



**WEST WIGHT SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING**  
**ALL SAINTS' CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**FULL GOVERNING BODY RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION**

**Catherine Powell**

**Chair, on behalf of the Governing Body of All Saints' CE Primary School**

**29<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

## Summary of Key Points

The Governing Body's priority is to ensure the best option for local children and families, as well as the wider community of Freshwater. We accept the over-arching reasons for the need for the removal of surplus primary school places within the West Wight i.e. the convincing forecast intake data presented in the report.

We understand limited resources risk the sustainability of any small school and that this impacts on the educational experience of its pupils. Budget constraints are not unique to All Saints' CE School. A larger school, which has been proposed, will give better value for money, raise standards, and impact positively on staff recruitment, job satisfaction and career progression.

We view the West Wight School Place Planning Consultation as an exciting opportunity for improving and refreshing the delivery of primary school education across the West Wight. However, too much emphasis has been placed on the notion of All Saints' CE Primary as a failing school; in the interests of fairness to staff and pupils we would like to redress the balance.

The Council's preferred option, and those that have been reported as being 'considered', fail to be inclusive of the potential that the other three Church of England schools in West Wight might offer, or indeed, of any future demographic risk to those schools. Furthermore, the denominational aspects of the preferred option are considerably understated in the report.

We are concerned that the Council's approach to surplus places is incremental and fails to relate to any wider strategy for the West Wight or the Island as a whole. Solving a problem with a 'quick fix' does not create an enduring solution; the paper, and the preferred option, is both damaging and divisive.

The rationale for the Governing Body's position, set out in detail in the paper, is built on the opportunity for educational improvement, as well as for ecumenical, social, economic, geographical, historical, environmental, financial, public health and child safety reasons. The location of the current All Saints' CE Primary School is key, as are the issues of equality and diversity. The Governing Body, together with children, parents and the wider community, are united in supporting the continuing delivery of primary school education in the heart of Freshwater village.

Whilst we firmly reject the Council's preferred option, we believe there is merit in the option to build a new joint-faith primary academy (Catholic & Church of England), with, as a minimum, a one form entry, on the All Saints' CE School site. Funding for capital investment at the site has already been identified through the Department for Education's Priority Schools Building Programme (PSBP2). We suggest that it would be ill-advised not to pursue these funds for the benefit of current and future generations of primary school-age children and their families, as well as for the wider community.

In short, if a delegated (or otherwise) decision is made to accept the misguided preferred option presented in the West Wight School Place Planning consultation paper, there is a palpable risk of destroying the ambitions put forward by the Isle of Wight Council for growth and regeneration in Freshwater. It would unnecessarily penalise the most vulnerable families in the local community and lead to poorer outcomes for children. A new school could, and can, be a beacon of hope and aspiration for the future.

## **1. Introduction**

1.0 The Full Governing Body at All Saints' CE Primary School (FGB) has discussed the Isle of Wight Council's West Wight School Place Planning paper in detail. We have consulted with staff, parents and other key stakeholders and listened to the views expressed at the Public Meeting at the school. We view the consultation and need for change as an exciting opportunity to raise standards of educational provision and outcomes for local primary school-age children. Our absolute priority is to ensure the best option for local children and families, as well as the wider community of Freshwater.

1.1 In stating our position, and our preferred way forward, we accept the over-arching reasons for the need for the removal of surplus primary school places within the West Wight i.e. the convincing forecast intake data presented in the report. We have been proactive and, in conjunction with the local authority, have carried out a consultation to reduce the school's Pupil Admission Number (PAN) from 30 to 15 from 2020 in recognition of the projected fall in population.

1.2 The FGB is acutely aware of the financial/budget implications of a school having low and fluctuating numbers of pupils, particularly at a time of national austerity. We understand limited resources risk the sustainability of small schools, and that this impacts on the educational experience of its pupils. A larger school, which has been proposed, will give better value for money, raise standards, and impact positively on staff recruitment, job satisfaction and career progression.

1.3 The FGB, together with children, parents and the wider community are united in rejecting the Council's preferred option and strongly support the continuing delivery of primary school education at the All Saints' CE School site. Freshwater, as the largest (and expanding) hub settlement in West Wight must have a village school.

1.4 We believe that there is merit in a reappraisal of the option to build a new joint-faith primary academy (Catholic & Church of England) at the All Saints' site. Our rationale, set out in more detail later in the paper, is built on the opportunity for educational improvement, as well as for ecumenical, social, economic, geographical, historical, environmental, financial, public health and child safety reasons.

1.5 Whilst we agree with the Council's assertion that the issues facing All Saints' CE Primary School are 'complex and inter-related [...] partly related to the number of surplus places' (point 19, page 4 in the West Wight School Place Planning paper), too much emphasis has been placed on the notion that All Saints' is a 'failing' school. Our response to the first stage of the consultation thus begins with a short section that aims to redress the balance and seeks to value our current school community.

## **2. All Saints' CE Primary School: redressing the balance**

2.0 The FGB accepts the OFSTED findings (of nine months ago), that more needs to be done to ensure the school improves to good. However, we would argue that the Council's delegated decision report is highly selective in its use of the OFSTED findings and of other subsequent data.

2.1 Indeed, we would suggest that in its negative bias, the author(s) of the report have failed to follow the Nolan principles of objectivity and openness expected of public leaders. There are known, measurable improvements in the school's performance, under its current leadership, that should be acknowledged and shared at this critical juncture.

2.2 In 2018, All Saints' CE Primary School was ranked second out of the five West Wight Primary Schools for overall performance at Key Stage Two (KS2) with progress scores in line with the national average. If compared with all the Isle of Wight Primary Schools, All Saints' CE School was ranked ninth out of 44 schools.

2.3 The KS2 data set includes the percentage of children meeting expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. All Saints' CE Primary School (whilst being just below average for the Island, and, in common with the overall results for the local authority, below national average) has shown a significant year on year improvement over the past three years i.e. from 35% (2016), to 40% (2017) and 50% (2018). Results for KS2 at the end of the current school year look set to continue this improving picture.

2.4 The improvement of 10% between 2017 and 2018 looks even more positive when compared with a fall in performance of 1% for the Isle of Wight local authority combined figures. Appendix One provides the graphical source of the data as produced by the Department for Education.

2.5 In addition to OFSTED visits, the school also has periodic faith school inspections known as the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS). The most recent SIAMS inspection was in 2015. The school was judged to be Good at that time, with a comment that '[the school] is good at meeting the needs of all its learners.'

2.6 The FGB also takes issue with the Council report's notion of All Saints' CE Primary not being 'the school of choice'. Whilst there are parents and carers who choose other options, as is their right, many local parents do choose All Saints' for reasons that include the Christian values of respect, friendship and caring, the location, accessibility and grounds.

2.7 As has been evident during this initial period of consultation, there are many parents and carers, former parents, grandparents and members of the wider community who are actively promoting a need to 'Save the School'. Children at the school are joining the campaign. Despite the current negative publicity, and the damaging impact of the consultation, the school continues to receive enquires and visits from prospective parents.

2.8 Parental satisfaction, as measured by the annual satisfaction survey (as well as face to face contact with parents) is high, with improvements noted in recent years. Appendix Two provides the recent findings and some lines from the Chair's message posted in a recent school newsletter.

2.9 The Council's report has also referred to limitations in the governance of the school, citing the OFSTED monitoring visit report. This same report notes that: 'the governing body has improved the way that it oversees the work of the school. Governors now carry out a wider range of activities that inform them about the day to-day experiences of pupils. Their supervision of the school's work to keep pupils safe is good.'

2.10 We have continued this improvement journey and a visit from the Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service (HIAS) in February 2019, confirmed that the changes would make the governing body more effective and should show more impact as they become embedded.

2.11 Finally, just to clarify, there is no longer a Foundation Governor vacancy, as the position is to be filled by the vicar of All Saints' Church, Reverend Leisa Potter, joining the Board as ex-officio. 'Rev Leisa' is a valued member of the local community and her leadership of the school's religious celebrations in the school and Church is outstanding.

### **3. A new joint-Faith academy school for Freshwater: the rationale**

3.1 Freshwater is the largest village on the Island and is recognised as an important hub and secondary settlement for the West Wight. The village and surrounds have been identified in the Island's Strategic Development Plan as an area for growth, not just in housing, but also in employment and improvements to the 'retail offer' in the High Street.

3.2 As an example of new employment opportunities, Rapanui, which is located close to the school, has recently published plans to create 100 new jobs in Freshwater. Other employment opportunities are being created at the Golden Hill Industrial Estate, just behind the school.

3.3 The Island plan details proposals for building some 450 new homes in Freshwater. The sites that have been identified for development are clustered around the All Saints' CE Primary School site. Many of these new homes will be for families. If the Council's preferred option comes to fruition, it seems entirely conceivable the absence of a village primary school will fail to attract families to live and work in the village.

3.4 The FGB is thus extremely concerned that the current plans and aspirations for this vulnerable community will simply not be realised. In turn, this will have a grave impact on the social and economic wellbeing of the whole community, resulting in significant costs to the public purse. Those most affected will be children.

3.5 As yet, we are unaware of any Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) being undertaken to inform the preferred option. The EIA requires that any new policy, project or scheme does not discriminate against disadvantaged or vulnerable people. Quite simply, the Council's preferred option does.

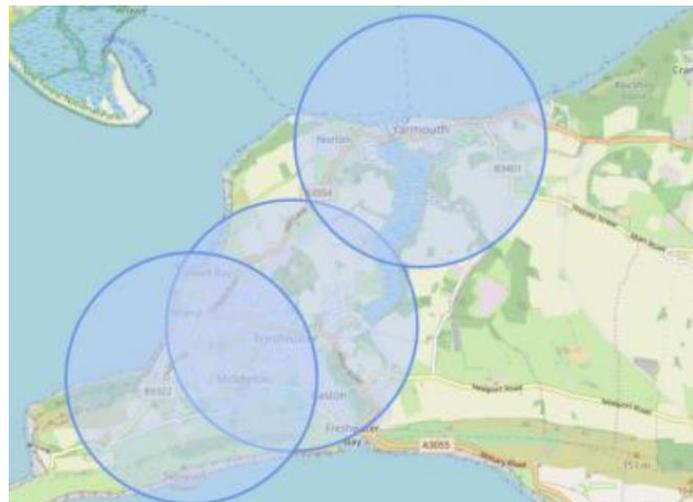
3.6 Officers will be aware that many families whose homes are close to the school live in an area that has high indices of multiple deprivation, including those that affect children. Many of our parents and carers (with financial, health and/or social care needs) do not hold a driving licence or have the means to own and run a vehicle.

3.7 Should families be forced to attend St Saviour's or take up places elsewhere because that school does not have places for all children in the current cohort, this not only removes their choice of school in the area, it also means considerable impact on transport arrangements.

3.8 Children as young as four years of age will be walking four miles a day, in all weathers, on top of the tiredness that comes with starting school. Furthermore, their younger siblings and parents and carers will be walking eight miles a day in drop off and collection. Popping into school, for example for the helpful 'coffee and chat' currently provided in the Early Years Class (to promote good home to school relationships) will be extremely difficult to maintain.

3.9 Notwithstanding the road safety considerations discussed below, some families may simply be unable to make the journey from their homes in Freshwater to a school in a neighbouring village. This is highly likely to impact on late arrivals and unauthorised absences, and in turn, progress and achievement. We predict that some parents will withdraw their children to 'home-educate'.

3.10 The FGB thus suggest that the Council's preferred option is socially divisive and likely to have the greatest impact on outcomes for children from the poorest families. Transport and location for Freshwater families (and for those from the wider West Wight) significantly favour the current All Saints' CE Primary School site. The diagram below, taken from a recent piece in the local paper<sup>1</sup>, is helpful in illustrating the advantageous position of the site when compared with St Saviour's and Yarmouth Schools (each circle represents a one-mile radius):



3.11 We understand that 95% of current All Saints' CE Primary School pupils walk, scoot or cycle to school. The West Wight Sports Centre also offers a 'Park and Stride' option for families living further afield to enable them to attend the school.

3.12 Information shared by the School's Planning Data and Information Team is at the current time there are 367 children of primary school age who live in Freshwater (this includes Totland). This means that, in addition to those attending St Saviour's Catholic School, there are a significant number of

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<sup>1</sup> Young, J <https://www.countypress.co.uk/news/17504092.village-faith-schools-must-combine/> (accessed 18/03/19)

children being transported to other schools in the West Wight; i.e. Shalfleet (56), Yarmouth (69) and Brighstone (17). The solution to the problem of surplus places should also aspire to reduce the outward movement of Freshwater children on a 'school run' to other parts of the island.

3.13 We accept parents' right to choose and that a choice of school may fit with a journey to work, or proximity to an older sibling's secondary school. However, it seems to us the primary solution to surplus school places across the West Wight would be to seek to establish and maintain an attractive and viable school option, close to where most children and families live and work.

3.14 Active and sustainable travel is part of the national and local government agenda, reflected in the 'Shift it' campaign (for which the school achieved a Bronze Award in 2018). Travel to school is an important environmental and public health consideration; as well as an equalities issue. A forced choice of St Saviour's means funnelling many more children, by vehicle or other means, into a tight corner on the far west of the Island.

3.15 There is said to be no 'safe route' to St Saviour's Catholic Primary School from the village centre. For example, Summers Lane has no pavement. There are also busy roads to cross. In winter we understand that icy roads present a hazard and there is an absence of street lighting on key walking routes. It is notable that St Saviour's has closed on 'snow days' when All Saints' CE Primary School has stayed open.

3.16 The site on School Green Road is critical to our preferred option. It is in the centre of the village, close to a large number of family homes (with more being built), the local shops, the health centre, the library, a country park, a multi-use games area (MUGA), a playground and the West Wight Sports Centre (currently used by both schools, but much closer to the All Saints' site).

3.17 There is also an 'Outstanding' (OFSTED, 2016) pre-school on the All Saints' site, enabling close links with the school and a myriad of opportunities for visits and joint activities. The sustainability of the pre-school – a valuable resource for very young children and their families- would be compromised by the absence of a primary school. The pre-school also provides a breakfast club for primary age children, a valuable resource for working parents.

3.18 The FGB's preferred option is that a new joint-faith village primary school (Catholic & Church of England) with, as a minimum, a one form entry, should be built on the All Saints' CE School site. This would be a Christian-ethos academy school fit for the purpose of the dynamic education of children in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A school which welcomes children from all faiths, and none.

3.19 Such schools are already part of the educational landscape on the island and are a means of embracing Christian values within a largely secular community, as well as promoting the British values of mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. This option would, we believe, provide an attractive and accessible choice for families living in Freshwater and the wider West Wight, reducing vehicle use and carbon emissions in line with national policies.

3.20 We note the option to close both All Saints' and St Saviour's schools and to open a new one-form of entry free/academy school on one of the sites was considered by the Council, as one of four other potential options, but there is little indication in the Council's paper of the debate and discussion regarding the benefits or otherwise of this option.

3.21 The FGB also note the denominational aspects of the council's preferred option are considerably understated in the report. We are aware that only a minority of pupils attending St Saviour's Primary School are practising Catholics; but we strongly suspect that the Catholic School option would not be the choice for some families.

3.22 Little reference is made in the Council's paper to the potential offered by the other three Church of England schools in West Wight; and it may be that more Freshwater parents than currently will now opt for the 'school run' to these schools. This is a retrograde step in reducing congestion and promoting active and sustainable travel on the Island.

3.23 We are aware of a groundswell of support from the local community for Federation with other island schools. We would be amenable to further discussions, providing there is some assurance these schools are not also 'at risk' from the demographic shift that has led to the surplus places across the West Wight. Our priority is to ensure children and families in Freshwater have an outstanding local school on their doorstep.

3.24 In contrast to St Saviour's, All Saints' CE Primary School currently has the space for a full one-form entry school (and very generous grounds). However, the buildings are tired and in need of extensive maintenance and repair. The heating is expensive and inefficient. There is a clear opportunity to be taken to build a new school in the heart of the West Wight that will benefit current and future generations of children and their families.

3.25 Funding for capital investment at the site has already been identified through the Department for Education's Priority Schools Building Programme (PSBP2). Development of the site could embrace other educational imperatives, such as a much-needed hub for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), forest school activities and adult education and training facilities.

3.26 We conclude with a message for Councillor Brading:

'Your portfolio of office for Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills, is critical for ensuring the best outcomes for all children. Most importantly, you have the responsibility to improve the education, well-being and life-chances of those who are most vulnerable. Please reject the Council's preferred option as damaging and divisive and find a solution to the issue of surplus school places that will protect the future of Freshwater and enable the West Wight to prosper.'

## Appendix One: West Wight Schools – Performance data<sup>2</sup>

### Overall performance at end of key stage 2 in 2018 - all pupils [?](#)

#### Progress score in reading, writing and maths

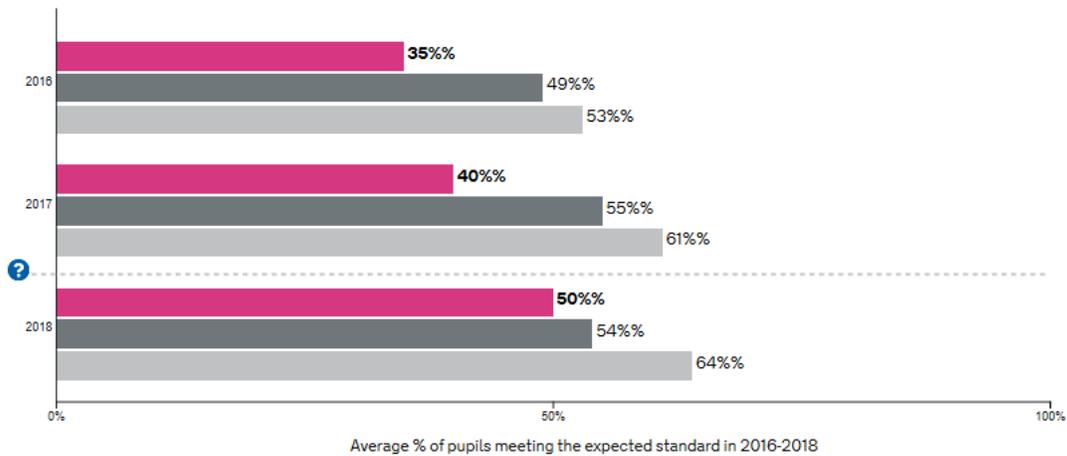
	Reading	Writing	Maths
St Saviour's Catholic Primary School <a href="#">Remove</a>	Average 2.1 <a href="#">?</a>	Average -0.1 <a href="#">?</a>	Above average 2.9 <a href="#">?</a>
All Saints Church of England Primary School, Freshwater <a href="#">Remove</a>	Average 0.2 <a href="#">?</a>	Average 0.3 <a href="#">?</a>	Average -1.9 <a href="#">?</a>
Yarmouth Church of England Aided Primary School <a href="#">Remove</a>	Average -0.4 <a href="#">?</a>	Average 0.1 <a href="#">?</a>	Average 1.5 <a href="#">?</a>
Brighstone Church of England Aided Primary School <a href="#">Remove</a>	Average -1.2 <a href="#">?</a>	Well below average -4.9 <a href="#">?</a>	Well below average -4.7 <a href="#">?</a>
Shalfleet Church of England Primary School <a href="#">Remove</a>	Below average -2.6 <a href="#">?</a>	Average 2.3 <a href="#">?</a>	Average -1.1 <a href="#">?</a>

### Percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard at All Saints'

#### Results over 3 years [?](#)

[View as table](#)

■ School ■ Local authority state-funded schools ■ England state-funded schools



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk>

## Appendix Two: Parental Satisfaction Questionnaire

### Excerpt from School Newsletter: February 2019

#### Happy Parents and Happy Children

'I was very pleased [...] to see that most parents at the school kindly gave a few minutes of their time to complete the Annual Parental Satisfaction Questionnaire. The results were presented at our recent Governing Body meeting, alongside the results from a survey of pupil views that had been designed and carried out by members of the School Council. You could say that the findings of the parental survey were 'five-star'; reflecting high levels of satisfaction with school leadership, children's educational experiences and the behaviour and values of this lovely Church School.' (Chair of Governors).

#### Questionnaire findings:

<b><u>About your child:</u></b>	AGREE	DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
My child enjoys being at All Saints School	<b>38</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
My child is making good progress	<b>37</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
The quality of my child's teaching is good	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
My child is treated fairly by staff	<b>39</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
My child is encouraged by staff to achieve their best	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
There is a good range of activities that my child finds interesting and enjoyable	<b>37</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
My child is encouraged by staff to become mature and independent	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
My child feels safe at school	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b><u>Behaviour, Values and Christian Character:</u></b>	AGREE	DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
The children are well behaved at school	<b>36</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
The school is effective at dealing with behaviour issues	<b>34</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>
The school promotes worthwhile attitudes and values	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
I am made to feel welcome when visiting the school	<b>41</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

I am aware that the school is a church school	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
The school is a caring institution based on clear Christian values	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
I am happy with the collective worship (assemblies) provided by the school	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
The school has excellent links with the local church, parish and clergy	<b>39</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
I see the school as inclusive where everyone is valued	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>
<b><u>Communication:</u></b>	AGREE	DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
I am satisfied with the range of opportunities I have to discuss my child's progress	<b>39</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
I can approach the school with a question or concern	<b>40</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
The school is good at seeking the views of parents	<b>33</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>
The school acts quickly on parents' suggestions and concerns	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>
I am happy with the overall communications from school to home	<b>36</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b><u>School leadership:</u></b>	AGREE	DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
The school is well managed by the head teacher and leadership team	<b>33</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>
The school has an effective Governing Body	<b>30</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>
I understand the role of School Governors	<b>30</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>
<b><u>School Provision:</u></b>	AGREE	DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
I felt well supported when my child joined All Saints Primary School	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>
The school is good at providing extra learning support when required	<b>27</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>
I am happy with the provision of school trips	<b>33</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>
I am happy with the quality of school lunches	<b>33</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>

I am happy with the condition of the schools' building/grounds	<b>33</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
I am happy with the provision of clubs/extracurricular activities	<b>30</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>

**What you said we do well:**

- Everything – All Saints is fantastic!
- I am really happy with how my children are encouraged both academically and behaviour wise. The school are good at encouraging good behaviour & for children to support each other.
- It's great that a risk assessment was carried out when [child had a fracture] and grateful for the teachers to make arrangements for PE sessions. Thank you.
- I am really pleased with how much my daughter has come on since joining your school in September. She is happy and a lot more confident, thank you for making the transition a great one.
- Brilliant reception teaching staff!
- Very friendly and I like that staff know who I am and who my child is – very person centred.
- Nice, friendly small school & all staff know all the children by name.
- My son is supported and encouraged to do his very best, which he enjoys.
- Gardening club was great.
- Open door for communication – feel welcomed.
- Swimming is fab.

**What you said you would like us to improve:**

- More communication e.g. text would be good, especially when my child is being rewarded.
- I think for those parents that want more involvement or put something on the governors, headteacher's agenda if required/valid. More involvement to PTA events/organization. Finally, more shouting about what a lovely school we have on our doorstep!
- Use of outside space & learning by practical application of maths and English throughout the school rather than just in reception may help to improve results as some children learn better that way!
- More varied after school clubs – what happened to cookery?
- I feel there should be more after school clubs.
- Extra-curricular activities are very sports based – this is great but my children are not keen, so 1-2 less 'active' clubs would be great – gardening and cooking very popular.
- Would prefer more opportunities for school trips.
- Extra support for students who are struggling, especially in mixed classes.
- Nothing – it is a lovely school.
- Inadequate lighting in bottom car park.

