

New Invention



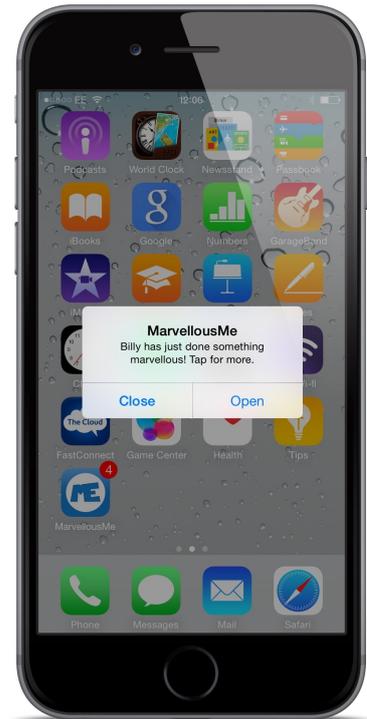
Laying the foundation of learning

New Invention Infants School is a large community school based in Walsall, West Midlands, with 350 pupils aged 3-7.

It became an Infants school in 1974 after the provision of a new junior school close by and has a nursery attached. The school is rooted in the local community, offering breakfast and after school clubs for working parents, along with a diverse range of subsidised after-school activities.

Ofsted inspections have consistently been extremely positive, noting the school is 'resolute in their pursuit of excellence'. It is ranked as 'Outstanding'.

The school is in a mixed catchment area with many of the children learning English as an additional language and a number of children who have statements for communication difficulties. Some of the children come from families facing challenging circumstances.



Parent engagement matters...

New Invention is a lively and vibrant school, where teachers work hard to create an inspiring and stimulating environment that encourages learning for life. They know that if parents can take an active interest in their child's education the benefits will filter through into the classroom, resulting in happier children who will do better.

It is important to Head Teacher Kate Travis that they keep looking for new and innovative ways to inform and engage parents. "Our ethos is to have an open door, and we are keen to engage ALL parents."

...but engaging all parents is tough.

Busy teachers ensure that they are available and visible at the start and end of the school day, but often find that time is taken up with any problems rather than sharing the good things that the children have been doing.

The website and blog are packed with photos and information, supported by mixed communications including newsletters, texts, parents' evenings - and even Twitter - to keep parents informed. But they take a lot of time and parent take-up has been low.

"We have tried really hard to encourage parents to visit the blog and have even held 'website days'" says Deputy Head Jane Cooper. "But due to the many pressures of modern life we have found that it is a hard core of parents that are responding to our efforts."

MarvellousMe has already engaged 86% of our parents...

"As soon as we saw the MarvellousMe app at the BETT trade show we were inspired about the possibilities it opened up to enhance parental engagement," enthuses Kate.

In just a few weeks after going live at the school, Kate and Jane have been amazed by its impact. MarvellousMe has gone way beyond expectations and there are already 86% of all parents actively using the app.

"There are inevitably parents that for a variety of reasons are harder to reach and engage, but we are absolutely delighted that MarvellousMe has won them over! And the number of parents enjoying the app is still going up daily" says Jane.

...and enables teachers to share all the wonderful things that children do at school with them...

MarvellousMe uses smart technology to build a direct bond between teachers, parents and children. It's exciting, fun and light touch.

Jane explains that "the one key thing that parents don't see in school is the positivity that the children get in class. Children thrive when they are confident and that confidence comes from positivity, praise and encouragement.

With MarvellousMe, this positivity can now be easily shared with those families whose circumstances are challenging and where outside influences are impacting negatively on the school experience."

Building a connection between teachers and parents, MarvellousMe allows parents to share in and celebrate their child's achievements as they happen during the day. It makes parents smile and inspires their interest and engagement in their children's education.

Parents receive a notification on their smartphone when a teacher posts an activity (telling them what activities, or topics, their child has done), awards a badge for good work and learning and life skills (like hard work and respect), or sends a message.

They can send the teacher a 'Hi5', to say thank you for keeping them informed, and share their MarvellousMe app with partners, carers and grandparents.

...supercharging great family conversations about school.

Parents are then able to build on the teacher's positivity and encouragement the minute they see their child at the end of the day by having truly meaningful conversations.

According to parent Nicola Mills "it's wonderful, my daughter loves it and her first question is 'did you see how many MarvellousMees I got today?' I can now have a much fuller conversation with her. Even though she has always been quite good at telling me what she has done at school, I can now prompt her and say 'and what about this...?'"

MarvellousMe is so fast for teachers to use, on tablet or desktop, and doesn't add to workload.

Teacher Louise Westbury agrees that parents love the app but found that some staff were worried that it may take up teaching time, "but it's so simple to use and just fits into the day. I try to post activities, send messages and award badges before lunchtime and before the end of school, and then as I am marking I award badges for good effort and work."

Andrew Craig, who teaches a Reception class, and has 100% of his parents using the app, agrees. "We are used to using apps in school, so it really is easy for us. It's intuitive and takes just a couple of clicks and it's done."

The MarvellousMe School Pack offers simple set-up and control and visibility of how the app is being used, as well as statistics to evidence its impact.

New Invention implemented the MarvellousMe School Pack, which offers unrestricted access to all

staff, parents and extended family members, along with a simple admin and reporting portal.

Children's names and classes were smoothly uploaded and teachers were then given their access codes and were ready to go.

Head Kate says, "implementation has been very smooth and really very easy. It was simple to set up and sits very well with what we already use".

Parents were issued a join code and just downloaded the app, entered their code and were ready to enjoy the notifications and see their children's activities and achievements.

As the MarvellousMe administrator at the school, Jane managed the process and says, "we asked parents to text us if they had any problems, but because it is intuitive to use we didn't really have any issues at all."

Concise reports in the School Pack portal track and evidence teacher usage and parental engagement and a 'Hi5s' summary measures parental appreciation and satisfaction.

"As a school leader, the reports allow you to see which teachers are giving plenty of encouragement and which perhaps need to give more, so it also gives valuable insight into teacher performance in the classroom," adds Jane.

MarvellousMe makes an impact in lots of ways:

- A better learning environment, at school and home.

New Invention has found that MarvellousMe is already having an impact on the atmosphere in the classroom.

Louise has found that the children are very excited by it. "There really are so many positives. It is lovely to have something so quick to use in class to send messages to parents and praise a pupil's hard work in a way that is so meaningful to them. Their little faces just light up when you say to them that you are sending a message to their grown up or telling them about a badge."

Andrew too has noticed a difference. "My class love it and I have noticed that parents go straight into a more relaxed conversation with the children when they pick them up. They haven't got to interrogate them to find out what they have done that day because they already know."

- Higher self-esteem, confidence and happiness.

Already there are examples of changes within the children, thanks to MarvellousMe. Teacher Debbie Naffati has seen how engagement by boys in

challenge activities has increased since they started using the app as an incentive.

Another 'marvellous' moment was reported by a nursery parent who works night shifts. She said "It made my day to receive a video message from my son telling me that he was looking forward to seeing me the next day." She was also able to go to her phone during her break and see what he was doing during the day. This window to his nursery day helped Mum to feel part of his school experience.

Deputy Head Jane mentions one especially shy child is now starting to speak up more and has been asking 'have you sent my MarvellousMe to mum?'

- Learning support.

Head Teacher Kate also feels it works well as a learning support system, mentioning one child with special needs who isn't able to communicate well, and that the teacher can now easily and instantly share with the parents what progress that child is making.

- Improved classroom behaviour.

As well as being fun to use, MarvellousMe has also proved much more motivational for the children than other reward systems.

Louise believes that is because MarvellousMe badges go straight to the parents. "It makes ALL the difference.

Instead of winning a sticker on a chart or a reward from the teacher, MarvellousMe badges fire-up parental pride. The children want mum and dad to know what they are achieving and are far more motivated by this. They are even reminding the teachers to give them a MarvellousMe".

Andrew has found that the MarvellousMe app prompts him to think more about giving more positive praise to the children in his class.

He is actively looking to award MarvellousMe badges, commenting, "the increased positive praise has definitely helped with behaviour and I am seeing greater involvement and engagement from the children. I also think it helps parents to realise just how hard we work at school, and they love finding out what we are doing. And the children love it too."

"It's wonderful." "It's the best thing." "It made my day."

Kate concludes, "comments from parents have included 'it's wonderful', 'it's the best thing', 'it made my day.'

MarvellousMe fits seamlessly into our school ethos and the ease of use for both staff and parents has ensured our whole school community are as excited about this project as we are!"

www.marvellousme.com

