

St Andrew's Parent Partnership Questions November 2017

Year 6

No questions were received

Year 5

1. Is the St Andrew's school fund still active, and are the school/governors asking new parents for monthly donations? How is the money being managed and allocated, and are there spending plans in place for school improvements etc.? Is this information accessible to St Andrew's parents?

Yes, the Stewardship Fund is still active and really needs more parents to contribute. Parents in the Reception Class have been encouraged to join.

The fund currently has about 20 families (equating to 13% of our families) contributing regularly and a balance currently of around £15,000. But it needs to grow.

At present the governors don't have an active project. The next large project they would like to spend money on is the refurbishment of the playground. That will be expensive - in excess of £100,000 - and will require them to first resolve the legal dispute with the TMA regarding the fence. But the school think it is a project worth saving for.

Recent spending of Stewardship Fund money includes:

1. £2,000 towards new school kitchen in May 2017.
2. £12,500 to Dining Hall refurbishment in August 2016.
3. £31,000 in 2015 to Office area, security doors overhaul and Kemp Hall upgrades.

So quite a lot of activity and quite a lot of Stewardship Funds actively spent on the school. Hence another reason why the funds are only £15,000 currently (given the small number of parents contributing) and why there is a need to do a bit of saving at the moment in order to build up sufficient funds to make big improvements as soon as we can afford them.

The governors would be interested to hear from parents about the Stewardship Fund. They have experienced a very low take up and are interested to understand why that is.

2. Are you able to provide information about the year's Personal, Social and Health Education curriculum, what's covered, and how it's taught?

The school follows a PSHE scheme provided by the Borough of Barnet. It is delivered in class and is an amalgamation of our Values curriculum and is supplemented with our SEAL (Social Emotional Aspects of Learning) curriculum. It is a graduated approach beginning in Y1 and follows the principles of the EYFS curriculum. We will ask each class teacher to upload the topics covered via their class curriculum newsletter.

3. Do boys and girls get changed for PE in the same room?

Yes they currently do. This is monitored by class based staff and adjustments will be made as the year progresses.

4. Is it possible to have a consultation meeting between the SLT and Year 5 parents regarding the trip to France in Year 6 and its costs?

As discussed in previous Parent Partnership meetings, the site in France is very small and very popular with UK schools. Therefore, the trip for 2019 has already been provisionally reserved for w/c 20th May 2019. Once Y5 pupils have returned from their Kingswood trip, we will be able to provide further details around costs. We remind parents that all residential trips are optional.

5. Please can you explain how spellings are to be taught now and what is the rational for end of term tests and will children be given the words to learn prior to the test or not?

As part of our school self evaluation, the staff reviewed how effective the teaching of spelling across all Key Stages was. In partnership with other Barnet schools, St Andrew's adopted a new graduated approach to the teaching of spelling. At the beginning of this term, the children were given a selection of age and stage appropriate spellings representative of key spelling patterns. This enables the staff to benchmark their knowledge. Over the course of each term, key spelling strategies and patterns are taught, followed by a review at the end to measure progress made.

Year 4

1. Is it ok for me to drop my child into the playground in the morning as there seems to be lots of adults around to keep an eye on them?

The school bell is rung at 8:50am. Up until that time, parents are responsible for supervising their children and ensuring they line up with their class. While it would seem like many adults are noticeable on the playground, this is not in a supervisory capacity. We would ask all parents to ensure they witness their child enter the school building. On rare occasions, such as the recent resurfacing of the Orange Tree car park, the school will deploy additional staff to enable parents to drop off and go.

Year 3

1. Is it possible for girls to wear ankle (short) boots as part of the uniform. My daughter complains her feet go numb when she's in the playground as it does get particularly cold out there. From experience cold feet leads to a cold body and tiredness.

Ankle boots are not part of the school uniform. We would suggest that warm tights are worn as well as a good quality winter coat. When temperatures are particularly low, we do allocate an indoor space for children to escape the cold.

2. Could messages be sent out with more notice. I know this has been mentioned before but the choir email was sent out the afternoon previous for a before school rehearsal. Very difficult for families to turn plans around that quickly.

We try very hard to ensure parents are given messages as early as possible. Regrettably on occasions this doesn't happen. This could be for a number of reasons. We were very fortunate to have a professional singer managing our choir for some time, but this did mean that Hazel had to juggle the choir with her own professional engagements. Now that the choir is run by school staff, we hope to ensure that all communication is sent in plenty of time for parents to make arrangements.

3. Half a term's notice seems unnecessarily long to switch school dinners/packed lunch. At most schools these days children can switch from day to day. I understand that can be difficult to manage but in today's world it seems an unnecessary length of time. Parents from other schools are shocked when I tell them the school still requires half a term's notice.

The half term's notice requirement is in line with other local schools and is common practice by school catering firms. As a small school, we cannot accommodate potentially fluctuating lunch numbers on a daily basis by allowing day to day switches. This would require a huge amount of communication from parents as well as affecting school deliveries.

4. Are there any plans for activities for golden time? E.g. zumba, football, science club etc.

We understand that Year 3 pupils are looking forward to doing a range of Golden Time activities now that they are in the Juniors. A selection of Key Stage 2 activities will commence in Spring Term

5. Do we get to see the year 2 SATS results, either as an individual mark, or a class mark? How did we compare in Barnet?

Parents have received an individual copy of their child's end of Key Stage assessment data. Collective data is available to see on our website. Comparative data for End of Key Stage 2 is published in December.

6. Concerns over Parentpay. It is very unclear for parents to know what they have paid for and what they owe - in general, just keeping on track. We also have to keep paying two payments have two passwords etc. Surely this can't be the case for all people with more than one child? We don't know how the amounts are calculated, how the amount outstanding is calculated etc.

It is possible to merge two accounts by following the link on the website. We advise anyone having difficulty to speak to school office staff.

Year 2

No questions were received

Year 1

1. I have not seen any 'visible' upgrades to the school over the past year. Are you able to outline where money has been spent and are there any future plans from the stewardship fund? There was talk of re-surfacing the playground?
- other than mention, from the PTA, of replacing laptops across the school, are there any other plans to update/replace resources across the school and specifically for year 1?

Please see the earlier Year 5 question and answer.

2. Is there a plan to replace the children that have left year 1? I believe that the class is currently down 4 children.

All school places are allocated by the London Borough of Barnet admissions team. There are set procedures and time scales that they work to. When a place in a school is available it is offered to whoever is at the top of the waiting list.

3. Is there going to be a year 1 assembly? (All other years appear to be on the school calendar, apart from year 1).

This date has been set for Wednesday 28th March and has been added to our school calendar.

Reception

No questions were received

Messages from the school:

- Reminder to parents that we will be finishing at 2pm on Friday 1st December in celebration of St Andrew's Day (30th November), not as is stated on the school photo printed calendar.
- Reminder of whole school visit to Aladdin panto on Friday 1st December - please ensure all payments have been received in plenty of time.
- We just wanted to share all the positive comments we receive on a daily basis from various visitors, and outside providers who work with the school, who are always impressed by the behaviour and attitude of our pupils. It's great to share such fabulous comments!