



Chestnut Lane School

20 July 2015

Chestnut Lane School

105 Chestnut Lane

Amersham

HP6 6EF

Telephone: 01494 727415

Facsimile: 01494 725969

Email: office@chestnutlane.bucks.sch.uk

Website: <http://chestnutlane.bucks.sch.uk>

Headteacher: Christine Plimsaul Cert Ed NPQH

Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you to all parents and carers who completed the recent survey informing Governors of your views about Chestnut Lane School. We were so pleased to have the survey filled in by 75 families representing 95 children at the School. This is a 25% increase in completions compared to last year and means that around half of parents and carers have shared their feelings about the School with us.

We were doubly pleased that so many of you had such positive things to say. There was 100% agreement with the view that *your child/ren like the School* with 99% sharing the view that *your child/ren feel safe at the School* and 98% believe their *child/ren are taught well at the School*. We particularly enjoyed reading about one of our pupils who "is so happy at Chestnut Lane that she was disappointed by the recent Bank Holiday as she was not able to attend School!" Another comment reflected the view of several in saying "Chestnut Lane is a great school. All my children have been very happy there. I am really impressed with Early Years at the moment. What a great start to school".

Over the last few years our ratings relating to the School's performance in keeping you well informed have increased enormously. In 2010 just 84% could agree or strongly agree on this matter. This year just shy of 95% of you agree that the School keeps you well informed. It is fantastic to see this progress as we have worked very hard in this area. Many commented that we should give more notice of events involving parents and carers. Comments along the lines of "please give more notification for parent attendance or participation". This is a very fair comment and is an adjustment we can make quickly. We realise that this year we have invited you to more events than ever before and we shall endeavour to provide at least 2 weeks notice at minimum but ideally between 2 - 4 weeks.

This year we added a new question to the survey in asking you whether you feel *the School is inclusive, promoting equality and celebrating diversity*. 89% agree that this is so with the remainder feeling they don't know or have insufficient information to say. Just 2 people disagreed with the statement *there is a good standard of behaviour at the School* and the same for *effective dealings with cases of bullying*. If parents or carers have specific issues they would like to raise with the School we encourage you to come forward and discuss them with Mrs Plimsaul or your child's class teacher. As Governors we were delighted to see comments along the lines of "big positives for me are the approachability of the teachers and Head Teacher" and we do hope that any parents or carers who would like to discuss issues or questions of any kind, however sensitive, would feel happy to make an appointment.

A small number of you commented on how the communication books don't always provide the information desired or that the parents evening does not allow sufficient time to discuss progress in depth. Additional to the minimum 5 hours it takes to cover each child's progress during the 10 minute parent meetings, all of the teachers can be available before School or after School and many have met with parents in this way. The parents evening is a lovely opportunity to see your child's work and to begin or continue the discussion with the teacher about your child. If your work commitments mean that a phone conversation would be preferable we would be pleased to accommodate a discussion over the phone.

96% of you who completed the survey agree that *your child/ren make good progress at the school*. This view was reflected in your scores for your child/ren's progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Every one of the scores in these subjects is higher than in the 2014 survey as is the score for the view that your child/ren receives appropriate homework for their age. Homework always attracts comment and we try very hard to strike the right balance. It is clear that we are doing better at this but we pledge to review the nature of the tasks across the year groups. Our expectation is that children will spend 20-30 minutes maximum on any one homework task each week whilst understanding that some children may wish to do more.

We did notice one or two comments referring to maths homework in reception. We are currently considering a new idea which is to alternate speed reading with speed maths as a trial. In the new school year 2015/2016 Chestnut Lane will have a new maths coordinator and we are positive plenty of new ideas like this will be brought into play.

Last year we asked you about extra-curricular activities and you mentioned the availability of clubs for reception children. We have tried to attract suppliers who would be able to accommodate our younger children and we are delighted to announce that Playball will be beginning classes for our reception children early in the new academic year. Some respondents to the survey believe that our teachers should be running clubs after school as happens in some other schools. It has been our policy to have our teaching staff focus their attentions on teaching our pupils during the School day. We run a lot of parent workshops and have high expectations for the quality of teaching in the classroom. Such expertise demands planning and we feel this focus contributes to our outstanding OFSTED rating. For this reason we will continue to seek external suppliers for our extra-curricular activities and we are very open to parents approaching quality suppliers to ask them to consider offering their activities in our School. In fact Perform have approached us recently and their classes will begin shortly. If any parent feels their child/ren cannot join these clubs due to the cost then please do speak to Mrs Plimsaul in confidence. It is our firm belief that no child should miss out on these opportunities due to a lack of funding.

It wouldn't be right to finish this letter without referring to our playground equipment. Our pupils have enjoyed playing on the wagon for many years but it is time for it to be replaced as it is now very old and worn. The removal of this piece has taken an inordinate amount of time to organise but at long last this project is underway. We have exciting thoughts around what to replace it with and plans will be made available for parents to view.

In summary the Governors are extraordinarily grateful for the time respondents spent sharing their views and feelings about the School. We have provided just an overview here but the responses to all questions are shown in the attached tables. If you have any questions at all as a follow-up to this survey we would be happy to oblige. Your views have already been included in a planning session where we discuss our objectives for the coming year. If you are left feeling that you would like to discuss any specific concerns you may have alluded to in your responses in any greater depth your class teacher or Mrs Plimsaul should be your first port of call.

As the Governors reviewed the survey results together one respondent made us blush with this fabulous praise "My children have truly had an outstanding education at Chestnut Lane. The staff team is strong and dedicated and they have given them a fantastic start to their school lives". As a School this is everything we aspire to achieve. We are now approaching the summer holidays and we wish you and your children the very happiest of breaks.

We look forward to seeing you again in September and we wish all of our leavers the very greatest success in their new schools.

Best Wishes

Alicen Stenner

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Chairman of the Governors

