

Summary Comparison of Parent Questionnaire responses
(February 2014 vs December 2014 vs January 2016)



Dear Parents

Re: PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE – JANUARY 2016

Thank you to those parents/carers who completed and returned our January questionnaire. Your responses provide a valuable source of information for both the school and the Good Shepherd Trust.

The January 2016 questionnaire was amended somewhat to reflect our school development priorities but it remains possible to make comparisons with previous findings. It is evident that there is an improvement in parental satisfaction in each of the areas previously measured and we thank you for your kind comments.

The new questionnaire also gives us valuable insight into your views about other aspects of the school, for example about the teaching of Religious Education and the value of our school website.

Having analysed the questionnaires in detail, it is appropriate to share my findings with you. Please find enclosed an overview of your responses and some commentary from the school in which I have included, for your information, some indicators as to how the school will address your remaining concerns.

Thank you again for your help

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Radcliffe".

Janis Radcliffe
Headteacher

Analysis and feedback March 2016

	February 2014 response	December 2014 response	January 2016 response	January 2016 don't know	January 2016 no response
Agree child is happy at school	94%	93%	100%		
Agree child feels safe at school	92%	95%	98%	2% don't know	
Agree child is well looked after	85%	93%	98%	2% don't know	
Agree child makes good progress	40%	90%	92%	3% don't know and 2% say it varies	
Agree child is well taught	43%	80% (plus 12% 'mostly')	96%	2% say it varies	2% no response
Agree they receive valuable information about child's progress	50%	68%	98%	2% don't know	
Agrees their child is taught the difference between right and wrong	82%	98%	100%		
Agrees St Mary's is well led and managed	6%	95%	98%	2% don't know	
Feels St Mary's develops the whole child including their spiritual development	49%	85%	95%	3% don't know	

	February 2014 response	December 2014 response	January 2016 response	January 2016 don't know	January 2016 no response
Would recommend St Mary's to another parent	25%	85% (plus 10% maybe)	95%		
Agree child is taught how to keep healthy	95%	76% (24% unsure)	Not asked		
Agree child receives appropriate homework for their age	66%	83%	Not asked		
Agree St Mary's pupils are well behaved	57%	90%	Not asked		
Agree St Mary's deals effectively with bullying	23%	63%	Not asked		
Knows what sanctions and rewards the school uses	31%	80%	Not asked		
Agrees the school celebrates their child's achievements and strengths	51%	85%	Not asked		
Agrees their child is given chances to succeed and feels that their child is praised	43%	88%	Not asked		
Agrees St Mary's responds well to concerns they raise	32%	78%	Not asked		

	February 2014 response	December 2014 response	January 2016 response	January 2016 don't know	January 2016 no response
Agrees they have received support from the school during a time of difficulty	31% did (37% did not and, for 32% it was not applicable)	39% did (6% did not and, for 46% it was not applicable)	Not asked		
Agrees their views are heard and their opinions are valued	43%	78%	Not asked		
Agrees the school provides for the different needs, abilities and interests of children	25%	88%	Not asked		
Agrees the school recognises and respects other faiths and those with no faith	45%	63%	Not asked		
Agree it makes a difference to them that the school is Christian	35%	54%	Not specifically asked		
Agrees the school promotes itself as a Christian community	74%	100%	Not asked		
Attends assemblies and school services in the church	83%	93%	Not asked		

	February 2014 response	December 2014 response	January 2016 response	January 2016 don't know	January 2016 no response
Feels parents should be more actively involved in assemblies and acts of worship	17%	22%	Not asked		
My child is taught how to stay safe, including online	Not asked	Not asked	91%	8% don't know)	
I understand what my child is being taught in school	Not asked	Not asked	92%		
I find it easy to approach staff to discuss my child's progress in school	Not asked	Not asked	96%		
I find the school newsletter to be clear, timely and helpful	Not asked	Not asked	97%		
I regularly look at the school website to find out what is happening in school	Not asked	Not asked	36%		
Children build up good personal relationships	Not asked	Not asked	98%		

	February 2014 response	December 2014 response	January 2016 response	January 2016 don't know	January 2016 no response
There are opportunities for children to serve others	Not asked	Not asked	86%	5% don't know	3% no response
There are strong links between the school and local parish	Not asked	Not asked	100%		
The school encourages daily prayer	Not asked	Not asked	85%	7% don't know 2% don't care	2% no response
My child is making good progress in RE	Not asked	Not asked	69%	22% don't know 2% don't care	3% no response
I know what my child is learning in RE	Not asked	Not asked	50%	3% don't know	2% no response

Addressing some of your concerns:

Behaviour

The school has a clear behaviour policy which it follows through with appropriate sanctions, including referral to the Deputy Head or Headteacher and working together with parents where required. For reasons of confidentiality, we try not to discuss individual children's behaviour with anyone other than their own parents; this may result in instances where parents may mistakenly believe that there have been no repercussions for a child who has misbehaved.

The school maintains an incident record which includes instances of bullying or racial harassment and teachers use the consequences sheet as a guide to appropriate sanctions. This document can be found under 'Parents Zone - Information - Behaviour Management - Consequences' on the school website. Alternatively you can request a copy from the school office.

As an inclusive school, we prefer to work with children and parents to encourage and reinforce good behaviour and eliminate poor behaviour.

Access to school

The last Open Morning for current parents was not well attended however we are quite used to doing tours of the school with prospective parents and more than happy to repeat this for any parent who would like to revisit the school to see it in action on a normal working day. Parents are invited to attend class assemblies, celebration assemblies, REACH award celebrations and end-of-topic events. We endeavour to accommodate parents and you should not hesitate to contact the school if you would like to book an appointment to visit us during a normal working day.

Communications

Information about what your child is being taught can be found in the Class Pages of the Learning Zone on the school website. If you let us know that you would like this information communicated in a different way we will be happy to oblige: perhaps a paper copy in the learning journal or in your child's link book?

Parent meetings and written reports are opportunities for teachers to share information about a child's development and progress. If you have any concerns, teachers are always willing to discuss this. Please do not hesitate to contact the school to make an appointment to discuss anything you are worried about. Alternatively, it is often possible to 'catch' the teacher at the end of the school day.

The October parents' evening is an opportunity for parents to meet their child's new teacher and obtain feedback about how their child has settled into their new class and 'iron out' any 'teething' problems. The February parents' evening has been extended to give parents more time to talk to their child's class teacher about progress and attainment. However, there should be no surprises and you should expect to be informed about any concerns your child's teacher has about their progress before the formal meeting.

With our ever-widening curriculum, including more focus on developing character traits, such as resilience and perseverance, parents should find that teachers will start to talk more about their child's individual strengths, personality traits and areas for development as well as about their attainment and progress in academic subjects.

Parents will be provided with feedback about their child's progress in maths as well as reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Teachers will also provide information about progress in RE and the outcome of any tests.

Healthy School

The school has a healthy eating policy and has renewed its 'healthy school' accredited status this year. The parents' welcome pack refers to the food and drink allowed in school (i.e. fruit only at playtimes), makes recommendations about healthy lunchboxes and informs parents about the availability of water in school. Squash is not allowed in water bottles.

Parents sometimes bring sweets to be shared by a child who is celebrating a birthday but teachers do not allow these sweets to be eaten in school; children have to take them home at the end of the day to obtain parents' permission before consuming them. Children learned about the sugar content of sweets and chocolate during our science week last term. Many of them will be familiar with the 'Sugar App' and it is expected that older children will begin to take more responsibility for their own sugar consumption.

Lunches are provided by Surrey County Council Catering Department (SCCCD), which is currently liaising with school leaders to provide more information about the nutritional content of the hot lunches they provide. School leaders are also carrying out a review of the children's 'dining experience' which will be extended to include breakfast club provision.

The breakfast club supervisor endeavours to limit sugar and always requests parents' permission to serve certain cereal brands, which, when consumed in moderation, are considered acceptable. The breakfast club supervisor and senior leaders are working together to carry out an assessment and analysis of the sugar content of various drinks and this will be formalised and parents advised of the outcome, in due course.

The Reception Class curriculum is under review with a view to including lessons to teach children how to hold and manipulate cutlery and about good table manners.

Sport and PE and Outdoor areas at playtimes

The Key Stage 2 adventure play area has now been improved and is ready for use. Work began at the beginning of this term and was completed quickly and unobtrusively. We are very grateful to parents and the PTA who raised the money to fund these improvements. School Council and pupil leadership team representatives' wishes were taken into account. The school will be seeking funding to extend the upgrades to the KS1 adventure play area in future and school leaders are considering wider improvements to include Chloe's Garden and surrounding areas. We have held meetings with 'Grass Roots' gardening services to look at the possibility of further extending outdoor learning, adding animal and bird habitats and looking for opportunities to develop some 'forest school' type initiatives. These things take time and money and we appreciate your patience.

We acknowledge the value of play and members of staff are very happy to share ideas for games and play with children. Teachers use play in their teaching, sometimes with the specific intention of teaching children to share and take turns, develop resilience and experience failure.

Some traditional games like skipping, elastics and hula-hooping are being reintroduced this term. Last term, we held the skipping workshops where children were taught some rope skills and impressive tricks. Children had the opportunity to purchase ropes for £1 and we are hopeful that the skipping 'craze' that has been successful in the past will continue throughout the summer months.

Last term we had 'Healthy Living' week when children were encouraged to walk or run daily and we are now focusing again on walking and running in the lead-up to the Rio Olympics. Every child is being encouraged to walk or run a mile a day and children's mileage is being tracked on a national database. Schools that reach or exceed the target to walk/run the distance from their school to Rio will be entered into a draw - the prize being a visit from a well-known sporting personality! Failing that, we aim to look for our own high-profile sports representatives to inspire children to develop their interest in sport. (If any physically active parent would like to come and demonstrate high-kicks or somersaults in the school hall, we would love to hear from you!)

The opportunity to bring small, safe, low-value toys into school was introduced about 18 months ago in response to suggestions from parents, staff and pupils. For the most part, the initiative has been successful although we do have occasional disagreements about the toys. We reason that this is a natural part of the children's experiences from which they can learn to share, develop their communication skills and grow in resilience. We will continue to monitor the use of toys and, from time to time, may 'ban' particular items (e.g. Pokemon cards) in the event they appear to be at the root of repeated arguments.

Staffing, recruitment and retention of staff

We recognise that there has been some instability, particularly in KS1. This has been unavoidable and has been the result of ill-health and maternity. The Early Years'/KS1 Leader has recently returned from maternity leave and some staff reorganisation had to be introduced to mitigate against the effects of this disruption. We believe that we achieved the best possible resolution and apologise for any uncertainty or anxiety the changes may have caused. The school leadership team is currently considering how best to ensure greater stability in KS1 going forward. We actively encourage staff to engage in professional development and whilst this can improve the school's own capacity, it is inevitable that some staff will look for more challenging work where the opportunities don't exist in a small school such as St Mary's.

It is typically difficult to recruit male staff into primary education; whilst we would happily recruit a male teacher, it seems that, for whatever reasons, the majority of male colleagues prefer to specialise in a subject area and tend to gravitate towards specialist teaching in senior schools.

School Website

We have checked the search function on the school website and it appears to be working now. The school website has been updated and improved in the last couple of years, however, we do agree that this could be further developed and improved. We have noted that over half of all parents say they do not look at the website to find out what is happening at the school so we may need to investigate alternative ways to make the website more user-friendly.

Curriculum including extra-curricular opportunities

The school endeavours to provide a broad-ranging and interesting curriculum, delivering age-appropriate and relevant topics that are familiar to children that they can understand and that will build on their interests. Children are encouraged to delve deeper into subject areas to gain a level of expertise or 'mastery', according to their chronological age and ability.

We believe that, for a small school, with limited staff, we provide a good range of clubs. The number of children engaged in clubs increases as children become older and move up the school, with 75% and 80% respectively of Year 6 and 5 pupils taking up one or more clubs. Clubs run by our own teachers include opportunities to develop technical skills (computer club), creative skills (art and craft, cookery), sporting skills (football, cross country and netball), thinking and reasoning skills (philosophy and chess clubs), music (choir), 'prep' (homework club for invited pupils), journalism (newspaper club) and support and extension opportunities (maths booster), for invited pupils. Outside providers also offer football and sporting clubs.

Children with working parents who do not attend an after school club have the option to go to 'The Barn', an off-site, after-school care facility, located close to the school. Children are collected from school by 'The Barn' employees and delivered by minibus to the facility. Children can be collected from 'The Barn' as late as 6.00pm.

All Key Stage 1 and 2 have a minimum of 2 hours a week sport/games/PE with their class teacher or with the sports specialist. We are very fortunate, in a small primary school, to have a dedicated sports specialist, albeit part-time, and Mrs Wright has recently engaged in professional development training to become an FA trained football coach! Teachers have also had training in the delivery of gymnastics and dance and we look for opportunities to include PE in the wider curriculum (e.g. Tea Dance in Year 4, Bear Hunt in Reception, Maypole dancing at the summer fete).

Development of music provision and encouragement of learning an instrument in KS2

Since its last formal Ofsted inspection, the school has naturally been focusing on the areas identified for improvement in the report and using the findings in its own self-evaluation. Senior leaders now recognise that the school has the capacity to look outside of the core subjects to the wider curriculum.

We believe there has been good progress in music. Non music specialists are supported in their music teaching by an interactive programme devised by Surrey Arts and by a variety of software programmes which enable pupils to use computer technology to create music. These programmes also enable pupils to understand the theory of music.

Beyond classroom lessons, but during the school day, pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2 have the opportunity to learn how to play an instrument within small groups. (Fees apply)

The 'rock musicians' perform each term and are growing in confidence and skills. Currently, eighteen pupils attend lessons provided by the Surrey Arts Music Service in drums, piano and violin. The school is keen to promote lessons in a wide variety of orchestral instruments. Beginners up to grade 5 are encouraged to join Haslemere Schools Community Orchestra training which takes place at Woolmer Hill School. In addition, the school runs choirs for children of different age groups.

Earlier this year, all pupils enjoyed a drumming workshop. Pupils from Woolmer Hill School also gave an inspirational mini concert which included a range of instruments. At the end of last term we held a music concert when children performed publicly, to inspire others to take up singing or learning a musical instrument. Children have welcomed musicians (e.g. a cellist) who have performed for children before circulating leaflets/fliers about music lessons they can provide.

Religious Education (RE)

R.E. was added to the January questionnaire because, as a Church of England School, we wanted to find out what parents think about the R.E. provision and what you know about what children are learning and the progress they are making in R.E.

The outcome of our survey has shown us that this is an area of the curriculum where fewest parents feel comfortable that they understand what we are doing in school. We take full responsibility for this because it is our duty to keep you informed. We have learned that we can inform you better about the school's R.E. curriculum, what we want children to gain from it and the progress they are making. In future, teachers will be able to tell you about your child's progress and attainment in R.E.

Once we were confident that we were making good progress towards a positive Ofsted outcome, we turned some of our attentions to the SIAMS inspection that we predicted would be imminent. We were surprised that the SIAMS inspection came before the Ofsted but this only reinforces our belief that Ofsted will not be far behind. SIAMS is the acronym for the 'Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools' and we were delighted that the inspectorate found us to be a good school with some outstanding features, including pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Because we are a church school within the diocese of Guildford, and because we have close links with St Mary's Church and Guildford Cathedral, we are obliged to follow the approved diocesan R.E. curriculum. This curriculum has been very recently updated and we believe it to be much improved and for the better.

The new curriculum no longer prohibits the teaching of evolutionary theory and it encourages the teaching of multiple world faiths, alongside Christianity, so that children are better educated about other religions and can compare and contrast their own beliefs with the beliefs of others, including those who have no particular faith. This promotes tolerance and inclusion which are central to our ethos.

We have introduced a philosophy curriculum to further encourage children to think deeply about their own and others' beliefs, and we don't ever make a judgement about the value of one faith over another; neither do we discourage children from having no faith at all and teachers don't impose their own beliefs on children.

We encourage children to become thoughtful, reflective learners and to develop their skills as 'thinkers'. Through our 'Thinking Schools' programme, children learn to select tools that will help them to gather and clarify their thoughts and ideas. We are firmly committed to the 'Thinking Schools' initiative as we believe it to be in the long term interest of children. Children will develop the skills to compare, contrast and make judgments that will help them in many other areas of the curriculum including history, science, literacy and the arts as well as in decision making in their own personal and social lives. You can find out more about 'Thinking Schools' on the internet under <http://www.thinkingschool.co.uk/>

Class sizes

Unfortunately, it is unlikely that the school will be able to reduce class sizes because we rely on having our school full to capacity (i.e. about 210 pupils / approximately 30 per class) for the funding we receive, per pupil, from the education funding agency. This helps to sustain staffing, good quality educational provision and resources. Like many other schools, St Mary's is already experiencing considerable financial constraints; rather than cutting pupil numbers we are looking at ways to increase our income, including by increasing pupil numbers and reducing costs where possible. We are always grateful to parents who support our school by volunteering and supporting the PTA and other revenue raising initiatives including the termly request for funds. Thank you for your continued support.

Uniform

The school believes children should take pride in their school and in their uniform. We have worked closely with uniform providers this year to improve the quality of items of uniform and we will continue to encourage children to wear their uniform with pride, tucking their shirts in and having their hands out of their pockets. School leaders would very much like to introduce a regulation jacket (perhaps navy or black), that could be emblazoned with the school crest, however we are conscious that this could be expensive for parents and that some parents may have already recently bought outer garments. School leaders are willing to discuss this and consider whether the phased introduction of a school blazer might be feasible in the future.

PTA membership

The PTA do not currently have a Chairperson although a couple of parents have been giving generously of their time to run the meetings, carry out administrative functions, including managing PTA finances, and communicating with other PTA members. The School Business Manager or another representative of the school tries to attend most meetings and, where this is not possible, she liaises with PTA members in advance of the meeting. The school is happy to advertise in the bulletin for members and helpers on behalf of the PTA, as well as to reinforce what has been discussed in meetings, including that casual members are welcome and parents don't necessarily have to devote too much time to the work of the PTA; they are at liberty to make an occasional contribution to a particular event or initiative that interests them.

Newsletter/Bulletin

At the moment, we are relying on the services of a generous volunteer to produce our weekly bulletin. We will try to trim the volume of content but feel it would be a bit onerous to ask for a segregation of KS1 and KS2 information. We do try to put key dates in one place to avoid the need for parents to read through the whole bulletin. And we have recently added a reminder of our 'value of the week' at the top of the newsletter.

Reading books

We think it is important that books are in good condition to inspire young readers. New reading books have recently been ordered. We always have to consider costs but do endeavour to make sure children's books are in good condition. We welcome donations of suitable reading books for our School Library/Learning Zone.

Weekly assemblies

Weekly 'jigsaw piece' nominations are finalised on the morning of the celebration assembly; they relate to children's performance throughout the week. Only parents of Reception and KS1 parents are informed if their child is expected to receive a jigsaw piece award because parents of younger pupils are sometimes able to attend at short notice. We inform all parents when a child is expected to be presented with a termly REACH award or if they are expected to receive a completed certificate and badge, but it is not always possible to give advance notice for the weekly 'jigsaw piece' nominations as these are only usually decided on the day or afternoon before.

Support in maths for children and parents

Our new Seesaw app is intended to be used for this purpose as well as for parents to see what their child is learning in school. The maths leader is working on producing examples of teaching methods so that parents can use the same method at home. We are also investigating a video available from 'Student Services' which explains how parents can help their child with maths and literacy at home. This would need to be paid for by parents.

Homework

Last year we carried out a full review of homework and revised our policy to the extent we were able. However, we are required to follow Good Shepherd Trust and national homework guidelines. We believe homework consolidates and reinforces skills and understanding in numeracy, literacy and other curriculum areas, helping to raise the level of achievement of individual pupils and providing opportunities for parents and children to work together and, thereby, fostering an effective partnership between home and school.

National guidelines recommend that homework extends the working week by approximately 10%. Homework tasks are increased as the child progresses through the school.

We recommend the following time and subject allocations:

- Reception
- Up to 1 hour per week (reading, phonics and 'take away' tasks)
- Key Stage 1
- Up to 1 hour per week (reading, phonics, spellings, mathematics, plus additional handwriting practice)
- Years 3 and 4
- Up to 1.5 hours per week (reading, spellings, mathematics, handwriting, topic work etc)
- Years 5 and 6
- Up to 2.5 hours per week (reading, spellings, mathematics, science, topic work, revision for tests and examinations etc)
- Occasional 'Takeaway Tasks' may be given to older pupils as well as Reception pupils and are usually a way of preparing for upcoming topic work.

Homework is not intended to be stressful or cause family upset. We ask parents to let us know if, for any reason, a child struggles or is unable to complete their homework in the allocated time or if they find the work too easy and require more of a challenge. Parents may sign homework to indicate where a child has worked for the required length of time but not completed the work. This helps teachers to determine the appropriateness of homework and to differentiate for different abilities.

Reporting and Teacher assessment

Teacher assessment is important and teachers make a judgement based on a combination of test results and teacher assessments; they base their teacher assessments on their knowledge of the child. If you have concerns about the accuracy of assessments, you should discuss this with your child's class teacher or with Mrs Buckley, who is the school's appointed lead for data, assessment, reporting and recording.

Disparity in quality of teaching

All teachers are subject to monitoring and evaluation of teaching and regular scrutiny of pupils' books takes place as part of our overall assessment of the quality of teaching. Teachers are also assessed on their knowledge of pupils in our pupil progress meetings. Where teaching or pupil outcomes do not meet senior leaders' high expectations, this is discussed with teachers and improvement targets are set. Where a teacher does not respond to target setting, a performance improvement plan is initiated and this will involve more frequent, monitoring, support and guidance and, where appropriate, a full review of competency and assessment of suitability for the role.

Admissions Policy

Some parents asked about our admissions policy. This is set, in consultation with the Good Shepherd Trust (GST) and applies to all GST schools. Parish boundaries are set and we have to adhere to them. There are no plans to change this and, if there were to be a proposal to change, there is a three-year consultation process. I am pleased to confirm that, for this year's Reception Class intake, although we were heavily over-subscribed, our admissions policy did allow for places for all siblings within the Chiddingfold Parish boundary, for September 2016.

Leadership presence and greeting pupils in the morning

School leaders attend morning briefings three days a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) from 8.25am to 8.35am. They are also often asked to meet with parents first thing in the morning. The number of entrance gates (3) to the school render it quite a challenge to greet children every day, however, school leaders will consider the practical implications associated with greeting children at one of the three different school entrances one day a week or, alternatively, rescheduling the staff briefing to begin a bit earlier so that they can be available before the start of school. It is anticipated that this might also encourage a small number of pupils who are regularly late arriving for registration at 8.45am, to be on time.

Other

Some parents thought the questionnaire should be amended to include a 'don't know' column. We agree and, for the purpose of analysis, this has been included in the feedback. We will include a 'don't know' column in future questionnaires.

Thank you again for taking part in our questionnaire. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.