



Parent's Forum – 10.07.19

Present – Craig Gibbens (CG), Helen King, Greg Stoner, Pam Bartlett, Vicky Craig, Andrew Nourish, Matt Johnston, Kevin Matthews, Billie Nickless, Sally McNaughton, Sean McNaughton, Sharon Morey, Andy Morey and Sara Bartle.

CG thanked everyone for attending and suggested that 6pm seemed more popular than previous timings

CG introduced the new trip schedule and explained the thinking behind it. All trips have been planned and costed for the next academic year with an option of using Parent Pay to spread the cost over six terms. This was an idea built upon from a suggestion made at a previous Parent's Forum. **Feed back from the forum was this was a good idea as it made it clear what was happening each year and the cost of the trips could be spread across the year.**

Question – will residentials be covered in this? Answer – No, these are planned separately with several opportunities to attend for those in Y5/Y6.

CG also introduced the academic calendar for 2019-20 and explained that it had been populated with all the key dates for parents. This will be on the website and sent electronically (or by paper if we are not ready to go paperless) next September. CG said that all 5 TD days would be on the calendar. CG explained that this was another forum suggestion. **Feedback was very positive from the forum.**

During the calendar discussion CG mentioned the three additional closure days and explained the thinking behind the decision taken in conjunction with the Local Authority – the building is still on schedule but the contractors will be working right up to the deadline - which evolved into a question from the forum – the first they were aware of this was in Priestley Post 9.7.19. If they had not come to the meeting, they would not know the thinking behind the decision – should that not have been explained in Priestley Post? CG explained it was a recent decision made in conjunction with the Local Authority and as work was being undertaken in both buildings it had been agreed to take the days to be able to get both buildings ready for the children on Thursday 5th September.

Observation – questions asked around this as the notice went out on the newsletter but could have had some supporting information as to why this has changed. Even a small paragraph to explain it as being related to the building works running right up to the wire.

CG informed the meeting that the development company are saying the building will be ready on time. Bright new rooms with lots of light and underfloor heating, Y3 and the three Y4/5 groups will be occupying the new spaces.

Question around communications and use of T2P, it was a surprise to some that adding more than one recipient was possible, which would aid communications. School is trying to go more paperless, more emails / e-communications. Some concerns raised as to amount of texts received from T2P (on occasion) and what happens in the event of "system failure" e.g. – extended power loss

CG explained that within reason e.g. no signal at work, not able to use a phone at work An alternative, reliable contact could be added. Just inform the office. Helen King agreed this was possible and had been achieved recently. In the event of a power loss school would either delay communication or return to a paper form if it was considered urgent.

CG then asked for questions from the floor:

Some concern was shared around the mix of Y1/2 and Y4/5, how this came to be and how work will be allocated, would there be expectations that lower performing Y5's would be allocated Y4 work.

The school has undergone a large exercise to try and find the best fit for all groups and to keep class sizes small. Many parents were surprised to find that while KS1 is limited to a max of thirty children, that KS2 has no

upper limit. The school has taken into account many considerations to minimise disruption, splitting genders, ability, needs, siblings and trying to also consider friendship groups. The school has not mixed KS1 and KS2 (Year 2 and 3) to prevent muddying of waters. Y1/2 and Y4/5 classes will share their topics i.e. Y1/2 have a shared topic, and Y4/5 have a shared topic. This will be managed by the teacher and specific “expected” level performance material will be issued to the respective year groups.

Observation – some parents concerned about siblings sharing the same class, and this was accounted for in the discussion, additionally some parents concerned about current Y4 going from four adults in the room to potentially one. Today, the Y4 group is large and has two teachers and there are two TA’s available. TA’s will move with the needs, so if they are allocated to a specific child, then the TA will move with that child, this is their primary focus, but obviously the class does benefit from the TA being in the space. Reception will have two TA’s – one in each class.

Observation – concern around amount of teachers – but the school has full time teachers instead of job-share, so even with staff members that are moving on at the end of year 2019, there is no net loss of staff and the school is up one teacher. As the school grows, additional classes may be added and additional teachers will be recruited as required throughout the year – as was the case this year.

Observation – concern around the mixed year groups, the school has been very fortunate to have a single class for each year. Mixed year classes are not “new” to Priestley, historically this has existed, and in an ideal world this would continue as single year classes, but the school is at the mercy of who walks through the door. There are some hard limits for KS1 and the limit for this year was 45, with five added under appeal.

Observation – concern around the way that this was communicated – a simple table with no supporting commentary – lead to a lot of anxiety for parents and a lot of comments on social media. This could potentially have been eased by a supporting block of text as to the reasonings. **CG agreed to share this with Mr Marsh-Ballard**

Question – when will children know which class they are allocated to for transition? - 19th July

With the explanations, this did appear to settle some concerns overall relating to the current one year plan.

Discussion on Toilet provision;

The school will be moving to a non-segregated toilet system, with the new build, there is no concept of boys / girls dedicated facilities. The facilities will be lockable cubicles. The existing buildings facilities will also be converted to this model.

Question – concern around provision of appropriate facilities for girls who start puberty early, is this being accounted for, so they have spaces to handle this? The school note that there will be provision for this.

Other discussions;

Home learning agreement to be updated to allow for generic local trip permission (i.e., go to the park, walk to the library) without having to send additional consent forms home – allowing greater flexibility to enhance learning.

Forum feedback was this seemed to be a good idea.

CG explained “Seesaw” – our chosen learning platform – is to launch in September. This will allow children to post their work and pictures to a secure site which will be password protected.

Applications used – School to review apps used – is Bug Club providing value for money; usage has dropped off. Times Table Rock stars – can be too fast (even for adults), no access to the App, instructions issued, mention using the app, but this is for paid use only and the school takes the free version on the web. Lots of love for “doodle (maths)” but the free version is limited. Some parents have paid for their own subscription to “doodle” products to supplement learning.

Date for next meeting to be confirmed – planned for October 2019