

Dear Parent/Carer

26th June 2015

KIRKLAND ROWELL SURVEY

Thank you to all the parents/carers who took the time to complete the Kirkland Rowell parent survey.

It is always our intention to improve the opportunities and experiences of our children and your input is essential in supporting us to evaluate our effectiveness. At Wentworth, we value parental contributions as a key ingredient to our success.

We have analysed the survey report which will support us in developing our School Improvement Plan.

The key findings are;

- Parents gave an excellent overall performance score.
- 32% of parents said the school had improved over the last year.
- 32% parents of new pupils said the school was better than they had expected it to be.
- With regard to academic subjects, parents are most happy with the delivery of Mathematics and ICT.
- Parents are least happy with the delivery of PSHE.
- With regards to non-academic areas, parents are most happy with our library facilities, out of school activities and computer access.
- Parents are least happy with suitable class sizes, developing moral values and control of bullying.
- Parents' top priorities for improvement are suitable class sizes, school communication and developing potential.
- Music received a significantly higher score than the previous survey.
- Mathematics received significantly higher scores over more than two surveys.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Relative strengths for academic criteria;

82.4% Mathematics – understanding
81.7% Mathematics – using and applying
81.4% ICT
81.2% English - writing and spelling
81.2% English - reading

Relative weaknesses for academic criteria;

73.4% PSHE
74.5% Communication and language
75.2% RE

Relative strengths for non-academic criteria;

88.9% Library facilities
84.7% Out of school activities
83.5% Computer access
81.6% School facilities
81.1% School communication

Relative weaknesses for non-academic criteria;

72% Suitable class sizes
73.4% Developing moral values
73.9% Control of bullying
74.2% Developing confidence
74.5% Community spirit

98.2% of parents said they would recommend our school to another parent.

As a school, we wished to explore some additional areas with our parents, particularly in relation to end of year reports, parents' evenings, communication and homework. Results show that parents consider delivery of the following criteria to be 'good';

- Parents' evenings, encouraging and listening to parents' views and explaining to parents how to help their child.
- Tailoring a child's work to their needs and ability.
- Access to staff.
- Ensuring pupils do their best/make good progress.
- Homework – building upon school work.

We appreciate the time taken by parents to make additional comments to support the school's development. After analysing these comments, there are a significant number of 'one-off' comments. There are, however, areas where comments have been made by a number of parents. These are as follows;

Homework
Behaviour – bullying
Progress discussions
Security
Vertically grouped classes
Holidays in term time
Accelerated Reading Programme
More support in understanding the curriculum
Class size
After school clubs

I would like to take this opportunity to respond to some of the comments made in these areas.

Homework

We had a number of comments in relation to homework with broadly the same number of parents saying their child gets too little with those saying their child gets too much. While homework is worthwhile, as it enables children to consolidate what they have done in class or prepare for future learning, we are aware that we are educating the 'whole child'. It is equally important that they have sufficient time to attend their out of school sports clubs, Brownies, Cubs etc and to have time to enjoy being young children.

Homework is always explained to the children with them having the opportunity to question anything they do not understand. If they take the work home and find it difficult, all members of staff are happy to go over it should it be required.

Topic based homework is intended to enable children to undertake their 'own learning' and to present work in a range of styles.

If you find that homework is too challenging or not challenging enough, please discuss it with your child's teacher.

Progress Discussions

In the last year, we have extended our parent consultations so that there is a 'meet the teacher' evening in Term 1, a formal consultation in Term 3 and a further consultation in Term 6 when you are given your child's end of year report. The format and frequency of 2015-2016 parents' evenings will be decided in the next few weeks.

These are for formal consultations, you are free to contact your child's teacher at any time to arrange a mutually convenient appointment or have a telephone review if you have concerns regarding your child's progress or development. Teachers are here to support you and your child, the liaison between the three parties makes the learning process effective.

Security

The safeguarding of our children is essential and everything is done to try and maintain this. We are currently investigating the installation of self-closing doors with entry by keypads and the development of an access path to Toybox to make it an independent body.

Vertically Grouped Classes

Wentworth Infant School and Wentworth Junior School were both originally organised as two-form entry schools, with a pupil admission number of 60. About 18 years ago, there was pressure for places in this area of Dartford and the Local Authority opened a classroom in the Infant School and built a new one in the Junior School. This changed our pupil admission number to 70 meaning that we had to re-organise to vertically grouped classes. This is similar to many schools across the county. It does, however, mean that we have to very carefully consider a range of issues, primarily social maturation before deciding which children are in which class.

We are further pressed for places as we are heavily over-subscribed and are frequently forced to take additional pupils on appeal. Class size is restricted to 30 in Key Stage1 by Statute, but we have had to increase our Key Stage 2 numbers due to demand for places.

Understanding the Curriculum

There have been major changes over the past year with the introduction of a new National Curriculum. This coincides with the removal of the levelling system that was common currency for parents and teachers alike. All schools have been charged with the responsibility of introducing the new Curriculum and a new assessment framework against a background of ever changing expectations. This year has effectively been a transition year and we will be holding parent information evenings next academic year to inform you of the requirements of the new Curriculum and the assessment system that will run alongside it. In addition, we will be updating our calculation policy on the school website to demonstrate the methods we use in teaching mathematics.

Holidays in Term Time

There is no right of authorised absence during term time to accommodate family holidays. This is a National policy that has received a good deal of media attention. We do, however, consider every application on its merits to ascertain whether there are exceptional circumstances. By operating in this way, we ensure there is consistency.

After School Clubs on the Same Night

While the majority of comments were extremely positive in relation to the range of extra-curricular activities provided by our staff, there were a few comments regarding the clash of clubs on the same evening. During the week, teachers attend staff meetings on a Wednesday and plan alongside year group colleagues on Thursdays. This limits the number of evenings available for club activities.

Teaching of a Foreign Language

The requirements to teach a foreign language disappeared in recent years, but it is now part of the new Curriculum. In response to this children in Key Stage 2 will be taught conversational French from September.

Behaviour/Bullying

It is essential that our school runs as a controlled, organised and orderly community. Incidents of misbehaviour in class are infrequent and dealt with immediately.

On the playground there are, at times, altercations between children in football matches, these are dealt with appropriately by the staff on duty.

We currently run a behaviour sanctuary in Key Stage 2 where any children causing a problem on the playground are withdrawn and placed in the sanctuary for a determined period. In addition, a letter is sent to their parents informing them of the behaviour causing concern.

If a pupil's behaviour is detrimental to other children's safety or effective education, we will work closely with parents using a 'report' system and fixed term exclusions will be enforced if appropriate. We believe that every child should feel safe at school and is entitled to an education free from disturbance or harassment.

Incidents of bullying, persistent verbal or physical assault against another child are very rare. If it arises, the perpetrator will be dealt with severely.

During the academic year 2015-16 we will be developing a school code of conduct that will be communicated to pupils, parents, teachers and governors so that the Wentworth community will be aware of our behavioural expectations and the rewards and sanctions that support it.

Accelerated Reading Programme

In recent pupil progress meetings, it was evident that the vast majority of Key Stage 2 pupils have made good progress as a result of this programme. We will continue to promote its benefits and are investigating the possibility of extending its use into year 2.

We are very appreciative to the support of the PTA who provided us with £2000 towards re-stocking the reading areas. This enabled us to buy £4000 worth of new reading material.

May I thank parents for the numerous positive comments that we received relating to their children's positive experiences at school. These by far outweighed the areas identified as being of concern.

Once again, thank you for your contribution towards the development of our school.

Yours sincerely

P Langridge
Acting Co-Headteacher