**Parent Forums**

**Wednesday 10th July and Thursday 11th July**

Presented by Mrs Peal, Mrs Bascombe and Mr Williams

The purpose of the sessions was to inform parents of the school plan and to update them on the new behaviour and attendance policies which have been circulated by the school office and are available on the school website. This session was an open forum – i.e. all parents were invited to attend. This report gives an outline of the School Plan and lists some of the Q&A which it was felt would be of interest to parents who could not attend.

**School plan**

The school plan is a living, working document that has been produced by the school but has also had input from key stakeholders. Each school plan lasts for two years and we have reached the end of one plan and are about to start on the next.

The purpose of the plan is to help drive continuous improvement within the school ensuring that it is an exceptional place to learn.

The key reasons for having the plan are –

- To improve outcomes
- To reflect local and national pictures
- To ensure stakeholders’ views are considered and incorporated (e.g. parent surveys)
- To build on success and bridge any gaps that might emerge

The plan has been created using a monitoring and evaluation cycle, this includes

- Observations and learning walks
- Work scrutiny
- Survey results
- Talking with children
- Analysis of data
- Feedback from moderators, county advisors/ external bodies

The vision for 2015 has three major themes:

1. **To make learning irresistible**

   - Ensure that standards in teaching remain high: 100% good or better with even more teaching becoming outstanding.
   - Review phonic and spelling provision and ensure parents know how to support their child.
   - Review maths provision- mental and oral and core skills
   - Review science provision- investigative skills and opportunities.
   - Developing relevant, real-life learning experiences and engaging children in creative learning through ICT.
• Review curriculum provision in light of new national curriculum and ensure levels of enjoyment and attainment are raised across the wider curriculum

• Raising expectations through behaviour policy and improving responsibility-developing the Gem project and thinking skills

• Improving the attainment and engagement of boys with their learning

• Targeted use of grants- pupil premium, SEND and Sports to raise the levels of engagement and attainment for targeted groups and individuals.

• Use music to enhance wider curriculum provision and provide all children with a wider musical experience.

2. To make best use of physical space and use systems effectively

• Complete a space audit and explore further extension/revision of space usage to ensure effective and efficient use of our schools, for example very aware that individual classrooms at the junior school are cut off from each other. We’d like to find a way of joining them.

• Develop outdoor learning and spaces for forest school and outdoor classrooms to ensure our children engage with the environment and have relevant and exciting outdoor opportunities which make them confident, resilient learners.

• Engaging groups in refurbishing the grounds to motivate and encourage them.

3. People share our message and contribute towards continuous improvement

• Engage and support parents to ensure that they are confident and informed about their child’s progress, next steps, attainment and our approach

• Staff structures enabled to support continuous improvement by providing clear career pathways and team structures to drive forward improvements and developments across the school. We will be altering staff structures to support continuous improvement, for example for literacy, appointing reading, writing and phonics leaders who will make sure that their areas of expertise are fully provided for within the school.

• Ensure effective use of communication from the school and about the school.

• Access the local community, groups and businesses to develop the children’s awareness of our surroundings and the diversity in culture and religion.

In September the school will

• Have included key points from the annual survey into the School Plan.
• Ensure that Stakeholders are engaged and fully understand the plan.
• Make sure that trends, patterns and local and national changes are reflected in the plan.

The actions we are currently working on ready for the Autumn term include:

• Developing spellings and phonics- and ensuring the weekly communication to parents includes use of the look, cover, write, check method to support children with learning their words for checking the following week.
• Creating plans to ensure communication about progress and attainment is proactive and parents feel that they have the information they need.

• Creating the teams of staff and stakeholders who will be driving the improvements in the School Plan.

Following feedback from a parent that he felt the school was overly positive at parent evenings and also following some comments made in the parents’ survey, it was made clear in the letter sent home with reports that parents can ask their child’s teacher for their attainment levels at any time. There will be a forum in the Autumn term giving a full explanation of the levels and the way progress is tracked.
**Attendance Policy**

Currently the school attendance percentage is 95.1%. If this should get to 95% or below the school would be considered ‘at risk’ and may find itself under review by outside agencies.

This percentage includes absence for sickness and holiday and is based on each half of the day counting as 1 session i.e. 1 week’s absence is 10 sessions.

The government policy on taking holiday outside of the designated school holidays is zero tolerance. Any time taken should only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

The school policy to date has been slightly more relaxed than this and has allowed a three day tolerance. However, due to the rising absence percentage, there is a need to come in line with government policy and set a zero tolerance for holiday taken outside of the school breaks.

Of course there will always be exceptional circumstances which will be considered and in some cases accepted; these requests need to be submitted in writing to the school in the normal way.

Q. What count as “Exceptional Circumstances?” under which absence would be authorised?

A. Music and dance exams would continue to be authorised as at present and of course any medical appointments. Probably also an exceptional opportunity such as participating in a West End show. It would be helpful to have a group of parents who could work with the school to identify a list of circumstances where authorised absence should normally be granted. If you would be interested in getting involved in this please contact the school office.

Q. What happens if I take my child out of school anyway, without authorisation?

A. If absence is repeated and extensive the Education Welfare Officer would get involved. If occasional, there would be no immediate action at present. The County is developing guidance which may include the option to fine parents, but this is not our current policy. However, you should be aware that absence has a marked effect on children’s performance at school.
**Behaviour policy**

This was developed by staff in close consultation with pupils who proposed some of the terminology in the new policy. The aim of the new approach is to tie in with the Learning Behaviours (Gems) which are the behaviours we want to encourage to help children learn and to feel safe and happy in school.

Q. If Red and Yellow Cards are removed, aren’t consequences for bad behaviour unclear?

A. The school is attempting to change attitudes of pupils so that they behave in a way that is underpinned by the values of respect, care, consideration and responsibility for themselves and others. We do not want children to behave well out of a fear of consequences but to gain a feeling of self worth and responsibility. The Cards were never the important thing – it is the actions that count. Appendix 4 of the school behavioural policy clearly outlines the consequences of misbehaviour that are relevant to different age groups.

Q. Will there be no more bronze, silver, gold badges at the Junior school?

A. No. This scheme was highly motivating to some and demotivating to others so it has been removed from the new policy.

Q. If there is behaviour issue that I hear about from my child and I think the teacher may not be aware of, should I let them know?

A. Yes please – report either direct to the teacher or via the office. It is helpful to teachers to know about incidents, as the report can be logged and may show a pattern of behaviour which needs tackling in a particular way.

Following our forums we are looking into offering support meetings for parents to help with their children’s behaviour at home.
**Other questions**

Q. Are there any plans to change the way Phonics and Spelling are taught?

A. We are looking at improvements to the spelling sheets which are sent home, to better communicate how to support your child. This will be communicated during Learn to Learn fortnight at the start of next term.

Q. The school was friendly and happy but is it sufficiently focused on the academic side?

A. We are very focused on getting the best out of all our children, and teaching standards and pupil progress are monitored rigorously, with action plans put in place if there are any shortfalls. However, we do not see focus on children’s happiness and learning behaviour as separate from their academic success but as an integral part of it – an unhappy or insecure child, one who cannot work with others or is easily distracted will not make the academic progress of which they are capable. The focus on Learning Gems in the behaviour policy is not a side issue, it is fundamental to the academic progress of our children.

Q. Year 4 has suffered a lot of staff changes and a very disrupted year. What can be done?

It had been a difficult year with maternity leave and staff changes. But it was shown that direct contact with the school about any concerns were very useful. This year group should experience more stability in Year 5. We are monitoring progress closely and will give additional support if it is needed.

**Can You Help?**

Parents at the forum talked about new ways of filming forums for the website. If any parents know of easy ways of doing this, please step forward.

If you have found websites or apps that have helped your child with their learning, please share them with us.