



PARENTS' FORUM

30TH SEPTEMBER 2019

13 parents attended.

Curriculum

We are following up last year's work on refreshing the PE and Music curriculum, making sure that teachers have the resources and training they need to deliver exciting and challenging lessons and checking that children are making progress in these subjects.

We are introducing a fresh focus on Art, in a similar way to last year's look at Music and PE. Staff started the school year with a training session on Art, and we will have a team working on our art curriculum this year, making sure that children get plenty of opportunity to learn the skills they need to express themselves through art.

We are also starting a review of our broader curriculum offer to make sure that it meets the needs of our school community. We will be looking at our topic plans, reflecting on the content and making sure that it covers the important skills and knowledge that our children will need to equip them for secondary school and adulthood. We know that our children are passionate about the natural world and environmental issues, and we would like that to be reflected in our topic materials.

We are delighted that we have just been awarded £20,000 to invest in our Sustainable Living Project, as a result of one of our children winning the Asda Plastic Investigators competition. We will be electing a child from each class to be a Green Ambassador, working with Mr Parr during the coming year to come up with ideas to encourage all of us to contribute to a "green", sustainable lifestyle. We would also like to recruit a small group of parents to the Green Ambassador team. We will seek expressions of interest in the HJS Update. Parents suggested raising the profile of the project by having a display or stand at events such as Open Afternoons and Parents Evenings, and by organising an afternoon tea. We discussed the possibility of inviting guest speakers in to assemblies, eg from Extinction Rebellion – bearing in mind that some children are very anxious about the more "cataclysmic" messages they pick up about climate emergency. Our tone should be positive, all about the actions we can all take to set an example and improve the sustainability of our school and our lifestyles.

School Values

At the front of the School Development Plan, and on the walls in the classrooms, are a set of four statements which we wrote over ten years ago after consulting with our school community. We would like to engage with parents, children, staff and governors this year in a review of those statements, to see if they accurately describe our aspirations for the school, and if necessary to amend them or add to them. We would like every child to know what those statements mean for them in their everyday experience of the school.

Parents considered the statements and added their comments as follows:

HJS Values statements	Parent forum suggestions
HJS is a safe and caring place where we can all enjoy learning together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree: examples are partnered learning and learning from clubs. • Supportive environment. • Great teaching. • The best learning happens while having fun
We work together in a spirit of enquiry and discovery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers show how they learn – they don't know everything. • A bit "vague" for children? • Useful for Year 7 when this becomes not so "cool". • A really important principle – teaching how to learn, not just subject matter. • Emphasis on music and option to do philosophy.
We learn to be resilient and resourceful and to take a pride in doing and being the best we can.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth mindset. • Learning skills. • Yeti. • Confidence in self rather than comparison with peers.
We aim to feel good about ourselves and about each other.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We think this is a very important value. • We think the school does this through the curriculum, focus on Art, PE. • Behaviour policies seem to work. • Great range of non-academic activities to give every child a chance to Shine. • Achievement is recognized at HJS. • Good range of subjects, clubs, music, to enable everyone to find something they enjoy.
Other ideas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and sustainability • Antibiotic resistance • Celebrate our differences – not just religion and ethnicity, art, music, creativity etc. (the school is quite strong on this.) • "Being the best we can" accepts limits, which runs counter to growth mindset. • Teachers should be able to expand horizons, fulfil potential, make this week's "best" just a step on the way to next month's "even better".

Standards

The school analyses the end of Year 6 results every year, and looks for areas to celebrate and areas to improve. The key statistic used by government to compare schools is the percentage of children meeting the required standard in the reading test, the maths test and the writing teacher assessment combined. HJS is consistently above the national and Bristol standards in all measures.

Analysis of our results this year indicates that there is a difference between boys and girls in the maths results. More boys than girls met the required standard, and the gap between boys and girls achieving the higher scores was even bigger. Nationally, this is the only measure where boys perform better than girls, so to some extent HJS conforms to the national expectation, but our gap this year was bigger than the national gap.

One of our parent governors, who was present, told us that the governors interviewed Year 6 boys and Year 6 girls separately at their Governors' Day last January about their attitudes to maths, and the difference was stark. Boys were animated, excited loved the challenge. Girls were anxious, uncertain, worried about getting wrong answers and did not see themselves as mathematicians.

Other schools in our NW24 Partnership have experienced similar results and we are working with colleagues to identify strategies to raise girls' aspirations in maths. Parents suggested consulting colleagues from local single-gender schools, eg Badminton, Redmaids, about their experience of girls' attitudes to maths, and also to co-educational schools which have introduced separate gender maths classes, eg Clifton High School. It was also suggested that positive female role models visiting school and positive messages from parents could help girls to overcome their anxiety about maths and improve their desire to "compete" with the boys.