



The Two Way Street

This is the last issue of The Two Way Street for this academic year, so can we wish you all a happy and safe summer break!

We are going to continue with the feedback from the questionnaire, both positive and ideas for making the school even better.

These are some of the positive comments:-

- *"It pushes my child to her full potential and boosts her self-confidence"*
- *"I like the fact that you look at the reasons for the child's behaviour not that the child is just being naughty!"*
- *"...friendly and approachable staff. Opportunities given for children to do extra lessons before school to progress if struggling. Having children who are happy to go to school."*
- *"The dedication of the staff and their head and the nurturing environment to help the children reach and excel their goals. Basically everything!"*
- *"I feel very honoured that both of my children attend this school"*
- *"...just keep it up you are all outstanding. Your child of the week is brilliant. It can be seen that pupils are cared for and seen to be treated in a way that makes them feel important "*
- *"... the open class rooms make the school a very good place to visit, this being because it is such a quiet place and thus means the children are enjoying their time in school"*

Points that we intend to address (or are already addressing); -

- *"Paper copies of letters to be given which require a response from parents - as working parents it is far easier to grab letters out of bags and fill it in"*

Many years ago, paper copies were sent out to every child for everything. We have more mail going out now than ever before, and so, as a school, we felt that we needed to be more 'green' thus setting up Parentmail. The advantages are; -

...that you get the mail instantly

...the school saves money on paper that can be better used on the children and other resources

...it is better for the environment!

...you always get the newsletters whereas historically, some children left them in their trays and bags for days, sometimes weeks!

As with anything new, we knew that there would be teething problems, so Mrs Edwards in the office has worked with many parents individually to sort any issues.

Some letters do require a response and we appreciate that sometimes, your printer may have run out of ink (or you do not have one) or you do not have paper to hand to write out written



consent. So, the office staff have devised a generic slip (to be used for anything!) that can be picked up from the Reception area and completed as usual. It may be useful to take a couple home to keep so that if ever you do have an email regarding a trip or visiting artist, you always have one to hand. Please remember that payments for trips can be done on Parentmail, and even if there is no payment required, you can tick the box to give consent without having to send in a slip of paper.

- *"As a working parent I find it extremely difficult to get to all of the parent afternoons. I was upset that because I wasn't able to attend the road safety one it meant my child wasn't able to take part in all the activities and despite being assured that he wouldn't feel left out he did. And the first thing he asks me is "Where were you?" Having to work full time gives me enough guilt as it is and if I had the choice I wouldn't and now there is added guilt because I cannot feasibly attend all dates"*
- *"Consider working professional parents when running sessions during the day"*
- *"Involve working parents more. As a teacher I simply cannot attend day sessions"*
- *"Do more after school things working parents can attend to see their children e.g. Special Assemblies"*

We understand and sympathise that sometimes, working parents cannot make certain events due to the timing or due to the inability to take time off work. As a school, we do have to weigh up the 'do we or don't we run an event' scenario to be fair to all. With the younger children, we know that after a whole day at school, they are tired and asking them to come back in the evening would not benefit the child at all. With some events, we open it up to parents as a courtesy rather a requirement. This aspect has also been discussed during a Governors meeting with the voted parental representatives being able to give your viewpoint. The Year 3/4 Easter production was discussed here and we are considering the practicalities of putting on an evening performance of this next year. We always put transition events on in the evening, we have altered parents evenings times on numerous occasions to accommodate complaints and we run the Family Service straight after school. The Year 5/6 production always takes place in the evening, as they do not get quite so tired, and we run the maths, literacy and SATs sessions out of the school day too. The special assemblies must be in the school day as it is a legal requirement to carry out a daily act of worship and to continue with the school ethos, we like to have all children present. The 'Child Of The Week' aspect only allows us to give a week's notice as we are rewarding the previous week's excellent behaviour or work ethic. If ever you cannot attend an event, we are happy for you to ask another family member to attend, grandparents, aunties or uncles. We do not want to stop our events as we feel that this would be detrimental and as you can see, we do try to do some things in the day, some after school and some in the evenings. Unfortunately, we do not feel that we can ever please everyone, as we all have different jobs, lifestyle and schedules to work from hence having to come to make compromises.

- *"I feel that a home work and reading club would be great for children whos parents work full time"*

Your child reads everyday in school in one format or another. If it is not their home reader, it will be a class book, a group reader or your child will need to read to access information for topic work or to read instructions. The home reader is sent so that parents get the



opportunity to hear their own children read to see how they are getting on and to give positive praise, and it gives every child a chance to practice even more! As a school, we value reading and the more they do, the better they get! Our homework policy is currently under review, but as the name implies, it is work that needs to be done at home. The children at St John's work very hard during the day. Having an after school homework club extends that day without them having an opportunity to wind down a little. After six hours at school, they need a break. We do run a Year 6 homework club, but this is to prepare them for SATs so that there is less pressure on them. They are also older and can handle a longer day with more ease. Most homework sent home can easily be done in a short space of time, and much of which involves talking to your child (Chat at Home) that can be done anywhere, even in the car on the journey to and from school. Once again, we appreciate that many of our parents work full time and even if only five minutes reading is carried out, the benefits will be reaped.

- *"Automated payment system for school meals as well as educational trips, parent mail two is temperamental and so far has not been successful in the attempts I have made to use it"*

As stated previously in the newsletter, please ask at reception if you are having difficulties with Parentmail. Mrs Edwards is glad to help.

School dinners are provided by the authority and so payments are not made directly to the school. The kitchen staff deal with meal payments and so unfortunately, the school cannot provide this payment facility for dinners.

- *"Sheltered area for parents when it is raining, especially those who have younger children"*

We did have a couple of canopies (albeit small!) over the doors of the cloakroom entrances, but unfortunately, they were condemned at a Health and Safety inspection, and so had to be removed. We do not have any plans to replace them as they are very expensive and funds have been used elsewhere to enhance the children's learning and enjoyment (such as the adventure playground, software resources and books). The trees in the playground do offer some shelter and we have the covered area on the infant playground, but unfortunately, we do not have the funds to replace the canopies at present.

If you have any comments, concerns or questions - why don't you email us on our address specifically for the 'Two Way Street'

Email address:

twowaystreet@st-johns.walsall.sch.uk

