

27Jan17

Dear Parent/Carer,

Today 260 children have been given a reward for their excellent attendance in the first term with over 40% of children achieving an incredible 100% attendance. To see their proud smiles in assembly was a real pleasure.

The school informed you of our decision to reward attendance and sought your views in my letter of the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2016, in the Parent Forum minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016 and in the newsletter dated the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016. Not one person came forward with comments so I can only imagine you are happy with the changes we have made. Rewarding attendance will, no doubt, remain contentious for a small minority of parents and I appreciate there are the glass full/empty arguments where it can be seen as either celebrating those who attend well or penalising those who don't. Nevertheless we do believe every child deserves to be celebrated including celebrating their attendance. Over a **thousand days** were missed last term by our children and every day counts!

Every decision we make is based on whether or not it will keep your children safe, promote their wellbeing and improve their primary school experience and achievement. Sometimes the decisions are hard and we have to make them knowing they will not be popular. Our behaviour policy was an example of this, as it was controversial and many questioned the no nonsense approach. Now behaviour is quoted to be one of the main reasons parents change schools and request BCPS. More importantly children's willingness to tell the truth and go to an adult for help has prevented several serious safeguarding incidents.

As a headteacher it is a difficult balance to shield your children from what they do not yet need to know about the world and at the same time preparing them for life beyond us. One of the reasons for choosing the Robbie Williams, 'I love my life' song as the school anthem is to illustrate the importance of building children's self-esteem and confidence but also their resilience. As explained in these various communications we consulted the children as to what they thought was fair. They believe teaching children that life is unfair is necessary, even at 4 years old. Teaching them that they can't always be perfect, can't always be winners and can't always achieve everything is also vital in ensuring a healthy mind-set.

Please be assured that the events of the summer have not been ignored and we have listened to what you said. We learnt several lessons, namely to make it fairer so that children get three chances a year; to give parents sufficient warning and to seek their opinions and to be more sensitive as to how the rewards were organised. This time we have issued individual tickets for the Rio cinema so children go with their families instead of as a school trip. At the end of this term there will be a different reward. We are also now much more thorough in double and triple checking so that absence due to funerals or other extenuating circumstances is taken into consideration. We also carefully check which children have ongoing medical issues and operations.

The parent forum will be meeting again later this term. ***Please do pass on your thoughts and suggestions to your parent representative so these can be considered before the next reward.***

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Kelly Stock  
Headteacher

