

Bernards Heath Junior School

Seeking Parental Views 2014/15: Feedback Summary

During the spring term each year, the school starts to formulate its key priorities for the following year. Many different aspects and sources lead into this process, including the views of parents.

In addition to the everyday communication, parents are actively encouraged to give their views in two ways: (i) via "Parent View" (Ofsted's national on-line tick-box questionnaire), and (ii) via the school's own annual questionnaire which allows for wider comment.

Parents are urged to contact the school, however, **at any time** of the year if they have any queries, concerns or comments, and can continue to register their views on "Parent View" at any time. What follows is:

- a) The level of response to "Parent View", and
- b) Feedback from the school's formal parental questionnaire for this year.

a)	<p><u>"Parent View" Feedback</u> (Ofsted's national on-line questionnaire)</p> <p>5 registered responses in 2011/12 33 " " in 2012/13 46 " " in 2013/14 8 only so far for 2014/15</p> <p>The overall responses over the whole timespan are very favourable, with parents overwhelmingly "agreeing" or "strongly agreeing" with the 12 statements.</p>										
b)	<p><u>Response to the School's Annual Parental Questionnaire, Spring Term 2015</u></p> <p>23 responses were received, including 3 responses from parents with children in two different year groups. This equates to a 6% rate of response, the lowest since the school has been seeking parental views via an annual questionnaire. The breakdown is as follows:</p> <table border="1"><tr><td>Parent of child in Year 3:</td><td>7 responses</td></tr><tr><td>Parent of child in Year 4:</td><td>11 responses</td></tr><tr><td>Parent of child in Year 5:</td><td>5 responses</td></tr><tr><td>Parent of child in Year 6:</td><td>3 responses</td></tr><tr><td>TOTAL:</td><td>26 responses</td></tr></table> <p>Number of children on roll at the time of the questionnaire: 359.</p>	Parent of child in Year 3:	7 responses	Parent of child in Year 4:	11 responses	Parent of child in Year 5:	5 responses	Parent of child in Year 6:	3 responses	TOTAL:	26 responses
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	<p><u>How effective is the questionnaire?</u> Parents' views and concerns are always taken seriously by the school. Parents are actively encouraged to give their views both informally in routine, everyday communication with the school, and more formally via "Parent View" and the school's own annual questionnaire. Parents know that their views are important to the school, so why the low response rate?</p> <p><u>Was it due to lack of awareness?</u> Parents were informed about the questionnaire and Parent View</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• via the Governor Newsletter sent out via 'Schoolcomms' at start of Spring Term.• in the specific letter + questionnaire sent out via 'Schoolcomms' early February. (both of the above easily accessible via links on school website, under "Information for parents")• reminders were tweeted to parents about deadline for responses										

- Governors were present at both Spring term parent consultation evenings to greet parents, hand out paper copies of questionnaire and highlight why their views are important to the school.
- The link to 'Parent View' is always available to parents via the "Statutory Information" section of the school website, plus reminder given at start of questionnaire letter.

How easy was it for parents to respond?

Parents were given ample time, several reminders and a choice of ways to respond:

- by printing out the form and sending back completed paper copy
- by filling in paper copy available from parent consultation evening
- by completing the form and returning this electronically
- by sending a stand-alone email headed up "Parent Consultation"

Are the questions too wide-ranging?

The rationale behind keeping the questions very broad is to give parents the opportunity to comment on **any** aspect they feel strongly about. In this way, parents are not limited to giving views on specific set issues. From the open responses, the school can ascertain any common themes from parents, as well as learn about any specific views on particular issues.

Maybe a more targeted/specific questionnaire would elicit a greater response, or would this just limit the range of views the school can be made aware of?

What other reasons could explain the low response rate?

- It is a fact of life that, if people are dissatisfied, concerned or unclear about any issue, they will make their views known when given the opportunity. The low response rate in this case could indicate that the vast majority of parents are generally happy.
- Could it also be due to a general overload of information and hectic lives? With many people accessing information via their phones at all times of the day, it is very easy to overlook attachments to messages which may require actions. For instance, once an email has been opened, it is no longer flagged up as needing further attention later on. It may just be, therefore, that parents have genuinely overlooked this issue amongst the mass of other items appearing on a daily basis in their inboxes, rather than deliberately not responded.

Breakdown of responses from parents

Despite the low number of responses, there were still some very interesting issues raised, which have all been carefully read and noted. **It should be remembered, however, that the comments listed below represent an individual parent's perception, and may not accurately reflect the school's everyday practice, or the views of the vast majority of parents.**

1. Areas for further development and improvement

- Homework/homelearning (6 comments): *can be too difficult; lack of clarity; hard to access; stressful; lack of assessment or acknowledgement of tasks completed; not marked or checked; child not motivated when homework not marked; more feedback for parents on tasks completed.*
- Class blogs (6 comments): *inconsistent from week to week and between classes; not always kept up to date.*
- Electronic games, tablets (4 comments): *should not be allowed for rewards time; not appropriate for class rewards sessions; divisive as splits the 'haves from the have nots'*
- Spellings (3 comments): *unclear system; need for regular spelling lists each week.*
- Supervision of children at end of school day (3 comments): *children not monitored until they are met by an adult; teachers could be more visible on the playground after school.*
- After-school/lunch-time clubs (4 comments): *introduction of new sports clubs to teach key skills for sports such as netball or hockey prior to year 5; taster sessions to encourage reluctant children to try new activities; more boys-orientated clubs, more creative after school clubs..*

- School lunches (3 comments): introduce possibility of a mix of packed lunch and school dinners; possibility of children from different classes eating together; healthier food with more fresh ingredients and fruit.
- Consultation Evenings (2 comments): could be more structured; child's assessments/test papers could be provided to parents to allow more focussed discussion.
- Pedestrian safety (2 comments): crossing needed on Seymour Road; school to continue to endorse current pedestrian safety campaign.
- School performances (2 comments): evening performances too late for some children; keep afternoon performances as well as evening.
- Plus additional single comments on: moving celebration assembly back to the morning; a better piano available for the children; reminding the children about their clubs; clarification/justification of charging parents for school events, both performances and things like Arts Week; additional guidance to support child's reading; additional support for children struggling with maths and English; school's welcome for children with SEN; more equipment needed on the playground; not enough space for games like football on the playground in the winter; provision of wrap-around care till 6.30pm for children of working parents; inconsistency between classes in same year group.

2. There were many aspects that parents were happy with. Parents suggested that the school should continue:

- *enthusing and motivating the students*
- *giving children an unquenchable thirst for knowledge*
- *having teachers who are professional, hardworking, very approachable and enthusiastic*
- *make learning fun (x2)*
- *having high expectations of the children (x2)*
- *delivering a very high standard of teaching and learning (x4)*
- *focusing on core maths and grammar*
- *providing maths lessons in groups according to ability to build confidence*
- *running the 144 Club to learn times tables*
- *offering additional maths sessions at secondary school*
- *developing the children's confidence (x2)*
- *providing an appropriate balance between academic learning, social skills and the emotional development of a child*
- *rewarding students for their achievements*
- *operating a very simple, clear and fair rewards/consequences system*
- *encouraging pupils to become more independent*
- *offering the outstanding football club run by Charlie Boswell*
- *delivering some PE lessons with external coaches/providers*
- *taking part in sporting fixtures with other schools*
- *offering wide range of sports and activities;*
- *providing a wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly after school (x6)*
- *inviting parents to school assemblies, concerts and plays*
- *organising school plays and concerts*
- *organising stimulating trips linking to topics covered in class*
- *providing interesting learning topics*
- *providing themed weeks, e.g. maths week and arts week*
- *organising innovative, hassle free (for parents), fun activities on themed days, e.g. 2015 World Book Day*
- *providing the services of an excellent school library (x2)*
- *offering cooking with parent volunteer*
- *valuing the importance of play*
- *providing great pastoral care (x3)*
- *providing a nurturing and supportive environment*
- *having a headteacher who is visible, approachable and clearly interested in the children and their welfare; headteacher provides excellent leadership*
- *dealing with concerns quickly*

- *taking parental concerns so seriously and responding so positively*
- *providing good level of communication via email, newsletters, etc (x2)*
- *communicating effectively with parents and pupils*
- *being a nurturing and warm environment and communicating to children and parents in a friendly manner inspite of the increased pupil numbers at the school*
- *posting homework on-line*
- *working on traffic issues.*

Plus the following specific comments:

- *Yr 4 parent: "In general my daughter has made great progress at the school and is happy and contented".*
- *Year 5 parent "There is nothing I would single out – the school is providing everything we could have hoped for"*
- *Yr 6 parent: "my daughter has been happy to go to school every single day"*

and several parents urged the school to "Keep up the good work!".

Actions taken or planned by the school in response to parents' comments

Whilst all comments have been carefully read, it will not be possible, or in some cases appropriate, to take action on **all** the issues raised. In a number of cases, the school is not only already addressing these issues, but they are already part of established everyday school practice. For example: the school has very clear procedures for the safety of children at the end of the school day and regularly communicates these to both parents and children; and children have regular opportunities to try out new activities (e.g. golf, fencing, etc). A great deal of wide-ranging and practical information is accessible to parents via the school website. In some instances it may suffice to remind parents of the benefits of regularly accessing the school website and using this as an ongoing useful information resource. For example, parents can easily read about the school's detailed Curriculum Map for the New Curriculum, or detailed information on SEN which are both published on the website.

The school has also responded pro-actively in the following ways:

- Headteacher has contacted a number of parents directly on specific issues raised when names had been provided.
- Headteacher has shared parental comments with staff, and requested immediate action in certain specific areas, e.g. information provided on class blogs and veto on bringing in tablets and other devices from home for rewards afternoons.
- Chair of governors has carried out detailed analysis of the responses, and shared key findings with all governors.
- Headteacher has sent out letter to parents (17/03/2015) with further information and clarification on homework, and informing that a whole school review of homework will take place in the summer term.
- Collaborative campaign ongoing between parents, school leaders and governors to improve pedestrian safety on roads around the school, particularly with regard to safer crossing on Seymour Road.
- The school already has plans in place for further playground improvements, but this is wholly dependent on sufficient funding being available. Money has been pledged by the PTA to help fund this project.

All key issues raised will feed into the joint staff and governing body discussions early in the summer term to formulate the 2015/16 priorities for the School Improvement Plan.

Mary Liming
Chair of Governors
April 2015