

Parent Focus Meeting – 8th June 2015

Staff Attendees:

Mr Ord – Head of School

Mrs Oliver – Deputy Head of School

Parent Attendees:

Mrs Lennon, Mrs Chilcott, Mrs Shore, Mrs Stone, Mr Wilkes and Mr Pollard.

Welcome by Mr Ord. All parents introduced themselves and said how many children they had, and their children's ages.

The Curriculum at Preston

Mr Ord began by saying that being an Academy gives Preston the freedom to craft its own Curriculum. This is a marvellous opportunity.

We all discussed what we want primary schools to teach. What is important? What life skills will be important? What will help our children in the world of work? The group felt it was a balance between social skills and academic content.

Mr Ord talked about his memories of Primary School. The learning was very topic based, but without any quality assurance around the coverage of subjects and skills. He shared his positive memories of that thematic approach to learning. The Preston teachers are working towards the principle of a thematic, cross-curricular way of planning the learning.

Phonics and maths are taught in discrete lessons to ensure coverage of the key skills.

We shared examples of current lesson planning and outcomes. We looked at how the Year 5/6 outcomes were presented and celebrated. One parent asked if we could consider publishing more children's outcomes on the website for all to see. Mr Ord shared his vision that because we live in such a beautiful coastal area, it is vital our learning experiences reflect this. The local community and people should be at the heart of all our curriculum plans.

Parents asked how we judge the impact of the learning experiences. Mr Ord and Mrs Oliver explained that every week the teachers come together in their Units to discuss the standards and progress of children in their classes. Every week they share their planning and books. This is also regularly done with the teachers at Eden Park.

Mrs Oliver explained that following a previous parent focus group, the school values have been reviewed by staff. They will soon be re-launched to parents and children. There will be one school value per half term. Visitors to our school, assemblies and the learning experiences will all link back to that one school value for that half term.

The question was asked, with the freedom of being an academy, can you teach verbal reasoning skills to help children who are sitting the 11+ entrance exams? It was also asked, could we be more overt in communicating information about Grammar Schools to Preston parents? Both these points have been noted.

The final comment at the end of the meeting was a positive one. A parent wanted the school to know that her children had a sense of pride in the school and their school work. That sense of pride had improved this year, with the learning experiences being a key part of that improvement.