



Parent questionnaire

Many thanks to all the parents who completed our questionnaire at consultation evenings just before half term. With over 200 responses, we feel that we have a wide representation of parental views. At the end of the newsletter is the breakdown from the questions – please note that not all totals add up to 100% due to rounding!

From my point of view, what I hold utmost in our school was recognized by you as strengths of the school- a Catholic ethos with a family feel; a staff that is approachable and respectful to adults, pupils and each other; a school where children enjoy their learning.

The feedback was very useful and wide ranging, but four themes came out more than most- homework (much more or much less – it was about even!), more parent consultations and feedback about the pupils; more communication and better buildings and toilets.

I do not subscribe to the thought that children should not do homework, but they should practice the skills and concepts taught in school. As a result, the homework is consolidating learning rather than presenting parents with new learning to be taught after school. We will look at what is currently being given and see what else would be helpful for those parents who want more homework.

We will reflect on what could be done to increase the opportunity for more formal consultation and feedback. Weekly or monthly feedback to parents about their child's progress is simply not feasible or fair to expect the teaching staff to undertake. We need to keep our staff, not drive them away because of additional workload beyond their contracted hours! However, lots of you responded that the staff are approachable and that you can always make an appointment to discuss any worries with the staff or leadership team.

We will continue to look at how we can get more information to you and continue to try to give you more advance notice for trips, fixtures etc. We do update the website frequently, which does contain lots of key information and newsletters. We do tailor the emails to parents so that they do not receive communication which does not affect their child. However I know from my own children, sometimes I can forget to open the email! If you are not receiving any of our communication via email, please let the School Office know so they can address the problem.

The school building and toilets do need upgrading- just as well we are getting a new building in Autumn 2019! Hopefully it is understandable that whilst we need to ensure that this current building is safe and secure to operate, governors will not be undertaking wholesale changes to a building that will be flattened in the near future. However we will be continuing to improve furniture and items that can be transferred to the new building.

All of the feedback you provided will be shared with the governing body who will use it as part of their future improvement plans.

School Uniform

In terms of school uniform, lots of positive feedback and useful suggestions were offered. In terms of changing our uniform policy, this ultimately is a governing body decision, not mine. There is now a wide body of evidence to take forward and it would be great to work with four or five parents to address the issue of trousers, quality of uniform and effective supply for parents. If you would like to offer your help to be on a working party, please let the School Office know before the end of term.

Feedback from the questionnaire was as follows:

Do you feel that the school uniform should be updated?

Yes – 22%

No – 38%

Don't Mind – 40%

Do you feel that girls should have the option to wear trousers?

Yes – 54%

No – 13%

Don't Mind – 33%

How satisfied are you with the current quality of the school uniform?

Very satisfied – 21%

Satisfied – 49%

Unsatisfied – 30%

Pupil Premium- Are you missing out?

As a school, we currently have an extremely low number of pupils registered for pupil premium – less than 3% compared to the 24% average in schools. If you qualify for pupil premium, your child will receive a free daily school meal, worth £456 per year, and the school will provide you with a £70 uniform voucher per year and will be able to help meet the costs of some trips and educational resources within the school. In addition, our school receives £1320 for every pupil premium child which is used to support teaching and learning throughout the school, including your child.

It is easy to apply and all you need is your national insurance number or home office number. Please do take five minutes to check online at:

www.hertsdirect.org/freeschoolmeals



Chaplaincy Team commissioned

In October, our newly appointed Chaplaincy Team were commissioned by Fr Carlos at a whole-school assembly. He talked about the Chaplaincy Team's mission: to make God's love known to all. Fr Carlos blessed the Chaplaincy Team's badges and then presented them to the children. We are very proud of our Chaplaincy Team, who have already had a busy term, spreading God's word to all members of our school community.

All Saints Mass

Fr Carlos very successfully celebrated his first whole school Mass with the school on All Saints. Just like Fr Peter and Fr Fortunato, he really understands how children think and really helped them feel at ease during his homily and the Mass.

The Poppy Appeal 2017

Thank you to all the parents and children who bought poppies at school, and for the pupils selling them in the classrooms and on the playground. We will let you know how much was raised once it had been confirmed by the British Legion.

EYFS and KS1 Nativity Plays

The school has been alive with wonderful singing over the last couple of weeks as the pupils have been rehearsing for their nativity plays over the next two weeks. When I was teaching, the vast majority of my experience was in Year 6 and I remember the challenge I had getting 30 pupils to remember their lines and actions, let alone 90 pupils across three classes! I am sorry that we can't offer any more seats for the performances, but unfortunately we are limited to 140 seated adults in the hall for productions due to health and safety and fire restrictions. You will enter the school from the School office entrance and for the afternoon performances, you will be able to take any siblings home as well after the shows.

Gentle reminders - do not use the College drop off area to park your car for these performances, nor publish images or video you take online.

Our Playground Rule

In case you were not aware, in order for children not to be left out and alone, we operate a very simple rule for playtimes that in St Joseph's: If someone wants to join in your game, we always say yes, we do not exclude them. If they leave and play with someone else, that does not matter.

We remind this to pupils on the playground and at assemblies and in class. Our pupils know this rule and that if somebody says 'no', then they know to speak to an adult to help sort out the problem. This does mean that the children may have to adapt their game slightly, but the overwhelming majority are able to do this quickly and without a fuss. Being adaptable is an important life skill! Acting out our Christian faith is a way of life.

Computing Clubs

The 'Lego robotics' and 'Kodu' computing clubs have been a real success this term. Club attendees have appeared to really enjoy the sessions and its been great to see children wanting to continue their learning experiences at home. If levels of interest continue, we will run further clubs in the spring term for pupils who did not get a place this time round.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the children's computing learning.
Miss Bull

EYFS show and share

The EYFS hosted another very successful show and share session. The children all really enjoyed welcoming their adults into class to see some of the things that they do during their time in school. Thank you to all of the parents that came and showed their support.

School Association AGM

Many thanks to all the parents and staff who attended the School Association AGM. Last year was again very successful in fundraising. Thanks to those people who proactively used their talents and time to organize and lead the events. We will once again have a very active and passionate committee for this year which is great. Thank you for putting your names forward and to everyone who supported our events last year.

Communication you may have missed since the last newsletter sent via SchoolComms:

Scholastic Book Club/Cricket Club after Christmas/New Governor Appointment/KS1 and EYFS Christmas performances/Screening of Reception children/Year 5 invitation to Sound of Music at St. Mary's School

Advent

As we rapidly approach the season of Advent this weekend and the new church year, the classrooms are full of purple in our prayer areas. We teach that advent means 'coming' or 'arrival.' There are two important things we think about in Advent:

- 1) Jesus arrived into the world as a baby in the manger at Bethlehem. We are getting ready to celebrate his birthday.
- 2) Jesus promised he would return. We are getting ready for when Jesus comes again.

What is Advent like for us?

Advent is joyful – Jesus is our friend, and we look forward to meeting him.

Advent is a time of hope – having Jesus in our lives is always good.

Advent is a time of waiting – we pray that Jesus will come soon.

Advent is a time for preparing– Jesus is important and we want to be ready to meet him.

Prayer

Mighty and merciful God,
You turn our expectations upside-down.
Show us how you can use us.
May your grace grow in us,
so that we may serve you,
Thought the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen



Thank you for your continued support of the school.

Peter Coldwell
Headteacher

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School ~ Parent Questionnaire 2017/18 Results

212 responses		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
1	My child is happy at school.	73%	27%			
2	My child feels safe at school.	77%	22%			1%
3	My child is making good progress at school.	53%	43%	1%		2%
4	My child is well looked after at school.	70%	30%			
5	My child is taught well at school.	64%	32%	1%	1%	3%
6	My child receives appropriate homework for their age.	44%	47%	7%	1%	2%
7	The school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.	64%	33%		1%	2%
8	The school deals effectively with bullying.	29%	31%	1%		39%
9	The school is well led and managed.	57%	40%	1%		2%
10	The school responds well to any concerns I raise.	46%	39%	4%		13%
11	I receive valuable information from school about my child's progress.	47%	43%	8%		2%
12	Would you recommend this school to another parent?	69%	29%	1%	1%	1%
13	The school keeps me informed of what is taught in religious education lessons?	50%	39%	5%	1%	5%
14	Religious education is challenging and exciting.	35%	45%	3%		17%
15	The school ensures that there are opportunities for daily prayer.	54%	37%	1%		8%

16	There are opportunities for my child to support those in need in the world.	39%	39%	2%		19%
17	The school provides clear moral teaching.	61%	37%			2%
18	The school offers a distinctively Catholic education.	62%	37%			1%