



Chestnut Lane School

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Headteacher: Christine Plimsaul Cert Ed NPQH

21st June 2013

Dear Parents

Thank you to all the parents who responded to this year's parental questionnaire. We find the feedback extremely useful as it is important to know how you feel the school is performing, where we have got things right and where we can improve.

We are extremely pleased by the positive responses and delighted that everyone who responded stated that their child likes the school. In the majority of areas the feedback is even more positive than in previous years, which is encouraging. Unfortunately the percentage of parents who responded was only 33% which was disappointing as it is difficult to make a true assessment based on such low numbers, but we have to assume that those who did not respond are satisfied with how the school operates and with their child's progress.

You will find attached a chart showing the responses from parents. In addition a number of you added comments on individual issues which, where possible, we have answered below.

Firstly, we were gratified to read all the positive and supportive feedback about individual teaching and school staff. Thank you.

There were some specific observations from parents regarding individual children. It would be inappropriate to respond to these comments here so we request that you make an appointment to see Mrs Plimsaul to discuss any particular concerns. Alternatively, if you wish to have an update regarding your child's progress please talk to your class teacher.

A few parents felt there was a lack of communication regarding the continuing absence of Mrs Hommel. We fully appreciate that parents have an interest in what is going on at school and that the children can become unsettled when such circumstances arise. On the other hand, we feel parents will recognise that the school has statutory obligations in regard to staff privacy and welfare, which makes it difficult for us to provide as much information as we might wish. There are, therefore, limitations on what we can disclose and Mrs Plimsaul, being conscious of the parents' interest, will provide information as soon as circumstances permit.

There was mixed feedback regarding the morning routines. These are under review and it is likely they will be 'fine tuned' for the start of the new term in September. However, the school aims to keep them consistent throughout the next academic year.

There were a couple of comments regarding changes to routines or events at short notice. We apologise for the inconvenience this may have caused parents. The school aims to make as few changes as possible to activities once they have been published on the website. Occasionally changes are unavoidable but teachers will strive to give parents as much notice as possible.

The comments requesting an increased emphasis on PE and sports have been noted. Please be reassured that the school delivers the required number of PE and sports sessions specified in the national curriculum and in addition, a specialist teacher, Mrs Douglass has been working with the key stage one children on a dance project. The possibility of providing additional specialist resources so that additional sporting activities can be offered is being considered. Sports Day is often a contentious issue and parent opinion is divided, but the school's aim is to give the children a fun, active morning, full of activities wholly appropriate for this age group.

In response to the feedback to the 'free flow' in early years, the school voluntarily commissioned an assessment by the local authority's advisory team who identified early years as having an outstanding learning environment, with knowledgeable staff who had good rapport with all children.

There was a comment about pastoral care taking second place to academic achievements. The children's well being is paramount in our planning and it greatly concerns us that any parent may think the school is lacking in this area. Perhaps academic achievements are more often publicised but please be reassured that staff are always ready to support any child while encouraging them to grow in independence and confidence. Any parent having a specific issue in this area should take the matter up with the Head.

As a result of a suggestion regarding parent consultations, Mrs Plimsaul and staff will from now on send children's target sheets home prior to the meetings so parents have an opportunity to review them in advance.

There were mixed comments about the volume and difficulty of homework, with some parents wanting more and others less. The school introduced a new system this year and endeavours to get the right balance, but it will be monitored.

The communication books were introduced this year, initially in early years. Your feedback has been very useful and as they are still evolving your suggestions for improvement will be incorporated where possible.

We have noted that some working parents feel that the school does not support them adequately. We appreciate that it is sometimes difficult to juggle work and other commitments, indeed many governors and school staff are in the same situation. Where practical, workshops are held during the day as well as in the evenings and in all cases information regarding topics and workshops are available to parents, either on the school's website or from the appropriate teachers.

There was a comment about communicating to parents who do not reside with their child. The school is more than happy to make arrangements to contact both parents with school information. Please ensure the office staff have details for both parties if you wish to avail yourself of this service.

The school's website contains most of the information parents need on a day to day basis including term dates, events, club details, uniform, topics and so on. It is continuously updated by school staff and is currently being developed to assist mobile phones users. We do urge parents to make use of the website, which we constantly strive to improve.

A significant number of opinions were expressed about school lunches, some positive, some less so. These comments will be passed back to Dolce, the caterers, but it will be appreciated that they, like everybody else, are constrained by cost factors.

Finally, the school is always striving to improve. Clearly, some initiatives are more successful than others but, with the continuing commitment of our dedicated staff and constructive feedback from the parent body, it will continue to progress to become a truly outstanding school. We do, however, operate in a difficult environment, in common with many schools in the County.

Thank you once again to those of you who were able to complete the questionnaire. The governors, Mrs Plimsaul and all the staff greatly appreciate your support. We will do our best to ensure that the children enjoy the remainder of term and wish you all a most enjoyable summer holiday.

Yours sincerely

David Begley

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Chairman of Governors

