



# **Analysis of Parents' Views**

## **Federation of Mowden Schools**

**187 Questionnaires Completed  
June 2016**

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## Analysis - Parents Questionnaire June 2016 – Federation of Mowden Schools

### Section 1

187 questionnaires were returned. Each person therefore represents just over 0.5%.

#### Total Percentages

Strongly agree: 46%  
 Agree: 44%  
 Disagree: 3%  
 Strongly disagree: 1%  
 Don't know: 5%

**%**

Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding or because not every question was answered

|    |   | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Don't know |
|----|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|------------|
| 1  | My child makes good progress at school  | 57.1           | 39.1  | 1.0      | 0.5               | 0.5        |
| 2  | My child enjoys school  | 54.4           | 42.3  | 2.6      | 0                 | 0          |
| 3  | The school keeps my child safe  | 59.2           | 39.6  | 1.0      | 0                 | 0          |
| 4  | The school deals well with any bullying   | 18.5           | 33.8  | 4.7      | 2.1               | 34.3       |
| 5  | Children behave well in school  | 29.6           | 57.6  | 0.5      | 0                 | 8.9        |
| 6  | The school children behave well out in the community  | 34.9           | 48.1  | 0        | 0                 | 16.4       |
| 7  | Children from all backgrounds get on well together  | 44.9           | 46    | 0        | 0                 | 6.8        |
| 8  | The school encourages my child to adopt a healthy lifestyle   | 40.2           | 52.3  | 3.1      | 0                 | 4.2        |
| 9  | My child is proud of the school   | 61.3           | 34.3  | 0        | 0                 | 2.6        |
| 10 | The school has a good reputation locally  | 69.8           | 29.1  | 0        | 0                 | 0          |
| 11 | The school works well to ensure good attendance   | 58.2           | 38.6  | 1.0      | 0                 | 2.1        |
| 12 | My child is taught how to be a good citizen   | 44.9           | 46.0  | 0        | 0                 | 7.9        |
| 13 | Teaching is good in school  | 53.9           | 42.8  | 0        | 0                 | 1.0        |
| 14 | My child feels cared for by the staff   | 55.0           | 40.7  | 0.5      | 0                 | 2.6        |
| 15 | My child receives the right amount and type of homework   | 34.9           | 51.8  | 8.4      | 1.0               | 1.5        |
| 16 | The school is clean and tidy  | 54.4           | 42.3  | 0.5      | 0                 | 1.0        |
| 17 | I am made to feel welcome when I contact the school by letter or telephone  | 59.7           | 35.9  | 1.5      | 0.5               | 1.0        |
| 18 | My child's class teacher is approachable  | 68.2           | 25.3  | 1.58     | 0                 | 0          |
| 19 | Senior staff are approachable and helpful   | 55.5           | 38.6  | 0.5      | 0                 | 4.2        |
| 20 | The school is well led by the senior staff  | 50.7           | 37.5  | 0        | 0                 | 8.9        |
| 21 | My child feels safe from harassment   | 39.1           | 46.0  | 1.0      | 0.5               | 11.1       |
| 22 | There is a good range of before and after school clubs  | 19.5           | 34.3  | 19.0     | 6.3               | 17.4       |
| 23 | My child gets good support for his/her learning   | 43.9           | 49.7  | 1.0      | 0                 | 2.6        |
| 24 | I get good information about my child's progress  | 39.1           | 50.7  | 6.3      | 0                 | 1.0        |
| 25 | Written communication from school is good   | 43.3           | 55.0  | 1.5      | 0                 | 0          |
| 26 | There are enough opportunities to see what my child is doing in school e.g. class assembly, parents evenings, sports day etc. | 43.9           | 45.5  | 6.3      | 0.5               | 0.5        |
| 27 | School dinners are good   | 22.2           | 39.1  | 15.8     | 4.2               | 16.4       |
| 28 | The school website is interesting and informative   | 26.9           | 65.0  | 1.5      | 0                 | 3.1        |
| 29 | Parents' Meetings are well organised, helpful and informative   | 37.5           | 49.7  | 1.5      | 0                 | 4.7        |
| 30 | I am happy with the range of subjects taught  | 45.5           | 52.9  | 0        | 0                 | 0          |
| 31 | Staff and pupils respect and trust each other   | 45.5           | 46.5  | 0.5      | 0                 | 4.2        |
| 32 | School reports give me a clear and accurate view of my child's progress   | 43.3           | 51.8  | 6.3      | 1.0               | 0          |

## Section 1 continued

The disagree/strongly disagree responses accounted for 4% of answers. 91 questionnaires gave a reason/s for any such answers:

- 49 comments were made about the range of before and after school clubs. Some parents would like a wider range of clubs or for them to be made available to more children. The majority of comments, however, related to extending or improving the before and after school childcare provision.
- 36 comments were made about school dinners with a range of suggestions/objections.
- 18 comments were made about homework provision, with broadly a 50-50 split: some parents would like more, some less, plus a couple of comments about the online facility.
- 12 comments were made about school/progress reports. Some parents felt they were too infrequent, or too generic, or confusing.
- 9 comments were made about bullying. This included issues with other parents and sometimes historical incidents.
- 7 comments were about behaviour of other children, sometimes indirect incidents or reports not affecting their child.
- 5 comments were about not enough opportunities to come into school to see what a child is doing, for example, missing class assemblies, or a request to have a summer term parents' evening.
- 5 comments were also made about insufficient information going home about their child's progress.
- 3 comments were made about not enough (or well run) parents' evenings.
- 3 comments were made about children not making good enough progress.
- The following areas each received 2 comments: the holiday policy being too lenient; an insincere/vague welcome at reception; letters home too abrupt or short notice; teachers unapproachable; senior staff unapproachable; cleanliness in school; teachers sometimes not supporting a child.
- The following areas each received 1 comment: child not enjoying school; not enough PE; a narrow (government) curriculum; child is bored; school could be used by more external organisations e.g. beavers and cubs; school doesn't encourage a healthy lifestyle (Fair Trade chocolate, sweets given out by friends).

## Section 2

The main **benefits** and **concerns** (if any) of sending your child to our school?

145 (79%) questionnaires listed benefit/s,  
of which, 89 (48%) questionnaires listed benefits only.

58 (31%) questionnaires listed concern/s.  
of which, 2 (1%) questionnaires listed concerns only.

40 (21%) were left blank

120 (63%) questionnaires listed more than one benefit.  
18 (10%) questionnaires listed more than one concern.

### Benefits

The figures above show that most questionnaires listed more than one benefit. The school's good reputation and the location figured highly, with comments about children making good progress, being happy and proud of our school, and in a 'whole child' (not just academic achievement) environment also expressed a number of times. Other comments praised individual teachers and staff; good behaviour and manners; the after school clubs; friendships; clear assessment procedures; letters and texts home; inclusiveness; not mixing classes; clarification on holiday rules; 'common sense' response to government legislation; school ambassador scheme.

### Concerns

Far fewer concerns were listed than benefits and most mirrored the common disagree points from section 1. The most common other concern was about the school increasing in size, with parents keen to see that a nurturing environment is maintained. The effect on road traffic was also mentioned in conjunction with this. Several comments referred to a narrow curriculum, largely due to national policies and a view that children should also be allowed to be children. Single comments also referred to the following areas: a lack of crossing patrols; the playground behaviour of some other parents; senior staff on playground duty; a wish to see Mr King attending choir events; a place at Mowden not guaranteeing a place at Hummersknott; large class size; recognition of quieter children; less strict on attendance if attendance is already good; standards being dumbed down; the red late slip; knowing the appropriate equipment to buy for school; variable teaching; school gate occasionally unlocked; mixed ability teaching; the playground behaviour of some older children.

# Mr King's Response

## A. Response to the agree/disagree questions

I am very pleased that the results are positive and that only a small percentage show an element of disagreement with what we are trying to achieve.

In this section I shall make a comment about any category where 5% or more of parents disagree/strongly:

- Before and after school clubs. Clearly this is the big topic and independently of this questionnaire we have recently started to plan an extension of our before and after school provision, with governors also keen for us to make some changes. Some parents will remember the consultation on this topic over a year ago, which was dismissed because it also included an unviable daytime nursery element. However since then the demand for an on-site before and after school childcare provision has become increasingly clear. There are some important factors for us to decide, which means it won't happen immediately. The current provider may be chosen, or we may select another contractor, in which case the ofsted registration takes quite a few weeks. We also need to plan carefully where it would take place (not preventing other in-school activities, for example). We hope to have an expanded, on-site before and after school childcare provision for January.

The other element to this question is about extra-curricular clubs. Although it would be preferable for more variety we are limited by the number of staff who are able to offer activities (on top of a normal working day, with limited time). We do also facilitate some external sports coaches for some clubs and as the national PE grant increases next year, we may be able to extend this. A way of providing activities for more than just the team members is an area we are looking to develop.

- School dinners. This issue generally comes down to taste (no pun intended) and although some of the criticisms are perhaps valid on some of the days, my honest overall view of the dinners is that they are good. Mrs Parker, Mr Johnson and I have a dinner each day, partly to check on the quality and we agree that the food is nice and well cooked. On the odd occasions that it isn't or if a new supplier delivers an inferior product, then we say so. I accept that there isn't a choice, but this changed about five years ago when the council could no longer sustain a deficit that this brought about. Children probably do come home a little hungry on some days, but we do encourage children to widen their pallet and try new food. The school ambassadors also recently had a tasting session, to guide the new menus from September. Better knife and fork skills would also help them to eat more easily, a problem for some children.

In the new school year, we might have a school dinner week, where parents are invited to come in and enjoy dinner with their child. As well as a nice family thing to do, it would enable parents to experience the dinners first-hand.

- Homework. 8% of parents felt that their child doesn't receive the right amount of homework and the polarisation of views demonstrates the perennial difference of opinion on this subject. We may not make big changes to this, but it gives us the opportunity to reflect on it within school.
- 6% of parents said that they didn't get good information about their child's progress. Currently there are no plans to change our procedures. In addition to the end of year report, we also send home the termly progress reports called 'mentoring sheets'. This has been the biggest year of change affecting progress reporting since I became a teacher, with numbered levels being abolished. We have tried to encapsulate progress as well as possible, but with little national guidance it has been difficult. Now that Year 2 and Year 6 SATs standards are known we feel we are in a better position to judge the 'expected standard' for next year.

For those of you who may have missed it, in the new, more difficult Year 6 SATs this year, nationally 53% of children achieved the 'expected standard' in all three subjects of reading,

writing and maths. In Mowden the figure is 65%. Using the old style levels, these figures were higher, presenting a challenge to us and the government.

- 6% of parents said that there aren't enough opportunities to come into school. Class assemblies have been introduced this year, which apart from not always receiving enough notice, have been appreciated by parents. These plus the various sports days, concerts, consultation evenings etc mean that I think we have a good partnership.
- Just under 5% of parents commented on bullying, but it is still worth a mention here. Some comments referred to historical events and some about other adults. Bullying will always take place on occasion, as it does in all walks of life unfortunately. Our approach is twofold. We try to give children the necessary tools and conscience building (PSHE curriculum, good role models, positive ethos, as examples) to prevent it happening and we also deal with it directly if it occurs. Sometimes this isn't to the full satisfaction of a parent, I understand that, but we don't ignore incidents and do try to find a good solution.

I am proud of the hard work of all the staff in our school so I was very pleased to see the very high recognition rates of this in the questionnaire in such areas as children's progress, their enjoyment, the reputation of school and the quality of teaching.

## **B. Response to concerns about our school**

The other main common area for concern that came out of this consultation was around the growth of the school. Twelve parents mentioned this, although some just as a consideration and one who said it had been better than originally thought. Mowden was never small, but this is something we do think about in school, especially as the third class moves into the juniors next year (extra lockers have been ordered, additional staff have been employed, for example). Just like in the infants, the extension building work was finished several years ago so the classroom space does exist, but like you, I do recognise there is a challenge in helping each child to feel that they are special and known personally.

### **And finally...**

Thank you to those parents who completed the questionnaire and I hope that you recognise your viewpoint somewhere in this summary. I feel the questionnaires have been completed responsibly with most being very complimentary. I enjoy analysing the results and even where only a small minority raise an issue it is reflected upon or is discussed at staff meetings, for example. I have been fully open about all the responses but please contact me if this analysis raises any further points with you.

As we approach the very end of the school year and these views start to shape next year's plans, this is also a good opportunity to say thank you to parents for helping me to settle in at Mowden. I don't know where the year has gone actually. I have really enjoyed working with you and your children.

*Peter King  
Headteacher  
July 2016*