent Focus Meeting – 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016

### **Staff Attendees:**

Mr Ord – Head of School

Mrs Easton – PA to Head of School

### **Parent Attendees:**

Mrs Miller, Mrs Cooke-Thomas, Mrs Boyce, Mr Gomez, Mr Bradley, Mrs Mackay, Mrs Alessi, Mrs Apps and Mr Warner.

Welcome by Mr Ord. All parents introduced themselves.

### **Topics Discussed – Starting School, Transition to Year One and Outside Curriculum**

Mr Ord began by stating that starting school is a very emotive time for both children and parents. Every school wants to know how they can make this easier for all concerned.

One parent talked about how they have moved from Italy and both their children had English as an additional language. They have found Preston to be an incredibly supportive school and has given one of their children additional help in learning English. Mr Ord added that we have recently had another Italian speaker join us in Year 4 and they have been paired together, which has been successful for both.

There was a general consensus amongst the parents that the teachers are very nurturing and have a good rapport with the children in their classes.

Parents discussed how some of their children were adverse to change and that they had taken a little while to settle when they initially started school. However, through the patient teachers in Foundation Stage, the children had flourished and were progressing well with their education.

There were a few parents within the group whose children had initially started education at other schools. They all confirmed that the transition went well and they were more settled than they were before.

One parents' daughter found starting school very difficult and feels that this was due to there not being a preschool based at Preston. Mr Ord said that he had logged an interest with the Local Authority to have a preschool here, but that these things take a while to come to fruition.

Parents were really pleased that children generally stayed with the same teachers for two academic years. The continuity really helps. Mr Ord asked whether one Dad was happy with the decision to stop home educating his children? He confirmed that as a family they definitely feel that the right decision was made, especially with the social advantages of the school environment.

Mr Ord explained that he does not want Preston to be just an exam factory. He wants children to enjoy outside learning and relish all the opportunities that are available to them.

Parents said, it's wonderful that parents are able to view their child's work on a weekly basis whilst in foundation stage. It enables them to see the progression they are making and gives the children a real sense of pride when loved ones see their work.

Many of the parents that attended spoke highly of the school allowing younger siblings the freedom to meet the teachers and become familiar with the environment before starting school.

The outside curriculum offered to pupils at Preston was discussed and it is evident that it's seen as a really positive aspect. Especially as there are multiple activities children can participate in. This practical learning appears to have enabled a lot of the children within the focus group to retain the knowledge and go home and discuss their current learning. This has been evident with the recent hook day on the Great Fire of London. Mr Ord thanked the group for their positive views and reiterated that he believes that learning should not just be about sitting in a classroom

writing, but about having a colourful and broad curriculum. The reason why hook days and outcomes are important are because they enable children to produce work of a high standard, and help children to retain the knowledge taught.

Mr Ord has recently introduced enrichment programmes within Preston Primary. Teachers initially discuss which children they feel would benefit from additional outcomes, which can be directed to specific areas. For instance, recently there was a small groups of children called Mathletes who completed an enrichment in higher level maths. We have also had Seahorses, who were investigating the impact of sea grass destruction on our coastal waters. It is the aim of the school that all children in Key Stage 2 and most in Key Stage 2 will experience an enrichment every year.

Parents said it is brilliant to hear about the fun times our children have been experiencing in school. Mr Ord is very conscientious that there isn't as much learning through play in years one and two, which is one of the main reasons for the new specific play zones in the Key Stage One playground. Some children need to learn through play for far longer than others.

Mr Ord added that we are currently developing the wooded area, there is currently a poly tunnel, fire pit, raised beds. We also have one of the Assistant Heads at Cockington who is a trained Forest School teacher currently running an enrichment with this age group. Within the next six months we are aiming to have this area completed.

Mr Ord thanked all the parents again for their time and wonderful comments.