

Overdale Junior School Parents' Forum

Minutes of Meeting Wednesday 21 May 2014, 3.30pm

Present: L Marsden, C Cownley, K Askew, K Cooper (staff)

Apologies: S Vallance, V Ball, S Vaghela

1. Lunchtime Improvements

We met in OJS dining hall to look at some of the lunchtime improvements taking place. Eight new picnic tables and 10 picnic blankets on the grassy area outside the dining hall are being used for eating lunch outside during the fine weather. Both packed lunches and school dinners may go outside on a rota basis - even/odd numbered classes rotate on a daily basis, but children can eat inside if they prefer. The outdoor facilities have generally gone down well this week and parents like the idea.

One idea put forward was to increase the number of bins in the playground/eating areas to avoid littering and train the children to use rubbish bins provided.

It was also suggested blinds or curtains in the dining hall might help to reduce noise levels due to poor acoustics and make it more comfortable for sitting out of direct sunlight.

We watched a video on the 'School Food Plan – What Works Well' website (visit <http://whatworkswell.schoolfoodplan.com/>):

Lunchtime Experience – Improving the Dining Area – Tips on improving the dining experience.

Parents liked the idea of 'Bistro Buddies' helping to serve younger children in the dining hall, and tablecloths to improve the look of the tables and reduce sound levels. It was suggested we could have a fund raising event to purchase suitable, durable table cloths, whereby supporters would know exactly what they are purchasing.

Other on-going lunchtime improvement plans include:

- new outdoor sports equipment and games,
- a dressing up area,
- 3 new outdoor clocks, and (hopefully)
- an outdoor table tennis table and chalk boards.

A garden shed is being purchased to put all the new equipment in, partly paid for by a donation of £250 from the local Tesco store on Aberdale Road which has recently undergone a refit.

After half term a group of Y5 Young Leaders will be trained to organise playground games. They will be in place in the autumn term.

An idea put forward was to look at other schools for ideas and information.

2. Year 6 SATs preparation – does it start too early?

This question was raised by one parent and others agreed that some Y6 children feel too much pressure is put on preparing for SATs tests in May. It was stated some research shows SATs revision is only effective 8 weeks prior to the tests, whereas SATs revision and practise papers often begin in the autumn term. The parent who raised the issue will look for further research and would like to offer debate in school on this issue.

The next meeting will be on **WEDNESDAY 2 JULY** at 3.30-4.15pm in the Healthy Hut.