

Surrey Mirror

Burstow Primary School has opened its very own coffee shop



You will often hear people making plans to meet up for a coffee, but it is very rare for those arrangements to tie in seamlessly with the school run.

[Burstow Primary School](#), on Wheelers Lane, has given parents the chance to tie in their morning caffeine fix with dropping the kids off by opening a coffee shop on-site.

Members of the public, not just parents of pupils, can use it every day of the week.

The idea for the café first came about at the end of last year and staff worked quickly to make it a reality as it opened to customers before the Easter holiday break.

Head teacher Claire Hodgson said: "Parents will normally talk outside the school gates, so we wanted to get people into the school and to feel comfortable and welcome here.

"We want to be part of a community and there isn't anywhere to network at all around here. In terms of supporting people trying to forge relationships, there isn't really anywhere to go."

The coffee shop has developed from the initial plans, as people asked if they could use it to get their elderly neighbours out the house.

Miss Hodgson said: "The proposals started off as it being a place for parents [of children at the school] so they could come and chat with other people, bring their kids, build relationships, make new friends with people who have children in the same class.

"When we shared the plans people started to mention that they've got elderly neighbours and asked if they could bring them as well. We thought this was a good idea and decided the coffee shop should be open to anyone.

"It's a really nice space. You can bring your kids and they can play. There wasn't really the opportunity to do that in this village. There was a gap for a community space which we hope this site will fill. It's a really sweet little village but it was lacking a place where people can come together."

The coffee shop is run by the school's family liaison officer Hazel Clarke, who offers a variety of hot drinks and a biscuit for £1, along with a relaxed friendly atmosphere.

Anyone concerned about the prospect of unknown strangers wandering in shouldn't be, added Miss Hodgson.

"The coffee shop has got its own entrance," she said. "It is totally separate from the school, so it is not as though people are going into the school and we don't know who is here.

"It has got a courtyard which is also separate from the school building."

The head teacher added that any money made from sales will go back into the coffee shop and that pupils will get the opportunity to work behind the counter.

Miss Hodgson said: "The coffee shop wasn't set up to make profits so any money that is made from the sales of coffee, which is priced at barely above the cost that we pay for it, is ploughed back in to the coffee shop resources.

"Maybe in the future, it will build to something bigger and perhaps it will be run by some of our pupils where it becomes more of an enterprise for our children to learn from."



Posted online: April 19, 2017

Web link: <http://www.surreymirror.co.uk/this-smallfield-primary-school-has-decided-to-open-its-own-caf/story-30280893-detail/story.html>