

Minutes for Enrichment Forum, Thursday 12th September 2024 3:30pm

MB: Thanked all for coming, 100% of invitees attended, explained a random selection of parents was made for this first forum.

Had spotted that enrichment was lacking in some areas and needs looking at but it was not on the school development plan for this year, input from parents has sped up the process.

In other schools enrichment is not an 'add on', it is embedded within the curriculum and should be used to enrich the curriculum. When enrichment was introduced to Sark School its purpose was to bring the community into school which it has done, but the community do not have to be restricted to 2:30-4:30 weekly for 6 weeks.

Enrichment can be changed to be within the curriculum and the community would be invited in during lesson time, at times convenient to them, to enhance the learning of the children. Staff would provide clubs as wrap around care. Currently enrichment is not making an impact on the children's learning, happy to make changes as soon as next term but will need to speak to all parents first, a questionnaire will be sent.

The children have been asked for their opinions and they would all like to finish school at 3:30pm rather than 4:30. Most enjoyed the sports enrichment and roughly half enjoyed the theatre and Forest Schools enrichment. Drama is part of the curriculum but could also be added as a club for those wanting to do more and have main roles in productions.

Parent A: Confirmed that sports during the Spring and Summer term would be provided by the Sports Club with 4 or 5 different sports being offered by Guernsey professionals.

MB: These sports, paid for by Sports Club, will be part of the curriculum, not enrichment.

Parent B: Whilst drama is part of the curriculum, it does not always require a final performance.

MB: The UK recommendation is that there are 3-4 performances per year. Following feedback we are looking at scaling back to a performance at Christmas which will be mainly songs, moving our entries to the Eisteddfod to every other year rather than annually, and then an end of year, whole school performance. Those wanting to, can join the drama club and they will have the main roles.

Parent A: Feels that the lines between enrichment and class time are often blurred, there is a heavy focus on drama and the children were complaining of doing 2 hours per week drama enrichment as well as 1 hour daily in class which is too much.

Parent C: Agreed there is too much rehearsal time and would welcome less drama and fewer performances.

Parent A: Said that whilst the Eisteddfod was good, it means there is a performance to rehearse for during every term which is not enjoyable and too much for most children. She said that 2 hours each week of Sarkese lessons is far too long and boring.

Parent B: agreed and suggested that whilst Sarkese is important for Sark history, it is far less important to the children who need to learn and use French. He also said that learning French and Sarkese Patois can be confusing due to some of the similarities.

Parent D: Agreed that 2 hours is far too long to study a subject with someone who is passionate but not a teacher, it becomes boring for adults so the children must struggle.

MB: Confirmed that if 2 hours enrichment is taken away and becomes part of the curriculum then Sarkese would be studied only when relevant i.e topic on Sark history and therefore become really enriching to the lesson.

Everyone was in agreement that there is too much emphasis on Sarkese.

Parent E: Would like to see cookery reintroduced.

MB: Confirmed that cookery is part of the curriculum, school does struggle with equipment but if we take away enrichment time and weave it through the curriculum then perhaps more could be done when relevant.

Parent A: Cookery in enrichment had no progression and was too basic.

MB: If enrichment changes we would link cookery to the unit of study. There is no statutory number of hours for cookery (or drama) and the curriculum is skills based. This would make it easier to provide these lessons within the school timetable rather than as add ons.

Parent E: If the school hours change would that impact the term times? Sark School breaks up late for Christmas and Summer.

MB: Due to the extra week holiday in October there would not be a change in term times as we still have to add those 5 days of education to the dates.

Parent B & C: Do hours add up to extra days, so when in school until 4:30 that can count towards some of the 5 extra days needed?

MB: The UK recommends that schools do a minimum of 32.5 hours a week. If we reduce it to 3:30pm Monday to Thursday and 3pm on a Friday then we will be in school for 34.5hours. The hours can not be grouped to make days, they are separate requirements. Sark has no statutory requirements so we base ourselves on Guernsey and the UK.

Parent A: Different end times each day are confusing and unhelpful for split families.

Parent F: Agreed that consistent end times would be helpful.

MB: Agreed and said that 4:30 was very late for children to stay in school.

MB: A questionnaire will be sent to all parents but if everyone is in agreement then this change can be made by next term with teachers providing clubs as wrap-around care for those that want or need it.

Parent A: Optional clubs will give parents and children more choice and might improve uptake and be more enriching. Her current concern is that teaching staff deliver the majority of enrichments and so do not have enough non contact time.

MB: confirmed that all teachers have the PPA time they are required to have (3hrs per week, 6hrs per week for NQT). This is covered and not eaten into by enrichment.

Parent E: Guernsey trips, Thursday provides a shorter trip departing Sark at 11am, children feel ill on the boat, then have to eat before going straight into swimming and sports. Can the day and sailing be changed?

MB: If we can arrange a better day and time with Beau Sejour we will. Guernsey swimming will only be 4 weeks this year rather than 6.

Parent B: It's a long day out just for a swim.

Parent G: Believes the children need the experience of the swimming lessons but also of travelling off island.

Parent B: Is swimming for 2 half terms too much?

MB: If enrichment changes then sea swimming will be part of the PE lessons rather than enrichment at the end of the day. MB and RS are doing training to become lifesavers (RS also training to become swim teacher).

Parent E: How will it work for Class 3 if SS is not trained?

MB: Staff would move, covering classes to enable qualified teachers to take each class swimming.

Parent E: Sark School is in school for far more days than any other school.

Parent B: Maybe cut October half term to 1 week?

Parent A: Most parents would like to keep the 2 weeks in October.

Parent H: The board have looked at this a lot and parents did want the 2 week holiday in October. A 5 week summer holiday is awkward for those with split families.

Parent C: Using Guernsey as a guideline is good but as we are our own jurisdiction can we just make our own term dates to suit us. How many days over the statutory number are we?

General consensus would like to increase Summer Holiday to 6 weeks, Christmas Holiday to 3 weeks for this year 2024/2025

Parent E: When enrichment came in 5 days a week, school technically finished at 2:30 so they said we had to make 5 hours up for each week which added up to include longer terms.

MB: Wanted to clarify that enrichment didn't count as teaching time and so children were doing 40 hours per week?

All agreed

MB: Thanked all for coming and hoped that parents would continue to have open discussions with the school.

ACTIONS: Questionnaire re enrichment to parents