



Parental Consultation – The Curriculum

Feedback

Many thanks for your responses to this questionnaire. Earlier this week, the children provided us with their feedback to very similar questions during their class council time and we will look at their responses in relation to yours as we plan for the year ahead.

In all, 34 parent questionnaires were returned and classes were represented as follows:

Class R – 7	Class 1 – 12	Class 2 – 5	Class 3 – 7	Class 4 – 4	Class 5 – 6	Class 6 - 2
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Question 1. However long or short your child's time at Willow Brook has been, which topics have been the most memorable – which themes have been talked about the most at home?

The list of topics mentioned in response to this question was very long! It is clear that different themes inspire different children and it was lovely to hear that topics from many years ago are still remembered fondly.

Whole School Topics <i>All of these were mentioned by more than one family with the more recent 'Rio' and 'Conservation' themes being sited the most.</i>	Class Topics <i>All of these were mentioned at least twice. History based topics were named more than any other curriculum area.</i>
<i>Chocolate (2011)</i>	<i>Castles/Kings & Queens (Reception/Year 1)</i>
<i>Enderbury Island/Shipwreck (2012)</i>	<i>The 1950s (Year 2)</i>
<i>London – Olympics & the Queen's Jubilee (2012)</i>	<i>Stone Age/Bronze Age (Year 3)</i>
<i>World Cruise (2012/13)</i>	<i>Egypt (currently Year 3)</i>
<i>Robots (2013)</i>	<i>Romans (currently Year 4)</i>
<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream (2013)</i>	<i>Tudors (Year 6)</i>
<i>Harry Potter (2014)</i>	<i>Europe (Year 5)</i>
<i>Money (2014)</i>	<i>The Shang Dynasty (Year 5)</i>
<i>Scoop/Gorilla on the Loose (2015)</i>	<i>Habitats (Year 2)</i>
<i>Alice in Wonderland (2015)</i>	<i>Space (Year 5)</i>
<i>Ali Baba/Christmas Play (2015)</i>	<i>Under the Sea (Reception/Year 1)</i>
<i>Conservation (2016)</i>	<i>Dinosaurs (Reception/Year 1)</i>
<i>Queen's birthday (2016)</i>	<i>Van Gogh/Sunflowers (Year 3)</i>
<i>Rio (2016)</i>	

Question 2: All of our topics are planned in relation to the National Curriculum requirements, including the three whole school topics which change every year. Are there any themes that you think your child would be inspired by and which you think would make a good topic for the school?

Thank-you for your ideas in response to this question – your suggestions covered a wide range of themes. The most popular response was 'Space/The Planets' which is already one of our Year 5 science topics. Some of your other suggestions are also already covered within our whole school curriculum plan and through the Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus for RE (eg: Ancient Egypt, Europe and world religions) – they will happen; your child just hasn't met them yet.

However, you provided us with lots and lots of ideas for our whole school topics – thank you very much, you've given us lots to consider! After we have examined all of the children's suggestions, we will decide which ideas will best support our curriculum delivery.

Question 3. Do you think that school trips support learning? Do you feel that the cost justifies their cause?

Overwhelmingly, the response to this answer was 'yes' and 'yes'. You provided us with many examples of memorable trips and liked that they were linked to learning in the classroom. Only one parent felt that school trips did not support/enhance learning. Chester Zoo was mentioned by many people as being a great experience which the children had enjoyed and gained a lot from. Two parents felt as though the journey was too long although a number of parents of our older children remembered our whole school visit to London very fondly (another long journey!). We do consider distance when planning our trips and always look at closer alternatives. We decided against Twycross Zoo as so many of our children had already visited and we had been following the conservation work done by Chester Zoo – also covered by the Channel 4 programme which ran at the same time as our topic.

Whole school trips were specifically mentioned by three parents as being very worthwhile. They involve a significant amount of organisation and finding a venue that suits all age groups can be challenging but we really value the shared experience they provide.

Lots of parents appreciated the residential visits for Years 3 to 6 and added lots of detail about how the children had benefited from these. A number of parents liked being able to spread the payments which they said made the overall cost manageable. Only one parent felt that the school should not organise residential visits at all.

Question 4. Listed below are some of the different ways in which we keep you informed about the National Curriculum and what we teach. How useful/informative do you find them?

Below each section, I've included some of the additional feedback provided by parents in response to the different types of information we share.

Do you find the following information useful and informative?	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Half termly learning letter	29	4		
<p>'Half termly learning letters contain a lot of information. It would be easier to digest if they were sent weekly/fortnightly.' – Teachers send the learning letters half termly as this reflects our changes in topic. We will be reviewing how and when our learning letter information is distributed with parents at the start of the autumn term.</p>				
Curriculum expectations for each year group (sent out in September)	20	12	1	
<p>'It is not very useful to know the expectations when you are not the person implementing them.' 'It would be better to have expectations re-iterated throughout the year – otherwise the information gets lost.' 'I think it is important to know what is being taught in school.' We felt it was particularly important to let you know at the start of the year how the expectations for each year group had changed due to the introduction of the new curriculum. We will re-distribute this information in September and also add it to our website so that parents can access it throughout the year.</p>				
Website updates – reports & photos	18	13	2	
<p>'We like to see the photos and read the reports on the website – it's good to see some of what's going on in school.' 'It would be good to receive email updates regarding information that's added to the website' 'I don't find the school website particularly user friendly' – the school website is being reviewed and updated over the summer ready for the autumn term. We will be making it more mobile phone/tablet friendly as well as tidying up the content so that, hopefully, it's easier to navigate.</p>				
Curriculum information evenings – eg: maths evening for parents (2015)	19	9	2	
<p>'We found the maths information evening so useful.' 'The curriculum information evening was really interesting. It explained the changes in a way that was easy to understand.' 'The information could be delivered by letter rather than having to attend a formal meeting.' We have a Phonics/Reading workshop planned for the start of the autumn term for parents of our younger children.</p>				

Do you find the following information useful and informative?	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Curriculum information on the website – curriculum plans for each year group & links to National Curriculum pages	13	16	4	
'It is useful to see how what the children are learning at school relates to the National Curriculum.'				
Information regarding the changes to statutory assessments (Years 2 and 6 only)	14	6	Many parents left this blank as it had not applied to them.	
'There was a lack of information on the new tests and scoring changes but this was not down to how the school presented the information.'				
If you would like to explain any of your responses – please do so here:				
'Parentmail is a very useful resource.'				
'The school's open door policy of talking to teachers/staff is integral to information sharing.'				

Question 5. The homework we set supports our curriculum delivery. We do review our policy on an annual basis and try our best to take account of your views even though it is the question that prompts the most divided response every year! This year, we would like you to consider the following:

The mark displayed is the average mark awarded, taking all responses into account. The comments below represent the various views that were shared.

Types of homework task	Rank from 1 – 5 in order of importance (with 1 being the most important)	Rank from 1 – 5 in order of how this activity engages/motivates your child (with 1 being the most engaging)
Reading (individual reading and/or guided reading support)	1.6	2
Spelling/phonics – learning sounds or words	2.3	3.2
Number practice (eg: counting or tables)	2.3	2.7
Maths & English worksheet activities	2.3	2.6
Creative projects. Homework tasks to make or create something based on a class topic.	3.5	2.4

If you would like to add anything or explain any of the above responses – please do so here:

'All of the above are of equal importance – I like the fact you do a variety throughout the year.' *Many parents found it difficult to rank the different tasks for the same reason.*

'Creative homework always seems like homework for parents!'

'Children love the creative projects... even if it daunts the parents.'

'My child loved designing the Olympic poster and spent a long time researching and testing ideas – a few more like this throughout the year?'

Regarding worksheets for younger children: **'Parents can teach the same skills through role play/life experiences although some parents may prefer to have more structure – everyone is different.'**

'I set a time limit on homework if it's causing negativity as I think they're pushed hard enough in school.'

'Shorter, bitesize tasks help to keep up motivation levels.'

'Homework is particularly useful as I can see where my child's strengths and weaknesses are and practise at home.'

'On the whole, the homework has been interesting – it just needs to be varied for all abilities.'

We always review our homework policy in September and will take your views into account during this process.

Thank you again for taking the time to provide us with your feedback – it helps to shape the education we provide for your children.

Mrs Toom