



PARENTS' FORUM

19TH SEPTEMBER 2017

26 parents attended. Approximately half were new to the school.

Mr Barber explained the purpose of the coffee mornings:

- To provide regular informal open meetings when the Head can inform parents about important issues affecting the school
- To provide an opportunity for discussion with parents about matters of interest
- To bring parents together so that they can get to know each other
- To listen to suggestions from parents for ways to improve the school

The coffee mornings happen three times a year – and there are sometimes additional events led by other members of staff to provide information about particular issues.

Walk On Wednesdays (WOW)

The school is taking part in an initiative to promote safe and healthy travel to school. We encourage children to walk, cycle or scoot to school, and if they live further away and have to travel by car, we encourage parents to park at least 5 minutes walk away.

There is a 5 minute walk zone map on the [School Travel Action Group \(STAG\) page](#) of the website.

Every Wednesday, monitors in each class will log every child's method of getting to school on an App, and badges will be given out monthly.

We are also encouraging parents to drive and park considerately – we have seen dangerous examples of people letting children get out of cars on the road side rather than the pavement side, and have had complaints from neighbours about people blocking their driveways.

A parent asked us to remind the children not to step into the road in order to overtake slower walkers on the narrow pavements around the school. We will do this in classes and assembly.

School Development Plan

Mr Barber summarised the main points of action on this year's school development plan.

In Literacy, we are focusing on reading for pleasure. Recognising that you cannot force someone to enjoy reading, we are encouraging children to explore a wider range of books, and publishing new recommended reading lists for each year group. We are stocking up the library and the classrooms with books on those lists, and giving children incentives to read them.

A parent suggested that we could ask for donations of books from home: this is certainly something that the school would appreciate. We do receive donations, from time to time, when families have a clear out. Miss Jones, who leads on reading and coordinates the Library, will look at this to see how it can best be managed. As well as stocking up our bookshelves with appropriate literature, the children who run the School Shop on Wednesdays also sell second hand books to raise money for our Enrichment Fund.

In Maths, we are focusing attention on the teaching of times tables and fractions. We recognize that, for many, tables are associated with the Tables Whizz challenge which many classes do on a Friday. However, speed of recall is not the most accurate measure of a child's understanding of multiplication facts. By the end of Year 4, the expectation is that children should know their times tables up to 12x12. We are reviewing the way we teach and assess children's progress so that they can meet this expectation.

In both Literacy and Maths, we want to improve children's understanding of what they read or hear. In Literacy, this means improving their inference skills: thinking about what they have read and interpreting deeper levels of meaning. This means answering questions like "How would you describe the relationship between character A and character B?" or "Why do you think the author used those words?". In Maths, this means understanding a problem sufficiently to be able to work out what calculations are required to solve it. If they cannot interpret the problem, children tend to just pick any numbers they see and perform random operations on them, not checking whether the result makes sense in context.

To make sure there is still plenty of fun and enjoyment, we will be using the technique of choral speaking to "perform" texts together. Staff had training in September from Bristol Old Vic, and we found that it was not only great fun, but it deepened our understanding of the texts. We were inspired by presentations from children in other NW24 schools last year at our conference, and we are hoping that there will be performances at our Music Evenings next Easter.

Music Evenings

Just before the Easter holidays every year, we hold two evenings of musical performance. Children who learn instruments in school will be asked by their teacher to perform, if they are ready, on one night or the other. The Show Choir and Orchestra will perform on both nights. Year 4, who learn the ukulele on Wednesday afternoons, are asked to volunteer for the ukulele orchestra. Children who learn outside of school can also perform. We invite them to audition, to check that they are confident enough, and we like to showcase a range of abilities from beginners to virtuosos. Families of performers have priority booking for tickets, but anyone is welcome to come and watch.

Futureproofing HJS

Another theme on our SDP is looking ahead and planning for a future where we know we are going to have less money to spend. Next year, a new national funding formula will be introduced. There have been some sensational predications, widely publicized, about how much each school might lose. We do not yet know what the impact will be, but we

expect our costs to rise and our income to fall. We are considering options for the future that will enable us to continue offering the children the same high level of provision.

One of the ways we anticipate maintaining high quality and standards is by working more closely with our partners in the NW24 Teaching and Learning Partnership. This is a network of 27 schools in the North West of Bristol, stretching from Hotwells and Cathedral in the South to Blaise Primary and Woodway Special in the North, and from Stole Bishop in the West to Bishop Road and St Bonaventures in the East.

NW24 schools work very closely together: Heads meet regularly, as do Business Managers, Governors, Deputies and Special Needs Coordinators. We hold an annual training day at the beginning of January when all of our staff train together, spreading good practice through all of our schools. We have a SEN committee that is working on the challenge of meeting increasing demands in schools with drastically reduced funding for high needs. During the coming months and years, we expect to be working even more closely together to ensure that children continue to receive the very best teaching and opportunities that we can provide.

Catering

Mrs O'Brien, our School Business Manager, came along to tell us about the new catering contract. At the end of October, Eden, the current contractors, will hand over to Edwards and Ward. We have negotiated a new contract, along with Parson Street Primary and Filton Avenue Primary Schools, which we are confident will provide a much better service, improved quality and choice of menus and more scope for involving children in the lunch service. Parents will be invited to tasting sessions, and we hope to see a big increase in take-up of school meals. At present, Henleaze Infant School have opted to remain in the Bristol catering contract. Their contract with Eden is also due to expire at the end of October, but we understand that appointment of a new contractor has been delayed.

HENSA

Mr Barber made an appeal on behalf of HENSA for parents to come along to the AGM on Wednesday September 27th. There is no obligation to volunteer for a post on the committee – it would just be great to see a good crowd of parents, demonstrating their support for the school community and a willingness to offer suggestions or help out from time to time. That said, we do need a small committee: we have to have a Chair, and Treasurer and a Secretary, and the current officers cannot be expected to carry on for ever! As a junior school, we know that many parents will have “done their bit” for the PTA at their Infant School, so we find it harder to recruit new helpers.

We are hugely grateful for the commitment of HENSA to raising money for the school and providing social occasions which build our strong HJS community.

Questions raised (to be taken to staff for discussion)

Can HENSA use the School Gateway system for payments?

Could Year 5 home-school books be bigger?