

Parents' Forum / AGM
Wednesday, 9th November 2011 – 7.00pm

Present:

Parents: Tim Knapp, Roy Jenkins, Emma Adamson, James Adamson, Rachel Underhill, Carla Boyles, Toni Cook, Erica Brechtmann, Jenny Hankins, Steffen Cleaton, David Morris;
 Governors: Paul Towner, Mark Hubbard, Alex Cook, John Martin, Sue Stewart, Peter Gale;
 Staff: Kathy Weston, Niki Summers, Becky Coleman, Wendy Pigott, Ben Caldicott;
 Apologies: Dave Clark, Lorna Piercey

Name	Discussion / Issues raised
Paul Towner	Welcomed everyone to AGM / Parents Forum.
Kathy Weston	Reiterated welcome. Explained there would be presentation to answer questions such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the governors? • What do they do? • What are the committees and their functions? Introduced the governors who were present. Told meeting that all schools have a governing body, that they are involved in all decisions taken by the school. Headteacher answerable to governing body. Acts as a 'critical friend', is hugely supportive to headteacher especially in regard to workload, takes a lot of commitment and hard work by individual governors who bring their different strengths to the various committees. Can effect success or not of a school.
Alex Cook	Suggested that parents would find it useful to compare St James' SATS results with other similar Herefordshire schools. Our results prove that we can still perform well despite being in special measures – we have done incredibly well compared to similar schools who are <u>not</u> in special measures.
Kathy Weston	Thanked Mr Cook for his positive information. Explained that some information regarding attainment of other schools was available in the public domain, should parents want to research it. The recent Ofsted MV was still at the confidential stage and could be discussed more broadly at the next Parents' Forum. Agreed that our SATS results were very healthy, that we were getting stronger.
Paul Towner	Pointed out that as we have been focussing on attainment other plans have been put on hold. That Mrs Weston has many ideas and plans, for example, for the whole school building.
Kathy Weston	Asked if anyone had any other generic queries about the governing body?
Kathy Weston	Discussion regarding budget concerns. There would be further cuts in the future due to fall in pupil numbers. Explained that last year we had a year 6 cohort of 39, which was a one-off, now down to 30 which means we were between £20 and £25,000 worse off - £2,400 per child. Any child who leaves St James means implications on the budget.
John Martin	(Chair of Finance Committee) Thought this year's budget was easier to manage as we had surplus to carry forward. However due to the drop in numbers we will, hopefully, only just balance this year. Next year will be £12,000 - £20,000 down so need to plan cuts.
Kathy Weston	Power point presentation to demonstrate budget figures. Told Forum that there would be no extra money this year so school would have to

	'manage' budget more carefully.
Mark Hubbard	Introduced himself as the 'new boy'. Explained allocation of funds are pre-ordained.
Kathy Weston	Discussion on budget figures and pupil numbers. Explained that the school must be judged 'satisfactory', if not 'good', to ensure the school is full. We have lost 5 children from last year's Reception class due to natural house moves.
Tim Knapp	Asked how many children in catchment area choose not to come here?
Kathy Weston	12% of school are HR2 so we do take children out of catchment.
Wendy Pigott	There was only one child in catchment this year who did not come here (within state school system).
Paul Towner	There were 3 the previous year.
Toni Cook	Feels that the profile of the school is poor. We feature very little in the local press whereas other primary schools are often featured.
Mark Hubbard	Offered to help with this.
Toni Cook	Feels that the school website also needs looking at.
Kathy Weston	This is being addressed. Meeting with Alpha Designs next week.
John Martin	Asked if parents would help in the distribution of leaflets eg Open Afternoon info.
Kathy Weston	An Open Evening has now been arranged for 1 st December starting at 7.00pm. Open Afternoon has limitations eg teachers are not available to talk to parents. The Open Evening would have groups of children working after a presentation to parents.
Paul Towner	Needs to be promoted as widely as possible.
Steffen Cleaton	Asked if the capacity of the school is set on a financial basis?
Paul Towner	Replied that capacity is set after the size of the building and its suitability is assessed. Set at 30 per class. Discussed staffing budget is 85% - unable to shrink any more.
Kathy Weston	Asked for opinions on state of building.
Various parents	Comments included 'tired', 'charming', 'victorian', 'dreadful'.
Toni Cook	Asked if money has been requested from local authority.
Kathy Weston	Felt the building was 'fit for purpose, but only just'. Described it as dowdy and dull. Said there was a lot needed to be done to it.
Peter Gale	Felt the sports facilities were inadequate.
Kathy Weston	Said that we were chasing funding for improvements. Is in discussion with architects who work extensively with Church schools. Has received phase one plan which has now gone back to be improved. Capital funding could be available – LCVAP – from the Diocese. Have to apply but have to prove that there is a need. Unfortunately available money has been cut, however we have been flagged up as a high level of need. We are waiting to hear

	what is available for April 2012. Phase one costing is £180,000 of which we have to find 10%.
Carla Boyles	Likes the character of the building.
Toni Cook	Not happy with building works undertaken previously (store room etc)
Kathy Weston	It answered an immediate need rather than long term need. Any improvements need to be energy efficient (eg previous improvement involved rooms with no windows so lights on all day). Looking at grants – one found in Gloucester for Church schools – will maybe apply.
Toni Cook	Feels there should be a role for governors in terms of fundraising. At the moment it is all on the shoulders of the PTFA.
Kathy Weston	Shared with Forum the recent success in grants: Awarded £10,000 from Heritage Lottery to carry out large topic on the History of the Mayor. Class 5 will undertake project in the spring term. School will benefit from ICT purchases.
Alex Cook	Presented power point to illustrate recent success in SATS. KS1 has shown incredible progress over a small period of time – above the national average. Parents can help their child by reading with them for 15 minutes every day.
Emma Adamson	Asked if this progress could be maintained?
Kathy Weston	Children have responded to the extra challenges. Lots of parents committed to help. Results may not be quite as high this year but certainly on par with national average.
Alex Cook	The reason KS1 results were so good was due to the teachers of Reception, Class 1 and Class 2. KS2 Reading and Writing are consistent with national average. Maths not quite there yet.
Kathy Weston	Results were helped by extra Maths classes run by staff during the Easter holidays in 2010. Repeated again this year. All children came in each morning. Similar schools to us who are not in special measures do not have such good results.
Wendy Pigott	Direct comparison data for Early Years is available at the end of each year.
Kathy Weston	Need to have discussion on swimming. Pointed out that swimming income does not match expenditure. Asked if parents would like swimming to start earlier at the end of class 1? Children learn better if they start at a younger age. Asked for a show of hands.
Kathy Weston	Discussion on the length of the school day. Felt 3.30pm was quite late to finish. No need any more to give parents 12 months notice. Suggest start time of 8.45 am for whole school and finish at 3.15pm. KS2 not to have afternoon playtime. Start after Christmas.
Kathy Weston	Still an issue with gate security – parents in the playground.
Toni Cook	An issue with parents who have children in KS1 and KS2, tend to stay in the playground.

Paul Towner	Felt it would be nice to change the layout of the playground.
Emma Adamson	Compared St James with Leominster – they have larger site so children are taken straight to the classroom door.
Tim Knapp	Asked about the possibility of emailing the newsletter.
Kathy Weston	We will look into this.
Paul Towner	Closed meeting and thanked everyone for coming.

Meeting closed at 8.00pm