

Bernards Heath Junior School

Parental Questionnaire, Spring Term 2013: Feedback Summary

Process for 2012/13

A letter from the Chair of Governors was written to parents/carers in mid January 2013 to seek their views on “how the school is doing”. The letter was sent by parentmail (or paper copy for the minority who do not subscribe to parentmail) and was also clearly made available on the “Information for Parents” section of the school website. A reminder was tweeted to parents to send in their responses as the deadline approached. Parents were given 2½ weeks to respond.

In drafting the letter, our aims had been:

- To make it quite clear to parents what we were asking them to do
- To stress how important parental views are to us, and why
- To encourage parents to engage with the school to enable us to provide the best education possible for all the children

In addition to completing the school questionnaire, we also asked parents to complete the national on-line “Parent View” questionnaire about the school.

Results

1. Parent View

- New initiative:** This was the first year that we had specifically asked parents to comment on the school via “Parent View” as it had only recently been launched this time last year and was not yet fully embedded into “the bigger picture” about schools. It is clear now that this is one of the tools that Ofsted will look at prior to an inspection, and it is expected that schools pro-actively encourage their parents to use this facility to comment on the school.
- Response rate:** Following this letter to parents, there has been a significant increase in the number of parents registering with “Parent View”, i.e. less than 10 responses at the time of the full governing body meeting on 6.12.2012, to just over 30 responses (21.2.2013). Whilst this is a move in the right direction, it still represents a relatively low level of engagement by parents bearing in mind that there are 281 pupils currently on roll.
- Comparison with other schools:** There is a very variable response rate for other schools. It would seem that schools with relatively high response rates are those who have recently undergone an Ofsted inspection, and parents have responded to a direct request to give their views to feed into the inspection process. Some schools, on the other hand, do not yet have even the minimum number of responses required to generate a report. The response rate for BHJS seems to reflect the general current picture at present.
- “Parent View” results for BHJS:** A very pleasing picture with the vast majority of parents responding positively or very positively to the 12 questions, e.g. 90% of parents would recommend this school to another parent. It should be noted, however, that there is also a very small percentage of parents (equating to just 1 or 2 parents) responding negatively to several of the questions.
- How to interpret the results:** Until the majority of parents respond, “Parent View” will not portray a particularly reliable picture of what parents think about the school. It is possible that the low level of engagement by parents is because the majority are generally happy with the school and do not feel that they have significant comment to make, and so do not feel driven to complete the “Parent View” questionnaire? We need to find more effective ways to

encourage more parents to respond to ascertain whether this is indeed the case.

The frustrating aspect of “Parent View” is that there is no way of knowing whether a negative response is entered as a result of a particular issue which has now been resolved, or whether this is still ongoing. It is very frustrating to see a negative comment without knowing what this specifically relates to. We would like to think that parents with a concern would have already approached the school to discuss this rather than just record a negative “Parent View” response, but there is no way of knowing this. It was hoped that by giving parents the opportunity to comment via the school questionnaire (anonymously if they so chose) at the same time as asking them to register with “Parent View”, that any issues would come to light and could be discussed and appropriately addressed.

f) Queries/anomalies: the reports on “Parent View” seem to be somewhat ‘open to interpretation’, for example for BHJS:

- 237 children on roll in 2011/12 with 5 responses recorded (insufficient for a report to be generated)
- 237 children on roll in 2012/13 with 29 responses recorded
- 237 children on roll for current year with 31 responses recorded
- 237 children on roll for “All” with 34 responses recorded

What is the difference between 2012/13 and “current year”? Why hasn’t the number of children on roll changed? Presumably an educational survey such as “Parent View” will run from one school year to the next? Are the responses counted from zero from the start of each school year, so that each school year starts afresh? If this is the case, do parents need to be asked to respond every school year, or do parents only have the opportunity to respond once? None of these aspects is particularly clear at present.

g) Actions recommended: School governors and SLT members to seek clarification on interpretation of responses and accuracy of data portrayed and consider best ways to encourage more parents to register their views with “Parent View”, if this is considered worthwhile?

2. School Questionnaire

a) Response rate:

Year Group	Reponses	Positive Comments	Negative Comments
3	1	3	1
3 and 4	1	2	0
4	3	12	4
4 and 5	1	6	5
5	1	7	1
6	1	5	0
TOTAL	8	35	11

Compared to the Spring term 2011 parental survey (17 responses) and Spring term 2012 (23 responses), this is a disappointingly low response rate this year, and especially so bearing in mind that the school has increased in size by one whole class since last year. It is, however, very pleasing to see that the number of positive comments far outweighs the negative ones.

b) Aspects of school life parents are particularly happy with:

- *Good communication between school and parent*
- *Good communication from the school to parents*
- *Child happy and confident*
- *Child happy to go to school*

- *Child enjoys school; confidence increased*
- *Child feels safe in school*
- *Feel my child is safe*
- *Children seem generally happy in school and content to learn*
- *Very impressed by the standards of education and the performance in terms of progress*
- *Inspirational teaching...work that engages and stretches child*
- *The teaching (x2)*
- *Standard of teaching*
- *Good quality of teaching*
- *Nurturing, good teaching, friendly*
- *Teachers approachable and responsive to problems*
- *Good attitude to learning amongst fellow pupils*
- *Appropriate support swiftly put into action by class teachers and SENCo re. literacy*
- *Child's ability to complete homework unaided*
- *Level of homework*
- *Children are put first*
- *Strong leadership*
- *Good leadership from the Headteacher*
- *Leadership and management of the school*
- *Good organisation*
- *Pupil very clear what happens each day, every day, which is great*
- *Significant change to school size has been well managed*
- *Transition from infant to junior school well managed*
- *Excellent library*
- *Choir and school concerts*
- *End of term concerts outstanding and involve all children*
- *Additional music activities, orchestra, ukulele*
- *Optional lunchtime and after school clubs*
- *School trips*
- *Availability of a breakfast club*

c) Aspects of school life about which I am unclear or am not so happy with:

- *Library system unclear*
- *Lunch times seem at times chaotic*
- *Not enough time for all children to eat lunch*
- *State of boys' toilets and lack of hot water to wash hands*
- *Communication – better to use text messaging service as at BHIS rather than parentmail and twitter*
- *Regular communication from school*
- *Marking of classwork and homework by other pupils rather than the teacher – some children can feel undermined by this, and parents do not fully understand system*
- *A proper school field – suggestion to incorporate lower field into the School*
- *Sports Day – could be more accessible to children outside top group with places also awarded in the “anyone who wants a go” races*
- *Bad driving and parking near the school*
- *Suggestion to allow cycling to school for lower years?*

d) Interpretation of parental comments:

- *It is very pleasing to see so many positive comments, particularly considering the nature of these comments, e.g. quality of teaching, good leadership, children happy and confident. SLT and teachers should be congratulated for creating and providing a school environment where parents have these positive views.*
- *There will always be some aspects, such as “Communication” and “Homework”, where some parents are happy and others are not. There is, however, always scope to develop methods and systems currently in place and explore ways of doing things or explaining*

things better.

- As only one of the responses was submitted anonymously, it is possible to contact all the parents who had concerns to discuss these with them. Some issues (e.g. clarification of the library system) are very specific and can be dealt with individually with the parent concerned. Others (e.g. communication, lunchtime organisation and state of boys' toilets) need to be investigated and addressed by the school. Driving and parking concerns around the school, and that of the school playing field are ongoing wider issues that school governors and school management are already aware of.

e) Actions recommended:

- Individual parents to be contacted by the Headteacher (or class teacher), in response to specific concerns raised, with clarification or suggestions for how the concerns will be appropriately addressed. .
- Headteacher to discuss issues raised, such as communication with parents and school's approach to homework, with governors, and new approaches explored for addressing these.
- Results of the survey to be communicated to the whole parent body (maybe as a Governor Newsletter?) later this term with indication of actions planned or taken as a direct result of comments made.
- Governors and SLT to explore and discuss the wider issue of increasing parental engagement and response.

Mary Liming, February 2013