

## St Andrew's Parent Partnership Questions - April 2016

### Reception

1. *When will there be after school football starting for the little ones?*

Football club begins Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

TFA registration forms are available on school website in parents section.

2. *Do they have to wear the logo polo shirts (boys) or can they wear plain white ones?*

Yes, the St Andrew's school uniform is the one with the printed logo on it

3. *Would there be a gymnastics after school club?*

This would require a gymnastics specialist teacher. Our School Business Manager is always looking to enhance and extend the range of after school provision. We will let you know if we are successful in finding a suitable provider.

4. *How are the children monitored when getting their food at lunch time? I hear different things from my child and I wanted to get to the truth and be assured it is a balanced meal:*

*"I had white rice and pasta."*

*"I had curry which is always spicy so I ate white rice, like my friends. There was no other option."*

*"There was no cooked vegetables and we are only allowed 2 spoons of each salad."*

Our school menu is available for parents to see on our website, under the **useful information** section. We have six mealtime supervisors who closely monitor the children, particularly Reception, when they are making their choices at lunch. Staff serve the salad to the children in Reception for easy access and to encourage them to try new items from the daily selection. A hot pasta main dish would not be served with a hot rice dish by our cook to a child - pasta/rice are often one of the items within the salad bar which may explain why they had both on their plate.

5. *How will St Andrews incorporate the GCSE's into the current syllabus?*

The statutory curriculum for the under-fives is the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. The pupils then follow the National Curriculum which is a progressive curriculum split across Key Stages 1-4. In primary schools, pupils are given summative assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2) and the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6) as set out by the Testing and Standards agency. GCSEs are an end of Key Stage 4 assessment (Year 11)

6. *Would it be possible to get 1 main email at the beginning of the week of all the school information, unless it's a lengthy issue? Perhaps a reminder email could follow later or class representatives could do that?*

This is a lengthy process and unfortunately we do not have the capacity to do this. We endeavour to keep the school calendar updated on our website and we suggest that parents

access this via their smart-phone or tablet and link up to the calendar. This then puts all events listed into your own device. We remind parents that we send out a monthly newsletter at the beginning of each month in addition

**Additional questions received:**

1. Does the morning bell go every day at 8:50, as they have been times it has not been heard?

*Yes Mrs Taylor rings school bell at 8.50 each day by the main junior doors.*

2. For reception what is the reading system? Being aware of the colour and letter coding, how does each child move up a level? Would it be possible for the parents to receive the system used so that we can understand it for our child? There has been instances of the same book being read, no book being given, children choosing books or a child reading well enough to move a level, so this would guide us better.

*Children in reception are beginning to tackle known and predictable texts but will still need support with new ones. At this stage they are at the important transition from dependence and memory to decoding and tackling unfamiliar words.*

*Familiarity with a text provides a supportive framework of meanings and language patterns. The system in Reception is therefore a combination of a graded reading system which provides challenge and familiarity. The children are encouraged to choose books from specific colour bands. They should be listening to and sharing additional books at home and at school helping them to build up a repertoire of stories they enjoy. Children move into a new colour band when the staff make a professional judgement that they are ready to do so. Reception staff report that there was one instance where a child left the classroom without their book and this was rectified immediately, followed by a meeting with the class teacher and headteacher at the parent's request.*

*We intend to deliver a curriculum evening about reading for parents in the Autumn term.*

3. Would it be considered to move the balloon race to 2:30/2:45 next year so the reception may leave after it?

*The balloon race is scheduled for 2pm to allow for any delays, after the event children are given refreshments. Normally in good weather this would held outside with the parents, unfortunately it was not possible this year.*

**Year 1**

1. *Is it possible for the weekly school dinner menu to be on the school website?*

The school menu is on our website under the **Parents, Useful Information** section. We will ask Rebecca, our cook, to clarify which week is the current menu for parents to know what the options were each day. Following the meeting, Rebecca has confirmed that we are currently on Week 1 of the menu, so w/c 2nd May will be Week 2. There have been some difficulties with a new supplier so some ingredients have not been received in time, meaning Rebecca has had to alternate some items with menus from other weeks. Current menus are being evaluated following pupils requests (e.g. a request from the pupils to

change the sweet and sour noodles back to the soy based ones they love) and we are just awaiting Barnet Catering approval for these changes. If and when a new menu is created, we will send out to all parents as well as upload to our website.

*2. The Maths Evening was good, are you planning to run any similar evenings for parents?*

We are delighted to have received such good feedback about the Maths Curriculum Evening, which was very informative for parents. We are planning to have a Supporting And Helping your Child with Reading evening in the Autumn term. Other curriculum areas will follow later next year. Sian Thomas, who led the curriculum evening, is starting an after school maths club on Wednesday evenings - flyers were given out at the start of the week.

*3. It would be good to get parents of different cultures to come in to school and talk to the children especially when they are studying it on the curriculum*

We always seek ways of bringing our curriculum to life by inviting in a variety of speakers for each topic wherever possible. This includes parents and other professionals. Last term, Reception had a variety of parents in to speak to the children about their jobs, Year 1 had a talk from Mrs Shah earlier this year when they were learning about Diwali, and they also had a visit from Mrs Barrett's daughter Steph about Postal Services. There is a planned visit from a Rabbi and a dental nurse this term. If any parents feel they could enhance the pupil's learning when learning a new topic, we encourage them to approach the class teachers. Currently Mrs Psara is liaising with parents in Y3 and Y4 to invite other religious leaders into school as part of the RE curriculum.

*4. Does the school do anything on teaching cycling?*

Yes, the Borough offer free optional cycle training (off and on road) for children in years 4, 5 and 6, which all year groups have already done this year.

*5. Is it possible to have a brief summary of what the children are learning each half term put on the school website in advance, so that we can help them more at home? With suggested books to read or websites to visit?*

With the recent improvements to our school website, this is something that will be in place from September 2016, but we encourage parents to always ask class teachers if they have any suggestions for helping their children at home.

*6. What is happening with the PTA?*

All parents are automatically members of the PTA and are invited to get involved as much as they can.

The new chair of the PTA will be officially taking over at the Annual General Meeting. Currently Elaine Bell and Gemma Ruffo are running the smaller events eg: balloon race, Easter event, New Parents Lunch etc.

*7. Would St Andrew's offer guitar lessons with BEAT from September if there are enough children interested? How many children are needed?*

Following a couple of parents requesting this, BEAT have managed to find a suitable guitar teacher for the couple of pupils starting this term. We know we have had further interest from other parents, and BEAT will be offering this to more pupils from September. The forms to book lessons have already been electronically sent out to parents.

**Year 2**

*No questions were received*

**Year 3**

*1. Polo shirts for girls as part of the summer uniform?*

The uniform list is available on website in the useful information section. Changes to school uniform need to go via School Governors and we have asked them to include this on the next Pupil Wellbeing committee meeting.

*2. Allow girls to have studs?*

Unfortunately no jewellery is allowed in school for any pupil for reasons of health and safety and also to ensure valuable items are not lost/mislaidd.

*3. Allow a space for bikes and scooters shelter to encourage children to come to school with and also use to go back home?*

We are currently in the process of applying for funding to provide an appropriate shelter for bikes and scooters which we hope will be successful. We also have issues with the amount of space we have available on site.

*4. Year 6 production. Does it have to be such a big deal where parents and a lot of money are involved? Perhaps a low key production that the teachers work on with the children, costumes brought from home, is better? from experience, the children will enjoy it as much.*

The year 6 production is an established event which pupils always list on pupil surveys and questionnaires as one of the events they look forward to doing. The choice of whether it is a 'big event' is always up to the parents of the particular year group. The school are happy to make the production more low key (like the Key Stage 1 nativity), but parents choose to undertake additional funding each year to facilitate purchasing costumes and hiring a chorographer/dance teacher. Parents of the current Y6 had a meeting earlier in the year with Mrs Datta and Ms Devine where they made the decision to undertake the fundraising required to make it a big event. Any money left over from their fundraising will be left as a gift for the school as a legacy present. This decision is made with parents, staff and the Y6 pupils.

5. *Invite parents to join their children for lunch. Will allow parents to taste the food their children are having. Parents will pay and by arranging in advance.*

JD/LB to investigate the possibility of Barnet Catering organising a tasting session for parents

6. *At the beginning of each term, will it be possible to receive information about the maths the children are going to learn with examples of how they will be taught to solve it? Parents feel that when they try to help they are confusing their children as the school teaches in a different way*

Curriculum information is given at the beginning of the year. We endeavour that weekly homework for maths is linked to the objectives covered in lessons that week so pupils will be using the skills taught that week.

7. *Are there plans to grow the lunchtime reading club organised by Mrs Psara? Would be great if it could be a regular thing each term for all the juniors*

At this stage we are trialling different clubs with different foci. Last term it was reading for pleasure. This term it is key stage 1 reluctant readers. We will certainly consider a 'drop-in' session. The clubs relate to our whole school improvement planning, which will be reviewed later this term.

8. *A 'quiet room' for children who go to after-school club, for them to read or do their homework away from the noise of the main room (especially the older children, or those who go frequently and for the whole session)*

Mrs Bonfield offers Tuesday lunchtimes for Y5 and Y6 to complete any outstanding homework, which pupils can sign up for. Younger pupils require parental support with some homework tasks. After school club is a play centred session where children can relax and unwind after a day's lessons.

#### **Year 4**

1. *Reading records: Clarity on use of reading records. How often are teachers/TAs expected to check in the children's reading record? How often should a parent be signing the record? Do the children have enough access to the library?*

All children are read with an adult at least once a week in addition to all the other instances where reading supports the curriculum and they keep professional records. Teachers will sign reading records weekly. Each class has a timetabled session in the library.

2. *Girl's toilets: Daughter reported that the toilets are never flushed whenever she uses them. Can children can be reminded to flush the toilets after use.*

We will remind the children to use all school facilities correctly

*3. Can Just-giving be used to raise funds for the school? (Maybe more of a PTA thing).*

PTA can look into this and report back to parents

*4. My son is asking for a football club after school*

Football club is offered to pupils after school on Mondays by the Sports teacher. In addition, Mr Frater is organising with another local school the opportunity for current Y4 and Y5 to commence football training in preparation for them being the Y5-Y6 team next year.

#### **Year 5**

*1. I wanted to table my concern with hearing controversy around the year 6 trip to France and wanted to request a meeting with the head mistress and our class before the trip was booked well in advance to allow us the opportunity to ask questions, voice any concerns we may have.*

The Year 6 trip to France compliments our Modern Foreign Language curriculum which all Junior pupils do weekly. Pupils in Year 5 have the opportunity for a shorter two night residential at a UK location which is Action/Adventure activity based. The venue in France is a small site and is extremely popular with British schools. In order to get the cheapest possible price for parents, 2017 trip has already been provisionally booked. The incident which you are referring to was following a parent raising a question regarding pupils travelling near refugee camps and some questions about safety. The school confirmed that our route does not take us to Calais nor Paris and instead goes to rural Normandy. The school takes pupil safety seriously at all times and wouldn't proceed with a residential visit if pupil safety were to be compromised. The school consulted with the Foreign Office and PGL (our providers) who advised that travel to France was still encouraged. Some parents suggested changing the school trip to a UK location at short notice. To do so would have incurred additional financial costs for parents, not to mention would have been a repeat of the residential trip which the pupils had in Y5. When given this option, Y6 parents opted to continue with the French trip. The school reminds parents that all residential trips are optional, and parents do not have to send their child if they do not wish their child to go.

*2. I also wanted to say my son is having a great year, he loves all of his lessons and his teacher.*

That's great to hear - it's always wonderful to receive positive feedback.

*3. My child is also asking for extra activities at lunchtime art club, cooking club and nature walks during lunchtime.*

There are a variety of activities and clubs offered at lunchtimes. Unfortunately we do not have the capacity to run teacher led clubs during staff lunchbreaks.

## Year 6

### 1. *Why is attendance so important to the school?*

All children aged 5-18 (Years 1-13) are required by law to receive an education and it is the duty of parents/carers to ensure they do so.

The Borough attendance target for all schools is 96%.

Children will sometimes be absent from school if they are unwell or if they have an on-going medical condition. This is why the target is below 100%

From the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 a change to government legislation meant that schools were no longer allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time.

It therefore follows that if pupils are not in school they are not accessing the curriculum. Requests for leave can only be granted by school if there are exceptional circumstances, holidays during term time are not considered exceptional circumstances.

Any requests **must** be made to the school in advance, as the department of education has informed schools that a Head may not authorise any absence after it has been taken. This form can be found under our **Parents: Useful Information** section. All requests for authorised leave should now be on this form which can be handed on or emailed to the school office.

At the termly meetings held at school with Borough educational welfare officer (EWO) attendance data is analysed. Parents whose children have low attendance may receive direct correspondence from the EWO.

The EWO will instruct the head to refer families with unauthorised absences for fixed penalty notices.

**In order for a school to be judged good by OFSTED, inspectors need to see that:  
"Pupils value their education. Few are absent or persistently absent."**