

Apps Central – Case Study

Brockmoor Primary - improving communication with parents using Apps Central's School Calendar and News App



The school

Brockmoor Primary in Brierley Hill, West Midlands, is a thriving school, growing rapidly and rated 'Good with Outstanding features' by Ofsted. Its 394 pupils come from an area with high unemployment and a very diverse population.

Headteacher Brad Jones sees the school as being at the heart of the community and makes great efforts to involve parents. He said, "We believe that a partnership between parents and school is very important and invite them to get involved in their child's education." Examples of this involvement include a Parents' Group which meets regularly and gives its views on school issues and training sessions for



parents. A popular one is a workshop where parents learn how they can support their child's reading.

The challenge

Three years ago the school was using a range of media to communicate with parents including its website, Facebook and traditional paper-based newsletters. However they were aware that this was not necessarily the best approach. "We had problems with Facebook with some people making inappropriate comments which could, if unchecked, have led to litigation," said Brad Jones.

"We needed a solution that put control back in the hands of the school and one that offered a quick and efficient means of communication. Conversations with parents tend to fall into two main categories. Either they need specific information such as dates and times or they have a personal concern about their child. We much prefer to sort out personal issues face to face, but wanted to make sure that parents had access to key information so they could keep up-to-date and would not have to phone the school or keep asking the teachers."

Brockmoor School was keen to update parents regularly regarding their latest news and provide them with a school calendar listing all key events so they could find information quickly and easily. Emails and texts were not an option for parents who needed to locate information urgently. Many also use Pay As You Go mobiles and change their phone numbers regularly which has made it difficult for the school to keep in contact.

The solution

Apps Central's School Calendar and News App proved to be the perfect choice for Brockmoor Primary School. The school's attractive and distinctive 'badger' logo features on the icon for the app, so it is very easy to find on a busy screen.



Rather than requiring parents to click onto the school website to look for information, news notifications now come direct to their mobiles. The app is completely free for parents to download and use and is available for iOS and Android devices.

To date there have been 389 downloads by the school's community of 260 families, so the school can be certain that that push notifications are getting through and parents are receiving news and alerts. "The app really comes into its own when dealing with something urgent," said Mr Jones. "For example, if swimming lessons are cancelled for Year 4, or if Year 2 are on a school trip and the transport is running late, teachers can notify parents immediately."

Benefits

The app offers an instant communication solution which can also be used to target specific groups, such as the parents of Year 5 pupils. The calendar on the school website is linked to the app so both are updated at the same time.

Once parents have downloaded the free app it is there on their phone no matter how often they change their handset or phone number. Now they no longer have to seek out the newsletter at the bottom of a school bag; it is on their phone as a PDF attachment which can be accessed at any time.

Brockmoor Primary School is now in its third year with Apps Central and the app has become an essential tool for keeping in contact with parents. "Every child, parent and stakeholder is important to us," said Brad Jones, "and with our app we can keep them fully informed about what we are doing."

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