



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 have spent some time collating comments and sharing the findings around the Governing Body. Below are a few of the general findings along with our first thoughts about what we can do to respond (there were also lots of individual comments which we have captured elsewhere – no suggestions have been lost):

You valued:	You suggested & our response:
<p>You told us that our school looks like an exciting place to be. You value the professionalism of our staff and that our headteacher is visible and proactive. You describe Riverside as a friendly and welcoming school which despite its size has a family feel that makes parents and pupils feel valued as individuals. Some of you stated that we 'live by our promises' and work hard to improve.</p>	<p>You told us that some areas of our grounds are looking tired. Several people mentioned the courtyard - after a lengthy negotiation with contractors, we have managed to get this area repaired free of charge over February halfterm. You felt that some classroom resources also look tired – we will work hard to review this despite a tight budget. Some mentioned toilet blocks needing refurbishment – we agree with this and will keep pushing NYCC to help us with funding. Year 3 and Year 4 blocks will be done this summer. Some of you are concerned about security and the level of playground supervision – we look at this frequently, but will liaise with NYCC to check we are doing the right things. Some parents had a few dinnertime concerns, which we will continue to look at, including the interactions with staff, activities provided and whether pupils are eating enough of the right things at dinnertime.</p>
<p>You continue to value our teaching standards and how our staff support a wide variety of need both learning and pastoral. Provision of learning opportunities is described very positively with high value attached to trips, visitors and a creative approach to the curriculum. You also value our varied clubs provision.</p>	<p>Some parents were interested in music instrument lessons earlier in the school – we will investigate this with NYCC. You also asked us to continue to investigate use of new technologies in the classroom – we will continue to purchase tablets, etc for classroom use, as well as finishing roll-out of school wide wifi. You also asked us to look at more learning opportunities outside the classroom – this is high on our priority list already and plans include canopies to facilitate all weather play. Friends are busy raising funds for outdoor projects!</p>
<p>Communication is good and you value our newsletters and how we help you link into work at home. Most respondents were making good links to school work and were happy with work they could do at home.</p>	<p>You have asked us to have all notices available electronically as well as being displayed at school, since some parents cannot get to school. Whilst many parents make active use of our information letters, you would like some more website links on our website. You asked us for homework to be as topic-focused as possible to help pupil engagement at home since some of you described enjoying planning themed days out etc. Mention was made of 'last minute' communications – we always try and avoid late notifications, though sometimes this is unavoidable when opportunities come up late in the day. You asked us to continue to look at how we communicate progress – this is high on our agenda at the moment (see school communication about 'Life After Levels') and new processes will be developed through this academic year ready for a 're-launch' of how we share pupil progress with you in September. Some parents were not aware of where to find our curriculum information – this is contained on the relevant 'Year Group' page of the school website. You also asked us to look further at informal communication methods – whether staff use planners consistently and whether it would be possible to use staff email addresses and online parents' evening booking systems. You asked us to look at information being available on how we teach maths and phonics – booklets, training events, downloadable video clips.</p>
<p>We are very proud of the range and depth of response you gave us on developing our pupils as citizens: You told us that we prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain, particularly how our pupils understand and welcome inclusion, show respect, independence and confidence. Our pupils develop strong friendships and self-belief. Other words you described were empathy, compassion and honesty. We teach a clear sense of right and wrong. We develop core skills for life, including literacy and numeracy. We work well to build pupil self-esteem.</p>	<p>Around citizenship, you asked us to look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing pupil understanding of different family structures • Building pupil understanding of diversity, including culture and religion – as part of the local STAR Learning Alliance we are hoping to do lots of work around this including developing an area-wide Charter For Diversity • Democracy – especially with elections coming up; further enhancing the role of our School Council • Linking to local and worldwide news events appropriately • Look further at the impact of our zone boards in class • Lots of active learning – ensuring pupils understand being healthy for life • Teaching pupils about appropriate bedtime and rest, limiting screen time, etc, ie, helping pupils take responsibility and possibly making parenting a little easier! <p>All of these will help further our citizenship work, which we always develop each year to suit children's needs.</p>

We welcome your feedback in all sorts of different ways. One way you can do this is by submitting your thoughts directly to the Ofsted ParentView website. In a few days you will receive a text link directly to the Riverside page of ParentView. **If you have the time, please do complete the survey.**

Local Authority 'Healthcheck' –how good is our school?

It is now some two years since the school was last inspected by OFSTED and whilst we are very proud of what we do and the feedback you give us is strong, we very recently commissioned a 'healthcheck' by North Yorkshire Education and Skills (school advisors) to bring an objective view of the school – it is always very hard to judge something when you are so closely involved. The following is a summary of the outcome from the review:

Overall Judgement – Riverside is a good school and has improved in every Ofsted aspect since the last inspection. It is not yet outstanding overall, but is outstanding in some areas.

Leadership and Management – This is good and improving. The work of the headteacher is described as strong and visionary; giving clear direction to the school. Management of the school is described as demonstrating outstanding elements because of the impact of highly effective policies and the smooth operation of the school on a day-to-day basis. The impact of leadership is clear and evident in the improvements being made. Governance is highly effective.

Behaviour and Safety – This is described as outstanding. Attitude to learning displayed in classrooms is outstanding. Pupils are highly engaged and motivated. Pupils show independence in their work and work well in collaborative tasks. They are resilient in their learning – concentrating well to get the best results.

Teaching – The quality of teaching is good overall with some clear evidence of outstanding practice. Pupils respond well to a wealth of exciting activities and tasks which make learning come alive. Learning environments are vibrant and support good learning. Presentation of pupil work in books in most classes is a key strength.

Achievement – This is good overall. Whilst there are some anomalies in the 'value added' progress in last year's data, evidence in pupils' books and from observation, secures this judgement.

Early years – Early years is at least good with some elements outstanding. Leadership in early years is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate independence, enjoyment and resilience in their learning because opportunities, including adult focus tasks, are planned for them to practise and deepen their learning in a relevant and exciting way.

Our main improvement target is related to marking and feedback – we have recently added to our school policy and our target is to really embed the new policy and ensure pupils are learning from their mistakes and making rapid progress.

I hope that this is an interesting read for parents. As governors, it aligns wholeheartedly with the detailed self-evaluation of the school, both that produced by Mr Yapp and the Leadership Team and that of the Governing Body itself. We set our sights high though and we will continue to ask ourselves two key questions:

- 1. What is stopping us from getting to outstanding?*
- 2. What can we do to get there faster?*

The Governing Body:

New government regulations led our Governing Body to go through a process known as re-constitution, wherein the group size has been reduced slightly and the numbers of different committees also reduced, so that individual governors are 'closer to the action.' This also involved a skills audit process to ensure all the right skills are in the right places. The newly re-constituted Governing Body is as follows:

Name	Type of Governor
Ian Butler	Local Authority – Chair of Governors
Deb Hastie	Parent Governor
Pete Carr	Parent Governor
Jon Haslam	Co-opted Governor
Chris Rose	Co-opted Governor
Charlie Heard	Co-opted Governor
Alison Lee	Co-opted Governor – Vice Chair of Governors
Vacancy – to be confirmed in May meeting	Co-opted Governor
Matt Copley	Co-opted Governor
John O'Callaghan	Associate Governor
Sarah Needham	Staff Governor
Ian Yapp	Headteacher
Penny Elmy	Associate Governor
Alison Woodward	Associate Governor
Sue Borradaile	Clerk to Governors

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO ENSURE OUR GOVERNING BODY CONTINUES TO HELP DRIVE OUR SCHOOL TOWARDS OUTSTANDING!

Over the coming year, we will have a 'planned vacancy' for a co-opted governor. We will particularly need to recruit someone with skills and experience in financial planning/accountancy and human resources. If you are interested in becoming a school governor, or know of someone who may be interested, please contact Mr Yapp/Mr Butler. The new governors do not need to be a parent of the school, and could be someone from the local community. We are planning well ahead so that we can ensure the very best continuity in our Governing Body.

Could I also take this opportunity to thank those Governors who have stood down or come to the end of their term of office, for all of their valuable work on behalf of the school.

If you would like to know more about the work of the Governing Body, full details are included on the school website www.riverside.n-yorks.sch.uk

Ian C. Butler
Chair Of Governors