

Parent Focus Meeting – 14th June 2017

2:30-3:00

Staff Attendees:

Mr Ord – Head of School
Mrs Easton – PA to Head of School

Parent Attendees:

Mrs Oliver, Mrs Stevenson, Mrs Pollard, Mrs Muscott, Mrs Newsam, Mr Orwin, Mrs Orwin, Mrs McPherson, Mrs Taylor, Mr Spies, Mrs McKenna and Mrs Miechowicz

Topics Discussed – Choice of School, Home Visit, Nursery Transition, School Transition and Your Child's 1st School Year.

Welcome by Mr Ord. All parents introduced themselves. The meeting started with Mr Ord thanking parents for attending. The opening area of why parents chose Preston Primary for their child raised some good discussion. All the parents were thrilled to have that they had chosen Preston for their child.

There is many school choices within Torbay, if you are deciding which school to choose for the 1st time it can be daunting.

A couple of the parents had initially put another local primary school as their 1st choice and had not considered Preston due to its previous reputation. They came for the open afternoon and any worries that they felt previously were quickly appeased.

Staff member had advised her friend that Preston would be a good fit for her son, mum was pleased that her son attends Preston as he is doing well and is really happy.

A parent stated that as a family, 3 children had attended Preston, and there has been some considerable positive changes over the past few years.

Parents had conducted research via the internet and were pleased with the schools vision, current results and innovative curriculum.

During their open afternoons, they noted how happy the school was and there was a lovely calm atmosphere. Last years' House Captains showed some parents around the school, it was wonderful to see the passion and pride that they had for the school, had a positive impact on how the parents reacted to the Preston.

Mr Ord directed a question asking why Mrs Oliver had recently moved her daughters to Preston. Mrs Oliver responded that they had recently moved and made a decision as a family to change schools. They have settled in really well and are thoroughly enjoying being part of Preston. It is wonderful to see staff members having confidence in the school, currently 10 staff members have children at Preston.

Parents feel that there is a professional feel to the school, front of house is now very friendly and approachable, in previous years parents felt you couldn't ask the office anything as you were wasting their time. This is no longer the case and it comes across that the whole school staff are very happy and enjoy their work place.

Parents felt that the nursery transition went really well, it's great that the children had the opportunity to come in to the school and spend some time in their new classrooms with their nursery keyworkers. These taster sessions definitely helped appease anxieties and ironed out any wobbles. However, some of the nurseries with less children transitioning to Preston found it logistically hard to release staff members to bring them across. As such, parents picked them up from nursery and brought them to Preston for these transitions.

All parents loved the fact the teachers came and met the children in their own homes. Helped seeing the teachers out of context, makes the process a lot more personal. It's important for parents to be able to ask teachers questions that they may need feel confident to ask in front of a group of people. Teachers also enjoying meeting children in their own environment as it allows them to get a feel for them.

All parents agreed that it is great that the children started full days straight away, it really helped them to settle in to school life quicker and easier. Especially as most children have already been spending full days at nursery, would see like a backward step to have a staggered start. By the children being in full time attendance straight away it allows teaching staff to get to know the children better, it helps with knowing their abilities and assessing them quicker. One parent stated that although she agrees with the full days straight away, having an older sibling starting at 8:40 and then waiting in the playground until 9:15 for the child to start made her worry unnecessarily. As such, new children starting this September will be in school from **9-3**, this should help those with older siblings.

The Thursday open door is a lovely practice, the children and parents love it. The children take such pride in showing their parents/carers/grandparents their work. Mrs Oliver stated that the school are exploring a digital version of learning journals. This would enable parents to look at work remotely and add home learning, this will help the school build a wider picture. If school were to move forward with this, the open door could happen every other week.

Mr Ord spoke to the group about communication, he understands it's not always perfect, but we work really hard to ensure parents know about what's going on. Mr Ord wanted to know whether we are missing anything. Parents felt that sometimes they don't always know what is happening with their children and Read Write Inc (RWI). Children's books aren't always changed on a Friday and parents don't know what to focus on. Sometimes the children come home with 2 books and at other times they haven't had a book at all. Mrs Oliver informed the group that all Teachers and Teaching Assistants are trained in RWI and all adults are supposed to change the books on Fridays. Mrs Oliver will speak with Mrs Pascoe and get create an overview letting parents know levels and progression through RWI.

One parent felt that text messages and emails can sometimes be confusing, as the dates do not always tally. Mr Ord informed parents that moving forward all dates on the schools website should be where parents go for definitive dates. Parents said that the text messaging system is great for being reminded of upcoming events. Having the newsletter emailed works well, it stops things being left at school and not known about.

Mr Ord asked the parents whether they felt Twitter would be a good median of communication, the parents felt that this would be a little excessive and they weren't on Twitter.

Mr Ord wanted to know if there were any other improvements that could be made to children starting their school day. Parents would like the children to adopt the same system as years 1 and 2, whereby

they listen for the bell and can then walk in to class. The current lining up is being very pushy, crowded with parents making it difficult to see your child in the line. Mr Ord and Mrs Oliver will speak with the foundation team and request that for the remainder of the term the children can go in at the sounding of the bell, this will be good preparation for the transition to year 1.

Mr Ord closed the meeting thanking everyone for coming and for having such honest discussions.