

Notes from Parents' Forum

26.03.18

Forest school

It was suggested that Forest School (which the children go to in Reception) is replicated in the juniors. Mrs Griffiths explained that the Forest School programme is directed towards younger pupils, and would be quite costly to replicate further up the school. Pupils tend to go to Kew Gardens, the Natural History Museum and Science Museum or Chelsea Physic Garden to support science learning in KS2.

Wednesday Word

A parents in an older class had suggested that the Wednesday Word was perhaps not the best use of PA funding. Mrs Griffiths explained that the school introduced the Wednesday Word several years ago after suggestions from parents. There is not a version for older pupils. Parents of younger children supported the Wednesday word as part of the children's Catholic formation. Mrs Yates would email parents of older classes to see if there was a general consensus.

Payments

Parents asked whether the spending of the Newman Fund and the Parents' Association would be published annually. Mrs Griffiths explained that spending of the Newman Fund would be reported from the end of the financial year 2019. Mrs Yates will publish PA spending at the end of the summer term and at the end of the financial year after that. The PA accounts are always available for those who want to see them.

Volunteer list

A parent asked whether all parents who volunteered at the start of the academic year had been timetabled to help. Mrs Griffiths explained that over 60 parents had volunteered their time in supporting on trips, regularly in class, or with particular skills. A list of names has been circulated to teachers, who can contact volunteers as needed.

CCS badges

A parents enquired about the Catholic Children's Society badges which had been given out at assembly. Mrs Griffiths explained that on badge for each week of Lent had been provided as part of our Lenten Charity Collection. The school was being encouraged to give to children who were particularly kind to each other during Lent. Anybody was able to nominate a child, and the RE monitors awarded the badges on Friday. A variety of boys and girls from various year groups had been chosen.

Directed play

Parents enquired whether boys and girls were encouraged to play with each other at breaktimes. Mrs Griffiths explained that all children are encouraged to socialise with each other at breaktimes, and to organise their own group games and activities.

Lunchtime

Some parents have shown concern that their children do not finish their food at lunchtime. Mrs Griffiths reiterated that pupils are given 20-25 minutes to eat their lunch. The first 10 minutes are in silence to encourage concentration. In her experience, pupils who do not finish their lunch during this time are unlikely to do so if given further time.

Emotional Wellbeing

Parents requested a parent workshop on emotional wellbeing. Mrs Griffiths will contact the educational psychologist to see whether we can arrange something through the local service.

PE Kit

Infant parents asked whether children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 might be able to come into school wearing PE kit. Mrs Griffiths explained that from September, tracksuits will be available for infant children, this will allow for greater flexibility but the school will decide on any changes to the current system in time for the new academic year and let parents know.

Swimming

Parents were impressed at the school's performance at the recent swimming gala and asked whether Oratory swims more than other local schools. Mrs Griffiths explained that the school does invest more than is absolutely necessary in swimming as it is an important skill. The National Curriculum only requires pupils to swim a distance of 25 metres. Our school ensures that all pupils in the juniors swim for half the year.

New Starters

Parents asked whether children who start the school in classes other than Reception could have a better induction. Mrs Griffiths agreed to make a brochure for new children, and involve Year 6 prefects in their induction. The group agreed that parent reps could be chosen in July so that parents of new starters can have a contact as soon as the academic year begins.

Water Bottles

Parents asked whether children are encouraged to drink during the day. Mrs Griffiths explained that all children should bring a bottle of water to school. They are encouraged to refill it at breaktime.

Sports Day

Parents asked whether the children's houses could be made more obvious during sports day. Mrs Griffiths explained that at junior sports day, the children now sit in their houses. The introduction of coloured caps will now make houses more easily identifiable. The possibility of shading in St Luke's during infant sports day was discussed, but it was agreed that it would be too time consuming for the hour that sports day is and that the caps, sunscreen and water were adequate.