**PRESENT:** Wendy Donnelly (head teacher); Tracey McGloin (Home School Support and staff governor); Mark Tickner (Chair of Governors); Lizzie Roser (parent); Suzanne Alford (parent); Abbi Milton (parent); Laura Jones (parent); Numera Anwar (parent); Debbie Richards (parent); Kayleigh Trowell (parent); Lisa Hoy (parent).

**APOLOGIES** received from Zoe Evans

**AGENDA:**

* *Welcome and introductions*
* *Agree Terms of Reference*
* *School expansion update*
* *Academy update*
* *Feedback from parent questionnaires*
* *Lost property*
* *Conduct records*
* *Signage on gates for parents*
* *Hand-drying arrangement in the FS/KS1 toilets*
* *A.O.B. (Star Awards and HT Awards; home-reading awards; School Council; transport to MYG events; children chosen to represent school at MYG)*

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence**

Wendy Donnelly opened the meeting and thanked all parents for their commitment in joining the Parent Forum.

1. **Terms of Reference**

The terms of reference for the group were read, agreed and signed by each new member. Parent representatives confirmed their preferred arrangements for contact from other parents (see separate contact sheet).

**School expansion update**

WD said that the school are very pleased with the expansion work. It has been hard work getting everything back in its place and there have been many minor logistical issues. We are still in discussion with Medway Council about the fencing around the outdoor area for the Foundation Stage. This should have been extended to encompass part of the wooded area.

We have had a site visit regarding Phase Two of the build and this is about to go out to tender. Phase Two (timing to be confirmed) consists of the extension of the school hall and the provision of two additional classrooms behind the current Ravens and Swans Classes. These will be joined to the school by a new corridor from the extended hall and a covered walkway from the playground.

1. **Academy conversion**

WD said that the school are pleased that the Academy Order has now been granted and we are hoping that the conversion will take place on 1st April. Parents did not have any questions regarding this. NA explained that, from her own experience, there will not be changes “on the ground” but there are benefits to staff training and development. LJ explained that, at her children’s previous school, there were many new people on the premises from the academy trust and that parents and children were unaware of who they were. MT and WD assured the group that the Senior Leadership Team and the teachers will remain at Halling for the foreseeable future.

1. **Feedback from the parent questionnaire**

WD explained that we have only received nineteen questionnaires, however, it is felt that, if parents were not happy with the school, then we would have had a lot more responses.

There were many pleasing comments in the “What works well” section.

Nine “even better if” comments related to communication. Four “what works well” comments related to communication. Parents agree that it did improve last year but there seems to have been some issues with emails again. It was recognised that the office had been hard-pressed to get everything up and running again after relocating, have new phones and computers installed etc. Some parents are saying that they don’t receive emails. WD explained that this has been brought to the attention of the office and that all emails go out through Parentcoms which gives an instant report of any that haven’t been delivered. We will continue to work on this. It was requested in the meeting that a list of dates for the year are sent out to parents. NM confirmed that this had been sent a while ago. KT said that the calendar on the website does not give a quick overview of the year as you have to click on each date. WD will ask the office to email another copy out to all parents. We will also look at the use of the APP.

Three comments related to the swimming pool. MT and WD reiterated our sadness at the pool closure and again emphasised that the school did not take the decision without exploring all avenues.

Three comments related to the parents using the staff car park and misusing the drop-off zone. This was discussed. The school would like to install a barrier to the staff car park but we do not have the funding to do this. Also, we cannot provide a person to permanently “police” the drop-off zone. It has been suggested, by the site management team, that the car park be closed completely to parents again. Parents in the meeting agreed that this may be the only way forward. It was mentioned that parents are not comfortable in letting their children out of the car in the drop-off zone to then go over the zebra crossing unaccompanied. This is due to the way that some people drive on the school premises. This will be mentioned in a letter to parents and then, if things don’t improve, the school will once again close the car park completely.

1. **Lost property**

There was a request for the school to reinstate lost property boxes. SA explained that her son had lost trainers in a named bag and been unable to find them. WD explained that, when we did have lost property boxes, they were completely full at the end of each term and, despite putting items out on tables for parents and getting children to sort through the boxes, we were throwing away great piles of unclaimed items at the end of the year. Often children realised within a few minutes that they have left e.g. a jumper on the field but would go to find it and someone will have put it in a lost property box somewhere in the school. Children are encouraged to look after their own property and all clothing should be named. Another problem is that, fairly often, a child will take home the wrong jumper or cardigan. NA mentioned a school where a parent volunteer takes control of any lost property and can be emailed by parents when there child has mislaid an item. This has proved to be quite successful. LH and KT said that they could see how this might work and that the lost property could also be put out at PTA events. LH will consider running this (although she already has many commitments on the PTA) but will need a school email address. WD will arrange this.

1. **Hand drying in the KS 1 toilets**

WD explained that there is a hand-dryer in the toilets as well as a paper towel dispenser that is filled daily. Children do use the paper towels as the bin is always full at the end of the day. The younger children did not use the hand dryer much because some were afraid of the noise and it also takes a long time to dry hands properly. WD will ask the Year 1 teachers to remind the children to use the hand dryer.

1. **Conduct records for children in Year One**

It was requested that a term other than “conduct record” is used for children in Year One as they don’t understand the term. WD and TM explained that we have done a lot of work with Year One as some found the transition tricky. WD, TM and Mrs Mauldon went into the class and held a circle time to discuss behaviour expectations, conduct and consequences etc. We were seeing quite a lot of low-level disruptive behaviour from this year group but this has now improved considerably. The Leadership Team will make sure that we visit Year One early in September to address this next year.

1. **Signage on the gates**

This point was in relation to parents not knowing or using the correct gates onto the playground. WD explained that we will purchase some signs for the gates and outer fencing when we have the funding to do so. On the questionnaire, a parent raised the matter of picking up children from different places. The SLT have been discussing the idea of allowing all parents (other than Year 5 and 6 as the children exit via the side door) to pick their children up from the playground. This was met with a positive response at the meeting. WD will discuss further with teaching staff.

1. **A.O.B**

There is a piece sticking out of the pedestrian gate and children and adults are catching their arms on this. WD will speak to the site management team about this.

Children have asked about membership of the School Council as some feel that certain people get more than one chance to represent their class. WD explained that children are not allowed to be on the School Council for two years running but, other than this, it is a democratic process and the children are voted in by their peers (having prepared and delivered a speech to the class).

There was discussion around awards for reading at home. This seems to happen in KS1 and in Year 5 and 6 (linked to the Reward trip/event) but not in Years 3 and 4. This is generally down to individual teachers but WD will discuss it with the English leaders. It is also unclear whether spellings are sent home. Spelling is taught in class but some children have had spellings sent home.

A point was raised around how Star Awards and Head Teacher Awards are given – there was not time to discuss this in any detail so this will be carried over to the next agenda.

**ACTIONS:**

* ***Site management team to look at the pedestrian gate***
* ***WD to arrange for an email account to be set up for the PTA***
* ***Office to send out another copy of the calendar to parents***
* ***Year One teachers to remind children about hand washing and drying***
* ***WD to speak to English Leaders about consistency of reading awards and home spellings***
* ***Leadership team to consider rearranging how children are picked up from the playground.***

***THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE HELD AT 2:00 ON WEDNESDAY 23rd JANUARY 2019***