



Chestnut Lane School

Chestnut Lane Infant School

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July 2014

To all Parents and Carers of children at Chestnut Lane

Thank you so much on behalf of all of the Governors and members of the leadership team at Chestnut Lane School for completing the Parent Survey distributed in May.

60 families completed the survey representing 69 children at the School. Your feedback was overwhelmingly positive and has been a delight for all members of the Governing Body to read. The leadership team appreciates your support and we were grateful for all of your messages and congratulations surrounding the recent OFSTED rating. This comment:

"We think this is a fantastic school. Standards are very high and communication is excellent. Leadership and teaching quality is exceptionally strong. The OFSTED status is well deserved" was heart-warming to read but also representative of much of your feedback. Thank you.

Another family commented,

"...I think they deserve their outstanding OFSTED and I also think that they have communicated that they are not now going to become complacent which is reassuring".

The comments that you have provided in this survey now become part of the discussions that we have within the leadership team meetings and will feed into our plans for the forthcoming School year. In this letter we will outline specific comments and recommendations made by the Parent body and outline actions that we plan to take in response. We have attached a sheet illustrating the actual numbers and % response to each question – they do not always add up to 69 children but every question has been answered by all 60 respondents.

Firstly we were delighted to know that 100% of families felt able to *agree* or *strongly agree* that their child/ren *"like the School"* and *"feel safe at the School"* and that 95% of families would feel happy to *"recommend the School to another parent"*. There were some particularly warm comments about reception and nursery and your specific notes about the teachers within Early Years have been shared with those staff. We were troubled to see that a small number of parents (2) *disagree* that *"there is a good standard of behaviour at the School"* and that *"the School deals with bullying effectively"*. We can only ask that if you have any worries at all regarding your children's day-to-day schooling that you please speak with your class teacher or with Mrs Plimsaul. We try to have an open-door policy as is possible within the School and we can deal with any issues only if you share them with us. We urge you, please do come forward.

Your responses indicate to us that communication has become a strength of the School. This is particularly satisfying to see as the office and teaching team have spent considerable time trying to get the balance right following comments in parent surveys from previous years. 95% of families *agree* or *strongly agree* that they feel well informed and 97% *agree* or *strongly agree* that they are aware of the topics their children will be learning each term. The regular topic meetings were introduced to ensure parents are informed of what their children will be learning that term. We appreciate that they can be tricky for working parents to attend every time but we believe they are a valuable method of communication. In response to your comments we intend to make much more use of the School website as a way of keeping you up to date on key dates, topics, club information, homework and other important data. The information available via the website will be extended over the coming months. Our intention is that you could use the website as your first source for this type of information and this objective will be measured in our 2015 Parent survey. We believe the website will be a valuable way for all parents, including working parents to find the information they need. Topic meeting termly updates are distributed via the book bags for all those unable to attend on the day so please be sure to speak to your class teacher if you do not have a copy of the topic outline.

The communication books are another valuable tool and from your comments it appears they are very much appreciated by parents. There are some busier times in the School year such as during the Summer term when the books are not kept as up-to-date as at other times. We ask you to bear with us during these busier times as teachers are working hard on pupil reports and hence do not have as much time available to update the communication books. We are attempting to strike the right balance and it appears that for some parents we have not got it quite right. As a leadership team we are spending time this term and next to ensure we understand the communication needs of the parents better so that we can try to satisfy all parties without compromising teaching. The comments section of this section of the survey were used to share some parents' worries about how their children are performing compared to other members of the class. The School shares performance information based on National Averages. In our opinion this is the right approach as every class is different. You may have a child who is performing well above National Average who one year might be at the top of the class and in another year would be found in the middle of the class. Either way what the School and the teachers are most concerned with is the progress that child is making. We like to work closely in partnership with parents to ensure the optimum progress for each child and their position in the class makes no difference to this. If any parent does have concerns about their child's progress we urge you to speak to the class teacher or to Mrs Plimsaul. They are always delighted to share your child's progress with you as by working in partnership we can ensure that the needs of every child are met successfully.

On the subject of progress it appears that the views of the parent body chime with those of OFSTED. 94% of you *agree* or *strongly agree* your child/ren "*make good progress at the School*". You are particularly pleased with the School's help in developing your child/ren's READING skills (99% *agree* or *strongly agree*) and WRITING skills (96% *agree* or *strongly agree*) whilst MATHS is slightly behind (87% *agree* or *strongly agree*). Maths is a focus for the School as we move into the 2014/2015 school year and we aim to see your views on MATHS shift by this time next year. Homework was shown to be the trickiest area in this section of the survey with 12% of families (representing 8 children) disagreeing that their child/ren "*receive appropriate homework for their age*". The School will run a homework workshop for parents in the coming academic year. This workshop intends to cover the issues raised in the survey - the best way to deal with the homework, how much parents should be supporting their child, how much time should be spent on it, how to help the child choose. If you feel your child is choosing the same task every week then talk to your class teacher or to Mrs Plimsaul who will help you and your child spread the choice.

For the first time we asked a specific question about extra-curricular activities. Lots of ideas were shared for new activities you would like to see offered in the School. Some parents would like to see more choice available to Reception children as currently judo is the only club available to our Early years pupils. As a result of your feedback we are now looking at ways to extend activities for all children. Please do watch this space.

Some comments were made about school meals offered by Dolce. We do monitor the school meal offering and we are aware of problems that some parents have experienced. We feel it is more powerful if parents also speak to Dolce directly. Please do make sure you share your thoughts and any concerns with them as well as with us as we feel this is the right way for improvement to be brought about.

Sports day is this year to be held on 18th July and we are all hoping for fine weather. We had wonderful feedback from parents last year when we made last-minute changes to the format of the day in light of the extraordinarily hot weather. Given the positive feedback we made the decision to repeat the format for this year with a broader range of activities available. We are positive that the children will really enjoy the day and we do hope that as many parents as possible can make it on the day and that they will enjoy it too. Please do feedback your thoughts following the day and we will make sure we take your ideas into account for 2015.

Finally we do encourage as many people as possible to get involved with the school by helping out in the classroom and on school trips. We are sure that many of you are aware that the guidance on CRB checks (DBS clearance as it is now known) has recently changed so that clearance is not essential if parents are not to be with children on their own. The School feels strongly that given the age of the children their safety and protection is paramount and as a result we will continue to ask

parent helpers to have up to date CRB/DBS clearance. We do hope you can support us in this decision.

Thank you again to all parents and carers who spared some time to complete the survey. If any other parents would like to share their views following receipt of this letter or if any parents have anything further to add please do speak to either your class teacher or to Mrs Plimsaul.

On behalf of the School Governors and the leadership team I wish you and your child/ren a very happy remainder of the Summer term.

Kind Regards



Alicen Stenner
Development Governor
Chestnut Lane School

