

Virtual Parent Forum

11th July 2022

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?




"The reshuffle of the reception classes prior to Year 1 received a really positive response from my daughter."




"Really pleased to see that the Targeted Learning Model is carrying on- I feel it has helped my Year 5 child with his personal organisation, and prepared him well for high school due to the movement between classes during the school day."



"A huge thank you to the SEND team, Helen Woolf & Sam Barrett. They are both superheroes and their work on my child's EHCP has been fantastic."



"Thank you for the transition events, my child is moving from Nursery to Reception and joined late, but it's been fantastic and really good to see who their teachers will be next year."



"It was so nice to have parents back in school for the Jubilee event and transition. Especially for parents of older children who don't get a chance to come to school as often. It was also amazing to see the steel pans players at the Jubilee picnic! The whole event gave a really good sense of what goes on beyond what my child says at home. It was lovely to see the ease of communication between everyone."

You said

"I was disappointed that the PTA summer fair clashed with Eid. It felt a shame."

"The summer fair didn't feel very inclusive due to the cost. When they used to do a wristband and pay as you go system it felt fairer. It would be good to have a wristband that included food and unlimited water. We paid £7.50 to get in then £40 once we were in, so felt as though there were lots of hidden costs. It would be good to have a loose change type stall to give children the concept of cash and handling/spending their own money."

"Not a fan of how much high school talk there seems to be in Year 5- my daughter says it seems like a lot of wasted time talking about it in school. Children do not want to be rushed, they want to enjoy what little time they have left at primary school. The amount of talk about preparation for high school is putting my child off slightly."

"What is happening about outward comms? There seems to be a lot of communication going out via ParentMail that doesn't always get included in the Weekly Update. Some things seem like they aren't time critical so could be saved for the weekly newsletter. Could we also split the Weekly Update into yeargroup sections so that it's easier to see which stuff is relevant just for your child?"

We did

DH & EL to have closer coordination with PTA going forward, as used to have regular meetings before covid. This will ensure things like dates can be cross checked with the school and religious calendars to avoid such clashes in future. Unfortunately this was the only date available when factoring in the closest Saturday to the end of term without having a clash with the Maker's Market to reduce any safety risk. The PTA also had to take into consideration the availability of the core organisers of the PTA who needed to be there on the day.

To note, in discussions all agreed the PTA were doing an amazing job and understood the need for them to raise money. There were also discussions about a great atmosphere at the fair and the respect for everyone who was putting their time in for this. EL to fed back to the PTA , who have explained that they tried to strike a balance with the cost of entrance which covered unlimited inflatable access which has in the past been limited to one go, unlimited assault course access and an included drink. We have in the past had an all inclusive band option which was more than £7.50 and will consider these in the future. All of the games were loose change games as well as our book and toy stall. This was balanced against card payments that could be made by adults.

DH to feed back to the Year 5 and Year 6 teams about this as a reminder that not all children will want to hear a lot about high school preparation – especially at the beginning of Upper Key Stage 2.

Now that EL back from maternity leave she will look at making outward comms more streamlined and see if there is a better way to organise the Weekly Update so it is easier to skip sections that are not relevant to a particular year group. All comms will continue to go out via ParentMail, however we will ensure that all of this is also included in the Weekly Update, so that parents have a choice of whether to read it as it comes out or all together on a Thursday afternoon when the MailChimp goes out.

You said

"The governing body meeting minutes are not up to date on the website."

"The Year 5 trip to the cinema didn't seem like a very exciting trip and felt quite expensive for what you got."

"Parents are already worried about paying for the upcoming Year 6 residential due to the cost of living crisis. Can we start making payments in smaller instalments soon for this to help ease the pressure?"

"PE seems to be quite football focussed. We'd like reassurance that PE is inclusive, equal and not just football. We'd like to see equality on captain choosing to ensure there's no favouritism."

We did

EL to get the latest ratified minutes from the clerk to the governing body and upload them to the website.

DH explained that this would not happen again- going forward trips will be written into certain units and planned at the start of the school year, with a £40 limit per child per academic year (apart from in Year 6 due to the residential). Subject leads will also have access to this list of trips for the year so that they can cross-reference them with the curriculum. DH & Kat Rowe (Assistant Head, Curriculum) will then do regular checks on this throughout the year. There were no early bookings this year due to covid, which is why this trip took place, as there was nothing else that could be planned that would work unfortunately. We took the decision that a trip to the cinema would be better than no trip at all, and have ensured that work will be carried out for future years to make sure this doesn't happen again. It was also noted Year 5 accessed a range of in school enrichment over the year, however there was an understanding this was not the same as the children going out on school trips.

EL raised with Finance Team and a letter was sent out during the summer holidays about a payment plan that has been set up, so that parents can start paying in smaller amounts from 1st September.

DH explained how outdoors games works and said that football is not overplanned and no straying from the curriculum should be taking place. Work has been done to reiterate about a different sport being done per half term, with a swap of when certain sports are played so that football is not reverted to as a backup in the case of bad weather (ie. football planned for when weather is likely to be worst). Football has now also been removed from the Play Leads' games and lunchtime sports clubs (unless the club is a specific football focussed club). DH shared parent concerns about captain choosing/favouritism with the PE team and it was agreed that teams would now be chosen on a number basis (eg. 1,2,3,4,1,2,3,4) more often rather than captains choosing their own teams. If captains are being chosen, there will be more consideration as to a range of children being asked. There would also then be more adult direction on children being put into more mixed groups. If a child is not seeming to be engaging with the PE lessons, Mr Bentley will raise this with the class teacher.

You said

"There doesn't feel like there are many opportunities for children to take part in different types of sports competitions."

"Kingswood Residential.. I wondered if the school would be interested in reviewing their approach to how they deliver the residential for Year 6. My current job is delivering a project that works with 9 residential outdoor learning centres across the country and fund them to deliver week long residential for children and young people who come from inner city areas and have never had experience of being in the countryside before. I've learned a lot about different residential programmes and what a transformative experience it can be for young people using nature connection as a pathway to improved mental health and well-being and also engagement in school."

"Year 6 homework - I can't believe I'm saying this, but one of the things that we would have liked to have more of in year 6 is homework! It has been absolutely minimal for them, and our experience is that our child in year 3, has had far more than our Year 6 to do, which has made it hard to get him to do it. I really think it would've been a great opportunity to prepare them for high school in terms of managing their time and doing work independently, as well as consolidate learning (esp with lost learning through covid)."

We did

EL checked with PE team and they confirmed that the following competitions were attended by Oswald Road children in the last academic year: Swimming gala; Boys football league ; Girls football league ; Boys futsal ; Girls futsal ; Tag rugby (Inspire league which was set up for beginners. We took a year 5 group this year); Basketball (mixed team of boys and girls, Inspire league); Dodgeball (Mixed team of boys and girls, inspire league); Hockey (Mixed team of boys and girls); Athletics ; Cross country

EL to put this parent in touch with Year 5/6 Phase Lead, Jen Beech, to discuss how we could possibly work together.

DH is going to be carrying out a review of the homework policy and will ensure that this is taken into account

You said

"It came to light at the school fair, when we were clearing up, that nothing is recycled at school, not even paper! Is that right? We couldn't quite believe that that was possible?!"

"The fact that families struggle to get after school care from Owl Club which has a significant impact on many aspects of our life. We have been on the waiting list for Owl Club since our daughter started in Reception and were really hopeful that she would get a place at Owl Club for even one day a week from Sept 2023 but again this hasn't happened. We are grateful for the after-school activity sessions but unfortunately these are only until 4.30pm."

"Greater communication between school and families re: Pride events which took place in school recently. We are fully aware of the need for inclusivity but feel there needs to be open communication with school so that a balance is achieved around how this is delivered whilst being mindful of religious beliefs etc."

"Opportunity to look at our child's books before the final weeks of the academic year so that we have a better understanding of the actual activities/tasks they are doing and where support is needed. I know Covid is likely to have had an impact on this but looking at other options such as sending books home for the weekend would really be helpful."

We did

We have a system in school for paper recycling, EL and DH to speak to PTA about making use of this at future events. We will also look into including plastic recycling as part of this.

We are looking at longer term plans to see if more capacity can be provided for wraparound care, however we unfortunately have no other solution in school at the moment.

We would be able to share details after Pride events to explain what was covered in each yeargroup etc.

In future we plan to have opportunities earlier in the year for parents to come in for showcase/stay and play type events. This year was different due to covid, which is why it was so late in the academic year.

You said

"School having a greater overview of the PTA and how this can be more inclusive and representative of the school demographics. I have already written to Mrs Howard about the fact that we felt excluded from the summer fair due to it being on the same day as Eid but there are other aspects which show that the PTA are unaware of the school community; we did attend the summer fair in 2021 but ALL the sweets for the games contained gelatine so were unsuitable for any children following halal or vegetarian diets. The meetings are also held at the Lloyds pub which excludes people who do not go to pubs for religious reasons and I must admit this is one of the reasons I have not volunteered to join the PTA (as well as being extremely busy with other things)."

"We are aware that there is a really wide range of abilities within our daughter's class and we would find it really helpful to have further information on how all the pupils are supported to achieve their full potential (and not just the ones that are falling behind)."

"Opportunities for extra-curricular activities such as learning to play a musical instrument from early on (which we would be happy to pay extra for)."

We did

School would firstly like to reiterate the huge amount of respect they have for the work the PTA does. EL discussed these points with the PTA committee, who explained that as a result of feedback from 2021 they provided Halal and vegetarian sweets in 2022. They have had one in person meeting at the Lloyds as they were unable to have the meeting on school premises, however they also had an option to dial in via zoom, which one parent did, to allow access to the meeting whatever your circumstance or religion. All of the PTA meetings have been accessible via Zoom since COVID and will continue to be ongoing. The PTA also welcomes all parents to join the committee, or even just come along to the first AGM of the next academic year to see if it is something they'd like to be involved in. This will take place on Tuesday 13th Sep at 7.30pm on Zoom (and potentially in person too). Committee positions that will be available to vote on at this meeting are:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Social Media and Comms
- Events Co-ordination
- Outdoor Space Co-ordinator

We'd welcome all further support for the committee and have regular monthly meetings

This is covered by our Targetted Learning Model, which we introduced last academic year– [click here to read the letter explaining how it works](#). In addition we will also have a focus next academic year on how we offer more challenge to our higher achievers.

We currently offer opportunities for children to learn a musical instrument in Year 3 upwards, but do not have plans at the moment to offer this to the younger yeargroups. We do, however, offer a wide range of afterschool clubs that are open to younger yeargroups.



What's going well/ highlights?

"I have a very happy child!"

"The Dungeons and Dragons role play that Mr Wheeldon organised really hit the mark. It was a lovely thing to offer and shows that staff go above and beyond."

"We feel that the communications team (Ellie and Christina) are amazing! Very responsive to messages."

"Mrs Howard is very approachable and we know that if there is a matter that needs raising we can do that with the assurance that it will be dealt with in a fair and thorough manner."

"We felt really well supported during the pandemic and felt that the school managed a very complex situation well."

"We find it really helpful being sent an outline of the work that will be covered in lessons."