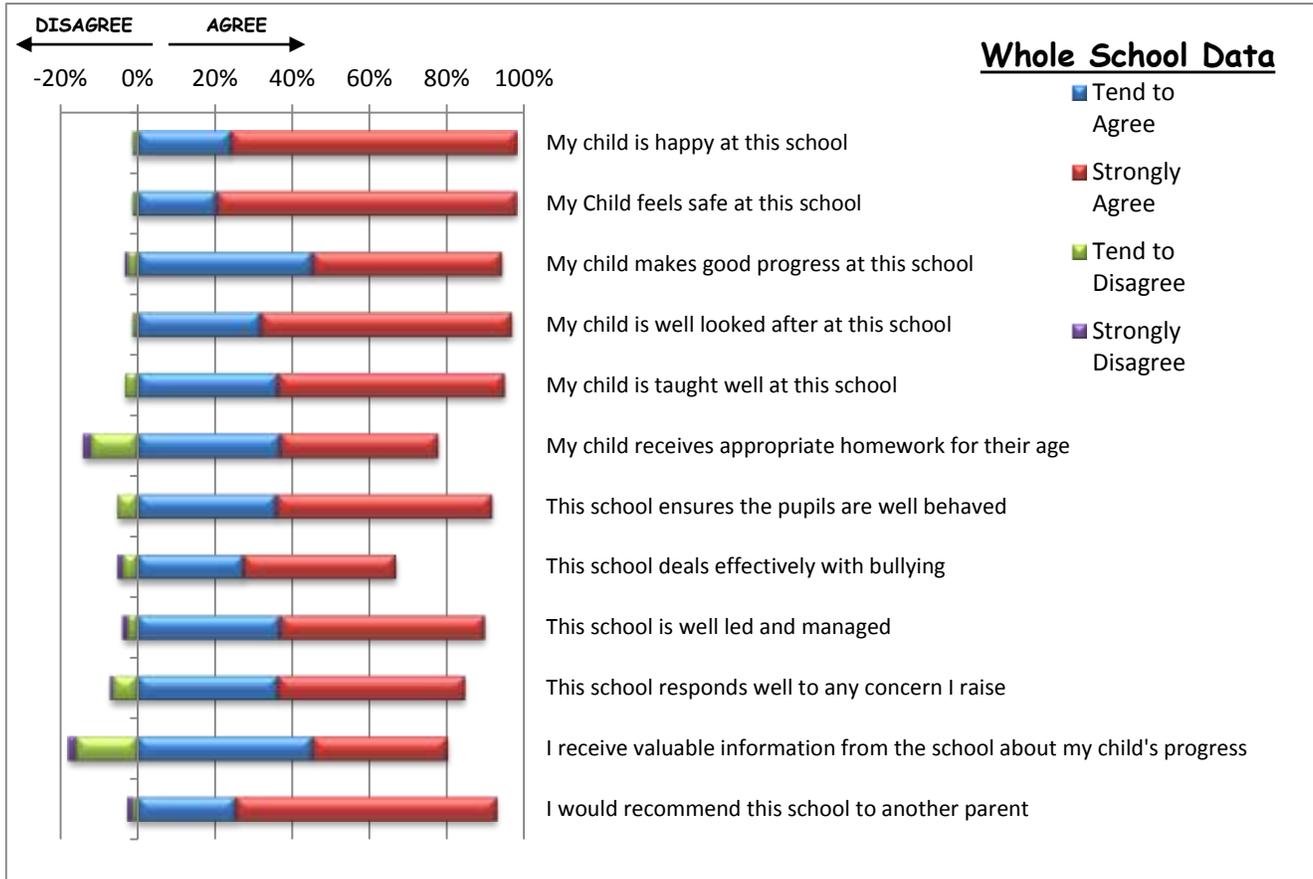




# Riverside Community Primary School Governor's Newsletter

## Parents Survey

Great thanks go out to the many parents who took the time to respond to our recent Parents Survey. We had 178 replies, which gives real credence to the results we have. The overall school findings are detailed in the following chart:



## What does this tell us?

Strengths:	Areas for investigation/development:
Our children are happy at school (98% agreed in 2014, 98% in 2012, 96% in 2010)	Whether pupils receive appropriate homework (14% disagreed, though this has improved from 2010 when 16% disagreed). Governors and staff will look at the comments submitted, discuss with children and with staff and check what is currently sent home. We will also use our local school network to compare our approach with other schools. This matter is complicated by the fact that there are some parents who consider there is too much and other parents who think there is too little homework given!
Children feel safe (99% agreed in 2014, 98% in 2012, 89% in 2010)	Whether parents receive valuable information about progress (18% disagreed, though improved from 21% who disagreed in 2012 and 26% in 2010). This is slightly disappointing as we have put a real 'agenda' into parents evenings, added take home target sheets and 1:1 pupil/teacher interviews at three points in the year. However, we will look at detailed answers and look again more widely at 'best practice' elsewhere. In the meantime, if ever you want to know about your child's learning progress, just ask!
Children are well looked after (97% in 2014, 96% in 2012)	
Children make good progress (94% in 2014, 96% in 2012, 91% in 2010)	
Children are taught well (95% in 2014, 96% in 2012, 88% in 2010)	
The school ensures children are well behaved (92% in 2014, 92% in 2012, 84% in 2010)	
The school is well led and managed (92% in 2014 and 2012)	
Parents would recommend our school (93% in 2014, 89% in 2012)	

We obviously also analyse the data in more detail by gender and age, and look at all of the comments added to the survey by parents as this can help with ideas.

We NEVER rest on our laurels! We look at the areas to develop as well considering, for example, why 2% of our pupils might not be so happy at Riverside. We want to achieve 100% agreement for every statement!

This survey has been in place every other year for the last six years and has already had some notable success:

- Previous concern about whether the school deals effectively with bullying led us to clarify our Behaviour Policy, and tell you about it. There are now fewer "disagree" responses (down from 26% to 4%). If you haven't seen our Behaviour Policy yet, why not check it out on the school website? Again, we would like there to be no one who disagrees!
- Teaching and learning is having an impact on standards and how well parents feel about pupil progress
- The physical and policy changes around our site mean that pupils feel safer
- We continue to pride ourselves on running an open, responsive school

Schools DO NOT have to run such surveys. We do this because we value your opinion and really want the best for each and every child and family at Riverside!

### Budget news:

Many of you will remember that some 18 months ago, changes to the way the Department for Education was applying a budget formula were predicted to affect our school very badly, leading to the loss of around £75,000 per year. We, along with many other local schools and North Yorkshire County Council, responded very strongly, with many of you also writing in support. We were backed by Nigel Adams MP and, in effect, Ministers did listen. The 2013-2014 financial year was not as bleak as predicted. Our budget has operated on a 'funding guarantee' (a safety mechanism to minimise losses for schools losing through the formula). If it weren't for that, and a 5% increase in pupil numbers, 2013-14 would have been a very bleak financial year indeed. We have tried very hard to maximise income and keep spending down, and despite losses from the formula, managed to run the year with a better outcome than originally predicted, but we now have very, very little left in the bank! Changes continue into this next financial year, as the DfE moves gradually towards a national formula for school funding. This coming year (2014-15) will see us again coping with an incredibly tight budget. We are very fortunate in so many ways through the 'demographic' of our school, but we attract very little of the extra funding that similarly sized city schools benefit from.



Thanks to careful financial planning, along with your continued support through Friends and donations for visits, our school continues to thrive in many ways. Thanks to our pupils and staff having a real passion for learning, our standards are high and numbers on roll are good. However, we always welcome fund-raising ideas, sponsorship links, business opportunities and so on, as every extra pound will allow us to improve our school in some small way! The 'buildings' side of our budget is especially tight with just £8,000 of income for a site the size of ours – and we are working hard to ensure our site is maintained and classrooms are fit for purpose. Again we welcome any sponsorship or fundraising ideas in this area.

### School attendance

	Autumn Term
2008-2009	5.2% total absence
2009-2010	3.53% total absence
2010-2011	4.4% total absence
2011-2012	3.3% total absence
2012-2013	3.05% total absence
2013-2014	2.11% total absence



Without entering into a debate about the rights and wrongs of government policy on Leave of Absence, school term dates and so on, the Governing Body would just like to thank parents for working alongside the school in such a positive way around these matters. Leave requests have decreased ten-fold and, as such, the school has only rarely been placed in the embarrassing position of having to decline requests or issue Penalty Notices. In fact, school attendance in the Autumn Term for 2013 was our very best ever, which means more sessions attended=more learning for our children!

### Parent Governor elections:

Finally, thank you to the 200 respondents to our recent Parent Governor elections. I can confirm that Jon Haslam and John O'Callaghan have been successfully re-elected to these positions.

### School Development Plan

We are currently finalising our new three-year School Development Plan. The plan has one overall key aim – that by the end of that period, we will be able to describe Riverside School as OUTSTANDING. In the current climate, this is a challenging target, but positivity is the by-word and we want the very best for our school community. Our main school priorities within the plan are very simple:

- Continuing to enhance pupil progress, at all levels, through appropriate marking and feedback, targeted group work, support for Gifted and Talented pupils, appropriate special needs interventions and so on. Tracking each and every pupil to get all pupils to make 'at least good' progress
- Continuing to develop excellence in classroom practice, including through partnership work with other schools

*If you would like to know more about the Governing Body, full details are included on the school website*

[www.riverside.n-yorks.sch.uk](http://www.riverside.n-yorks.sch.uk)

Ian C. Butler  
Chair Of Governors

**BREAKING NEWS - - - latest Ofsted data release for Riverside is available via 2 links on our website frontpage**