

## **Making the Most of Parents' Evenings - A Guide for Parents**

Parent teacher evenings are a fantastic opportunity for you to get involved with your child's school. Fakenham Academy holds parents' evenings at different points in the year. The autumn term meeting is ideal for building relationships with your child's teachers. The spring and summer term meeting is best for picking up areas for development before the end of the school year.

Whenever they happen, they're a great opportunity for you and your child to talk to the teacher together, so it's important to prepare in advance to really make the most of the short window of time you get.

Here are our tips for getting the best from your parent teacher evening.

### **Prepare in Advance**

Remember you are going to get around 5 minutes to talk to each teacher. If you are prepared, you are more likely to have a successful meeting.

- Talk to your child before the meeting. Find out if there's anything they'd like to discuss or understand more about. How do they feel about school and their teachers?
- Make notes. You've not got long. Don't risk forgetting a key question. Write down your questions, or areas you want to discuss and refer to your notes at your meeting.
- Don't forget to listen. It's very easy to get caught up in the moment asking questions. Listen to what the teachers are telling you.
- Don't try to cover everything. Stick to asking questions about the things that are most important to you and your child.
- Make an appointment. You will be asked to make appointments, please do. Arrive in plenty of time so that you can look at any schoolwork before your meeting.

Your child will have different teachers for each subject. You will have several short meetings with different teachers. It's almost certain that you won't be able to meet with all their subject teachers in one evening, so prioritise meeting with the teachers of the subjects that your child either struggles with, or shows great promise in.

These meetings will be short, maybe five minutes each, so it is important to prepare well.

### **Some Questions you Could Ask**

What is my child most engaged with? Which classroom activities have resulted in your child making the most progress?

What can I do to help? The things you do with your child at home support the learning they do at school. What else could you do to make things better for your child?

What have been my child's big successes this term? And what are the big challenges for the future? If your child is not at the meeting, make sure you report successes back to them.

Does my child make friends easily? Are they happy at school? Are they engaged with the staff and the other children? Can we keep in touch? Regular short contact with teachers will greatly benefit you and your child.

**At the meeting**

Make it a two-way conversation. Read your child's school reports and schoolwork before you go. Make a note of what you like or what concerns you and bring it up with the teachers.

It's about your child. You may be unhappy with government education policy, or the way that the school is run but this is not the time to bring it up.

Don't forget the social side. There's more to school than learning. Ask about your child's social life at school. Take notes at the meeting. Write down what you hear so you can remind yourself later of what you heard.

Be patient. You might have to wait longer than you would like, but it will be worth it. You will have had a long and tiring day, but so will the teachers.

**After the meeting**

Don't wait to discuss big issues. If your child is struggling with a subject, or having difficulties at school, bring them up with teachers as they arise. It's better for you, your child and the teacher if problems are addressed early.

Keep up contact. Ask how you can support your child at school. Ask how you can stay in touch with teachers. Get their email addresses. Find out if you can pop in to see them for a chat.

Involve your child. Talk to your child before and after the meeting. Let them know how it went if they weren't there. Or discuss it with them if they were. Are they happy with how it went? Is there something you can work on together to make their lives at school better?