



Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pontybrenin

Heol Casllwchwr, Gorseinon, Abertawe, SA4 6AU

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Parent Focus Groups 2019/20

Summary of issues raised by Parent Focus Group members – Autumn term 2019

Foundation Phase meeting date - 3/12/19

Parents Present: Abi Hobson, Sara Morgan, Chris Griffiths & Chris Pinnington

Staff Present: Mrs Southgate, Mrs Owen, Miss Richards, Miss White, Mrs Edwards, Mrs Bishop-Williams, Miss West, Mrs Griffiths & Mr Scourfield

1. The general message from parents / guardians is that they are very happy with the school and that their children are also very happy attending school. Parents wanted to thank the staff in particular for all their efforts in preparing the children so well for the Christmas concerts which were fantastic.
2. According to a number of parents, some pupils have complained that the toilets are not being flushed and that this is putting them off using the facilities.
Response: This is an ongoing issue which the school has attempted to address by reinforcing the importance of good hygiene habits with pupils and through regular monitoring of the toilets by staff. However, the responsibility of flushing the toilets ultimately lies with our pupils and this message will continue to be shared with them.
3. Some parents have noted that a number of Lego Club sessions have been cancelled recently as a result of Parents Evenings and Christmas concerts, resulting in a disparity in the number of sessions pupils received in the 1st half term compared to their peers who attended Lego Club during the 2nd half term.
Response: Unfortunately, many pupil have missed out this half term due to the cancellation of clubs and the school will certainly look to avoid this in future by planning ahead and with a view to distributing sessions more evenly as opposed to on a half termly basis.
4. A growing number of parents have expressed their dissatisfaction with the standard of the most recent individual & family photographs by Colorfoto, with examples of pupils with their eyes closed, untidy hair etc.
Response: Whilst the school is contracted to Colorfoto for the remainder of this year, we will look at all options and consider the alternatives on offer. In the meantime, your comments will be passed on to Colorfoto.
5. Some parents have found it difficult getting through to the school office, via telephone, towards the end of the school day.
Response: Whilst the office staff make every effort to answer all telephone calls, there are occasions where this is difficult as a result of the various

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demands on the role. With so many parents continuing to telephone the school late in the day with changes to pupils' collection / transportation arrangements, the staff often have to leave the office in order to inform class teachers of these arrangements. All we can do is ask that parents inform the school as early as possible of changes to collection arrangements and if you don't succeed in getting through to the office immediately, then please try again in 5 minutes.

*Please do not leave messages regarding your child's collection arrangements on the answering machine.

6. It has been noted that some Foundation Phase pupils are coming home very clean, with little evidence of 'Outdoor Play' on their clothes.

Response: Outdoor Learning is playing an increasing role in the weekly timetable of our pupils and with the recent purchase of waterproof clothing by the 'Friends of YGG Pontybrenin', we hope to develop this further in the coming months.

7. Parents have welcomed the recent closure of the large gates at the Loughor Road entrance to the school and have asked whether this can become a permanent feature, as both parents and pupils feel a greater sense of safety when the gates are closed to vehicles.

Response: The school will make every effort to ensure that these gates are closed during the busiest times of day.

Key Stage 2 meeting date - 4/12/19

Parents Present: Kate Jones & Chris Pinnington

Staff Present: Miss Dark, Mrs Sartori, Miss Davies, Mrs Parkhouse, Miss Walker, Miss Gwenter & Mr Scourfield

1. Pupils are not changing their reading books as often as they should be and the general quality of some of the reading books is poor.

Response: Although pupils are encouraged to change their reading books on a regular basis, they don't always do so. The school will timetable a specific rota which will ensure that books are changed on a regular basis. Some pupils have also found it difficult to change their books when they cannot find the next book in the reading scheme as there have been gaps in certain levels of the scheme. However, the school recently invested over £3000 in new reading books and have removed the worst quality books from circulation.

2. The Home/School Contact Books are not being checked regularly and parents are unsure of their purpose.

Response: The purpose of the contact books is to enable parents/guardians and staff to share informal messages with other and also to act as a reading record. However, if parents have written a message for the class teacher to

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read, then it's important that the child makes the teachers aware that there is a message in the book. Class teachers cannot be expected to collect and check every child's contact book on a daily basis. Where appropriate, teachers will respond to these messages on the day they're received.

3. A growing number of parents have expressed their dissatisfaction with the standard of the most recent individual & family photographs by Colorfoto, with examples of pupils with their eyes closed, untidy hair etc.

Response: Whilst the school is contracted to Colorfoto for the remainder of this year, we will look at all options and consider the alternatives on offer. In the meantime, your comments will be passed on to Colorfoto.

4. Parents continue to be very grateful that Key Stage 2 pupils are visiting the library on a monthly basis and having the opportunity to borrow books for pleasure.

5. The question was asked by some parents whether they could receive their child's weekly spelling test scores?

Response: Whilst teachers would be more than happy to share spelling test scores with individual parents, doing so would take up valuable time. Key Stage 2 pupils are more than capable of sharing their test scores with their parents and the various 'celebrating my work' days and parents evenings also provide an opportunity for parents to check on their child's spelling progress.

6. Following the recent concerts, a number of parents expressed disappointment with St Catherine's church as a concert venue, with the main issue being not being able to hear the performers speaking.

Response: Whilst the acoustics in St Catherine's are not great, it's the size of the venue and the sound system that results in the audience not being able to hear the performers. I'm sure most people would agree that a church is the perfect venue for a Christmas concert. However, we are currently looking to change the structure / timetable of our Christmas concerts and will bear this in mind when choosing venues for December.

7. A number of pupils are very physical whilst playing on the yard break time / lunchtime and are hurting themselves and others in the process.

Response: Whilst pupils can, on occasion, get very physical whilst playing, they are discouraged from doing so by the staff supervising the yard. The recent investment in additional play equipment has resulted in more structured play and will hopefully avoid further incidents.

8. The variety of after-school clubs on offer this term has been fantastic and well received by both parents and pupils.

9. Some parents have stated their disappointment with the school dinner options and are somewhat puzzled with some of the food combinations served to pupils.

Response: There will always be occasions when some pupils turn their nose up at school dinners and express their dislike with what's on offer. However, pupils within the City & County of Swansea are fortunate in having a choice of meals to choose from every day of the week (2 choices & a vegetarian option). Many local authorities, include Carmarthenshire, don't provide their

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children with options at all. The issue of strange and unusual food combinations is down to individual children. All pupils are offered various 'sides' with their chosen meal, and even though they might choose to have unconventional combinations, provided they eat their food, the school is happy.

10. Parents were eager to thank the staff for all that they do for the children and to state how happy they are attending Ysgol Gymraeg Pontybrenin.

Thank you to everyone who contributed comments to these Parent Forums. We will try our best to address the concerns you've raised 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.

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

Thank you as always for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Ceri Scourfield
Headteacher

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