

## **Parent Forum- 4/10/23**

### **Present:-**

**Staff members-**Adam Campbell, Kerry Mercer, Vik Gamble

**Parents-** Pardeep Uppal, Natasha Ford, Zoe Davison (Sheaf), Ying Pickavance, Nicole Cunningham, Alixia Butnariu, Katie Mysko Von Schultze, Dominic Adamczyk, Kate Adamczyk, Steve Keely

### **1. Pine induction and transition further up the school**

#### **Stay and Play sessions/ 4 x half day Taster sessions/ Home Visit**

The following points were raised:-

- half day sessions were really tricky from a logistical point of view
- half days can be a bit confusing for a child as they may be used to full days at nursery/pre-school. At the end of the half day session, one child commented "Is that it?"
- one parent liked the phased start but suggested longer sessions
- half day sessions suited her son as he hadn't been full time at pre-school and it would have been too much for him
- the two morning sessions (as opposed to the afternoon sessions) were less confusing for a child with an older sibling as they were going to school at the same time
- Saplings transition sessions into Pine and the home visit meant that by the time her child had started Pine, he had already seen lots of familiar faces. His mum was amazed at how well her child had settled.
- the Stay and Play sessions enabled the children to meet the teachers before they started
- due to a job share, one child was visited at home by one of their teachers but was greeted on their first day by the other teacher.
- due to an error, one child appeared to come through on the system as a Saplings child (rather than a non-Saplings child) and unfortunately, parents didn't receive the transition letter sent out until a few days prior to the Stay and Lunch session.

Mr Campbell explained why we had organised the transition sessions the way we had and also mentioned that when we started the taster days, we didn't have the Saplings pre-school at the time and having our own preschool really helps with the children's transition.

### **2. Read, Write, Inc.**

A parent commented that the daily sound videos emailed home were useful. Parents found the RWI presentation evening informative. Due to work commitments/ difficulty organising child care etc, some parents were not able to make the evening and it was suggested that the Powerpoint presentation could have a voice over and be emailed to parents. Mrs Mercer suggested that having the presentation at school drop off may mean that more parents can attend. It was pointed out that although the RWI presentation had gone out on the date sheet, a separate bit in the newsletter would be useful, especially for new parents of children Y1 and above. It may also be useful to have the presentation at a slightly earlier date so that parents have a better understanding of how to support their child from the beginning of the RWI programme.

### **3. Transition further up the school**

**YR-Y1-** one parent explained that she had prepped her daughter for the more formal learning in Y1 and suggested that it would be useful if the transition arrangements had been communicated with parents so that they have a better understanding of what happens.

**Y1-Y2-** having Mrs Wadsworth again in Y2 had helped the transition from Y1. Parents of children new to the school commented on how much more confident their children had become since starting at The Firs, for example, choosing to walk into school themselves and wanting to read. They feel that staff nurture the children so much and it has a very caring ethos.

### **4. The Firs Way- Establishing a Restorative Culture**

Mr Campbell outlined the changes and challenges the school has faced since Covid. Ms Gamble talked about how we are building a sense of community at The Firs. It's about building relationships- between children, between adults, between children and adults. Adults can't expect children to be respectful and honest if the adults aren't showing this to the children. We need to create a safety net for children if things go wrong. It's important that all children receive the same approach from all adults. Staff need to create opportunities in school to build relationships, for example, read a story, have regular circle time, ask children how they are as you walk past them in the corridor. It's about not taking a judgemental and blame approach, it's about acknowledging that the child has made a mistake and then discussing how we can put this right. It's not about the adult doing it for them or to them. A 'restorative' approach is taking a 'with' approach. Can the child choose to do the right thing even when people aren't watching? Staff need to make sure they're in the right place to help children co-regulate when things go wrong. If things are made right, it's thinking about whether it's going to work for both the child and the adult.

Ms Gamble explained how staff are going to do more things during the year to continue to build a restorative culture. We want to get to the point where a child says "Yes, I made a mistake but actually I did something about it." When having a restorative conversation with a child, avoid asking why they did what they did. Sometimes children don't know why so they respond by saying "I dunno". It also attributes blame as we're assuming the person's at fault but we don't know what happened previously. As adults, we don't want to bring judgement and we want to explore what happened.

Ms Gamble talked about The Firs leaf nominations where you can nominate people (children and adults) who you 'catch' doing the right thing i.e. following The Firs Way. The motto is 'Catch them in, not catch them out'. Children/adults awarded a leaf get to stand up in assembly and then the leaves get added to the tree in the main foyer.

Parents responded very positively to the restorative approach and suggested a workshop for parents and possibly a newsletter. Ms Gamble explained that she is trying a drip feed approach

e.g. sharing videos with parents. One parent added that if we are doing things in addition to what other schools are doing, we are likely to get parents choosing The Firs.

### **5. School uniform**

Mr Campbell explained that at the end of social times (lunchtime, playtime etc), children are asked to tuck shirts in to look like 'smart learners'. He explained the difficulties of our sandy soil and how it makes the white polo shirts look very grubby! The children love digging and we have now given them digging tools so they are not using their hands. As well as the children enjoying it, it has really helped to reduce the number of behaviour incidents. We are trying to make play times fun for the children, for example, by having the pirate ship installed.

A parent suggested children wearing an overall / welly boots which Mr Campbell said we would consider.

### **Other points raised:-**

- PE kit- the Pine booklet needs to state that PE kit can include leggings and trainers (not just joggers and plimsolls)
- Snacks- one parent asked if snacks are monitored in terms of whether they contain nuts? Mr Campbell explained that parents are occasionally reminded in the newsletter not to bring food containing nuts. It would also be worth flagging up less obvious foods which contain nuts such as pesto.
- Summer Club- helpful having the Saplings children there as this helped with transition into Pine as Miss Davanna worked there. One parent said it would be good to have it for longer than 2 weeks in the summer as well as additional holidays. Mr Campbell explained how difficult it is to staff it and when summer club ran for 4 weeks, not many parents wanted the last week so it wasn't financially viable.
- Kids' Club
  - A parent is paying twice if their child is paying for the Premier Sport club as well as Kids' Club
  - Parents get given an amount to pay but no breakdown so it's hard to double check if they are being charged the correct amount especially if they have more than one child at Kids Club.

Mr Campbell said we would look into both of these points.