

2012/13 (May/June 2013)

Questionnaire for Parents and Carers Feedback

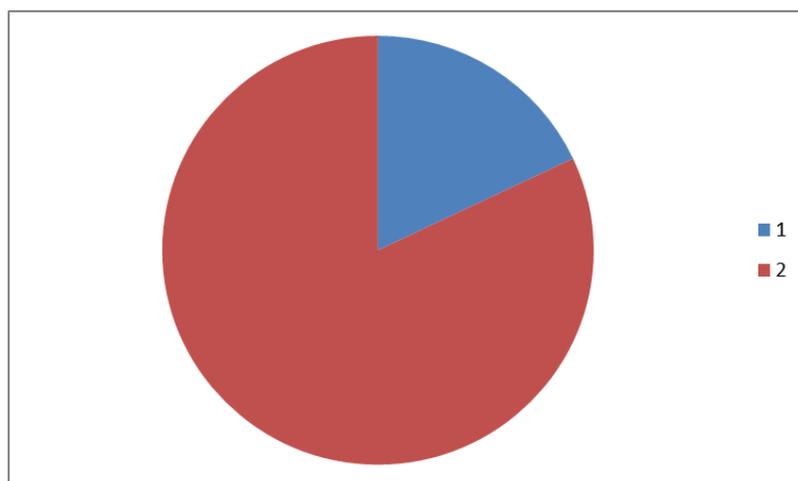
Many thanks for all of you who completed the Parents' Questions at the very end of term 5. Apologies for the delay in returning to you the results, which I hope you will find both informative and pleasing. However, I felt that it was only right for the teaching staff to have access to the comments so that a response could be made.

Although they do take some time to complete, many thanks to those parents who took the time and effort to do so. They are a valuable source of information for the school to base its future plans on and to help us plan ways in which we can improve our current service. So many thanks to everyone who found the time. Alas, because these are anonymous questionnaires we are unable to speak directly to any parent who felt strongly about an issue.

In total we received **31 (1)** questionnaires returned to the school office out of the **137 (2)** families within the school.

As you can read from the table on the reverse there was an overwhelming and positive response to the work of the school and the pupils. In most cases everyone agreed with the statements with a significant amount of responses strongly agreeing to most statements.

Not resting on our achievements however there were a number of concerns and suggestions which have been listed below and ones which the school will discuss with the Governors at a future Governors Meeting as well as with teaching staff.



A number of parents mentioned the very positive inclusive nature of the school and the way new pupils when joining join the school and settle very well – a change from other schools. In fact 97% of the responses stated that they were very happy with their child's experience of St. George's.

A number of parents were delighted that even in these financially troubled times the school will introduce a new class which will enable Key Stage Two pupils to be taught in their separate year groups.

There were many very positive comments which I believe that the majority of the school community would support.

"I think that St. George's is a brilliant school and my children love it there!"

"My children love coming to St. George's. I couldn't be happier with my choice of school for them. I can see progression continuously and I am enjoying watching them grow here!"

*"Having experienced another local primary school with my other children. I cannot believe how warm and friendly the atmosphere is at St. George's. ***** is approachable and very hands on with all the children. It's like a big happy family. My child is confident and happy to talk to *****"*

"My daughter participates in many extracurricular activities at St. George's and cannot wait to get to school every day."

"Very happy with the school. They treated my concerns with respect and got back to me to check that everything was going well. What more can you ask for when a problem arises?"

“Our daughter is progressing well and she is very happy at St. George’s. It is very important to me that our daughter is able to learn in a safe, secure and loving environment. St. George’s provides all of this and more. While still managing to focus on academic achievement too!”

“As a new comer to the school it is difficult to comment on the majority of questions.... I would say that my children have settled in very well and made a smooth transition and are happy at the school! Our experience so far has been positive!”

A small number of concerns were brought up and these include:

- One parent commented on the infrequency of **Parents’ Consultations** and whether they could be longer in length. *Currently the school operates an ‘open door’ appointment policy where parents can speak to class teachers throughout the year. Over the year the vast majority of parents have welcomed this instant ‘question and feedback’ arrangement as opposed to waiting until parents’ Consultation Evening arrives. On top of this the school runs two formal parents’ evenings in October and in March. During the latter part of the summer term full reports are written and published with an informal open evening. However, based upon a small number of parents who have expressed a desire for more formal meetings with teachers, from next year we will increase the number of formal Parent Consultations to three per year (September, January & April) plus the annual informal end of year post report meeting. Please can I highlight again that teachers at St. George’s are always available to speak to parents, mostly at very short notice, and we feel that if there are immediate concerns it is far more productive to do this rather than waiting weeks before the next formal meeting.*
- Two parents commented on **homework** and how it could be expanded potentially into Year 1. *This will be discussed with Senior Teachers before the start of the next academic year.* There was also a comment about having Homework Club available throughout the year. *Although Homework Club was available from September to April we will try to introduce it throughout the entire school year.* Finally, one response stated that Learning Logs were too ‘time consuming’ and spoilt family time. *One of the reasons why St. George’s focuses on Learning Logs is that each child and their parents can decide how much or little time they wish to spend on their homework. These ‘open ended’ tasks were a response to previous parents stating that the previous method of Literacy/Numeracy Worksheets were again too time consuming. Collectively as a staff we all feel that the Learning Log approach supports transition to secondary schools where pupils will be expected to have developed the skills for research and hopefully gives parents the opportunity to work with their children on interesting tasks.*
- One parent commented upon the **lack of PE in Year 6**. *Clearly the national current curriculum means that from time to time some subjects are squeezed but I can assure parents that PE at St. George’s school is viewed as a core area of the school curriculum. During the term in which classes swim, that entire afternoon is dedicated to the pupils taking part in PE. In addition another session during the week is timetabled for PE in each class.*
- Two responses highlighted the fact that **the school gates are left open** during the day. *Security, or Safeguarding is constantly discussed at Governor Body Meetings and we are aware that a small number of parents feel that having the gates open all day is a risk. Members of the Governing Body, as well as the Community Police, have reviewed this during the risk assessment of the site and felt that the danger was very small. Discussions have to be made with limited school budgets, and the GB feel at the moment that increasing the class structure has to be the priority. However, it is on our long term plan to review again when funding allows and to install electronic gates. .*
- There was a lengthy note from a parent in Reception Class who appreciated the difficult task teachers and schools have but commented upon the **lack of communication for new parents** which resulted in some confusion. *We believe that the school does keep parents well informed. We have a team that supports communication in school – the Headteacher, the teaching staff, the school office, the school council, the Governors and the Home School Association. All actively contribute to the school newsletter, website pages and to letters. We operate an open door policy and senior leaders are on the school gate morning and evening every day come rain or shine. We do not regard ourselves as unapproachable and urge you to make an appointment to discuss this with us if you feel that you cannot approach us informally. Your concerns are valued and we use constructive feedback to help us to further improve. The ideal solution would be that teachers, despite all they do in class find time to explain every event in the form of a weekly class briefing. Certainly this is possible but perhaps we need to think more about the information we give out in the weekly newsletter and possibly by using the Parent Text Service more.*

Response:

Overall, despite a small (ish) number of responses we are delighted that the overall reaction to the survey was so positive and that the children enjoy coming to school. It is a joy to see their smiling faces each morning. As staff, governors and parents, we endeavour to make our school a safe and happy environment and it is of paramount importance to us that the children feel safe.

Because of this we spend a lot of time ensuring that the children build relationships with each other and feel safe with the adults that they are working with. We employ a Family Liaison Officer, Donna Freeman, to support families and children in feeling emotionally safe, knowing that there was another adult that they could go to if in need of any extra support. As a result of this nurturing philosophy adults in school take time with children and want them to feel supported, safe and cared for whilst also encouraging them to develop their skills for life.

Across the school, there are high expectations both in terms of academic achievement and of behaviour which need to be sustained across St. George's with Year 6 offering models of behaviour that are most appropriate and that our younger children can learn from. As buddies they have the opportunity to informally mentor our younger children and help them to understand good choices and how to learn from mistakes. These positive relationships were commented upon during our SIAS Inspection in December when St. George's School was given for the third time an 'Outstanding' judgement.

As staff we pride ourselves on our attitude to learning. Learning is for life and all staff are keen to take up opportunities to improve their own practice in order to improve what we can offer the children. Our biggest resource is our human resource and we redeployed our teaching assistants on a needs led basis for pupils. We review our provision every year and plan for pupils' personalised learning needs. Every child does matter at St. George's School. Children's work is differentiated to provide challenge at different levels suitable to the children's needs. If you want to know more about what your child is learning please make an appointment with your class teacher and do not wait until the termly Parents Consultation Evenings.

This year the school invested, with the support of the LA, funding into a new library and ICT Suite which will support our children for many years to come. We invested in new reading books to support reading and we have updated the library books. There has also been funding spent on upgrading existing Interactive Whiteboards as well as investment in the outdoor area, including the new playground markings, a nature trail and the development of the Forest Schools programme which will be expanded during the next academic year. There has also been an enhancement of our music provision within the school with a significant increase in the amount of performance the children now participate in. This, along with the school's extensive extra-curricular programme plus residential visits, allows our children to experience an 'all round' education.

This year as well as a record number of Grammar School passes, indications from Teacher Assessment looks as though the annual end of Key Stage Two SATs results will be again very high and place the school again in the top 10% of schools nationally, based upon the progress of individual children.

Finally, as Headteacher I would like to thank all the parents that took the time to complete this survey. It is a very busy world and there are always so many things on our "to do" lists so I appreciate that you have offered time to share both positive and constructive comments. We strive to do the best for all of our children in school. We believe in the value of people and of relationships and we teach our children to form positive interactions with the people they come into contact with. Our partnership with you as parents/carers/grandparents helps us to move the school forward. We could not do it without you!

In conclusion, thank you for helping all our events, attending our Christmas and Summer Fayres, partying at the school Christmas do and attending other social events - be it the Talent Show or The Arts Festival, and for coming into school to walk with us to Church, for supporting reading to our classes, for coming in as a regular volunteer to help in class, for supporting our sporting teams, for driving children to fixtures, for practising their tables and spellings with them on a regular basis, for helping the children learn lines to a play, steps for a dance or words to a song and ultimately for keeping them healthy and happy.