

Beechwood Junior School

Parents Forum

Meeting 1: Thursday 12th November 2015
Session 1: 14:00 Session 2: 18:00

In Attendance:

Beechwood Staff: Mrs Marsh (Headteacher), Mr Crosby (Head of Learning and Assessment),
Session 1: Mrs Nadkarni (Head of Professional Support)
Session 2: Mrs Gardner (Head of Inclusion and Music Manager)

Edwin Jones Trust: Dylan Wrixon, Family Support Manager Email: parents@hamwic.org

Parent Forum Representatives: *Sessions 1 & 2:* Denise Deacon, *Session 1:* Clair Foster

Parents: *Session 1:* 22 parents, *Session 2:* 4 parents

Apologies Received: 6 parents

Introduction: This is the first meeting of the newly formed Parents' Forum. The Agenda was circulated prior to the meeting and comprised of items raised by parents, with the addition of the new curriculum changes by the school.

Welcome: Mrs Marsh thanked everyone for attending.

New Curriculum and changes to assessment (getting rid of levels) explained: Mrs Marsh introduced the changes that have been implemented by the Government to the national curriculum, which have become mandatory this year.

- The end of year expectations have been significantly changed; the new assessment will raise the bar about what a child has to achieve in each year.
- Formal tests will be introduced from Year 2.
- There will also be a Baseline Assessment in Year R.
- A child will be measured whether they meet the level (100%) or not.
- The school are still awaiting further clarification from the Government as to what these levels will be.
- The aim is for the child to attempt less subjects and achieve more.

As a school, Beechwood will ensure they prepare each child for these tests.

Mr Crosby distributed an information pamphlet and explained each section, highlighting the changes.

- All primary schools have to follow this curriculum and all will be on 'catch-up' for years 5/6.
- At each level the child must achieve 100% as otherwise they will be unable to move up to the next level.
- What this means for year 6 children – as this has been introduced at this stage, the Government have agreed that the pass rate for the current year 6 children may be 60%.
- What this means for year 5 children – the pass rate for the following year 6 children may be 85%
- What this means for years 3 and 4 children – as the children are now already being taught under the new curriculum changes, they will be required to achieve 100%.

The main changes are:-

- Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar – this is returning back to basics. Under the new system, poor spelling will no longer be acceptable.
- Handwriting – must be legible, neat, joined, evenly sized and on the lines.
- Spoken English
- Maths – must be fluent in times tables; mental and rapid arithmetic.
 - There are now 3 maths test papers for year 6. The first will be 'calculation' (30 minute paper for 30 questions).
 - The following have been removed from the curriculum: algebra, trigonometry, statistics
 - There is more focus on reasoning (*see example of leaflet under Fractions*)

A full explanation is provided in the pamphlet.

Test papers – May 2016

Maths – 3 papers

Reading – 1 paper

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar – 1 paper

All the above test papers are external.

Writing– this is internal but verified by outside source.

Questions and Answers:

Q: Where can we, as parents, find more information regarding the new national curriculum?

This information is provided on the pamphlet; “the full curriculum can be viewed online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/ukgovernment/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-primary-curriculum>

Q: Where can we, as parents, find resources online to help us?

Maths

Kangaroo Maths: www.kangaroomaths.com

National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics: www.ncetm.org.uk

NRICH Maths (Enriching Mathematics): www.nrich.maths.org

Handwriting

Nelson Thornes script: <https://global.oup.com/education/content/primary/series/nelson-family/nelson-handwriting-new-edition>

Q: What about those children who do not achieve?

Teachers will have to continually monitor and assess those children who they identify as not being able to reach the required 100% level. They will receive additional support.

All schools can now choose their own assessment methods. In the Edwin Jones Trust cluster, Beechwood’s planned assessment is being adopted by some of the schools.

Children will be continually identified in these categories:

Masters - the child has fully understood and reached the 100% level

Experts – the children has fully understood and reached the 100% level, and is above the standard required. These children will assist other children, as well as being provided with their own challenges to meet their needs.

Apprentices – the child needs to be guided and support, and is not yet independent, and will not, therefore reach the 100% level

For all children, Beechwood will be more specific on identifying where a child needs to improve, and will be Keeping parents informed what each child needs to be focusing on, and will be working with parents on ways they can support their child at home.

Q: What happens if Year 6 child does not achieve 100%?

There is no allowance for anything under 100%. Therefore, a child that does not achieve this will continue to work in Year 7 at secondary school on the same level until 100 is achieved. All results are shared with the child’s new school.

Q: What about those children who are high achievers – will they still be challenged?

The high achieving children will no longer be taken out of other lessons to have extended learning. Instead it will be necessary to ensure they are thoroughly conversation with all basic skills and knowledge. The way in which they will be challenged will be by broadening their knowledge so it is more in depth and by having a full understanding of the core subject.

Q: Times Tables – in the mixed sums at the end of the homework sheet, could a mix up of numbers (up to and including the one being focused on) be included?

This was considered to be a good suggestion and should be able to be adopted.

Mrs Cotton was in the process of revamping the times tables as a whole, and children will be able to work towards Bronze, Silver and Gold standards. This will be introduced in due course.

Q: Main methods of operation booklet

This is a booklet explaining all the mathematical methods used by Beechwood. Year 3 parents have not seen this so this booklet will be reissued to all parents in due course (Mrs Marsh/Mr Crosby)

Q: What additional language has been selected by Beechwood?

French and has been taught at Beechwood for a number of years.

It was agreed that the leaflet distributed at the meeting would be sent out to every parent on Monday morning with an accompanying letter. A separate event will be arranged by the school and it is hoped that at one parent/carer (at least) will attend per child.

NB: There was a request if some form of childcare provision could be made at the school for the children until the meeting had finished. This will be further discussed. *Action: Sue Marsh, Denise Deacon*

Cyber Café

To support those without internet at home, a computer will be available at the Tuesday coffee mornings. Parents will be able to access the information online, and if they need assistance this will be provided.

The IT Technician (John Wheatley) has agreed to provide workshops to introduce basic skills for those who would welcome some assistance with use of a computer/internet.

In addition, it was agreed that the possibility of some basic software courses may be able to be offered. Denise will investigate if there is still government funding initiatives for providing this as a service and will report back to Mrs Marsh.

For information, Mrs Marsh shared the exciting news that learning tablets were being ordered for interactive lessons for the children. These link up to the smartboards in the classrooms. They will be stored in a cabinet that charges them via wifi.

Changing Facilities (PE)

In accordance with the request that girls and boys in years 5 and 6 be able to change separately in view of their changing bodies and modesty, arrangements have now been put in place to facilitate this.

Bad Weather Procedure (School closure)

Owing to financial cuts, the council and radio stations will no longer be providing this information service.

Beechwood's procedure will now be:-

- 1) Mrs Marsh will text all parents from home first thing in the morning (prior to breakfast club commencing)
- 2) Mrs Marsh will contact the IT Technician who will immediately update the website.
- 3) Mrs Marsh will contact Denise to update the Parents Forum on Facebook.

Text Santa Christmas Jumper Day (ITV – 18 December)

A compromise was reached that rather than the school participate as a whole on the 18th December that the week prior children could wear something if they wished to do so on the non-uniform day held to donate chocolate or bottles for the Christmas Fayre tombola. Mrs Marsh did not want to ask parents for yet more money for an additional fundraiser.

Updates on improvements already raised by the Facebook Parents Forum

Website – a questionnaire was issued to enable more detailed information to be obtained as to the difficulties being encountered on the website.

Newsletters – these will not be sent out as a paper copy owing to the cost implications. It is available on the website and a text will be sent out when it is 'live'. There will be a copy available to read in the folder in reception. It will also be accessible at the cyber café for those without internet access. An email will be sent to parents for whom the school has an email address. A copy will also be displayed in the playground notice board.

Emails – the hyperlinks on the website are not working for all members of staff and Mrs Marsh will get this resolved by the IT Technician. With regards to parents not receiving emails when sent, this matter should now be resolved as there was a system error and all the information has now been reinstalled.

Online Payments – letters will no longer be sent out until the online payment is live on the system.

Letters/Communication – letters will be sent home with the children; on the same day the letter will be uploaded to the website; if the letter is important a text will be sent out to advise parents it is being sent home; a paper copy, by year group, is available in the office to be viewed/collected.

Stubbington – no letters have been sent out to date because it has been so over-subscribed, Beechwood are waiting to hear from another school whether they are using all their allocation of places. Once this has been confirmed, letters will be sent out to confirm a child's place.

Kitchen/Catering – Mrs Marsh has been having regular and intense meetings with Caterlink. It is hoped that this past week the improvement has been noticed by the children.

- **Cleanliness** – these issues have been resolved by the school purchasing more plates and cutlery.
- **Portions** – there has been improved portion sizes and every child now receives a whole jacket potato, two vegetables and can have salad as additional item.
- **Chef** – a newly appointed chef is due to start imminently.
- **January – Focus on Food** – the head chef of Caterlink will be coming into school to provide training; they will be making bread with the children; providing a free taster session which all parents will be invited to and there will be another free meal provided for all children for a day to compensate for the problems encountered.

Mrs Marsh advised the reason they left City Catering was because the school were being charged £25K per annum for admin plus the cost of the meals. Mrs Marsh explained that she felt the £25K per annum could be used for the benefit of the children. With Caterlink, the school only has to pay for the meals, there are no admin costs; there have been initial set up costs, for example, the purchase of the equipment but that is now complete and owned by the school. All food is cooked fresh and on the premises.

Wet Play

When it is actually raining, children now eat in their classrooms.

At other times, children are given the option where they eat their sandwiches – they can eat them in the dining room or outside on the benches.

The school were unable to utilise the hall as it is used for PE immediately after lunch and there would be insufficient time to clear spilt food and make it a safe area.

Q: Now it is Autumn/Winter, can children be directed to eat inside?

As this has been requested, Mrs Marsh agreed an alternative would be trialled and implemented.

Disco - there was a problem with the food at the last disco whereby not all the children got a hot dog for various reasons. Mel suggested that a child could have their hand stamped when they received their hot dog and this will be adopted at the next disco. This will save on printing costs, avoid the issue of lost tickets and confusion as to who had

received their hot dog. Mrs Marsh has also instructed that sufficient hot dogs should be purchased for every single child in Beechwood even if they are not all attending to ensure in future they do not run out of food for the children.

Playground Sink Hole – this area has been coned off and is booked for repair during the Christmas break.

Formation of PTA

Purpose: to help school with fundraising and events; to provide parent/school links and support

Committee

In view of the volunteers already coming forward, Denise has agreed to set up a PTA for the school. Denise advised that we need as many volunteers as possible, even those who only want to help with ad-hoc or regular events, or those who do not wish to attend a committee meeting, will be welcomed and valued.

The Committee will need to be formed from scratch. Denise will get this under way as proposed chair. We also have a proposed treasurer. We would be grateful for volunteers for a vice chair and vice treasurer from a parent in years 3/4 so that a smooth transition can take place when the year 5/6 parents leave the school. We need a secretary, then we are good to go (as well as many members/volunteers/helpers as possible please)

Mrs Marsh is more than happy to attend and be involved as she is grateful to be having a PTA as Beechwood has been so long without one.

Sub-Committees

These will be formed for regular events, for example, Discos, Summer/Christmas Fayres so that only interested parties need attend or be contacted.

As a PTA, the following matters will be picked up on behalf of the school (agenda items)

Lost Property

Once a month, all lost property will be in the hall for all parents to be able to browse through whilst waiting for school to finish. Dates to be advised in due course.

Mrs Marsh advised there are lost property monitors who check clothing for names and items are returned to classrooms. However, this is carried out by children as she does not have the resources for a teacher to carry this out.

Thrift Shop

Donations of good quality second hand uniform items will be accepted. These will be available for sale for nominal prices (e.g. 50p). Once a term.

Playground Notice Boards

A copy of the Newsletter and important notices will be displayed in the playground notice boards.

'Share' Group and Workshops

Parents can meet together to make resources in school for use at home to support their child(ren) with their learning.

As an extension, workshops by year group will be introduced to help parents support their children with the new curriculum.

Clair and Denise will get this set up, and it will be supported by Dylan. Initially this will be once a month. Denise, Clair and Dylan to liaise regarding dates. There will also be liaison with Mrs Marsh and Mr Crosby concerning which resources to focus on to start with.

Questions and Answers – Workshops

Q: Can a weekend workshop be arranged for those unable to attend during the week?

A: It was felt that this was impractical at this stage to expect the already over stretched teachers to voluntarily give up their weekends. A number of parents also said they would not wish to attend at a weekend.

Q: Can workshops be run on different days and times to give everyone an opportunity to attend (for example, shift workers)

A: This would be discussed when setting the workshops up.

Q: Can workshops be run at 15:30 (to give time to collect from Glenfield) and parent/s attend with their child(ren)?

A: This would be discussed further but was deemed to be a good idea.

Denise will feedback on these in due course.

Parent Forum

Mrs Marsh asked whether a parent forum was useful and would parents like another one to be held. All those attending agreed it was beneficial. It was agreed a forum would be held once a term, with agenda items to be sent to Denise, either via the Facebook Parents Forum or email denise.deacon@gmail.com, or via the school office or even by emailing Mrs Marsh direct head@beechwoodjuniorschool.co.uk

Parents were reminded that Beechwood has an open door policy and any questions or concerns at any time can be raised with the school.