

URSULA TAYLOR VC LOWER SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2008

Dear Parents

Response to the Parental Questionnaire

I am pleased to attach the results of our recent parental questionnaire. The staff have considered your responses carefully and together with our own self evaluation will be making adjustments to some of our current practices. If I have not addressed specific concerns which you have raised and you would like to discuss these further please do make an appointment to see me and I will gladly discuss any actions which I may or may not have taken. We were very pleased to see the enormous support which you, as parents and carers, have given us and the many compliments endorse the solid foundation of care and support in the school in which the children flourish academically and socially. However we are always striving to make improvements in our provision.

These are areas which have concerned us:-

Bullying and Harassment

As you will see the vast majority of children suffer no bullying or harassment, but the small minority who do are obviously of concern to us. Besides the work undertaken in PSHE and individual behaviour programmes we will install a 'worry box' which will be situated inside the children's entrance door. This is for children (or children and parents) to write 'worry notes' about situations which concern them and post them in the box for us to address. These must be named so that we can ensure they are dealt with appropriately.

Lack of information for Parents

We will ensure that the termly curriculum sheet is circulated to both Key Stage 1 and 2 and posted on the website. Together with this a half termly sheet detailing numeracy facts to be learned at home will be given to each year group / maths group. From the beginning of next term weekly spellings will be sent home for each child. We are currently revising our homework policy and this will be shared with you early next term.

Queries about our status as a Voluntary Controlled Church of England Lower School

A few parents wanted clarification about our status as a Church School. As a Voluntary Controlled School:-

- The school building and land are owned by Trustees, as part of a Church educational trust
- foundation (church) governors serve on the governing body, but are in the minority
- staff are employed by the Local Authority
- funding is from the Local Authority, not the Church

- RE is taught in accordance with the Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus for Local Authority schools (this is different for Voluntary Aided schools).
- worship is conducted according to the provisions of the Trust Deed i.e Christian
- besides an Ofsted inspection the school is also inspected on its status as a Church school
- the Christian ethos of the school underpins a respect for, and understanding of, those of other faiths and those of none.

Healthy Eating

From our own monitoring we feel confident that a balanced meal is provided every day for the children. However, we are well aware that some children do not always recognise what they are eating and do not always appreciate healthier foods! Having said this we are in negotiation with Edenfoods services to further improve the quality of the food and new menus are to be put into operation in the near future. At this point we shall circulate menus to all parents and display these in the entrance foyer.

Birthday Sweets / Chocolates – a concern was raised which referred to the practice of some children bringing in sweets and cakes which would not appear to be in keeping with a ‘healthy school status’. We have discussed this at length, but have agreed to maintain our current policy of allowing children to bring birthday cakes /sweets to school to share with their friends who will then take these home to eat.

Extra Curricular Activities

A few parents were concerned that there were not enough clubs for children to join. Below is a list of our current clubs. With other commitments (and hall space) our staff are unable to offer more than is already in place. However, we are looking at the possibility of employing external sport coaches, but there will be a cost attached to these. We are also looking to the local community to identify any possible sources of talent.

Current Clubs

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lunchtime	Brain Academy KS2 Library Club – each class once a month			Recorders	
After School		Football	Choir	Netball Y4 (Summer – High Fives then Rounders) Thursday Club KS1 (Summer)	

Parents' Consultation Group

I would like to form a small group of parents who would be willing on two separate occasions to discuss some of the issues raised in the questionnaires. If you would like to be involved in this group and could meet Thursday, 6th March from 9.00-10.25am and Thursday 10th April 9.00-10.25am please could you complete the form below.

Other News

Guided Reading Groups

To ensure a more directed time for 'Guided Reading Groups' all children in a class will have guided reading as the same time rather than being withdrawn from other activities. This does mean that we are in need of more adult help (parents, grandparents, friends) and therefore are looking for adults who:-

- are keen to lead a group of four / five young readers
- be prepared to give a regular weekly commitment
- would attend a short training session
- would go through a CRB check
- would respect confidentiality

Key Stage 1 classes will have their reading sessions once a week before playtime and Key Stage 2 sessions will be after playtime. If you are interested please complete the form below and return to the school office.

Collecting Children from School

Please would you ensure that your children do not climb on or over the new Reception Class fence or on the outdoor equipment. Unfortunately such incidents have been observed by members of staff.

Photographs

We have a number of occasions arising in the near future in which photographs of children will be taken and may be used in our new brochure or on the website. Our policy for the taking of photographs is:-

- never to use a child's photograph in publicity without parental consent
- never to use a child's name
- never to use a child's photograph more than two years after the photograph has been taken

Please would you complete the form below giving or not giving your consent.

PARENT CONSULTATION GROUP

Parent's Name..... Child's Name.....

I would like to attend the above group on Thursday, 6th March from 9.00-10.25am and Thursday 10th April 9.00-10.25am

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GUIDED READING GROUP VOLUNTEER HELPERS

Name Child's Name.....

I would like to be involved in the Guided Reading groups and am available on the following mornings:-

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PHOTOGRAPH CONSENT FORMS

Child's Name..... Class.....

I give my permission / do not give permission for photographs of my child being taken.

I understand that the name of my child will not be used and the photograph will not be used more than two years from this date.

Signed..... Date.....