

Parent Forum

Wednesday 28th March 2018

Staff Present

Deborah Howard- Headteacher

Ellie Linton- Communications & Marketing Manager

Format

At the start of the forum we asked parents to write answers to the following questions on post-it notes and put them on big pieces of paper:

What do you want to share?

What do you want to ask/raise?

What's going well/highlights?

The answers that parents submitted were then used to structure the discussion at the forum.

We also had a separate piece of paper called the 'carpark', which parents could add post-it notes to throughout the forum so that these items could be addressed at the end of the meeting.

What's going well/highlights

"The Year 2 Tatton Park trip was really good."

"The music concert. I'm ashamed to say I went in with really low expectations and came away amazed, super proud and even with a tear in my eye- well done to all!"

"The SEN drop-in meetings are a great idea to plug a gap."

"The choir singing 'Nana was a Suffragette'."

"Staff on reception are always helpful."

"Mrs Howard sending postcards home to children."

"Have valued good feedback about my child's progress at parents evenings."

"Really value all the enrichment trips/ experiences provided."

"I think this is a fabulous school with some truly amazing staff who make such a difference to the children."

"I spotted a 'thank you' note to one of the teachers pinned to the wall- appreciating her for the difference she makes- I thought this was a fabulous thing to do."

"The morning opening of the doors has improved, thank you!"

You said

The Easter hat day and parade was lovely but I wondered if it needed to be a competition? As that inevitably resulted in disappointment for many. Perhaps all children could receive a sticker or something for taking part instead?

I'd like more creative work to be brought home and a better understanding of creative work done in Nursery.

There doesn't seem to be any consistency in the production of Mother's/Father's Day cards etc that the children make in class.

My child's work is not displayed on the walls in school.

The use of 'Twinkl' for colouring-in exercises does not feel creative or educational enough.

We did

Deborah Howard took this to the EYFS team to discuss how this can be improved in future. It was decided that we would keep the parade as an annual event but there will not be any prizes for specific children.

Deborah took this to the Nursery team to discuss. All agreed a lot of creative work is done in our Nursery and we will look to ways to send more of this home.

Deborah will take this to decide as a team which events we will make cards for in each Key Stage.

As above, a lot of creative work is done, so we are happy to celebrate this further with you. Deborah spoke to Early Years staff about parents being directed to artwork in the mornings if it has been done in class the day before. Each class has a dedicated topic board on the corridor outside their classroom. There are also specific subject boards all around school, including a maths gallery and art gallery, where work is displayed. For September, staff will discuss the balance they would like in their classrooms between children's work and learning aids.

Deborah explained how we use Twinkl in school and that it is mainly used for displays and certain learning resources (only if they are deemed to be of value). She also explained that Twinkl colouring in sheets would have been done during Freestyle Friday or at lunchtime and not as a class activity.

You said

You wanted to know how much say the school has in issuing fines for unauthorised attendance.

You wanted to know the purpose of parents' evenings.

Not all the books were out for parents evening for my child's class, only the maths and English books (maybe because of the Spring Showcase, which working parents were not necessarily able to attend?)

We'd like ways of increasing informal relationships with the teachers and getting a better sense of what is happening in the classroom.

I don't have a clear idea of my child's schedule with regards to how many hours each subject is taught for each day/week, when assemblies are and when Freestyle Friday is.

I would like my child's book changing day to be communicated in writing.

The website is not user friendly on a mobile phone so I use the app, but the calendar on there is not up to date.

We did

Deborah explained that fines are issued in accordance with local authority guidelines, meaning that school has little say when it comes to appealing any fines issued.

Deborah explained the parents evening process and how the showcase events link to parents evening.

For the next parents evenings (autumn term) we will make sure that the same books are displayed consistently across school.

Deborah explained that we will continue to provide opportunities (eg. showcases, class assemblies, teachers in the playground in the morning) for parents to form an informal relationship with the teachers.

Ellie suggested having a 'Day in the life of a pupil at Oswald Road' section in the newsletter, instead of the staff ones we currently have, which parents said they would really enjoy.

Ellie to ensure that book changing days are communicated for all classes at the start of the academic year and put on the school website from September.

Ellie to look into both of these issues with the web developer and company that hosts the app.

You said

What is the aim of Freestyle Friday?

I'm still unsure about my child's attendance at the ProSport lunch club.

I don't know when homework is set in my child's year group unless I check my emails for The Hoot.

I have a child in Year 3 who is missing his outside play in the afternoon. Also, in the week of the snow it felt like they had an awful lot of indoor plays that week.

The gritting of the playground is inconsistent, making it impossible for people with mobility issues to walk across some of it.

We did

Deborah explained that Freestyle Friday is held in the last 30 minutes of the day on a Friday. Children miss bits of Freestyle Friday if they make poor choices. With the new Behaviour Policy currently being worked on as a staff team, it is likely that Freestyle Friday will not be part of our school week from Summer 2 onwards.

Ellie to speak to ProSports coaches and staff on reception to see if we can keep a register for the lunchtime clubs, like they do with afterschool clubs. That way parents can call in to check if they child has been attending the clubs.

Discussions are currently taking place.

Deborah explained that Ellie had collated pupil voice from Years 3-6 after the changes to afternoon play were made. The feedback was positive and showed that relax time was consistently happening. Children said they did a range of activities instead, including peer massage, sharing a class novel, drawing and playing games. Deborah also explained that the School Business Manager and Strategic Lunchtime Organiser make the decision as to whether or not to call wet play when it has snowed, and that during the snow week it was deemed too dangerous for the children to be out in the playground on some days due to the type of snow (very slippy ice).

Deborah to look into this for next winter, putting a planned gritting regime into place.

You said

How is the RE curriculum split across different religions?

My child brought home a certificate that they had been given at the Easter Experience trip, which had a promotional flyer for church events printed on the back.

Are all religions taught as what some people believe and not as fact?

Can we have a better and broader offer on afterschool clubs?

Can any child go to Nurture Club?

Is it possible to see lesson plans/ overviews for the new PSHE curriculum?

We did

Deborah explained that the RE curriculum focusses on many different religions and that there is certainly no bias towards any one in particular. This curriculum can be viewed on the website and on topic webs.

Deborah explained that she had not been made aware of this. Deborah to follow this up with the church and to ensure the positive links we have are kept in place.

Deborah to speak to our RE Lead to discuss.

Deborah explained that we are looking to broaden the free clubs that we offer that will be run by the teachers and teaching assistants. Letters will be going out at the start of Summer 1 for various year groups (these are a mixture of targeted clubs and clubs that are open to all).

Deborah explained that Nurture Club is open to all children that feel that they're struggling at lunchtimes. Teachers can also refer children that they think would benefit from attending. The new lunchtime zones should reduce the demand for Nurture Club attendance as there will be clearly defined zones for more quiet play.

Ellie explained that we keep a folder at the front desk with all of the course information for the new PSHE curriculum. For copyright reasons we are not allowed to let parents take copies away with them, but parents can come to the office at any time to have a read of the information.

You said

Can we have some information regarding rewards and the different certificates that are given out in school?

You wanted to know if interventions are still taking place for higher ability children.

You wanted more of an explanation as to why we couldn't fundraise for Forest Crew.

There was a trip when I received the letter before it was available to pay for on SIMS Agora.

Some parents previously asked if it would be possible to 'overpay' for a trip, thus contribute to the school fund. However, there is no facility to overpay for trips on SIMS Agora.

We did

Deborah explained that this will be changing once the new Behaviour Policy has been put into place. Ellie to let parents know about the different awards given out once the policy has been launched.

Deborah explained that budget restrictions mean that we have fewer teaching assistants than before, which limits our availability to offer interventions outside the classroom. Although some children are given interventions outside the classroom, higher ability children are still getting the support they need to challenge them further by staff within their class. Good practice on this is also shared between teachers.

Deborah explained why Forest Crew is no longer running, for parents that were not aware of the situation. Deborah explained that fundraising for it would not be an options due to cost (we would have needed to raise £3k), as the school would not have the ability to fund the cost upfront, particularly if there was no guarantee of being able to raise such a large amount of money through fundraising activities.

It was established that this was a one-off occurrence, but if it happens again parents are to let Ellie know so that she can look in to the issue.

Ellie to speak to the Finance Team to see if this can be added as an option.

You said

There is a lot of litter in the playground.

Is there an opportunity for parents to contribute to the new behaviour policy?

French/Spanish is quite daunting/confusing at the start of Year 7. Can we focus a little on Spanish- even only after SATs for Year 6 would help?

We did

Deborah explained that Sarah Nicholls (School Business Manager) is working with the caretakers on a new cleaning rota for the playground. She also explained that the Eco Team have selected new bins for the playground with lids to stop litter being blown out of the bins by the wind. Ellie to speak to the Strategic Lunchtime Organiser to check if litter pickers are still going round.

Ellie explained that parents are still able to send in their feedback on what elements of the current policy they like and what they feel needs addressing (to be emailed directly to e.linton@oswaldroad.manchester.sch.uk).

Deborah explained that Spanish is taught as a subject in KS2 and is often linked to topic work. Year 6 will start Spanish after SATs are finished, as they have done in previous years. Ellie explained that we are going to start putting a Spanish 'Phrase/Word of the Week' on The Hoot in KS2 and in the Weekly Update.