



## January 2016

Dear Parents,

Parent Partnership is an informal meeting between teachers and parents and an opportunity to have a discussion about topics relating to school life. Thanks go to representatives who gave up their time to attend Parent Partnership in January.

Nursery	Charlotte Bywater		
Reception	Sarah Gardner		
Year 1			
Year 2	Charlotte Bywater		
Staff	Mrs Farkas	Mrs Church	Mrs Morrison

We need representatives from all year groups and especially Year 1 who were not represented at the January meeting.

## Assessment

Mrs Farkas shared information with parent's about how children will be assessed in school during the academic year 2015/16. This information can be found on the school website. This information has been updated following changes introduced by the Government to the way teachers' assess children in Key Stage 1. New KS1 National Curriculum Tests have been introduced for May 2016. The key change is that outcomes will no longer be reported using levels but scaled scores. Assessment will still be supported by a body of evidence using daily records, observations and tests which are moderated to ensure that assessment is accurate. Parents were pleased with the information and teachers approach to changes in assessment and the national curriculum. They raised concerns about the expectations placed on children at infant school and the rigorous 'assessment culture' that has been introduced by the Government and the pressure it places on children. One parent asked about the phonics test in Year 1 and if this is still to take place? Mrs Farkas said that it will, but that if children do not meet the standard they will be retested in subsequent years until they pass it. It was suggested that this was mentioned in the Assessment information. Mrs Farkas will edit the document to reflect this suggestion.

## School Development Plan

Every year the school reviews and evaluates its' work and generates a new work-plan with priorities set for the following academic year. Mrs Farkas explained to parents the priorities contained in the School Development Plan for 2015/16 which can be found on the school website.

The first priority area is **assessment**. Over the last year Blossomfield has worked collaboratively with other schools towards developing a framework to assess children.

The new curriculum has raised expectations placed on children and Blossomfield are aiming to ensure that 85% of children meet or exceed age related expectations for

reading writing and maths at the end of Year 2. Parents agreed and thought this was a good priority.

The second priority area was **curriculum**. Mrs Farkas explained that teachers had worked hard designing a curriculum for Blossomfield which they felt was right for our school. Teachers have worked innovatively and creatively and have generated curriculum maps and plans that cover the requirements of Curriculum 2014 and are now matching assessment to that curriculum. Mrs Farkas explained that the design has integrated and made the links between the old and new to ensure outstanding curriculum provision. Staff are currently designing academic posters that present the key information about the curriculum at Blossomfield which can be shared with a range of stakeholders, including parents. Parents were pleased and thanked teachers for all their hard work.

The third priority area was the **school expansion** which was confirmed on the 10<sup>th</sup> December. A meeting will take place between the school and the Council on the 25<sup>th</sup> January to start to plan the logistics of the expansion and information will be shared with parents in a timely manner to ensure transparency. Mrs Farkas has already met with nursery staff to get their views on their requirements as this building will be the first to go. To keep parents updated the back board in the school hall will be used as a diary planner to chart the progress this will also be available on the website so parents can see what is happening on a monthly basis. Parents were pleased they would be kept fully informed and updated about the impact of the building work.

The final priority area is working towards achieving the **green flag** award, having already exceeding last year's expectations by achieving the bronze and silver award. Mrs Mason is leading on the Gold award and getting our 'Green Flag'. Plans are going well with parents and children very enthusiastic about the eco work taking place in school.

### **Items Raised by Parents**

#### **Emergency Drills**

While parents understood why there was need for emergency drills to take place in school, reception parents would have liked to receive a letter home informing them about it so they could reinforce advice at home and calm anxieties. Mrs Farkas explained that it is Council Policy to keep children and adults safe in school, and that 'intruder on site drill' will now take place termly, in the same way as fire drill. It is not appropriate to inform parents when these drills take place as both children and staff need to be prepared for unexpected emergencies during the school day. Emergency drills will therefore, in line with Council policy, continue to take place.

Mrs Farkas explained that the reason for the drill was shared with the children immediately afterwards in an assembly and was presented as 'keeping safe from strangers'. No teachers reported that any child showed any signs of anxiety during or after the drill and children were keen to share their knowledge of keeping safe and stranger danger in the assembly.

### **Cursive Writing**

Parents would like to know why there has been a change in the handwriting policy and for a worksheet or workshop to be provided to support parents in helping children at home with their writing. Mrs Farkas explained that this is the first year of using cursive handwriting at Blossomfield with the aim being to improve the standard of children's handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar. A writing workshop will take place for parents in the summer term and will include information about how to support children with cursive handwriting at home.

### **Spellings**

Parents in Year 2 said they liked the new design of spelling homework which tests children's knowledge and understanding of spelling patterns and their application in words. A dictation exercise then allows children to show this knowledge alongside punctuation and grammar.

### **School Gates**

Parents raised concerns about access into school through the school gates. Parents asked if an in/out gate would be installed to ease congestion as part of the expansion. Mrs Farkas explained that this has already been addressed and can be viewed in the plans which can be found on the Council website.

### **Targets**

Parents mentioned that they hadn't received any feedback from teachers in reception regarding achievement of targets. Mrs Church will feed this back to reception teachers.

### **Portion Sizes/Snacks**

Parents again raised concerns that children were coming home hungry. If parents do have concerns about school dinners/portion sizes they should contact the Council catering service as they provide the food in line with very strict National guidance. With regards to snacks, there is always extra fruit in school so if children are hungry or drop their fruit on the floor they can get another piece of fruit.

### **Counting in 2's**

Some parents in reception expressed concern about last week's homework and that it was too early to expect children to be able to count in 2's. Mrs Church mentioned that it is part of the Early Years curriculum and that children did very well in class. One parent mentioned that with the raised expectations in maths it is important that children start to learn to count in multiples early on to support learning of times tables in Key Stage 1.

### **School Nativity Plays**

Parents expressed thanks for the work teachers had put into organising the school plays for all year groups. They were all wonderful to watch and the right length, as in previous years the KS1 play had been a bit too long. One parent asked if the nursery play had been recorded for parents to buy. Mrs Morrison said the school had not recorded the Nursery plays for parents to buy but this would be something the school would consider for next year.

### **Thanks**

Parents from reception wished to thank the teachers for all their hard work with the children; children in reception are happy, settled and enjoying school.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 @ 7pm