



THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST

Elmstead Wood Primary School Parent Council

Notes of meeting held on Friday 13th June 2005 at 5.30pm via GoogleMeet

Present:

Mrs C Lewis (Headteacher & Chair) (CL)
Charlene Andrews (R) (CA)
Rochelle Wright (R) (RW)
James Newby (yr 1) (BJ)
Michelle Bond (yr 4) (MB)

Apologies:

Also present:

Lucy Bodycombe, Clerk (LB)

1. Welcome and Apologies

- The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming all attendees to the newly formed Parent Council (PC) for EWPS.
- No apologies were received.
- The PC members were asked to introduce themselves and share what they hope to achieve as a member of the PC:
 - CA and RM will be sharing the PC role for Reception due to personal time constraints. Both have an educational background, which they believe will be valuable in supporting the school and its community. RM also has a child in Year 6 and she is keen to share feedback and suggestions that have arisen over the years.
 - JN has a child in year 1. JN would like to become more involved with the school and represent the voices of parents and carers within his year group. With a professional background that supports effective communication, he feels that he can ensure that parent feedback is directed through the correct channels and addressed appropriately. He views the PC as a valuable opportunity for parents and carers to engage meaningfully with the school.
 - MB has a child in Year 4 and, due to work commitments, has previously found it difficult to get involved with the school. She sees the PC role as a great opportunity to become more engaged and contribute to strengthening the connection between parents and the school community.

2. Purpose and Vision of the Parent Council

- The PC Terms of Reference and code of conduct document had been distributed to all PC members prior to the meeting, but there was an amendment to the code of conduct to include: *“As a member of the Parent Council I agree to: Not influence the course of discussions for any financial gain for yourself or any direct family member. Any potential conflict of interests must be disclosed at the earliest opportunity”*.
- The code of conduct outlines the expected behaviour for all PC members, and also applies to all school-related communication platforms, including Whatsapp groups.
- It was highlighted that the purpose of the PC is to encourage parents and carers to ask questions, raise concerns, and make constructive suggestions for the school community. CL stated that while she may not always be able to provide immediate responses, she will consult with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) as necessary before providing a full reply. The PC is not the appropriate forum for individual grievances or matters relating to a specific child. The PC will be a valuable platform to share and promote positive messages and successes within the school. Information discussed and outcomes from the PC will be communicated and made visible to all parents and carers.

3. How we will work together

- The meeting frequency will be once per half term on Friday afternoons, they will be a mix of virtual and face-to-face.

4. Key priorities for the year ahead

- CL is hoping to recruit additional PC members from Years 3, 4 and 6 from September.
- One of the aims of the PC is to encourage greater parental involvement in school life. To support this, the school will offer opportunities for parents and carers to engage, these include coffee mornings, parent workshops, 'stay and play', and 'say and read' sessions.
- The PC will be working alongside the school improvement plan, which will primarily focus on behaviour and academic achievement. The specific priorities in the school improvement plan will not be available until the next academic year.
- The school has a high percentage of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium and those with SEND, and this will be one area of focus for the PC. The PC can engage with parents and carers to gather ideas and feedback on how the school can best support these children.

5. Open discussion: hopes and ideas

- The PC was asked to explore new areas where parents and carers could offer support in the schools which are not currently being implemented by the school. One suggestion was the idea of Reading Breakfasts. The proposed format would involve inviting parents and carers into their child's classroom one morning per week, where they would have the opportunity to listen to their own child or a small group of children. This would strengthen home-school relationships.
- The PC was asked about the effectiveness of the school's communication methods. The school currently uses multiple communication channels to reach families: ClassDojo for messages and updates, school newsletters and emails. WhatsApp groups are used by parents to share messages sent by the school. It was acknowledged that communication remains a challenge, but the school is using a variety of communication channels to ensure important messages reach as many parents and carers as possible.
- The PC raised the issue of Breakfast Club availability. In response, CL shared that she is currently gathering information to explore whether the club can be accommodate more children, but there are a number of considerations: there must be a minimum staff-to-child ratio of 1:8, which means additional staff can only be brought in if there are enough children attending to cover the cost. There are also logistical challenges due to the cooking facilities. At the moment, there are spaces available on some of the days for families who may be interested.
- The PC discussed the government's proposed free breakfast club scheme, which would offer a 30-minute session before school that includes a free breakfast for all children. CL explained that it will be difficult to employ staff for just 30 minutes, and existing Teaching Assistants start at 8:30am, so covering earlier sessions would mean extending their working day. One of the schools in the Trust is currently trialling the scheme, but more investigation is needed to understand whether there would be enough interest and if the school has the space to accommodate it. If the scheme does go ahead, the current 7:45am Breakfast Club would still continue. It was noted that all children are offered freshly made breakfast bagels everyday, they also receive fruit at break time and in the afternoon, and KS1 pupils receive free milk. All children receive free school meals.

- The PC said parents had expressed concerns regarding the organisation of school trips. The main issue highlighted was the amount of travel time compared to the time spent at the venue, with instances of children having to leave activities early in order to return to school on time. This has negatively affected the overall value of the trips. CL acknowledged the concerns and explained that trip funding remains a significant challenge. Many trips have had to be cancelled due to insufficient payments from families. The cost of coach hire has increased considerably, making it financially unviable in many cases. As a result, the Trust has taken the decision to avoid coach bookings unless absolutely necessary. The PC suggested that there could be more local trips. These will be more cost-effective and time-efficient, allowing for a better experience for pupils without the burden of long travel times or high transport costs. They asked if there is an opportunity to create a trip fund; this would involve a voluntary parental contribution of approximately £20 at the beginning of the academic year. This fund would be used to help cover the cost of trips and reduce the likelihood of cancellations due to financial shortfalls. CL will investigate the feasibility of establishing a trip fund and report back to the PC. **Action CL**
- CL informed the PC that she is currently collaborating with Eltham College's deputy head for the year 5 pathways programme for high achieving pupils. The college also supports the school choir and has previously donated keyboards. The college has mini buses, and due to the close ties with the college, they may be available to hire. It was highlighted that Kemnal Technical College also has mini buses. CL will look at the feasibility of mini bus hire. **Action CL**
- CL highlighted the importance of children experiencing a visit to the beach, and it is something she would like to consider for EWPS. It was mentioned that Coopers Lane Primary School currently charter a train to Broadstairs, with each child accompanied by a parent and all families covering their own travel costs. CL agreed to speak with the Headteacher at Coopers Primary to understand the logistics, and if it would be financially viable. **Action CL**
- The PC suggested exploring the possibility of sponsorship from local estate agents and shops to help raise money for school trips. CL informed the PC that Clarion Housing has many residents in the local area, and the school has received grants. Mottingham Big Local Refocused is a lottery funded project who have sponsored science workshops, and they funded the nursery floor, but the lottery funding comes to an end in 2026. The PC could look into sponsorship opportunities with local businesses. **Action PC**
- The PC was informed that ParentPay has a hardship fund donation option and it has currently generated approximately £75 this academic year. A suggestion was made to include information about the hardship fund and what the money is used for in school communications. **Action CL**
- The PC reported that parents have provided negative feedback regarding the schools sandwich lunch option. CL explained that sandwiches were introduced to provide food for children who dislike hot meals. The school now offers a variety of lunch options: hot meals, pasta, jacket potatoes, and sandwiches with different fillings. CL confirmed that children can try a school lunch, and if they do not like it they can eat their homemade packed lunch. Pupils are not rushed during lunch periods, so they will have enough time to eat, although the final class has a set time limit. There will be no changes to the current school lunch arrangements.
- CL proposed showcasing student work such as art displays in the local community to raise the school's profile, for example in train stations. CL requested that the PC ask if parents and carers would be open to this idea. MB will explore the option of exhibiting artwork at the Phoenix Children's Resource Centre in Bromley. **Action PC**
- The PC suggested that prospective parents be signposted to current parents and carers at open days; they can share their experiences at the school. CL will consider this as an opportunity.
- CA and RW reported that some reception parents have expressed concerns about the transition from play-based learning to a more structured format. CL will liaise directly with reception parents to support a smooth transition and address concerns. **Action CL**

6. Next Steps and AOB (Any Other Business)

- CL will send a communication via Arbor and dojo to inform parents and carers who the PC members are, and confirm that the first meeting has taken place. **Action CL**
- The next meeting will be: Friday 19th September, 2pm at the school.

Actions:

Date	Action	Who
14.5.25	The PC asked if there is an opportunity to create a trip fund; this would involve a voluntary parental contribution of approximately £20 at the beginning of the academic year. This fund would be used to help cover the cost of trips, reducing the likelihood of cancellations due to financial shortfalls. It was clarified that PTA contributions cannot be used to subsidise individual trips for specific classes or year groups, as PTA funds are required to benefit the entire school community. CL will investigate the feasibility of establishing a trip fund and report back to the PC.	CL
14.5.25	CL informed the PC that she is currently collaborating with Eltham College's deputy head for the year 5 pathways programme for high achieving pupils, and the college also supports the school choir and has donated keyboards. The college has mini buses, and due to the close ties with the college, they may be available to hire. It was highlighted that Kemnal Technical College also has mini buses. CL will look at the feasibility of mini bus hire.	CL
14.5.25	CL highlighted the importance of all children experiencing a visit to the beach before leaving primary school. It was mentioned that Coopers Lane Primary School currently charters a train to Broadstairs, with each child accompanied by a parent and all families covering their own travel costs. CL agreed to speak with the Headteacher at Coopers Primary to understand the logistics, and if it would be financially viable.	CL
14.5.25	The PC suggested exploring the possibility of sponsorship from local estate agents and shops to help raise money for school trips. CL informed the PC that Clarion Housing has many residents in the local area, and in the past the school has received grants. Mottingham Big Local Refocused is a lottery funded project who have sponsored science workshops and they funded the nursery floor, but the lottery funding comes to an end in 2026. Mrs Arnold is applying for a grant from them for nappy changing facilities in the school. The PC could look into sponsorship opportunities with local businesses.	PC
14.5.25	The PC was informed that the Trust has a hardship fund donation option in ParentPay, it has currently generated approximately £75 this academic year. A suggestion was made to include information about the hardship fund and what the money is used for in school communications.	CL
14.5.25	CL proposed showcasing student work such as art displays in the local community to raise the school's profile, for example, in train stations. CL requested that the PC ask if parents and carers would be open to this idea. MB will explore the option of exhibiting artwork at the Phoenix Children's Resource Centre in Bromley.	PC

14.5.25	CA and RW reported that some reception parents have expressed concerns about the transition from play-based learning to a more structured format. CL will liaise directly with reception parents to support a smooth transition and address concerns.	CL
14.5.25	CL will send a communication via Arbor and dojo to inform parents and carers who the PC members are, and confirm that the first meeting has taken place.	CL