

Hawkesbury CE VC Primary School

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Change to the length of the school day consultation

Initial response

The school has received a number of responses to the consultation to change the length of the school day in line with the Government's expectation that all schools are open for a minimum of 32.5 hours per week. We are grateful to those who were able to share their thoughts at this time.

All responses will now be shared with the Governing Body which will meet on **Monday 10th October**. After this meeting, the Governing Body will make a final decision about the proposal and this will then be shared with all members of the school community on **Friday 14th October**. Governors are also planning another Governor-Parent Information session during term 2 when parents can raise any further questions.

As part of the consultation, some questions were raised. This newsletter provides answers to those questions.

1. What other options for an extension of school hours have been considered and why were they rejected?

The school has explored the option of an earlier start but this was rejected. The school day already starts considerably early compared to other schools, which means that staff currently need to arrive at school at 7.30am to ensure the classroom is ready for the day ahead. To start the school day earlier would mean staff needing to arrive even earlier and this is not a fair or realistic expectation.

The Government's White Paper 2022, states that: "We strongly encourage all schools to deliver a substantive high-quality morning and afternoon session in every school day." The school's afternoon session is currently 1.5 hours long and the morning 3.75 hours long. To enable a broad and balanced curriculum, it would be better to provide a more balanced length to both sessions rather than to extend the morning and leave the afternoon as it is. In addition, subjects such as art and music tend to be taught during the afternoons and these are the areas of the curriculum the school is keen to provide more time for rather than English and maths which is taught in the mornings and has a significant amount of time dedicated to it.

2. Will an afternoon break be introduced as a result of the school day being longer? If it is does this mean that there will be no increase in teaching time?

*Children in Swallows and Hawks will **not** have an additional afternoon break but their lunchtime will be extended by 15 minutes to 1 hour in total. For those in Wren Class, learning is active and very much play based so teachers will make a decision about additional play opportunities as required. It may be appropriate to do this on some days but not on others depending on the learning that is taking place. We are planning to increase play based learning opportunities in Robin Class over the course of the year so a similar approach will be applied here, too. It will be down to individual teacher discretion and reviewed on an ongoing basis so that if teachers feel there is a need to break this will happen.*

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3. The current finish time creates a lot of opportunities for extra-curricular activities. Can the longer school week be absorbed across four days instead of five with an early finish on Friday?

The school's preference is for an even finish across the week. An uneven finish will mean that some days need to be even longer to compensate for this.

3. Could school support children leaving early for extra-curricular activities such as swimming?
The expectation placed upon schools is for them to be open to all as part of children's statutory education. This means that all children must be in school for the duration of its opening hours and school would be unable to support earlier finishes for some children. Individual circumstances may be considered as part of a transition arrangement where required.

4. Could the school share a proposed breakdown of the day to get a better understanding of how the extra 30 minutes would be used?

A typical day would look like this:

Time	Activity
8.30 – 10.15	Phonics / spelling English / maths lesson
10.15 – 10.30	Collective worship
10.30 – 10.45	Break time
10.45 – 12.00	Guided reading English / maths lesson
12.00 – 1.00	Lunch
1.00 – 2.45	Other lessons including: Enquiry (art, DT, history, science, music, geography) PSHE RE PE (2 hours per week)
2.45 – 3.00	Whole class story time

Please note: the approach taken in Wren Class is very different and includes a more play based curriculum which promotes active learning and a lot of which takes place outside. Robin Class uses some of these principles and will extend this further over the course of the year.

The current timings of the school day can lead to some areas of learning being rushed and some learning opportunities can become less effective as a result. An extension to the day would enable a more effective approach to curriculum coverage. School is particularly keen to provide further opportunities for children to engage in high quality art and music lessons as well as to spend time outside, however, teachers will be free to make decisions about how best to meet the expectations of the curriculum, taking into account the needs of the children in their classes.

Thank you for taking the time to read and respond to the consultation. A further update will be provided on **Friday 14th October.**