

Parents' Survey 2018 – Open Questions - Summary of Replies

There were fewer responses to this year's survey than last, this could possibly be because parents felt they had already given their views in the Ofsted survey in October.

Q: Can you tell us what you think the school does really well?

(57 replies in total- in order of number of comments made – only categories where five or more comments were made are included)

1. Ethos and Community (22 comments)

Parents felt that the school has a strong religious ethos and provides a warm and welcoming learning environment for all.

Quotes:

"Works well with the Parish" "Good ethics" "The school has a wonderful community feel" "SJF provides a caring, safe environment in which it is clear that all children are valued as individuals and encouraged to do their very best" "Our children love to go to school each day. I wouldn't hesitate to choose the school again"

2. Provision – teaching, learning, curriculum and extra-curricular activities – including home learning (18 comments)

Parents said that the school has dedicated teaching staff who encourage children to learn by providing a broad curriculum which is pleasingly enriched both by the wide variety of clubs, additional support classes and home learning activities.

Quotes:

"The children are kept engaged by dedicated teachers delivering fun learning and plenty of activities and events." "Teachers often seem to go way beyond the norm to provide a solid learning environment and extra help when it is needed." "SJF provides great opportunities for children to join in extra activities" "The home learning grid is interesting" "Provides interesting supporting activities." "Additional sports activities available are helpful in encouraging children to try different sports types"

3. Communication (12 comments)

Parents felt that communication had improved significantly over the past two years. Weekly newsletters, emails and texts were seen as keeping parents fully informed of school events.

Quotes:

"I think communication is very good" "Communication with up and coming events. I always feel like I know what is going on." "SJF communicates very well with parents either via SMS or email. Parent views are listened to and responded to via regular parent forums." "Excellent parent teacher meetings with constructive feedback are most helpful"

4. Behaviour (7 comments)

Parents said that the school promotes, teaches and encourages very good behaviour

Quotes:

"Well-behaved environment" "Encourages good behaviour – impressed with behaviour in assembly" "Children are well disciplined"

5. Leadership (5 comments)

Parents felt the school had strong leadership who drive through improvements

Quotes:

"There is an excellent head teacher who takes time to be visible to all parents" "They try to improve the school whenever the opportunity arises" "The senior management team provide strong leadership and genuine care for the pupils" "Strong leadership"

Q: Tell us one thing you think we could do better.

(52 replies in total – most comments were about differing single issues but we have grouped where five or more were about the same topic)

1. Parents' evenings/ information about children's learning and/or progress (6 comments)

Parents wanted longer or more frequent parents' evenings. Some wanted fortnightly information about how each child was progressing and others asked for weekly details of the learning happening in class.

Quotes:

"Parent Meetings are too short and need some form of structure in the older years" "More frequent reviews for children with special needs" "More regular contact" "A parents' evening in the Autumn term for nursery"

Parents' meetings are set at 10 minutes as this is generally ample to summarise progress. Any issues requiring longer are best dealt with in separate meetings. Lengthy discussions on parents' evening result in long delays for subsequent appointments.

Children on the SEN register have termly reviews which include an additional face to face meeting in the summer term.

Children in nursery usually spend the first term settling and issues are dealt with in person as they arise. It is not until they have been in school for at least a term that progress can be meaningfully discussed.

We are committed to ensuring that our staff have a reasonable work/life balance and so will not be requiring routine fortnightly feedback to parents, notable issues between parents' evenings are brought to parents' attention as required.

2. Home Learning (5 comments)

The content of these was divided: 2 comments wanted less or no homework; 1 wanted more structured homework. The remaining comments were about clarity of instructions and asking for a way for home learning to be done in school.

Quotes:

"I am yet to be convinced of the value of homework in primary school" "Home learning takes up so much family timechildren should be able to go out to museums, investigate nature and spend time with family playing board games etc."

Having changed our approach to homework, and developed the home learning grid this year, we are keeping our policy under review. We will be considering all current research on the subject to ensure our homework policy enhances pupils' learning. We strongly support the benefit of family activities and cannot emphasise enough how important just talking to, engaging and playing with your children is for their progress.

3. Communication (5 comments)

These were mainly about advance notice for events

Quotes:

"There is sometimes not much pre-warning for working parents who need to book the time off work." "The app doesn't have all the dates that the website has." "More notice about events through the year"

This continues to be an issue for a small number of our parents and we will work hard to look at our systems to see how we can ensure that we give as much notice of events as possible and that the app is kept fully updated.

However, there will always be occasions when opportunities arise at the last minute. All class assemblies and Masses are on the website for the year in September as are other key dates such as performances and Sports Days.

Any other issues raised had fewer than five comments and most had a single comment each. If you would like to discuss any issue directly, please do not hesitate to make an appointment with the Head or Deputy Head Teacher.

Summary of main questions

(see separate document 'Analysis of Responses to Questions – Graphs – Parents Survey 2018')

Most questions received an overwhelming number of 'agree' or 'strongly agree' responses. We have summarised below those which had a higher number of 'disagree' 'strongly disagree' or 'don't know' responses.

Q12: I know who the members of the governing body are.

(Agree/strongly agree=75, disagree=9, strongly disagree = 4, don't know=3)

There has again been a pleasing increase in the proportion of parents answering positively to this since last year and we will be continuing with the clearly successful strategies to ensure our governing body are more well known throughout the school community.

Q16: The school deals swiftly and effectively with unacceptable behaviour, including bullying.

(Agree/strongly agree=60, disagree=3, strongly disagree = 4, don't know=14)

This question received the second highest number of 'don't know' responses with feedback suggesting this is because those parents had not experienced any incidents of unacceptable behaviour needing to be dealt with. We are very proud of the excellent behaviour of our pupils as judged by external visitors, including Ofsted, as well as comments when we take pupils out of school.

As always, we invite any parents who feel that the school's action has not been satisfactory and who may wish to discuss an individual case to make an appointment via the school office.

Q20: Overall. The school has improved in the last two years.

(Agree/strongly agree=60, disagree=4, strongly disagree = 1, don't know=16)

This question had the highest number of 'don't know' responses. Some of these will come from families new to the school, but we will also be reviewing how we ensure that we 'shout out' louder about our continuous drive to make our school be the very best it can be. Again any parents who have a specific topic they would like to discuss are invited to make an appointment via the school office.