

Friday 7 January 2022

Dear Parents & Carers

Many thanks to everyone who completed the parent survey (132 respondents) which ran throughout November. We have now carried out a detailed analysis of the feedback we received and discussed our findings with Governors. We would now like to share some key highlights from the survey and a few of the actions that we have taken as a result.

We are delighted that a huge 99% of respondents reported that their child/children were happy at school. Our school motto of “Happy Children, Happy School, Learning Together, Growing Together” is hugely important to us and we never lose sight of the fact that children learn best when they feel happy and safe. We have a whole school focus on well-being and we continue to work closely with the Healthy Minds project which appears as if it is having an impact; giving children the opportunity and vocabulary to talk about their feelings and become more proficient at self-regulation.

Those families who completed the survey also felt that their concerns were dealt with well, including any incidents of bullying and we believe that this is as a result of members of SLT being available on the yard before and after school. We always like to “nip things in the bud” whenever possible and would encourage anyone with any concern (however minor it may seem) to come and talk to us before it becomes a bigger issue. We do record some incidents on our secure database system and alert any relevant staff; this ensures that we have a joined up approach to dealing with incidents and that everyone is aware of any issues.

Percentages of respondents considering that their children make good progress were slightly lower than we would hope for (93%) and even more families felt that they would like to receive more information from the school about how their child was progressing. Teaching has undoubtedly been impacted by COVID and the blended learning programme that we put together during periods of enforced closure were not as effective as “normal” face to face teaching, thereby hampering progress of all children. We have a system of “catch-up” time in place where small groups of children of varying abilities have the chance to work with their teacher in order to plug any gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The funding for has been agreed to last most of this academic year and teachers also submit detailed notes about the impact of this time. We have also introduced “Early Birds” sessions for invited pupils to work in smaller, intervention groups and PPA time now focuses on core skills (+French for KS2). This does not take away from the wider curriculum and we are continuing to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum.

How we communicate progress has also been difficult with parents’ evenings going on-line and fewer opportunities for parents to “pop in” to talk to class teachers as well as see the learning environments and the children’s books or work on display. In December, we invited EYFS parents into the classrooms in small groups and we hope to do the same for Y1 very soon (we are very aware that these two year groups have never had the opportunity to see inside the school). Later on this academic year we plan to roll this out further through a series of “open events” to celebrate the children’s work. It is likely that the parents’ evenings this term will need to be virtual again although we hope to offer a mix of on-line and face-to-face next year (some parents have commented on how they like the virtual meetings as there is no need to arrange childcare or return to school later in the evening for a 10 minute meeting).

Homework is always a contentious subject with some families considering that school do not set enough whilst others think it is too much. The table below sets out expectations for each year group. We think that this programme prepares children well for the next stage of schooling. All children will have the chance to complete homework on either a weekday or weekend so that it can fit around family commitments and other activities. All homework will be available on Google Classroom. As part of our whole school priority (*To further embed a whole school reading culture to ensure reading is prioritised by all*), all children are expected and encouraged to read as often as possible at home with an adult and vocabulary development is available for all year groups through the half-termly knowledge organisers.

Year Group	Expectation	Approximate time/week
EYFS	Supporting reading and phonics activities as required	N/A
Y1	Reading + <i>Optional</i> phonics, maths or topic investigations	N/A
Y2	Reading & Spellings weekly + <i>Optional</i> other tasks to support phonics, handwriting or Maths as required	N/A
Y3	Reading + one other task. This may be English OR Maths or pre-learning/research for topic	30 mins + reading
Y4		
Y5	Reading + two other tasks. 1 x English & 1 x Maths. Fortnightly spellings/spellings zappers	Approx. 45 mins + reading
Y6	Reading + two other tasks. Usually 1 x English & 1x Maths	45-60 mins + reading

In the “what we can do better” there were a number of comments about misleading/overloading communication and communication taking various forms e.g. email, text, letters, Google Classroom etc. Since then, an email has been sent to all parents suggesting not using the Teachers2Parents app as this sometimes confuses emails and texts. Email will be our first method of communication other than for short, specific, reminders and late notice messages (texts). A monthly EPS Newsletter is also sent out through email (and posted on the school website). Social media (predominantly [Facebook](#) with increasing use of Instagram and Twitter) is used to publicise “Good News” from EPS. The [EPS website](#) should be the first port of call for everything else including calendars, curriculum information (knowledge organisers and half-termly curriculum jigsaws). Please also feel free to email to enquiries@ecclesall.sheffield.sch.uk and the office staff will forward your email to the relevant individual.

More opportunities for clubs was also a theme that appeared a number of times. We are gradually re-opening clubs as we can now mix year groups and we are hoping to be able to introduce more clubs on the completion of the Ecclesall Hub building. Likewise, the re-introduction of visitors into school, trips, sports and residential visits is already taking place.

Thanks again to those parents/carers who completed our parent survey; it is through tools such as this that we strive together to make our school the best it can be.

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