



Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022

**Re: Update on the Proposal to Shorten the School Day**

Dear Parents and Carers,

During the consultation period regarding the school day finishing at 3:15pm, we received 7 letters and 1 parent came in person to oppose the change. Governors have considered the concerns put forward and have made the decision to go ahead with the proposal.

Thank you to the parents who gave feedback and thank you also to the parents who trust governors and school in making the right decision for the children of St Chad's.

We would like to reassure all parents and carers that the decision has not been taken lightly and is based purely on maximising opportunities for teaching and learning. All the St Chad's staff have been involved in this process and we have collectively decided this is the best option for our children. The staggered sessions in lockdown and temporary changes to the school day gave the opportunity to look at things with fresh eyes and consider new possibilities.

There were several concerns raised during the consultation process- I will address the most relevant concerns.

**Concern 1- Loss of Learning for Key Stage 1 Children**

**We have already changed our timetable to maximise learning time from September 2021 and children have been gaining an extra 10 minutes learning time per day.**

Instead of children coming to school at 8:45am, playing on the yard then being collected by teachers at 8:55am to start the school day as they used to, we decided to maximise learning opportunities and start the school day at 8:45am. Effectively, all St Chad's children have been receiving an extra 10 minutes education since September 2021. In finishing at 3:15pm instead of 3:25pm, EYFS and KS1 children will have the same learning time as they always have done- there is no loss to learning. Key Stage 2 children will actually gain 10 minutes.

We changed the times of our worship from 9:05 to 10:05 in September 2021 so children have a full lesson at the start of the day. This is working well as it is when children are their most productive. We have looked at other variations of the school day but we are restricted by the age of our children, when they need to eat lunch and their concentration span. We know what works and what does not work from the staggered sessions of 2020-21 and we know our children.



We are not unduly worried about the learning lost through covid. We have hard working, wonderful children and after 2 terms back with excellent teaching, hard work, intervention and home support, our internal data is giving us reason to be optimistic that we are getting back on track quickly. Any children eligible for the catch-up tuition have been receiving it, with school funding the 20% short fall. Schools have faced significant challenges from government cuts over the last decade and we still manage to deliver what children need- this is what schools do! So please trust us that we will not do anything to jeopardise children's learning.

### **Concern 2- Convenience**

We understand that many parents will be inconvenienced due to this earlier finish. This is why we are trying to help by giving extra notice (LCC guidance is 3 months, we are giving 5 months' notice) and we are keeping after school club prices the same. We also continue to offer extra-curricular activities at a time when many schools, including those closest to us, are finding it hard to do so.

### **Concern 3- Congestion**

We take on board this is a concern and that collecting siblings and parking is already a problem. We have considered various solutions and think it would be best if we let EYFS and KS1 children with siblings out first just before 3:15 and any KS2 children without siblings can go out first at 3:15. Given that it can take a few minutes to dismiss 35 children, this should give parents with siblings some flexibility at collection time.

### **Concern 4- Breaks for Key Stage 2 Children**

Key Stage 2 children can still have a break in the afternoon- the original letter explained that it will not be a formal break time at the same time as KS1. It will be up to each teacher to decide when best to have break time in light of how learning is progressing. There will be more space on the playground for all classes as a result.

This is a positive step forward for our school and I would like to thank the School Leadership team, staff, governors and parents who were involved in the process.

Thanking you all in advance for your support and cooperation.

Kind regards

*Nicole Bitsakaki*

Headteacher