

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE 2022

Governors were delighted that there were 84 completed questionnaires and that the format and timescale of the questionnaire had given more chance for comments to be made. There were 474 comments and suggestions, some of which were developed at length.

All the comments have been read by myself, other school governors and Mr T. It will not be possible to implement all the suggestions made for various reasons but all suggestions have been considered carefully and will be implemented where it is felt the change will improve what is offered by the school. Last year, for example, over 10% of comments about extra-curricular activities were negative. The school has made a huge effort to improve the extra-curricular offering and governors were delighted that 96% of respondents this year were positive about this aspect of the school's work.

Governors are particularly concerned when there are more than 10% of negative responses to a question. This year three questions got a significant number of negative responses. The three questions were concerned with the usefulness of the website; the system of rewards used by the school and the standard of school lunches.

Many commentators said they didn't use the website but four of those who do use it felt it wasn't always easy to navigate a way round it and one observed that it wasn't always up to date. Governors acknowledge that navigating the website isn't always easy and that there are problems with keeping the website up to date. It was also acknowledged that, whilst the things required by statute were on the website, there were other things that would be useful to parents which weren't there. Over the next year the school is going to investigate alternative platforms that are easier to use and which will be easier for non-specialist staff to update. In the meantime it is hoped that one of the administrative staff will be able to give more time to developing and making simple improvements to the current website. Hopefully parents will be able to see significant improvement of the website by this time next year.

In the parent questionnaire school lunches received praise from some commentators for the variety of the menus and the availability of healthy options. One parent also noted how helpful the catering staff were at dealing with special dietary needs. There were, however, a number of criticisms of what the school provided. In particular parents were concerned that children didn't like the choices and especially the plant based choices that were on offer and parents of older children were concerned that portions were too small.

Governors understand that the school has the difficult task of trying to ensure that school lunches are both enjoyable and healthy for the children. The school is now part of the Fix our Food schools network which is seeking to work towards a situation where healthy eating is enjoyed by children. Various ways are being tried to learn what children want from school meals including consultation with the School Council and staff eating with children at lunchtime. School based catering staff are also fully involved in the discussions taking place. Our hope is that in time the goal of providing healthy food that children want to eat can be achieved.

The system of rewards in the school came in for comment. Many parents were complimentary about it and felt that it motivated their children. In particular team / house points and the Gold Book were praised.

A number of commentators said rewards went to the same children all the time and that only extroverts got rewarded. Governors felt that this criticism did not reflect the real situation. For several years now staff have carefully recorded which children receive rewards to ensure that they are evenly distributed.

Some commentators felt there was inconsistency in the award of rewards whilst others said they didn't know much about the system and what children had to do to get rewards. Governors believe that staff do aim to be consistent in giving them out but acknowledge that children have different needs and that the school needs to acknowledge this.

Governors believe that the rewards system does motivate children and accept that it is kept under constant review by the school. What is clear, however, to both governors and staff is that the school needs to make more effort to explain to parents what the rewards system is and why particular rewards are given out.

A final area of concern is IT equipment and facilities which four commentators felt were inadequate and there were criticisms elsewhere of the need to share computers and the unreliability of computers. This was a matter of concern to staff and governors. Some schools have gone down the road of providing tablets or laptops to be used in the classroom but this is an expensive option and would require reliable wifi in every classroom which is not the case at the moment. Before going down this route Mr T would want to be certain that the equipment would be used and that it would make an impact but this is a matter which the school will explore over the next year

What particularly pleased governors was the fact that the vast majority of responses to the questionnaire were very positive about what the school is doing and most comments and suggestions were made in a spirit of cooperation. It is important to the governors and to the staff to have got this overwhelming vote of confidence from the parent body.

Allan Boddy
Chair of Governors
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