

Wednesday 14 May 2008 @ 6pm

Jack & Jill Nursery Parents' Forum

Minutes

Present: Staff - Kim, Elizabeth, Melanie, Jillian
Parents – Kay (1 – 2), Donna (2 – 3), Jo (1 – 2), Chrissie (3 – 5 + 1 – 2), Pauline and Richard (2 – 3), Angela (3 – 5), Flow (2 – 3), Mary (3 -5), Kristina and Andre (3 – 5), Moira (3 – 5), Charlene and Victor (2 – 3)

Apologies received from several parents, hoping to attend next meeting.

Welcome and Introductions

Kim thanked everyone for coming, and welcomed everyone to the first Parents' Forum Meeting. We went around the group and introduced ourselves.

Kim explained the incentive for creating the Forum had come from various sources, namely feedback from parent discussions and questionnaires, guidance from Curriculum for Excellence and changes in the Care Commission inspection process. Kim explained the Parent Forum ideally will be a parent lead group where parents will set the agenda - however she had prepared an agenda for this evening's meeting to start things off!

Parents' Forum Aims

Kim set out her hopes for the Forum, and asked parents to comment and add their own ideas. Parents were supportive of these aims, and there was general agreement that they would be adopted as the aims and role of the Forum, with room to evolve as the Forum develops.

- To encourage parents to contribute and participate in the work of the nursery
- To involve parents in their children's learning and in discussions about the children's education
- To involve parents in evaluating the nursery and contributing to the nursery's plans for improvement and development

One parent (3 – 5) asked how much flexibility there was in terms of activities offered to children. Kim explained that the curriculum is set by Scottish Executive and Glasgow City Council, and we have to follow the local and national guidance. However, within the framework there is room for us to follow the children's interests and base our activities and experiences on our knowledge of the children's abilities as long as we meet the required outcomes. Kim explained that there has been a review of the Scottish curriculum and changes are currently being implemented with the aim of establishing the new 3 – 18 Curriculum in our nursery by August. We have put

a display outside the 3 – 5`'s room, with draft curriculum policy statements, and we have asked for feedback from staff and parents. Jean, our peripatetic teacher, has been working with Elizabeth and Kim in developing this. One parent (3 – 5) asked for more information on the teacher's role in nursery. Kim explained it was through our partnership with Glasgow City Council for pre 5 education we had the support of Jean in the nursery, to keep us up to date with current practise. One parent (3 – 5) asked if Jean was involved with the children, and Kim went on to explain that Jean works with management, staff and children. Elizabeth gave an example of the type of work Jean does with the children and the benefits of this. One parent (2 – 3) then asked how the new curriculum affected the younger group. Kim explained that the Birth to Three Matters planning will continue to be used for the 0 – 3 years groups, and the Curriculum for Excellence outlines the curriculum for 3 – 18 years olds. However, the ethos within Curriculum for Excellence is relevant to all ages and will have an impact on the under 3`s. The parent asked how we were preparing for this and Kim explained we had external and internal training on this, and Jean had been supporting the 3 – 5`s staff in adapting their planning.

One parent (3 – 5) asked about the expectations for children starting with regards to reading and writing. Kim explained that there is no requirement for children to be able to read or write on starting school, although we do encourage children to recognise letters and numbers, and to experiment with writing. Kim explained our emphasis is more about teaching children to enjoy learning.

Fundraising

Elizabeth explained that we were planning our Summer Trip and that part of this is fundraising for it. Two parents had previously expressed an interest in becoming involved in organising events. Elizabeth asked whether anyone present was interested or had any ideas. No suggestions were forthcoming so she invited everyone to approach her later if they thought of anything. One parent (3 – 5) asked what we were raising money for and how much we were aiming for. Elizabeth explained that last year we had risen over £1000.00, which had mostly been spent on the trip - buses, entrance fees, lunch etc. The excess had been used as a kitty for occasional outings and small resources such as shaving foam, seeds etc. Elizabeth asked if the parents felt this was appropriate and everyone agreed.

From this we went on to discuss outings, where parents said they would like to see more outings for the children, as currently there is the summer trip and the Christmas Pinto. Elizabeth explained that we would like to go on more outings but there are financial restraints and if we were going to do this we would require parent helpers to assist. Parents agreed that these were issues to be considered. Kim explained that throughout the term room staff do try to go on shorter outings to support their current themes. One parent (2 – 3) commented that her child had clearly learnt from one of these outings and had told his mum about what he had learned. Kim gave some examples of recent outings that we had been able to organise and we encourage staff to do as

many of these as possible. One parent (3 – 5) commented on a magazine that provided information on local events, some of which were free.

Jack & Jill Nursery Mission Statement

Kim asked parents if they were aware of the current Mission Statement and read it out. Kim suggested that we would like to review the statement to take account of parent's views. There was general support for the current statement, once it had been adapted to include the new curriculum and the under 3's. One parent (2 – 3) raised the point that children learn everywhere, not just through planned activities. We discussed this and agreed we should make reference to it in the Mission Statement.

We went on to discuss the Learning at Home and in Nursery sheets as a means of working together to support children's learning. One parent (1 – 2) commented that she found these useful and that she could see her child learning as a result of the continuity between nursery and home.

Following on from this one parent (3 – 5) raised the issue of daily communication about activities in the 3 – 5 room. Parents feel that they are not getting enough information from their child and they do not know how their day has been or what they've been doing. Elizabeth explained this was something we had become aware of as a result of the recent Parent Questionnaire. Elizabeth had already consulted staff in the 3 – 5 room who would be happy to trial a daily sheet for this group. One parent (3 – 5) explained it did not need to be as comprehensive as the under 3's sheet, and we discussed the information desired;

- What activities have taken place
- How much they have eaten
- How their day has been

One parent (2 – 3) suggested using symbols and one parent (3 – 5) suggested a tick box system. One parent (3 – 5) suggested a whiteboard in Reception to avoid overuse of paper as it was not environmentally friendly. Kim agreed this was something that should be taken into consideration. Kim promised to follow this up.

One parent (2 – 3) said that she was concerned about the changes in her son's sleeping routines when he moves into the 3 – 5's, as they do not take a nap. The parent was concerned as at the moment he has his nap during the day and she struggles getting him to sleep at night. We discussed parents various bedtime routines and the routine in nursery. Kim explained that nursery cannot keep children awake nor will they enforce sleep time on children. One parent (3 – 5) explained that she had spoken with 2 – 3 room staff and her son had stopped taking a nap before he had moved into the 3 – 5 room. Two other parents (3 – 5) said that after a couple of weeks adaptation their children had settled into the new room routine and this had helped with bed time routines at home.

Vouchers / Free Things

One parent (2 – 3) suggested joining the various voucher schemes available. Elizabeth explained we had participated in the Tesco Sports for Schools scheme and were currently collecting the Tesco Computers for Schools. Some parents were unaware of this, and Elizabeth explained the poster and collection box were in Reception next to the Sign In / Sign Out sheet. Elizabeth asked parents to inform her of other schemes available in the supermarkets that they used and she would be happy to enrol the nursery if possible.

One parent (3 – 5) said that she supported the nursery in involving parents leading activities and pointed out that this was another free resource that we can access. We discussed the many benefits for children and parents that this offered. An open invitation was extended to the parents to come and help in this way. Several parents suggested ideas for professionals who could visit the nursery, and one parent (3 – 5) offered to provide details of contacts she had through her work.

One parent (3 – 5) said she would like a graduation photo and perhaps a list of contact details so people could keep in touch after they had left the nursery. Kim explained about the Graduation Party, and that we had arranged for our photographer to come in on Monday 19 May to take the graduation photos.

Parents were asked when we should meet again, and it was agreed that mid July would be most suitable.

Kim thanked everyone for their time, and asked parents to complete the Evaluation Form and hand in to the Office.

Action Points

- Update Mission Statement and Aims, and display in Reception - KR
- Develop a daily feedback system for 3 – 5's, and trial - EB
- Develop a programme of summer activities to include group outings and visits - KR/EB
- Organise contact details for the 3 – 5's who are leaving - EB
- Schedule next meeting - KR