

Langar C of E Primary School

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Head Teacher
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Dear Parents / Carers,

Outcome of Proposal to Change the School Times

I am writing to inform you that, the governing body have agreed to change the timings of the school day. **The new times will be 8.45am (with doors opening to classrooms at 8.40) to 3.20pm, with effect from September 2019.** This has been altered following the consultation as parent's views have been taken into account.

Parental Responses to the Proposal

Thank you to all of those families who took the time to reply and give us their thoughts on the proposal. A considerable amount of time was spent reading your replies and considering all of your individual views. We will address some of the concerns expressed in this letter.

Out of 69 families, 30 responded (43%). Of these responses 57% agreed with the proposed change, 23% neither agreed or disagreed and 40% disagreed (this represents 17% of the families in school).

In summary, we have made this decision for the following reasons:

- Whilst we accept that some families were not in favour of the proposed change, the majority of parents were in favour because they could see clear benefits for the children.
- The staff can restructure the school day to support more productive learning.
- We fully understand and have attempted to address the concerns of those families who did not support the change, particularly in regard to possible childcare issues.
- It will allow more after-school enrichment activities, without affecting learning time.
- An earlier finish will allow our children to walk home in daylight during the winter.
- The staff will have more time for year group team meetings, planning, marking and professional development, all of which benefit the children.

We will now explain this in more detail.

Learning

The open door start to the day means a smooth transition into school from home. Children will have time to 'settle in' with appropriately set activities and teachers will be on hand for parents to talk to

and pass on messages. There is much research to suggest that the first two hours of school are the prime time for learning, when children are best able to retain and process information. The change will give us three meaningful teaching sessions in the morning, instead of two – allowing for discrete sessions of reading, spelling and Fun Fluency Facts outside of English and Maths sessions.

Although there is no statutory school day length, follow the old government guidance of 23.5 hours per week and exceed this weekly by 2.75 hours. Children currently have 5 hours and 20 minutes of teaching time a day, this remains the same with the open door start to the day and has a loss of 5 minutes for families who choose to arrive for registration at 8.45am. The staff are confident that a better organised day will further increase the amount of learning time.

Lunchtimes, Break Times and Physical Activity

We place physical activity as high importance and ensure it is incorporated as frequently as possible into timetables; meeting and exceeding government and NHS targets through our provision of outdoor learning, PE, swimming and dance plus lunchtime clubs, after school clubs and events organised by Rushcliffe Sports Partnership, Fosse Schools and Inspire+. Teachers plan lessons that utilise our outdoor space and incorporate active learning into many areas of the curriculum. Our playground has been equipped with apparatus and equipment that further promotes self-led activity. However, having taken in account the views of parents and children, although no formal break will be timetabled, individual classes will take a brain break in the afternoon.

Learning Skills and Values are at the heart of the Langar curriculum and we do not underestimate the opportunities that free play provides for children to apply the skills they have learned. Children will still have a 15 minutes break time in the morning and half an hour of lunch play to do this. However, our broad and varied topic planning provides plenty of opportunities for children to work collaboratively, discuss ideas, express themselves and make moral choices. Moreover, the availability of the school field, MUGA and climbing frames after school mean that parents can continue this social interaction after school if they wish. We are still awaiting the outcome of our Lottery application but, if successful, the installation of the all-purpose walking/running track will enable families to keep fit together making the most of the earlier end to the school day to spend time together.

Child Care

The primary purpose of a school is to provide education for your children, however as a staff of working parents we know too well the pressure on working families and understand that choosing and securing childcare adds to this. Sourcing childcare is a personal choice and a variety of solutions are found by families in school, including utilising friends and family, child minders and Out of School Club. We are very fortunate here that the Early Years Learning Alliance are on site to provide quality before and after school care. They will continue to provide such care at the costs set by the EYLA. We do not have any influence over this. We are working together with the EYLA and can assure you that with these changes there are *no increased costs* to parents. We will also ensure a smooth transition between the end of the school day and the start of after school care.

Extra-Curricular Activities

After school clubs and activities will still to run and we will continue to source a variety of providers who can introduce exciting and engaging new hobbies to your children. The clubs will take place in daylight throughout most of the year. We also envisage some impromptu clubs - for example, if there is a Rushcliffe Learning Alliance sporting event, training sessions could be organised in the run-up to the competition. Many parents felt that the earlier finish of these was helpful in enabling them to get children to activities that they attend after school hours such as swimming lessons and Brownies and to enjoy a longer evening together as a family.

Impact on Staff

Teachers spend time outside of lessons on quality marking, meetings, lesson planning and professional development. These activities are for the benefit of our children's education. Finishing earlier will allow more time for this and having more time to focus on planning and professional development will lead to an even more creative and vibrant curriculum. More staff training is now done in conjunction with other schools. At the moment, our staff consistently miss part of this training because other Rushcliffe schools finish earlier. For staff supporting children with additional needs, the half hour saved at the end of the day can be redirected towards valuable planning. Currently it is difficult to spend time on planning during the school day as SEN staff often spend break times and lunchtimes with the more vulnerable children who find less structured time difficult.

Any change is clearly about determining the collective best interests of the school, children and staff. On balance, the governors are satisfied that the clear benefits of the change outweigh the disadvantages for some families. We look forward to embracing this change for the future benefit of our school. We have trust and confidence in the school's ability to represent the best interests of our children and to continually strive to improve their education.

Yours sincerely,