



Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pontybrenin

Heol Casllwchwr, Gorseinon, Abertawe, SA4 6AU

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Parent Focus Groups 2016/17

Summary of issues raised by Parent Focus Group members – Spring term

Nursery & Reception - Meeting date - 7/3/17

1. The activities that were organised as part of the school's recent Book Week were very well received, with everyone having benefitted greatly from the experiences.
2. Parent's liked the St David's Day Eisteddfod and the competitions that were held as part of the celebrations;
3. A number of parents stated that teachers do not always reply to comments written in the Home / School contact books.
Further guidance on how to use the books to their full potential will be sent out shortly.
4. The 'Celebrating Skills' week held in January for parents of reception pupils, was a great success, with parents stating how much they enjoyed the opportunity to sit with their children and share in their accomplishments. A similar week has been arranged for May.
5. Some parents questioned whether there was a possibility of Breakfast Club starting sooner.
The school has looked into this, but as the majority of the staff who supervise those pupils attending Breakfast Club are parents of young children themselves, this isn't possible at present. We'll continue to monitor the situation and respond appropriately if this changes.
6. As KS2 pupils visit Gorseinon library on a monthly basis, parents asked whether it would be possible for a mini 'class library' to be organised for Nursery / Reception pupils who don't currently have reading books (populated with books that can be read with parents at home)?
We'll certainly look at putting a system in place for the summer term.
7. Could the school please ensure that the pupil entrance doors are opened on time in the mornings, especially on rainy days?
8. When will Nursery pupils start attending school assemblies?
Historically, nursery pupils begin attending our assemblies in the summer term, as they have longer concentration spans and the ability to sit still for longer periods by this point in the year!
9. Can staff please ensure that pupils don't play in water and dirt during breaktimes, as they often come home filthy and wet?

Pennaeth / Headteacher: Mr Ceri Scourfield

Dirprwy / Deputy headteacher: Miss Elen Jones





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An appropriate number of staff supervise pupils during both break times and lunchtimes. Although the staff do make every effort to stop pupils from getting wet and dirty, there will be instances where this will happen, as children, by nature, will be drawn to water and dirt.

10. Is there any possibility of an afterschool club for Nursery and Reception pupils?

The school currently organises numerous afterschool clubs for pupils in Years 1 – 6, with staff giving their time freely to lead these activities. Providing extra-curricular clubs for nursery & reception pupils would require a far greater staff to pupil ratio, which would make it very difficult to arrange.

Years 1 & 2 - Meeting date - 2/3/17

1. There was an article in the news recently regarding a school in England that had grouped all its INSET days into one week in order to allow parents to book cheaper holidays. Is this a possibility at YGG Pontybrenin?

INSET days are organised to meet the ongoing professional development needs of the school and its staff, which develop as the year progresses. Predicting what those needs could be at the beginning of the academic year would be very difficult and wouldn't allow the school to respond to training needs that could emerge during the year.

2. Is there any way the school could go 'cashless', with an electronic payment system allowing parents to pay dinner money, trip money etc from home?

The Local Authority intends to pilot an electronic dinner money payment system sometime in the next year which would be free of charge to the school, but would only allow dinner money payments. The school has looked at the Parentmail payment system, which does come at a cost, but could be an option going forward. We'll ask all parents for their views on the subject in the summer term, and if there is enough demand to warrant piloting an electronic payment system, then we'll do so.

3. Could the school please specify which clothes children should wear on various trips?

Unless the Parentmail message / letter states otherwise, pupils should always wear school uniform on all school trips and visits.

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Years 3 & 4 - Meeting date - 1/3/17

1. When will Year 3 pupils receive their swimming lessons this year?
Swimming lessons for Year 3 pupils will take place during the summer term, after the Easter holidays.
2. The activities arranged during the school's recent Book Week celebrations were fantastic, with lots of positive feedback.
3. Similar feedback was given for the St David's Day Eisteddfod, with parents appreciating the various competitions that were organised.
4. This term's extra-curricular clubs have been a great success, with a nice mix of clubs for pupils to enjoy.
5. There seems to be a greater consistency with homework this term, with parents praising the new system of issuing homework 'projects' for the half term, which allow pupils greater independence to produce work that reflects their strengths and interests.
6. A number of parents feel that there is a shortage of quality reading scheme books in Years 3 & 4. Can the school invest in new books and / or look at reading apps?
The Year 3&4 teaching staff will conduct an audit of the reading scheme books that are currently available, as well as those books that are missing, and order new books as a result. Whilst we'll continue to look at suitable electronic library / reading programmes and consider investing in them, at present, they are prohibitively expensive.
7. The recorder lessons Year 3 receive are proving very popular with both pupils and parents.
8. The 'Celebrating my Work' week held in January was a great success, with parents stating how much they enjoyed the opportunity to sit with their children and share in their accomplishments. A similar week has been arranged for May.
9. Could some parents receive the answers to homework in English, as non-Welsh speaking parents are having to guess the answers?
Feedback given on all work, be it class based work or homework, is directed towards pupils and not parents. Pupils in Years 3&4 are generally fluent in Welsh by the time they reach the Juniors and as such, should be able to translate the answers / teacher's comments to parents.
10. Collecting children at the end of the school day can be difficult as the Junior pupils all exit the school via the bottom gate.

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Unfortunately, the layout of the school doesn't provide many exit points which can be used by Junior pupils. However, we will look at alternatives, including the possibility of slightly staggering the release of pupils at the end of the school day

11. Could the school provide parents with more information next year regarding the Urdd Eisteddfod? Also, could parents register their children for Urdd competitions, as opposed to asking the pupils themselves?

We can certainly provide parents with an overview of the Eisteddfod and a list of the competitions that are open to pupils. However, parents and their children need to come to an agreement on which events they choose to register for, as coaxing reluctant pupils to learn their words and attend practices is far from ideal.

Years 5 & 6 - Meeting date - 28/2/17

1. The Junior girls' toilets are looking great, with lots of positive comments being passed on.
2. A wonderful variety of activities were arranged for Book Week, which were a great success.
3. Will there be an extra-curricular Reading Club this year?
The timetable for the summer term clubs hasn't been finalised yet. A Reading Club is certainly something we can consider.
4. The recent links with Ysgol Pontybrenin have been welcomed by a number of parents who feel that both pupils and staff can benefit from this new relationship.
5. Why don't Year 6 pupils receive swimming lessons?
The Welsh Government are currently targeting pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5, and with increasing funding pressures, there is no provision for Year 6 pupils.
6. Parents love the idea of the monthly library visits, which allow pupils to choose a wider variety of books that the school can offer.
7. The 'Celebrating my Work' week was a great success, with parents having enjoyed the opportunity to share in their children's accomplishments. The standard of work that the pupils produce, particularly the work involving the 'Descriptosaurus' was fantastic. A similar week has been arranged for May.

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Thank you once again to everyone for all your comments. We will try our best to address the concerns you've raised in these Parent Forums and hope that you'll notice improvements in these areas soon. If however, you continue to have concerns or have any further comments or suggestions to make, then please do contact me at the school to discuss these further.

The next round of Parent Focus Group meetings will be held midway through the summer term.

Thank you as always for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Ceri Scourfield
Headteacher

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