

## **COFFEE AND CONVERSATION - 14 NOVEMBER 2019**

### **Attendees**

Mr and Mrs Fernandes, Mrs Spencer, Mrs van den Hoed, Mrs Mickuviene, Mrs Chijutomi, Ms Campos and Mrs Burnham.

The following questions and comments were discussed at the meeting from e-mails sent from parents.

### **1. Feedback on uniform**

**I look forward to hearing the feedback from any discussions the school has subsequently had with AlleyCatz regarding uniform. I bought new jumpers for each of my children at the start of this term, which have already stretched at the cuff and hem. Another parent I spoke to said they have stopped buying cardigans as the buttons were constantly coming off.**

An action from the Parents Forum in June 2019 was to have a meeting with AlleyCatz as the feedback from parents was that the quality of the uniform was not up to expectations. Jumpers and cardigans were not holding their shape, red polo shirts were losing their colour and the white transfer lettering on PE bags was not staying on. Mrs Burnham met with AlleyCatz in June and took all the comments from 30-40 families. They were quite horrified as it was not an issue that they have had before with other schools. Cardinal Newman's uniform, specifically the red Cardinal Newman polo shirts, are different in colour to their other customers, bright and deep and our jumpers are a very dark navy.

### **Actions:**

- **The school has taken some samples from various different suppliers and is washing them a number of times to see which clothes keep their quality best. AlleyKatz will then change the supplier to a new one of our choice.**
- **The School logo will be embroidered on the PE bags rather than using transfers.**

Next big order is Feb 2020, and therefore by September 2020, we hopefully will have this sorted.

### **2. Would the school consider allowing girls to wear grey trousers in winter, like the boys, rather than navy trousers? Grey shorts are an option for both sexes in the summer and I think it would look smarter if the colour of the trousers available on the uniform list was also uniform.**

The school uniform has been navy trousers for girls and grey trousers for boys. Discussion on whether the uniform could be the same for boys and girls. Mrs Burnham said that this topic has been discussed at Senior Leadership meetings. Some staff feel that we should keep the uniform as it is now and others feel that when you have all the children together it does look like a mismatch.

It was mentioned that girls' navy trousers are harder to find, some girls do not wear trousers and that it looks smarter when everyone is dressed in the same colour. The colours were also discussed stating that grey blends in whereas navy colour is strong and vibrant for girls. Parents present had differing views on whether to change the colour of girls' trousers.

It was mentioned that white shirts are hard to manage as they get black around the cuffs, collars fade, and difficult to keep clean ie tomato sauce stains. Mrs Burnham stated that white shirt with the red and navy does makes the children look really smart and we would therefore be reluctant to change this part of the uniform.

### **Action**

- **Put this question out to parents and get their feedback. Decision will be made and communicated to parents.**

## 2. Website/Newsletter (in response to requests to feedback from previous meeting)

I personally find the website very user friendly. The new newsletter format with links is excellent.

Feedback from attendees was the format works well, calendar at the bottom helps and easy to find the links. Very positive.

## 3. Parking

1. Is there anything further that the school can do to deter parking and improve safety outside, such as asking the council to have a parking warden present every morning or to change the parking restriction on Arch Road?

2. Is there anything that can be done – a marshal/cones/lollipop person? Is there anything the council/parking attendants can be asked to do/reinforce more?

This is an on-going issue. The school has 1 - 2 irate people complaining about inconsiderate parking by parents every single week. This does give the school a negative image and most importantly, it is also an accident waiting to happen with regard to the safety of our children. The school is in contact with the council on a regular basis and have asked for parking wardens to come to Arch Road. They come down maybe half a dozen times in a year. When parking wardens do patrol Arch Road, it does make a difference, but only for about a week.

The school puts out cones every day. Talked about staff marshalling the road but all LSAs need to be in class from when they start at 8:30am and the school cannot commit to Senior Leadership team patrolling the street due to other commitments.

Discussed

- Is there any reason why we do not use the field for people to park in? Mrs Burnham stated that we can only use it in the summer e.g. for sports day. Not suitable all year round as the ground is soft and tyres would churn it up, so it would ruin the field.
- Could we set up an initiative where children who walk to school could collect badges. This has been done in the past (Walk Once a Week – WOW) and was run by a staff member who has now left. Stated we could put it into PE team action plan.
- Residents of Arch Road do not want double yellow lines as this would restrict their parking. Permit parking is better – the restrictions are already in place on Arch Road but parents do not adhere to them.
- Whether it would be a good idea to remind parents how easy it is to get parking permits for Hersham Station car park, so that parents who drive can use this option.

### Actions:

- Re-issue the statement that parents **are not to drive down Arch Road** in Newsletter. This is a combination of child safety and respecting our neighbours.
- Advertise the process and how easy it is to get a car park permit at Hersham Station car park.
- Talk to PE team to start up Walk Once a Week (WOW) initiative again.

## 4. Dogs

**To raise the safety issues of tying dogs to the fence so close to the school gate as I have witnessed younger children being frightened by sudden barking and jumping on the road to avoid a dog. Many jams have been caused by people stopping suddenly to pet these dogs.**

In the newsletter, we have asked parents not to tie their dogs up on the school gates. Dogs cannot be brought into school grounds for safety reasons and there is no place for dogs to be placed in school, as a holding place. As the fence belongs to the school, we could get children to design posters asking owners not to tie their dogs to the fence.

### **Action:**

- Children to design posters to put on the school fence.

## 5. Reading in KS1

**Is it possible for children in KS1, especially Year 1, to have more reading opportunity with a school adult? Most read with a school adult only once a week.**

As a school we are in the **top 10%** with greater depth in Reading and **top 5%** with phonics in the country. Great results so there isn't an inherent problem with reading.

We put a lot of resource into reading in Reception – working towards reaching the phonic screening threshold at the end of Reception, giving them excellent grounding for Year 1. Coming out of Reception, therefore, most children's phonic knowledge is already very strong and they are ready to read with any adult in Year 1.

Extra support is given by LSAs to support any Y1 children finding reading difficult, with specific intervention in place to support phonic knowledge and to fill the gaps.

We have the initiative of Come Read with Me, where local parishioners come and read with the children and we always encourage parents to support us by offering to hear readers in Key Stage 1. Training is given to Come Read with Me volunteers to enable them to give the best support to children.

**Comment made that the Reading Challenge has become boring for some children, can we jazz it up a bit?**

Mrs Burnham mentioned that they will be rolling out the Accelerated Reader programme – an online reading tool to promote reading progression in KS2 – in the Summer Term. They will have a library of about 1000 books online but the school's intention is also to have new books for the library, thanks in part to a parent donation to the school. This will do the job of the "Reading Challenge", in ensuring that children are reading books at the right level and are understanding what they read.

## 6. PSHE – Emotional Literacy and Wellbeing

**In the tough climate of reaching targets in academic learning....my question is if the school would be interested or open towards extra activities which may promote emotional learning and development. Various activities and materials like; brief presentations, films, videos etc which may be interesting, interactive as well as important learning opportunity about emotional literacy, positive thinking, awareness or overall Well Being and mental health of primary aged children.**

As a school, we do a lot about emotional learning and development of wellbeing, for example this week, staff were trained in "Zones of Regulation" (children developing understanding of their emotional state) which are already used with some children in school and will be rolled out to support all children. The school is blessed to have 2 Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) and a Home School Link Worker (HSLW) to support individual children's wellbeing and we also work closely with the Xavier Educational Psychologist who delivers training both to staff and to children (e.g. Circle of Friends to Y4 this week)

As part of our PSHE programme, we focus on different aspects across the year in different classes, as well as having some whole school themes. This week we are focusing on anti-bullying and next week on road safety. Classes are also rolling out meditation with the children to support well being and there are opportunities for prayer and reflection throughout the day. Teachers are regularly trained on different aspects of well-being.

Comments from attendees was that they would like to be informed about specifics of the different topics the school does in different classes so that they can support them at home. Mrs Burnham reminded parents that the PSHE overview for each year group is on the school website.

## Action

- **The school will raise the profile of the excellent work they are already doing on well-being and mental health, so that parents feel informed about what is happening in school.**

## 7. PSHE – RSE Policy and LGBT

**The Government says there is no specific requirement to teach about LGBT issues in primary schools, however they do encourage schools to do so. How does Cardinal Newman take this on as a school with religious values and beliefs and will there be any changes to relationship education?**

In line with the Diocese programme, agreed by our Bishop, we use the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programme called Journey of Love. This is what we have already used for a number of years. The Government guidance changes in 2020 and clarifies that LGBT must be talked about in schools *where appropriate*. This does not change what we already do.

The school follows the Diocesan guidelines and staff have already had training on this. The government guidance allows for local context and gives discretion to the school, while also acknowledging the Catholic Education Service (CES) programme to be a national model for RSE in terms of holistic coverage of sex and relationships in context. This is in line with the teaching of the church. If asked, staff will tell children about what is possible in marriage by law as well as talking about what the Christian sacrament of marriage looks like. As in all subjects, we follow our Mission Statement, that we are all uniquely created and loved by God and should show love and respect to all, regardless of gender or sexuality.

Attendees were able to review the Cardinal Newman Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) policy which is also on the website, as well as looking specifically at the programme of study for RE and PSHE which maps out links between the two subjects and offers suggestions of scripture readings and secular books which may be useful to support children's understanding in various topics.

Mrs Burnham confirmed that letters are sent out to parents in Year 5 and Year 6 prior to teaching about puberty and about how babies are made, and parents are invited to review the teaching material if they wish to. It is a two-way road; the key point is that parents are the first educators of the child and the school works with parents in doing that job. Those present recognised that it is difficult to control if the family has older siblings and some children have greater knowledge than others at the same age. Primary schools can consider within their context and age stage how much they discuss as a class. At Cardinal Newman, the teachers ask the children to write any questions they have. If not age-appropriate to talk to the class about the subject, the teacher will talk to the parents and ask them to answer the question within their family values and have the conversation at home.

Those present felt reassured that the school will always work with parents to support the education of their children in this aspect, as in others.