

Bernards Heath Junior School

Annual Parental Survey: Feedback Summary for 2015/16

As in previous years, a letter was sent to parents/carers from the governing body during the spring term (25.02.2016) asking parents for their views on the school. We requested that they do this in two ways: (i) via "Parent View" and (ii) via the school's own annual questionnaire which allows for wider comment.

It was stressed as usual within the body of the letter that these questionnaires do not replace everyday communication with the school. The purpose of this exercise is to seek more general views about the school rather than address individual or very specific concerns or queries.

From the feedback below, the most striking factor is the low response rate from parents. For Parent View, however, it must be highlighted that this is fairly typical and in many cases better than the response rate for other local primary schools. Noticeably, more parents have chosen to register their views this year on-line via Parent View, with less choosing to send in their views via the school's questionnaire.

a) "Parent View" Feedback (Ofsted's national on-line questionnaire)

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|----|---|---|----------------------------------|
| 5 | | | registered responses for 2011/12 |
| 33 | " | " | for 2012/13 |
| 46 | " | " | for 2013/14 |
| 9 | " | " | for 2014/15 |
| 41 | " | " | so far for 2015/16 |

The overall responses over the five years that Parent View has been in place have remained consistent and pleasingly positive. For this academic year, over 75% of parents agreed with the statements, with less than 8% disagreeing. In two categories "The school deals effectively with bullying" and "The school deals well with any concerns I raise", 50% and 14% respectively responded with "don't know", presumably because they had no experience of bullying at the school and had not needed to raise any concerns, so this adds to the positive picture.

b) Response to the School's Annual Parental Questionnaire, Spring Term 2016

13 responses were received, including 2 responses from parents with children in two different year groups (years 3 & 6, and years 4 & 6), and one anonymous reply. The breakdown is as follows:

4 responses from year 3; 6 responses from year 4; 2 responses from year 5, and 2 responses from year 6

With **360** children on roll at the school, this equates to a response rate of less than 4%.

It is difficult to identify trends or common themes with so few responses. These have to be taken more on an individual basis rather than representative of the whole parent body. However, all the points raised are of interest to us and we recognise the importance of carefully considering these when parents have taken the trouble to put pen to paper and let us have their views. In some instances, comments are responded to personally and straight away by the headteacher. All other comments are considered alongside the many other factors as part of the structured process of deciding on actions and priorities to be taken by the school for the coming year.

PARENTAL COMMENTS

1. Aspects that parents consider to be strengths of the school, and would like to see continued.

To try to identify common themes, parents' comments have been grouped under the following headings:

- The wider curriculum opportunities (14 comments):
 - "Great opportunities to be involved representing the school at sports, and good extra curricular activities"*
 - "Every child is involved with school drama and singing performances which promotes confidence"*
 - "A great range of clubs and activities on offer"*
 - The amount of work and effort that goes into whole-year events, e.g. yr 3 review, yr 4 play"*
 - "Art Week, Maths Week, skipping workshops etc – all great fun and the kids get a lot out of them"*
 - "Themed weeks, i.e. Art week, Maths week"*
 - "Offering swimming and a good range of clubs"*
 - "Opportunity to learn an instrument"*
 - "Good library"*
 - "Wide choice of after school activities"*
 - "Team sports and events / themed days"*
 - "Visiting workshops"*
 - "Really varied timetable of activities and variety of speakers at assemblies"*
 - "We like the opportunities outside the curriculum, e.g. knitting club".*
- Encouraging (11 comments):
 - "Giving all children of all abilities the chance to take part in concerts and plays – always amazed how all the children are willing to give things a try, audition for parts and get involved – it always comes across that the children are having fun and get to enjoy themselves and are genuinely encouraged to give things a go"*
 - "Setting the children targets to achieve their house points and headteacher awards seems to be really working in encouraging them to want to do better and reach those goals. Even though at times they may feel they're not ever going to get a headteacher's award, it develops other coping skills, teaching them patience and encouraging them to keep going and working hard to reach that goal"*
 - "The certificates and house points system seems to work well, with the children really enjoying the recognition or effort or achievement"*
 - "Headteacher awards are really good and children are genuinely proud to get one"*
 - "I am really impressed with the level of independence that the children are encouraged to develop, which in turn has increased confidence and maturity"*
 - "I like the way the children comment in their books about how they feel they are getting on with their tasks/learning and that there is a dialogue between them and their teacher, developing effective communication"*
 - "the teachers know and care about my child and are eager to help him reach his full potential"*
 - "My child is very motivated and enthusiastic about what he is taught, so lessons must be fun and engaging"*
 - "I like the fact that the children are grouped in maths by ability – it's handled sensitively so they don't feel bad if they aren't in the top group and it gives the children space to learn at a pace best for them"*
 - "house competition and house points"*
 - "celebrations in assemblies"*
- Communication between school and parents (10 comments):
 - "Good communication with parents and teachers – I feel that I am able to talk to them at any time if I need, and my concerns are taken seriously"*
 - "Good communication via emails and website"*

"Parent Evening very much improved this year – the teacher had structured notes and knew/understood my child well"

"School happy to speak with me to deal with concerns when raised"

"Always possible to arrange some time to speak to staff should there be any concerns about progress, behaviour, etc. – staff very approachable and supportive"

"Information evenings – good to understand school's response to changes in curriculum and how parents can support at home"

"I've received several phone calls over the years from different members of staff about a whole range of issues which makes me feel reassured that my children are safe and thought about – this is impressive with so many pupils at the school"

"Good communication"

"We have appreciated the increased level of contact and communication needed to support our child and give continuity of message between school and home in order to deal with issues and behaviour"

"There is a great sense that you're welcome to pop in for a chat or wait on the playground to catch the teacher when necessary; also the updates on the blog are very useful to know what's going on"

- Quality of teaching (10 comments):

"The standard of teaching at the school is extremely high"

"Good teachers"

"Good teaching standards"

"Great teaching"

"Experienced teachers"

"Strong, experienced teachers"

"High standard of teaching"

"High quality of teaching"

"Excellent support from class teacher this year"

"We have been impressed with class teacher's teaching and parent feedback, showing good understanding of our child"

- Atmosphere and environment (8 comments):

"There is a friendliness and welcoming feel at the school"

"Nurturing"

"Safe"

"The school provides a safe environment to learn and play"

"School office staff always very helpful"

"The atmosphere of the school is very positive"

"The school seems to have very good discipline, alongside encouragement of warm relationships, e.g. being able to nominate other children for awards"

"Strong discipline and also caring"

- In the classroom (6 comments):

"Opportunities for children to mix across classes within their year group and across year groups"

"The range of themes used across subjects to support learning"

"Appropriate challenging work for ability"

"Streaming for numeracy"

"Children enjoy their learning"

"Interesting topics".

- Leadership (4 comments):

"Excellent headteacher with strong leadership"

"Strong leadership team"

"Strong leadership from headteacher"

"Well led school"

- Plus the following 2 comments:

“Both my children are generally really happy to come to school I believe this is due to enthusiastic and caring staff, engaging lessons and their friendship groups”

“The children enjoy to be at school”.

2. Aspects parents would like the school to consider for the future, or which they think could be improved.

On analysing the responses, it proved very difficult to find common themes within parents' suggestions for improvements or new developments. Many of the points raised below arise from an individual parent's experience and are not necessarily representative of the wider parent body. Many points also do not reflect everyday practice within the school, or are counter-balanced by another parent's comment praising that particular aspect. The school is, however, very aware of the importance of recognising and understanding parental perspective, and working to ensure that this accurately reflects school practice. Suggestions from the 13 responses were as follows:

- *Better communication, including advance warnings and reminders for school events such as Arts week assembly; better communication about school events and issues – a weekly newsletter?*
- *Reliable communication, in advance, if clubs/events cancelled*
- *Increased frequency of newsletters/communication*
- *More consistent use of school blogs for all classes*
- *Getting more parents involved in the PTA*
- *Improved guidance for how to support reading at home*
- *Improved communication on how times tables are taught*
- *Greater contact/direct feedback with staff other than class teacher e.g. maths sets teacher, or SEN teacher.*
- *Consistency of approach with marking and feedback of home learning*
- *More homework in years 5&6 on preparation for transition to secondary school*
- *Children from all years involved in student council*
- *Improved (safer) system for handover of children returning from trips*
- *Wider possibility for booking and paying on line, e.g. for clubs, trips etc.*
- *On-line payment for workshops, etc*
- *Investment in Business Enterprise, e.g. Young Enterprise workshops*
- *Teaching stress management, relaxation and more calming measures to children*
- *Some concerns around general friendship/playground issues in one year group*
- *Clearer rules for bringing toys into school - preference for total ban*
- *School performances – would be good to have two to give parents greater flexibility for attending*
- *Development of a school garden/allotment area; opportunities for outdoor learning, e.g. “Forest School”*
- *Mixing up the classes from year 3 to year 4 – do not understand reasoning or think it is beneficial*
- *More varied range of after school clubs*
- *Provision of sports clubs earlier than year 5*
- *Greater support for those children who are not yet ready to take on greater independence or personal responsibility*
- *Reception staff could be more helpful and informative*
- *Class teachers to send an acknowledgement note to parental written queries*
- *Query re. requests for financial contributions from parents for activities and events*
- *Suggestion to hand out survey questionnaires at Parent/teacher consultation evenings and for responses to be anonymous.*

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

1. Headteacher to respond to specific points raised to discuss, clarify or reassure as appropriate.
2. School leaders, including governors, to be made aware of the points raised.
3. Findings from the survey to be fed back to parents via a Governor Newsletter early in the Summer Term.
4. All key issues raised will feed into the joint staff and governing body discussions early in the summer term to formulate the 2016/17 priorities for the School Improvement Plan.

*Mary Liming
Chair of Governors
March 2016*