

February 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

It was good to see so many of you at the recent parents' evenings (and to escort a number you to the lovely new classrooms in the extension). Thank you to all those who completed our brief questionnaire; we received 110 responses which represents 47% of the families whose children attend the school.

In answer to the question "Why did you choose Little Paxton School for your child?" the majority (75%) mentioned that this is their catchment school. This is good to hear as, despite the recent extension to the building and the Governing Body's decision to admit more pupils, we do want this to stay as a community school. The increase in size is primarily intended to allow us to admit children from within the village.

A significant number of parents (just under half) mentioned either that they knew the school has a good reputation, or that it was recommended to them, or that they had read our favourable Ofsted report. This is pleasing to hear and equally gratifying is the 10% who said that the warm welcome they got when they visited the school was part of their reason for choosing it. A handful mentioned the excellent facilities the school has and some that there is a family connection in that they, the child's parents, or, in one case, the child's grandparent attended the school.

So what makes Little Paxton School special? You told us loud and clear that it is the people: 87% of respondents mentioned the staff who provide good opportunities for the children to reach high standards and ensure each individual is given the care and support and also the level of challenge that they need and benefit from.

Just over a third of parents said that the school is special because it has the community feeling of a small village school where there are good relationships and good communications with parents, where there is a positive atmosphere and children (and staff) are happy. Parents also appreciated the contribution made by the LPSA. 11% specifically mentioned the inclusive nature of the school – all pupils from the village are welcomed and valued, and those with SEN have their needs well met. A small number of respondents included that the school facilities (in terms of the building and grounds) are very good.

Most of you (91%) are aware of receiving the regular School Newsletter – the vast majority by email many of whom said how convenient they find this. A couple of people said that they opt to receive paper copies; we are very happy to provide this for anyone that wants one – please ask at the School Office. A few had to check with their other halves – including one who amended his questionnaire to confirm that the family does indeed receive the Newsletter. Several of you asked if it is possible to have the Newsletter sent to more than one email address. It is in some circumstances, please contact Mrs Staple in the school office who will be happy to discuss this with you. One person asked if the Newsletter could be in the body of the email rather than as an attachment but unfortunately this is not possible with the present system.

Most respondents (76%) told us that they like the Newsletter just as it is: you said that you find it informative and interesting. Some of you felt it is sometimes too retrospective (reporting about things that have already happened) and that you would like it to be more of a reminder of things

coming up. Others of you said that you didn't want the Newsletter to be used to give reminders of forthcoming events and would rather separate letters were used for this purpose. It may be useful to note that there is a "dates for your diary" page on the school website which lists all school events for the term - click on the "News and Events" tab and then select "Diary Dates". Term dates for this year and next, as well as copies of all this year's Newsletters, can also be found on the same webpage.

A few said that the Newsletter should be more positive; we try to strike a balance between celebrating all the very positive good things that happen at school but also to inform you of areas that could be improved for everyone's sake (and yes, car-parking is the issue that causes most angst and considerable problems for our neighbours).

A few respondents said that they would like the Newsletter to contain more information about particular classes and maybe also about specific learning that the children are involved in. The school Newsletter is not the best place for this; staff produce individual Newsletters each term for their own class that covers this and the class dojo is regularly used to update parents about what is going on in particular classes.

A number of comments/questions on other topics were raised:

- The children are very happy here
- Could there be a wider range of after school activities?
- Please try to avoid asking parents for money so often (either for trips or for fundraising)
- Rubbish that collects at front of school and in the reception foyer should be cleared away more frequently
- Change in timings (in the year) for parents evenings
- Could more staff (especially more senior staff) visible on the playground in the morning?
- Catering: several parents mentioned that it has improved but a couple said there are still some issues to be addressed
- Could parents be invited in more often to assemblies?
- Fewer tests and more fun and games please
- All the staff are very caring and know the children well
- Provision of an information pack on joining the school
- This is a really supportive school, for example the workshops for parents that have been run
- More information about the school's reward system
- Concerns about bullying
- Request for information about the discipline policy
- Could a "buddy system" be put in place so older pupils look after younger ones in the playground?
- Please could pupils be reminded that when they are on the way home whilst they may no longer be in school they are in school uniform and poor behavior reflects badly on the school?

The Governing Body will look into these and ensure that the appropriate staff are made aware of these comments and, where applicable, action is taken.

One respondent thanked the Governing Body for the work we do, recognising that it is not always an easy task but one that we carry out with care and consideration. We will shortly have a vacancy on the Governing Body for an elected Parent Governor. I will write to you later this term about this opportunity and the procedure for nominations. If you are interested in finding out more about the role please do ask. We can, as always, be contacted through the School Office.

Yours sincerely,

Penny Conway
Chair of the Governing Body