

Coffee and Conversation – Parent Q and A

19th November 2020 9:15am

Please is it possible to have more information about what the Reception are learning day to day as my 4 year old doesn't tell me very much!

The termly overviews for all year groups are on the school website. I'm sorry if this hasn't been communicated sooner – it is usually mentioned in the "Partners in Learning" meetings, but these were in a different format this year and may have missed this out! The link for Reception is here: https://www.cardinal-newman.surrey.sch.uk/_site/data/files/BF2DC8D531F52B482698A83E3E65BD24.pdf

The pathway for other year groups is the same: Home Page – Learning – Year Groups – then click the link for the year (e.g. Year 3) and then scroll to the link for the term (currently Autumn 2020)

Has Cardinal Newman considered using an online learning app to share learning with Reception parents?

The app we use is called Tapestry and staff use it to record the children's development through annotations and photos of their learning. We are conscious that some settings use this to share information with parents. We do recognise that this is really lovely for parents to receive. Our concern with this is purely around capacity – the time staff are spending checking that every parent has received a picture and the same number of pictures each week is time which is taking them away from working with the children to help them progress. We try to work in partnership with parents in other ways e.g. sharing learning overviews (And usually books!), parent consultations, parent Q and A and homelearning email addresses (usually direct catch up with our teachers). Our Early Years data at Cardinal Newman is very high – as it is across the school – and we know that what we do to help our children learn works very well. So in short, yes, we have considered using the app to share with parents but have made a conscious decision for staff to focus on the children's learning.

Please can you describe the COVID cleaning regime both nightly and through the day.

Quite extensive, but in brief:

Classrooms – Surfaces cleaned by LSAs in class before and after school and at break and lunch (work tops, desks, chairs etc)

Shared spaces – Mr Philips is working additional hours to clean frequently touched areas and the shared toilet areas during a couple of hours at lunchtimes

Cleaners - Come in during the evening to clean the rooms more thoroughly, ready for the day ahead.

After our first COVID case in school, we checked our cleaning regime / infection control with the school nurse team who said we were doing all we should. There is no evidence of transmission at Cardinal Newman and none of the three positive cases we have had appear to have been caught on the premises. We shouldn't be complacent and will continue to do all we can to keep the school open and running safely.

Is there an alternative to school uniform being worn for PE? I know we discussed this before, but wanted to raise it again as it does mean uniforms get mucky.

Thank you for raising this concern. We do recognise that it's highly inconvenient not wearing PE kit for PE and that wearing uniform involves additional washing through the week. The reason for not using PE kit is that we are advised not to regularly get changed in school at the moment, so the children would have to come into school in PE kit. This worked well in June and the children enjoyed romping around in PE shorts and T shirts. Not so in November!

It isn't evident probably to parents and carers as they drop up and pick up, but school life is very different to normal inside the building. One of the things we are very conscious of is "air flow." We are told that ventilation helps prevent transmission and so all outside doors, windows and roof vents are open for much of the day. What was a welcome cooling breeze in June is somewhat chilly in November. Many children – more than half of our school community – don't have the optional PE sweatshirt and tracksuit bottoms which would keep them warmer. We will therefore keep children using uniform for PE until the weather gets warmer – hopefully in the second half of the Spring term, but latest by after Easter.

No-one likes the children wearing uniform rather than PE kit for PE, but the ventilation is more important and does help us to keep the children safe and the school open. I am sorry for the inconvenience of the additional washing though!

HT presented the new RSHE Programme Life to the Full Online Parent Portal and this can be accessed with information about the learning for each year group. (Access information will go out next week.) This has been approved for use in our diocese by Bishop Richard and really makes great links with everyday life for the children.

Why is one session taught separately for boys and girls? Don't they all need the same information?

All of the sessions are taught to the whole class, but for especially sensitive topics, girls and boys may be given the opportunity to ask questions / share in a discussion separately so that they don't feel embarrassed about asking questions around what is happening to their bodies. These questions might then be fed back into the whole class sessions anonymously so that all the children know what their classmates are thinking and feeling about the topic.

What is the situation in school for our children – have they now made up any learning they might have lost during the first lockdown?

The situation is different for different children and families. Some children made more progress over lockdown and some made less. Key patterns across the school include reduced writing stamina in KS2 and some reduction in Mastery in Maths for children of all abilities – our children usually have

the opportunity to explore and investigate collaboratively while they are in school and this deepens their understanding. This kind of learning couldn't take place over lockdown and so there is an element missing which teachers are working hard to redress.

A baseline assessment of the children's learning took place in October, just before Parent Consultations and those results for your child would have been discussed then. The next assessments will happen in December and that will give us a clearer view of the accelerated progress made during this half-term and any further needs we should address. Our School Development Plan has as its key aim to enable all children to make excellent progress this year and to be on track to at least match their prior attainment by the end of the year. School staff are working hard to make that happen.

Thank you to all parents who were able to join me this morning. At this time of limited interaction, it is more useful than ever for parents to be able to have their questions answered and for me to be able to share information about the school.

The next Parent Q and A will be in Spring 1 – Wednesday 27th January at 9:15am.

Please do join us if you can – and feel free to submit questions if you can't!