

Parent Survey Response Sept / October 2019

Thank you to all the parents who completed our Parent Survey in September 2019. 354 people replied which is very helpful as it gives us a great idea of how our school community of parents and carers are feeling, as well as ensuring we are kept on our toes with a few useful comments and suggestions.

As always we have been overwhelmed by the lovely comments that have been put on there and it is lovely to see how many of you are as proud of Thorpe Hesley primary School and the staff and pupils as we are!

As always we are more than happy to hear your comments, sometimes it makes us reflect on practice and adjust our thinking or behaviour and sometimes it gives us a little reminder to make sure we continue with the high standards we set ourselves in every year group and every class.

I have written an overview of the results below and, again, thanks very much for completing it.

Question One: My child enjoys going to school

94% of people who responded said that they felt this was true (*Strongly Agree* 67%, *Agree* 27%). Of the 14 people who feel their child does not enjoy coming to school, there are some cases where we are working with the parent to address issues their child has. We would love every child to enjoy coming to school every day and this is our ultimate aim.

Question Two: My child feels safe and well cared for in school

97% of parents *Strongly Agreed* (77%) or *Agreed* with this statement, 5 of the remaining 12 said that they *Don't Know*.

We adhere to very strong safeguarding strategies in school and all our systems and processes contribute to this. Pupils in the Infant Building are released only to named individuals unless in emergency where a password system is used. We have a Safeguarding Team with myself as Designated Lead and Mrs Oakley, Mrs Rawlinson, Miss Stephenson and Mrs Hewitt as Deputy Leads. You can approach any of those people should you have concerns and matters are always investigated, dealt with and referred on should they need to be. We work with external agencies to support quite a few of our families including Early Help, Barnardos and Operation Encompass and Mr Rawlinson has role to support vulnerable families and children for both safeguarding and Emotional Health and Well Being. (EHWB)

We are a very secure site and all staff have safeguarding training regularly. Our children also have internet safety lessons on a regular basis.

Question Three: I feel welcome in school and am encouraged to be involved in my child's education

99% of people who responded *Strongly Agreed* (76%) or *Agreed* with this. We always try to include and involve our families (and wider families) in anything happening in school and parents are always welcome in to work in classes. We have some of our parents who are carrying out college qualifications in school and many parents / grandparents who just volunteer as an extra pair of hands / ears for reading. We love to have these people in and anyone is welcome (subject to a DBS check) just ask in either office or speak to your child's class teacher.

We plan as many events as we can over the year to welcome our families, from Stay and Learns, sharing assemblies, church visits to Parents' Interviews and Spelling Drop In sessions. We sent as many dates as we could at the start of the year on the Dates for Parents document. This is also available on the website. (Please be aware that occasionally dates may need to change, or even be added in, for unforeseen circumstances but we will always inform you by Parent Mail prior to this.)

We do understand that for some parents, coming in the school day time is not easy but grandparents, friends or aunties and uncles are always welcome. We do offer some activities after school but generally we need to fit them into the school day to ensure all our pupils are there and to fit round after school staff commitments – eg: clubs, meetings etc. Children who do not have an adult present are never left out and staff are very aware of this.

Question Four: I feel the school is approachable when I have a query or problem

97% *Strongly Agreed* (73%) or *Agreed* that school is approachable. We do always try to be and although we are a very busy place, I do hope that parents / carers feel that they are met with a smile and a welcoming face / voice should they ring or pop in for anything.

Question Five: Through events, newsletters, Twitter and Parentmail I feel the school works closely with parents / carers

99% of you thought this was so with 77% *Strongly Agreeing*. We are a very big school (currently 540 pupils) and we are always aware that at times communication can be tricky. However, we do try to send everything via Parentmail including letters, updates and newsletters. We are attempting to be eco-friendly and be as paperless as we can – this does mean that we print very little off to send home. We were finding 25% of letters were being left in cloakrooms at home time anyway and quite often parents did not see them in book bags. Since we went paperless we feel lots more of you see them! Not everyone has a Twitter account but this does not prevent you from looking at it, which is why we chose Twitter as our medium. **@ThorpeHesleyPri** is an open account anyone can see. We love to hear what is happening at home and be able to comment too!

Newsletters are sent by Parentmail and always have the latest dates and information in them.

We are aware that one of the comments we have received stated that not all our website class pages were not up to date and we apologise for this oversight – it has now been rectified.

Question Six: My child is encouraged to show good behaviour in school

99.5% of you *Strongly Agreed* (91%) or *Agreed* with this and the only people who did not were the 2 people who did not know. I would like to think that behaviour is one of our really positive focuses in school and, although we do have children who occasionally misbehave, we always tackle any poor behaviour and deal with it immediately. In general our behaviour here is exceptional – something visitors frequently comment on.

Question Seven: Behaviour in school appears to be well managed

See above – we have very strong Behaviour Management strategies in school which all staff refer to. This is a positive behaviour model where we praise good behaviour and exemplary conduct. We have Class Points, given by any adult in school, for example a class moving around school beautifully, coming

into assembly respectfully, lining up sensibly. We also have Golden Tickets which are given to individual children for hard work, individual good behaviour, thoughtfulness, respectfulness etc. (We no longer have Merit Cards as we felt they were duplicated by the much more popularly received Golden Tickets.) For the 9 people who feel it is not well managed, I know that some of these are I conversation with school currently regarding their child's experience and I urge the others to come and speak to someone about where they feel this is an issue.

Question Eight:

I feel the school communicates effectively about what is happening in school. Eg: through newsletter, Twitter, facebook, website

97% of people *Strongly Agreed* (78%) or *Agreed* with this. See Question Five.

Question Nine: The standards of teaching are good

97.5% of people who responded *Strongly Agreed* (82.5%) or *Agreed*. Of the rest, 2% *Didn't Know*.

We are very fortunate at Thorpe Hesley Primary School that we have a very hard working and dedicated staff (in both teaching and non-teaching areas) who really want to make a difference. We have a strong School Improvement Plan and our staff access good Continuous Professional Development both in school and externally. We offer support to other schools in the authority as we are regarded as a good example and many of our staff are considered 'experts'. We have staff who work for the Local Authority including the areas of PSHCE, wider curriculum and Teaching and Learning. This not only ensures we are consistently up to date but also brings some additional funding into our budget.

We consistently monitor the quality of Teaching and Learning practice in school and support all staff to be the best they can be – just as we do our pupils.

Question Ten: I am invited to Parents Evenings and information sessions and so school keeps me fully informed about my child's learning and attainment.

97% of respondents *Strongly Agreed* (84%) or *Agreed* with this. 1.5% said they *Don't Know* and we are assuming this is because they are new parents to school. Dates are always given at the start of the year on the Dates for Parents document and appointments are created through Parentmail. Any parents who have a concern are always welcome to pop in and make an appointment with their child's class teacher or a member of the Senior leadership Team at any point through the year.

Reading Records have your child's targets in the front and this, along with homework gives a clear indication too.

Question Eleven: The school expects my child to work hard and achieve their best.

This question is closely linked to Question Nine and we are very happy to see that 99.7% of you *Strongly Agreed* (90.4%) or *Agreed* – only one person *Strongly Disagreed* and I urge that parent to speak to their child's class teacher. We truly feel that we expect every child to work hard and do the best they can – all staff who work in school encourage this whether it be in academic work, creativity or physical activities. We want all our children to be the very best they can be.

Question Twelve: I am happy with the progress my child is making.

97.5% *Strongly Agreed* (78%) or *Agreed* with five people *Disagreeing* and four who *Don't Know*. See Question Eleven above – we consistently expect all our pupils to do their very best and if parents / carers feel their child is not progressing as expected, staff are always available to chat and to offer support and additional work or advice.

We do regular assessments of pupils in school, sometimes informally and sometimes formally. Whilst aware that one of the comments feels there is an over emphasis on testing, we always try to make sure children feel comfortable and supported whilst also giving them the experience of assessments that they need to the those at the end of each Key Stage without it being a huge change for them. We have cut down the frequency of the formal assessments this year in an attempt to make it less onerous. Unfortunately whilst we still have Government tests it is something we will continue to carry out, although of course the diagnostic information they give us is incredibly useful to future planning and lesson input.

Question Thirteen: The school is well led and managed.

96% of our families *Strongly Agreed* (82%) or *Agreed* with this. Thank you.

Our Senior Leadership Team work very hard to ensure that things run smoothly in school, they are very approachable and always endeavour to sort any issues that arise. They arrange a variety of events in school – with the help and support of our other fabulous staff – and I do not know another school where so many wonderful events happen so regularly.

Our Governing Body is a very proactive group and come in to carry out visits, meetings and reviews over the year.

We are very fortunate to have both these groups of people and they are a large part of what makes Thorpe Hesley Primary School special.

Question Fourteen: The school has a pleasant, well maintained and friendly environment with attractive displays of children's work.

99% of people *Strongly Agreed* (86%) or *Agreed* with this. Only 2 people *disagreed* and there were a couple who *Didn't Know*.

We are incredibly proud of our Learning Environment in school, both indoors and out and staff give a lot of their own time to ensure school (both buildings and the surrounding environment) look fabulous. We have staff who have carried out events in their own time to raise funds and then improve areas – eg: the stage and astro-turfed area in the Infant yard – and Mr Durham (our caretaker) has done an amazing job since he started before the summer. We work very well within our low budget to ensure children have access to quality materials and if anyone visits our school I am always proud to show them round where they can see the beautiful quality work on display.

Question Fifteen: The school makes good use of budget and provides good resources to support my child's education.

89% of respondents *Strongly Agreed* (75%) or *Agreed* to this question with 9.6% stating *Don't Know*.

We work very hard within a limited budget to provide a quality education for your children. This has been even more tricky over recent years as, since the amalgamation in 2014 we have been running two very separate buildings as one school with the funding for only 'one school'. As you may remember if you

were a parent at that time, we lost a significant amount of funding at the time as we went from being two schools with two budgets to only one with one lump sum.

Some staff (myself included) carry out lots of work for external bodies – eg: the Local Authority – to bring in additional funds and, as you know, we do lots of fund raising to top up the budget and allow us to afford the ‘additional bits’ such as quality art media and playground equipment.

We have very low funding compared to many of our neighbouring schools, for example we have more than £2,000 per pupil less than some of our local schools and even our nearest similar school receives £500 per pupil more than us. This is partly due to our school being in what is considered an affluent area but it does mean that we have to be very inventive with how we spend our money and find ways to bring in additional income.

Question Sixteen: The school provides a sufficient range of lunch time clubs, after school activities and participation in local events.

We do know that there can never be enough clubs and activities for every child to benefit – on staffing alone, let alone the access to hall space, we just cannot support everything our children and parents would want. However 90% of you *Strongly Agreed* (72%) or *Agreed* here.

We have a huge variety of clubs available in school, including sporting ones, choir, Baking Club, Culture Club etc but are always limited by available space and the fact that we are so busy we just don’t always have available staff. Unfortunately we are frequently bound by numbers and so have to limit to certain year groups.

We take part in as many local and regional sporting activities as we can, usually very successfully, and even attend national finals in some cases!

Keep an eye on Parentmail and the newsletter for clubs available in school which your child can attend.

Question Seventeen: I feel that encouraging my child to do a ‘Daily Mile’ and regular activities is a positive thing.

Over 99% of respondents *Strongly Agreed* (88%) or *Agreed* that this was so, with just three people who *Don’t Know*.

The Daily Mile has been a very positive innovation in our school with all children carrying it out. The only time this does not happen – if the weather is very inclement – then children carry out some other form of movement in class in its place. It is very rare that any class misses out.

The Daily Mile has been a great addition to our curriculum with children and adults not only getting extra exercise but also having opportunity to talk to each other, a good support for EHWB.

Question Eighteen: I am happy with the Out of Hours provision of Breakfast Club and After School Woodlies.

81% *Strongly Agreed* (71%) or *Agreed* with all but two of the other people who replied saying *Don’t Know* – presumably as they do not have a need for these facilities. We feel that our Out of Hours provision is the ‘Gold Standard’ model with two designated rooms where provision is set up permanently and children have access to a quality Learning Environment as well as fun activities and delicious cooked food. In many schools a Breakfast Club is merely provided in the hall or classroom with access to slices of toast and colouring books. We give our children who attend these services a really good start or finish to their day to the same standard as any other provision in school.

We do know that some parents would like an earlier start or later finish but currently this is not an option.

Question Nineteen: The school provides a good and welcoming induction for new pupils.

92% of respondents *Strongly Agreed* (82%) or *Agreed* with two people *Disagreeing* and the remaining 26 people (7%) *Don't Know*.

We provide time for pupils coming to our school to come and spend time in their new classes in F1 and F2 and children moving from the Infant to Junior Building (Y2 to Y3) have a Parent Meeting and two half days of transition before the summer.

Staff in all year groups also run Stay and Learn meetings during the first term, a welcome one, and then others on such subjects as reading, maths etc. This ensures parents also feel comfortable knowing what their children are doing in school.

Question Twenty: I am happy that my child attends Thorpe Hesley Primary School.

This is the one question which really matters! Your child should never be in a school where you, as a parent or carer feel you are not happy that they are there. This may mean that you need to speak to the Senior Leadership to discuss any concerns or maybe even think whether Thorpe Hesley primary School is the right setting for your child.

A resounding 99% *Strongly Agreed* (91.5%) or *Agreed* with this question, a true validation of the hard work our staff do and the fact that your children are in a place you feel confident is right for them.

Thank you very much again to everyone who completed the survey – the information is always useful to us and helps us to be even better!

I have put a few of the comments from parents below too although I have tried to answer many in the body of the text.

Please do not hesitate to contact school – and myself – if you have anything you wish to discuss from this survey result.

Thank you.

Trudi Toms – Head Teacher

We feel very lucky that XX attends such a fabulous school. We find the school and staff extremely welcoming and it is obvious that the staff are very passionate about the job they do and always put the children at the heart of everything. Thank you!	
Amazing curriculum, teachers work exceptionally hard, lots of opportunities for my son to apply what he is learning to different situations and through wider opportunities to extend skills/ knowledge further. I would like reading books to be more challenging as my son is a fluent reader within his band and would benefit from reading books with ambitious vocabulary and with a higher lexile score in preparation for the challenges of KS2 reading test next year. Overall however I cannot speak highly enough of the quality of XXs school experiences and education. Many thanks to all.	We will certainly look at focussing some funding into additional reading books.

<p>My child is happy at school and I am so very grateful for that, however, one thing I think it's important to mention is that the school has a lot of 'dress up' days that don't add to education, but make it difficult for parents and tend to cost a lot of money. I find this completely unnecessary and upsetting for those children that don't enjoy dressing up. Mad scientists, super heroes, Victorians, legends, 1940s. It's all too much. Most parents work full time now and the volume of these dress up days can add unnecessary stress. That added to the other activities like charity days and bun sales just add to the cost of my kids going to school. Lastly I'd like to reiterate that my children are happy at school. They love their teachers and all activities they are involved in.</p>	<p>Just to say that we would never want to put parents under financial pressure and often we go for things that could be easily remedied with things our families have at home. Children do not have to dress up and when some of our pupils don't they are never made to feel different. However, dressing up – for example for a Victorian Day does add to the fun and general feel of the day – in some cases this is instead of a visit out of school as we are attempting to save our families the cost.</p>
<p>Another thing I'd like to add is the amount of homework that children get. I <i>Agree</i> that some homework is needed to prepare children for their future Comp experience. However, in this day and age children grow up so quickly, it's a shame that they aren't able to spend whatever time they have at home just being kids. I understand the need for maths and Spellings, but quite honestly Creative Homework is a complete chore. I personally didn't get any homework whilst in Junior school and it didn't infringe on my GCSE results one bit.</p>	<p>As a Senior Leadership Team, we feel that homework is a vital part of a child's learning. It not only gives them opportunity to extend their learning from the lessons, it also enables parents to see where their children are and what level they are working at – also if they are struggling. Creative Homework is one that many of our families enjoy as a 'family' time when they can work together on a project. It also links with our vision that all areas of the curriculum are equally important and for some pupils creativity is the area where they shine.</p>
<p>I continue to think it is such a wonderful school. I feel there is a great vibe about the school and any problems are always addressed promptly and well.</p>	<p>Thank you for this. 😊</p>
<p>As always, cannot speak highly enough of the Head, the teachers and Admin staff at this school and the way that school is managed. I have had 5 children who have all attended this school and actually moved back to Thorpe Hesley in order to ensure that my youngest children were able to attend Thorpe Hesley Primary School (as it became). There is nothing I could suggest to make any improvements as everything runs smoothly and as a parent, I know I can always approach the Headteacher and any other teachers and Admin staff of course if I ever needed to know anything or needed help in any way. The involvement in the local area is fantastic such as Easter, Harvest and Xmas services at the local church and involvement of parents in activities in schools is great such as assemblies, sports days and Parents evenings. Excellent school, Many Thanks.</p>	
<p>Thorpe Hesley is a brilliant school.my daughter always looks forward in going to school and I am proud to say that she is doing really well from all the help and support from the teachers at Thorpe Hesley primary school</p>	
<p>Still maintain that this school is exceptional. Just hope secondary education can live up to the standard(s) set by Thorpe Hesley Primary School, when that time comes.</p>	

<p>Fantastic school, fantastic teachers and a fantastic headteacher who really cares for every 1 I couldn't ask for more from a school</p>	
<p>Lovely school with friendly approachable staff & any issues we have had have always been dealt with swiftly & satisfactorily.</p>	
<p>XX seems to have transitioned well into the Juniors and being more independent. I'm very happy she comes to such a lovely school. She likes her new class and her teachers and is coping well with the work she brings home. The meeting last term with the Y3 teachers and welcome meeting were helpful. Thank you.</p>	
<p>I'm really happy with the way that XX has settled into year 1 and how quickly the teachers have been at assessing where XX is and what he is capable of.</p>	
<p>I feel it would be great if there were more afterschool activity clubs available particularly sports related. I would happily pay for these.</p>	<p>We do try to offer as many clubs as possible; the main restriction is the use of the halls. We will certainly look in the summer to add some additional outdoor clubs in.</p>
<p>Volunteering in school gives me a greater insight into the school day and teaching methods in school.</p>	<p>We always welcome volunteers in school – why not try it?!</p>
<p>Since the school has gone paperless it is harder to keep up to date as to what is happening. Reliant on social media and not all parents are on it.</p>	<p>We do try to send as much as possible by Parentmail and will take this comment on board.</p>
<p>Only comment I'd make is with regards to school lunches, now XX is in Jrs he mostly takes a packed lunch as its much cheaper however we are regularly reminded they can't have crisps, biscuits 'unhealthy items' etc but yet school dinners options are things such as burgers, pizza, iced buns, choc cake etc ! It seems quite unfair somehow?!</p>	<p>I completely understand your frustration with this. We are a Healthy School and encourage our children to eat a healthy diet. The lunch menu is one provided by Rotherham as part of their school meal service and is nutritionally balanced with certain options only being on offer for limited times / days. I understand that it appears at a glance that more unhealthy food is on offer but we are assured by the service that this 100% not the case.</p>
<p>I would prefer if drinks were healthier at school mealtimes. We only let him drink water or milk at home, but because juice is available at mealtimes, he always chooses that. Sugary drinks are horrendous for kids teeth and I would rather there was no choice of a sugary drink. The same with sweetened and flavoured yoghurts.</p>	
<p>I don't think that writing that asking for funds for school trips are optional. I have paid for twins all through school and have found out that school pay for children who's parents don't pay for their child to attend! I think that school leaves it wide open for parents NOT to pay as they know school will foot the bill, not taking into consideration that other parents do care and do pay! Not very fair or equal ops either! If parents don't pay, then they should understand for that child bot to go on the trip!</p>	<p>The letters we send out asking for 'contributions' to school visits are a legal requirement. We are bound by DfE rules to ask only for contributions and are not able to prevent a child from going on a visit because their parent has not contributed the full (or any) amount. As I have pointed out in the newsletter previously this can put us in a very difficult situation when we have not received</p>

	payments as that money then has to come from our very limited school budget – hence the messages regarding having to cancel visits.
Regular holiday clubs for all years please, as well as Woodlies and Breakfast Club.	This is an area we are looking into to continue to further develop ‘wrap around’ care.
XX loved the holiday club over the summer and it would be great if this could be offered during other holidays and for longer during the summer.	
Drop offs and pick ups are very stressful, especially when you have a pram. Would there be any possibility in teachers collecting parents and dismissing parents on the yard?	We did try previously for Classes 1 and 2 to line up elsewhere but it created lots of issues for staff where parents wanted to talk or ask questions and children were in classrooms alone. We do realise that space here is an issue but cannot find a solution to increase the waiting area I am afraid.
Just a huge thank you for being all of you :) x	Aaaw! ♥