



End of Autumn Term 2021

Parent Survey

7th January 2022

Thank you to all the parents who responded to the survey. I have collated the responses and identified common themes. I have included many parental comments, but not all of them. I have also tried to address some of the issues arising by responding in blue.

What has been going well?

Happiness of the children at school

- Child remains very happy to go to school.
- Over all very happy, obviously helps that my son is having a very professional/ dedicated teacher. that always willing to listen and make my son days so enjoyable, so he is always so so happy to go to school.
- Most importantly, my son seems generally happy and settled at school at the moment, which is brilliant.
- Our child is happy as ever and thriving academically.
- The children have had a really nice smooth transition back to school and have enjoyed the term. They have clearly learnt a lot as well.
- The children clearly feel reassured by the leadership skills of their class teachers and this is evidenced by the positive way in which they all speak of their teachers on leaving class each day.
- My daughter has been enjoying her lessons with her teacher. She enjoys coming to school and never stop praising her teacher.

Return of Curriculum Enrichment opportunities

- Introduction of more varieties of activities e.g. October Black History Month.
- The return of school educational school trips.
- The two school trips appear to have been a great success and were very well organised.
- The initiative for more sports activities before/after school is a good idea.
- Extra school activities such as football back again provided and by the school is very thoughtful for those who are less fortunate to get extra out of school activities .
- It's great that the after-school clubs are back and assemblies etc.
- I am happy about the different clubs at the school ie football club
- Really happy to see activities back, like school trips, nativity plays, Friends events etc

Promotion of the school

- I think has been a massive improvement in the way the school is projecting to be or became.
- Visibility of the school is improved which I always found quite shy for the quality and potential it has. So well done for the Ms G and staff, it raised definitely the profile of the school.
- Were there open days to visit the school before? If so, I was not aware and if not, that was an excellent initiative, it was a great experience, thank you very much

Emphasis on Punctuality

- At first, we found the school gate closing at 8:45 a bit of a challenge but now I welcome it as it really does get us moving in the mornings and is a good thing to instill in our children.
- The strictness on punctuality is good to help get the kids out of the door in the morning.

Communication:

- We're glad to see new ways of communication being introduced.
- Communication from the school, including the head and class teachers, is generally very good.
- There is more opportunities for communication between school and parents more awareness of what is happening and activities that parent can be involved.
- It's also great that we're being asked for our feedback like this.
- Zoom Meetings:
 - The parent teacher sessions on zoom work pretty well although miss going through the books and probably a little bit more clinical than face to face.
 - It was useful to have a Zoom meeting with the headteacher.
- School newsletters are pertinent and easy to read.
- Teachers have been responsive to personal emails and are very approachable at the end of the day.
- Social Media:
 - It's nice to see photos on Facebook of what the kids are up to - it makes school feel like less of a 'black box' for parents.
 - Facebook/Insta/Twitter – so nice to see their achievements and activities on there. Great idea.
- I appreciate the convenience of notifying absence via the new Scholarpack app.

Additional Comments

- Improvement on PTA, actively involved from school and head teacher receptive to new ideas.
- Going in PE kit seems a good idea which could stay long term.
- Very pleased that classes have not been sent home due to COVID outbreaks.
- Taking into account extremely difficult circumstances of your arrival, we feel you did great job.
- The welcome in the morning is relaxed and friendly.
- The regular presence of the head at the gate is also reassuring to parents.
- Otherwise all seems to be going ok so far. Thanks for all your hard work.

What could be even better?

Tone of the newsletter

- The tone of the newsletters is very preachy and quite downbeat.
- I appreciate the need for the new Head to set clear boundaries and establish her authority straight away, and I also understand that it is not easy following on from a very long-standing, much-loved predecessor. The school is not perfect, I know. Plus everything is harder, including communication, in times of Covid.
- That said, many of the initial communications from the new head (both in newsletters and at the online meeting with parents that I attended) have come across to me as very rules-focused and emphasizing what was wrong with the school (or us as parents), rather than building on the many positives.

I do apologise for the tone of the initial newsletters, I do agree that on reflection, they were very rules focused. We felt that post school closures, staggered starts etc... some of the long standing 'rules' (pre-pandemic) had not been a priority e.g. uniform policy, packed lunch policy, absence, punctuality etc. I do think less of that takes precedent in the newsletters now, as they are established. I do hope the tone of the newsletter is more positive, as there is a huge amount of good in this school community.

INSET Day Change

The change of the day for the inset day was very short notice. With 2 full time working parents and a need for us to provide 6 weeks notice of applications for holiday we found this really poor.

As I explained at the time, it was to ensure our staff could attend high quality CPD at the time. I will not be making a habit of this. Again, I apologise for inconvenience caused.

Mental Health of children

- I think we should be more involve on kids mental health after the 2 years we have had of Covid.
- Provide support to those who need help integrate and socialise.
- Be more alert and aware of kids bullying behaviour, as they could be very good at hidden from adults but massive impact on kids with a very low self-esteem.
- What needs to be addressed is the negative interaction between the kids. Not all kids are exposed to those behaviours and when encountered at school it's very unsettling and puts the child in an uncomfortable situation. Please have the teachers talk to their classes about bullying

This is a constant priority for the school. Since the beginning of this academic year, we doubled our budget for therapy. We now have a therapist in school two days a week, working with children, who need extra support. The children have weekly PSHE lessons, embedded into the curriculum. Teachers lead circle times when issues arise. We did a lot of work during Anti-bullying week to ensure the children know what to do if they are not happy with how others are treating them and if they see others being treated unkindly. We will be celebrating Children's Mental Health Week in February, which Ms Falconer, our PSHE lead, is organising. Moving forward, I will communicate these initiatives to parents.

Nativities

- I used to love the fact that each year group could have their own and so they could all have a 'part'. Not sure why the years were combined? Was it due to Covid or too much for the teachers given the difficult term it must have been? I think an explanation would have been good to have as to why it had been changed and if this is a permanent change.
- For year 6 this was also being held after school in the church – but it wasn't really explained why. Maybe it is normal. I just feel if it had gone ahead you might not have had all the class there as it was after school...
- And now obviously with Covid cases increasing it is hard to understand why the Borough is advising cancellations when Boris is saying it should go ahead. But of course it is right for you to follow what the Borough says.

On discussions with the teachers, it was decided to stage collaborative productions. There were various reasons for this. Logistically it was very difficult to arrange rehearsal time in the hall, share costumes and music lessons in a short space of time, a lot of lesson time was lost. By working in phase groups, it ensured that the workload for teachers was eased, as it was a collective effort and far more manageable. It also has impacted the learning of the children less. I do believe this will be the model moving forward. As a staff, we felt that Upper Key Stage Two had a different level of maturity and would benefit from exploring the Nativity story in a different way. We also believed that it would have been a very special event in the church, really celebrating the true meaning of Christmas, just before the end of term. I am very sorry that this was not communicated with parents well. Next year, I will publish the dates much earlier in the term, to allow for all families to plan in advance.

In relation to the cancellation of the Nativities, we are incredibly sad to not be able to have parents at them. It really was awful to have cancel them for parents, but we have to follow the guidance given. I hope that you were still able to enjoy them at home.

Opening Times

One thing we were going to ask about is whether it would be possible to arrange for school gates to open earlier, at least on a rainy day. There's always a small group of parents and children arriving around 8:20 and it would be great to be able to make use of the shelter located on the school playground. Unfortunately, due to safeguarding reasons, we would not be able to facilitate this. On opening the gates, we would need staff supervising the gate and the playground. We cannot have children on the premises unsupervised.

Merits

The merit system is unclear and is therefore not encouraging for the children. There has been one or two times that the list of children who have been chosen for merit during have been published in the newsletter but not weekly. My child cannot explain the system to me and does not know what she needs to do to be chosen as "star of the week" or its equivalent. A house point system or similar would be a welcome motivation for the children academically and from a behaviour standpoint.

Currently two children every week are chosen for merits. The children are celebrated in an assembly on Friday and are presented with a sticker and certificate. The merits are given for both academic reasons and pastoral ones, these are also shared in the assembly by the teachers and written on the certificate. At the end of every half term one child from each class is chosen as a 'Golden Achiever', they are also presented with a certificate and their photo is displayed on the Golden Achiever display board. These names are published in the newsletter. I will explore ways with teachers this term to promote and motivate the children with them.

Additional English and Maths

Extra school activities in Math/English focus.

There is not enough emphasis on Maths in Key Stage 2. Homework has been targeted towards English and writing, and all maths has been online targeting times tables not always effectively. Better emphasis is needed in reinforcing key areas that children have missed during the pandemic and which were therefore not revised for SATS: time, measurements, basic fractions etc. I have noticed my child is losing maths skills that she previously had since starting key stage 2 which is concerning.

The impact of the pandemic and school closures is evident in the learning of the children. All the teachers assess the children continuously in lessons. From teacher assessments, gaps in learning are identified. If your child has been identified by class teachers as needing additional support, there are many interventions / focus groups taking place throughout the school day. Currently there are some after school maths clubs and in this new term there will be more.

Secondary School Applications

Maybe it comes in 5th or 6th year but kind of expected more direction/guidance/insight about secondary schools and particularly the grammar school application process.

The school provides the dates of all the open days and sends parents any publicity we receive from local secondary school. The admin team also provides support for parents to submit the online application, if they need it. In the future, we do hope to be able to have parent Q&A sessions here in the school, with representatives from the local secondary schools.

I know that many parents choose to prepare their children for Grammar schools, however, as a Catholic primary school, we need to promote our excellent local Catholic secondary schools.

Thank you once again for participating in this survey. I have found this to be incredibly useful reflective tool, I hope you will too. I will be asking you to participate in one at the end of every term.

Kind regards

C. Gillespie

Claire Gillespie