



St. Martin's Catholic Primary School

Pendennis Avenue, Caversham Park Village,

Reading, Berkshire, RG4 6SS

Telephone: 0118 937 5544

Email: admin@stmartins.reading.sch.uk

www.stmartinscaversham.co.uk

Acting Executive Headteacher: Mrs M Cosgrove

Deputy Headteacher: Mrs S Bernto

Minutes of meeting of St Martin's Parent Forum, held in the school hall at 19.00 hrs on Thursday 1st November 2018

Those present: Charlie Cox (Chair), Marion Jones (Vice Chair), Madeleine Cosgrove (Acting Exec Head), Sandeep Shetty, Trung Tran, Sally Murphy, Adamma Okonkwo, Corrine Hackett, Catherine Harris, Kevin Kingswood, Adeline Gibbs, Zoe de la Pascua, Theresa Lisi, Fransesca Cavallari, Lucy Ring, Vivien Rina, Marilyn Clayton, Tony McKenna, Rosmund Porter, Katy Withers, Angela McConville

Apologies: David Sherman, Paul Bardos, Yasmin Sanchez-Pearson, Sarah Bernto, Juliette Williams, Pratik Kothari

Discussion with Mrs Cosgrove about the Federation with focus on school life at St Martins in particular

- Mrs Cosgrove (MC) gave a brief summary of her career
- MC stated that her immediate priority is to be in both schools each day. This will allow parents to see and meet with her. It also allows staff access to her daily
- MC spoke extensively about how special St Martin's is. She particularly mentioned the benefits of a small school; and how supportive and involved St Martins' parents are – which makes a real difference and is appreciated by teachers.
- MC gave the example of a parent enabling St Martin's to have some Japanese researchers visit and give the children expert insight into the real-life impact of geological phenomena
- Morale is very good
- MC is retired and so the long-term future will probably not include her. She is contracted until the end of Dec 2018 but may well continue after this
- MC confirmed that a communication about leadership situation would be sent in the very near future
- MC is regularly showing new families around the school and getting very positive feedback. MC is hopeful that pupil numbers can be maintained or increase over time. New families are motivated to consider St Martins because of the good SATS results and the inclusive family atmosphere
- MC was very clear that she had no concerns about mixed age classes, and reminded those present that there will always be a very wide range of abilities in any given year group
- MC mentioned that the best performing school that she ever worked at had one class for KS1 (Reception/Yr 1/Yr 2)
- MC said she saw no reason why the SATs performance wouldn't continue to be excellent. Because St Martin's is an inclusive school it is unlikely to have 100% of children achieving the highest levels
- A parent reminded those present that, in a small school, one child could account for as much as 7% of a year's SATs results



- MC believes that the Executive Head position is sustainable if the correct support structures are in place
- MC confirmed that the Federation is here to stay but that this doesn't mean that St Martin's (or St Anne's) will lose their unique identity
- MC is aware that the website needs attention.
- MC advised that we are NOT the only school with budget pressures. There are options that can be taken to deal with a tight budget situation. The LA is acutely aware of our situation and will not compromise children's learning at this school
- MC said that Reading Borough Council forecasts have not predicted either the bulge or low birth rate years, and therefore their numbers couldn't be relied upon. It is therefore very difficult for the Governors and Diocese to plan. However, they are very mindful of this challenge, and are looking to implement sustainable solutions for the leadership of St Martin's.
- There is a need to get St Martins back to be the "first choice" school

Discussion on how to organise the Parent Forum (to include the constitution)

- MC explained that the Parent Forum is not a typical method for a Head Teacher to communicate with parents. MC is responsive to emails from individual parents and is happy to meet parents on request
- Charlie Cox (CC) expressed his admiration for the parent community at St Martins and the success of the PSA. He illustrated how much money the PSA raises (£11,500 from less than 150 children) relative to a large secondary school he knows of (£40,000 from >1,000). He felt that the Forum had been of benefit at St Martins
- CC explained that The Parent Forum has a long constitution, which is not fit for purpose in today's situation
- CC is now a Governor and so won't be able to continue as Chair of the Parent Forum and has resigned his position with immediate effect.
- There is also a vacant position as Forum Secretary
- MC feels that Governors will be more communicative in the future, as will the SLT
- CC will be on the Governor's Communication Committee and will champion improved communication. The other committees are focused on Resource and Curriculum
- Governors will be available for questions at the forthcoming parents' evening
- One parent suggested that a network of Class Reps could be used for comms too
- A parent asked if there could be an annual meeting where Governors presented to parents
- One parent felt that trust needed to be rebuilt between Governors and parents

Homework

- MC said that the school doesn't have a homework policy as such, and research shows that homework needs to be pertinent and not just done for the sake of it
 - MC advise: To best support children at home parents should encourage lots of reading (daily), supporting phonics with words games etc, practising times tables (which is key to maths progress) and independent research into topic areas
- MC will be reviewing "Homework" setting and consistency as part of her ongoing involvement