

# Virtual Parent Forum

## Tuesday 30th March 2021

### Staff Present

Deborah Howard- Headteacher (DH)

Ellie Linton- Communications & Marketing Manager (EL)

### Format

At the start of the forum we asked parents to think of answers to the following questions:

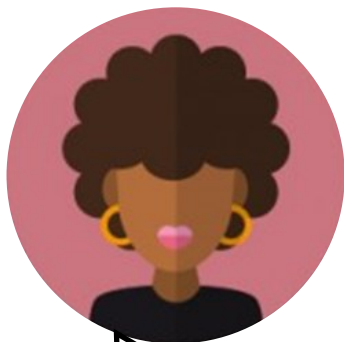
**What do you want to share?**

**What do you want to ask/raise?**

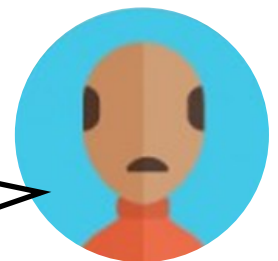
**What's going well/highlights?**

The answers that parents submitted were then used to structure the discussion at the forum. Some parents emailed their discussion points in before or afterwards as they were unable to attend the meeting. These were all discussed by DH & EL in their follow-up meeting after the forum and have been included in these notes.

## What do you want to share?



"I wanted to say a huge thanks for the way the school staff have looked after my daughter since her diabetes diagnosis , particularly her teachers and the office team!"



"My child attended skeleton school and we really felt an appreciation for the impossible task that schools had been given during the closure. It gave us so much confidence and faith in the school and its leaders."

"I just feel very proud that my children are at Oswald Road. Throughout the lockdown the staff have made it easy for parents and children and as a result I really feel like my children have not felt the impact of the difficult circumstances."



# You said

"What was the purpose of the recent assessment week? It seemed out of place with Oswald Road and disappointing for it to take place just after the children came back after lockdown. What were the school assessing and why at that particular time? It felt like too much pressure on the children and not easing them in. I wish parents had been told about it before."

**"When exercise books are sent home at the end of the year there are often lots of empty pages at the back that have gone to waste- could the books be passed up to the next teacher so that they're always filled up?"**

"One thing that has been good about the changes in school that have come through Covid is that as parents we don't have to negotiate the playground at home time with so many snacks being given to children and bake sales. It feels difficult to say no to your child when they're asking for food at home time and all their friends have got something. Could there be a rule that snacks could only be given to children outside the gate, when pick-up does move back into the playground?"

# We did

DH explained that we felt as a school that it was important to carry on as normal with the assessment week that had been planned since the start of the year. We needed to measure progress to get a snapshot of where children were at after the school closure as we can't plan effective catch-up learning without getting assessment data. Teacher assessment via looking at workbooks and observing answers written on white boards and shared verbally would not be thorough enough to get this snapshot, we needed something that was going to give us the full picture. There has been a real place for quizzes and mini checkers of knowledge following lockdowns and returns to school – however at this normal assessment point we needed to get a thorough picture to allow teachers to plan effectively. There is also so much more expected of school at this time. We very much believe that the children should not feel or be put under any pressure when doing assessments, our message is always just to try your best. We also felt that it was important to keep assessment week as planned so that we have a sense of normality in school. We can appreciate that it would have been good for parents to have been made aware of this beforehand, so we will ensure that we do so if there is ever a situation like this in the future.

**DH looked into this following the forum and unfortunately we're not able to do this, as we would not be able to maintain consistency in this across the school due to some children taking the books home and some not. As paper waste is the big issue here, EL will speak to the Eco Team to see if they can make a poster to encourage families to make use of their unused pages if they have any at the end of the academic year.**

DH explained that we introduced a new Food & Drink Policy a couple of years ago, after consultation with children and parents, and one of the elements of this is that we do not tell children that any foods are not allowed. If there was a concern about what a child was eating in school, the teacher would raise this with the Health Lead and they would have a confidential chat with the parents. Unfortunately we also cannot police what happens after the school day has finished, so we would not be able to ban snacks from being given out in the playground by parents at home time. We could, however, make changes to the way bake sales are run once these are allowed again (eg. only having them on the last day of term so that they're seen as more of a treat ) This idea was put to parents during the forum but all agreed that they did not think this was the issue so it would not help to put this in place.

# You said

"I wanted to ask what the school's plans are for a possible 'School Streets' event and the general traffic situation around school."

**"I drive my daughter to school from Hulme and find it very stressful. Is there a way we can provide solutions to those that need to use a car to get to and from school? This may be more helpful than the approach at the moment that says what they can't do/where they can't park. Perhaps we could find out who lives far away and drives and work with them, maybe set up a carshare initiative (post-covid)? Or tell them another place that they can park that won't be breaking the rules or just pushing the traffic onto another street that has similar issues. Could the precinct carpark be an option, for example?"**

"It was good that school shared the information about lateral flow tests being made available to families of school children, and I know that a lot of parents particularly higher up the school are making use of this. Could school have a stronger stance on this by encouraging parents to test regularly? Particularly before the children come back after Easter to prevent bubble closures as much as possible."

**"When will Stay & Plays be back on for EYFS parents?"**

# We did

EL explained that we are planning a School Streets event in May, where we'd close Nicolas Road at drop-off and pick-up times. This would be a trial to see how we got on, with a view to joining a network of Chorlton schools as part of their bigger School Streets event in June.

**EL to get in touch with Walk Ride Chorlton to see if they have any resources that could help with this, or ideas for better places that parents could 'park and stride'. Since the forum the precinct carpark was checked as an option and their grace period is 10 minutes, which would probably not be enough time for parents to use given the current staggered drop-off and pick-up times.**

EL to send clear communications to parents explaining the rationale behind the lateral flow testing programme and how it can work in the long term to prevent bubble closures. Recent Year 5 case will be used as an example of how an asymptomatic case was caught early to prevent further spread across the school community. We will also ask parents to test their children before coming back after Easter.

**DH explained that we are only given new guidance at the time, rather than being given a 'roadmap' out of restrictions as with the national guidelines. This means that we do not yet know when we will be able to start having parents in school again (this includes if we were to hold the event outside, unfortunately).**

# You said

"I have concerns about the Star of the Week certificates, my daughter gets very upset by them when she doesn't win. It's good that it is no longer announced in the newsletter, and seemed to stop being included in the assemblies part-way through lockdown, but are the school considering getting rid altogether?"

**"The children seem to be using so many apps for school now, with so many different passwords! I'd love a sheet of paper instead!"**

"I work with a lot of artists that are currently unemployed due to the pandemic, and we have a situation where lots of children are in need of creative learning opportunities. Could we link them up and use some of the catch-up funding for this?"

**"I have seen an initiative that looks great for the school to join- it is called the Diverse Curriculum Charter. It has been put together by a local MP for schools to join and show their commitment to delivering a truly diverse and anti-racist education."**

"I wanted to ask about plans for promoting emotional health and wellbeing and the possibility of increasing time outside/physical activity in the last term. I really think having regular fun and relaxed activities planned that get children reconnecting/ exercising/ outside/ relaxing would be really beneficial."

# We did

DH explained that pupil voice has always been positive on the Star of the Week certificates. It is also common practice within schools and we find that children are often proud of the ones that do get it, which is something we think is really special about our school. We will, however, review this with the Behaviour Team and the children (through the use of pupil voice) ahead of the summer holidays.

**DH explained that this is something we've had to introduce to ensure that our home learning offer is of a high standard. Not all parents will have access to a printer and we would not be able to provide worksheets from school for everyone during a closure.**

DH explained that although we would not be able to use the catch-up funding for this, we have thought about running something like this alongside Hoot Camp in the school holidays. We will look into this further (EL to contact this parent directly to see if a link can be established).

**EL passed to our Curriculum Lead, Assistant Head Kat Rowe, and we have since signed up to the charter as a school.**

All class teachers have been told that they can take extra playtimes whenever there is a free slot in the playground. Kieran is also doing extra outdoor PE slots with a focus on teambuilding and working together. Our children continue to have a voice through regular wellbeing check-ins on how they reconnect with school and we continue to ensure the principles of nurture are in place to understand children's wellbeing needs. All classes are continuing to take part in our planned PSHE recovery lessons, additional activities based on the outcome of check-ins, and targeted therapeutic support continues to be available for individuals/groups of children who require it.



# What's going well/ highlights?

**"Miss Webb and Miss Rice are just amazing, my girls love having them as their teachers. Their videos in lockdown were great, so well done to the teachers for doing them. It was amazing as a parent to see their lessons on a screen, I was blown away!"**

**"My son loved when Mr Burton covered his class recently. Mrs Murray's wellbeing videos are also brilliant!"**

**"I thought the RSE PowerPoint was really good."**

**"During lockdown it was fantastic that the work was video based and supplemented by one live Zoom call a week- this was perfect for managing time. I think timed live lessons would have been a nightmare!"**

**"The video based learning really stepped up in January with the most recent closure. Mr Salisbury even taught me to like maths!"**

**"The support from the pastoral team has been amazing."**

**"I recently had a call with Sam from the SEN team and she was amazing."**

**"The communication is great, it is fantastic that Ellie replies to every email and so quickly."**