

Parent Rep Meeting & Ms Steele – Spring (2) 2023

1. Thank You

A requested to pass a big thank you to the whole reception team for another good half term! A thank you from Year 1 for the support and continuation of this year's well-being programme, with a special mention of the Chinese New Year Dragon, which sparked lots of family conversations. Finally a parent also wanted to give their support to the teachers and the school should they choose to strike in future demonstrations.

2. Croydon Stands Tall

The question was asked if the school were aware of this initiative and if it was something they are/would consider getting involved with? Initially Ms Steele was not aware but prior to the meeting she has researched and forwarded the information to Mrs Atkins (Art Leader) who will look into this over the coming half-term. There would be a cost associated with it, so funding would need to be looked at/considered before a final decision would be made.

3. Reading Passport Scheme

There has been really positive feedback with the new reading scheme, it was remarked by one parent that it has been great for their child and their reading has greatly improved, they are so eager to collect the stamps!

4. Building works update

A request on if the parents could get an update on the current building work, what is the planned finish date and what are the plan for the new space.

As of the meeting date (09/02/23) the current finish date is the 10th March, however it was mentioned that there have been several delays in the past and so this date is not confirmed. The plans for the new space are still fluid. Ms Steele would like to wait until builders have handed over the building and she can see the space and how best to utilise it.

5. Inset days

The question of why inset days are attached to holidays was asked. Ms Steele replied that training is the key reason as to why inset days are attached to holidays. For example, at the beginning of the new school year in September the inset day at the beginning of the term is to ensure all the staff are up-to-date with any new legislation (especially safeguarding) that may have been issued. It was felt that having inset days attached to holidays would be easier for parents when planning childcare.

6. After school activity clubs

The question on the number of after school activity clubs was raised by one year group in particular to the limited options for particular year groups and different finish times.

It was also raised that a number of children are keen to join football and netball but these clubs are only available to Years 5 and 6.

Ms Steele highlighted that the majority of activity clubs are run by staff who do not get paid for their time and it is entirely up to them if they feel able to offer a club. Some clubs are seasonal such as the Country Dancing club that starts in the summer term.

With regards to outside clubs Ms Steele has little influence of timings or the day of the week that club staff are available. There is also the additional issue of space.

For all clubs, we have to look at the age of the children and how many staff are needed and that can be different for different cohorts of children.

A request has been made for potentially more creative clubs be available.

7. School Dinners

Initial feedback on the new caterers has been mixed, in particular the roast dinner - received little meat and that it was mainly stuffing, Mac and Cheese is no longer appetising and some foods were cold.

Ms Steele replied that for roast dinner a stuffing ball is optional, whilst the Mac and Cheese has not been on the latest menu. With regards to food being cool this was a genuine issue as one of the hot plates was not working properly, this has now been rectified.

Ms Steele was keen to highlight that initially the new caterers were not given a great deal of lead time before commencement of the contract. There were some teething problems with supplies but they have reverted back to their original food supplier which has made things better. She was also appreciative of the flexibility of Aspens, unlike the previous caterers who were very ridged when it came to children with undiagnosed food intolerances. Portion sizes are good and in line with government guidelines and the school will continue to monitor food quality. There are still a lot of issues with children eating very little and trying to leave the lunch hall early to play with their friends. The staff monitor this very closely and send children back to their seats to eat a little more.

8. After School Club (ASC)

There were a number of queries relating to after school club were raised. Firstly if more places could be made available, that some days are boring with little activities on offer and finally timings around snack/tea.

Currently ASC is run by existing staff with a ratio of 1 adult for 8 children. The beginning of the week is the busiest with 32 children compared to 16 children on a Friday. Ms Steele has looked to recruit more staff both internally and externally several time but has struggled as very few people want to work 3-6pm. At present there is no plans to increase ASC numbers unless additional staff can be found.

Feedback from some children is that some days are boring, that staff are not as engaging; that at times staff were using their phones and that children sometime remained in the dining hall after snack and the TV put on.

Ms Steele has spoken to ASC in regards to all the feedback raised.

Organising activities for a large group of children ranging from 4-11 years can at times be challenging especially in the winter, many children just want to sit quietly away from adults whilst others want to be rushing about. There are also the individual needs of the children to consider. In school a child may get 1:1 support but this is not possible in ASC.

ASC have recently purchased some new games and activities for the children and it is hoped now that the days are getting longer and (hopefully) the weather getting warmer that children will be able to go outside more.

In regards to staff being on the phone, at present parents must call ASC when they arrive to collect their child, staff must then escort the child to the black gates and ensure they are closed before returning to the Morris building. To help save time if another parent calls when a member of ASC is en-route to the black gate they will call that staff member to let them know. It is hoped that once the new entrance is working this will no longer be an issue.

Snack/tea is planned to be served between 4.30-4.45pm. Normally a member of the team will go up to the dining hall and beginning to prepare the food. Unfortunately if staff are continually running back and forth from the Morris building to the black gate to let parents in or because non-ASC parents are calling trying to gain access to the sport match that is occurring that day, this can cause the occasional delay in the time food is offered. Again it is hoped that once the new entrance is working this will be less of a problem.