

**Ryarsh Primary School
Parent Survey 2016**

This year we received a record 86 responses to our annual Parent Survey – thank you for taking the time to share your views.

The attached document gives you the detail of the responses we received. A brief summary is as follows:

	% responses 'strongly agree' and 'agree'
My child is happy at this school	97%
My child feels safe at this school	98%
My child makes good progress at this school	99%
My child is well looked after at this school	99%
My child is taught well at this school	98%
My child receives appropriate homework for their age	81%
The school makes sure its pupils are well behaved	99%
The school deals effectively with bullying	56% with 39% 'don't know'
The school is well led and managed	98%
The school responds well to any concerns I raise	86% with 10% 'don't know'
I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress	90%
I would recommend our school to another parent	99% Yes

Once again, these responses show overwhelmingly positive view of the school, with levels of satisfaction remaining high.

Overall, the recurring themes on 'what our school does well' are:

- **Enrichment events - learning being stimulating for our children.** This year we have doubled the amount that we spend on children's in-school learning experiences (events such as the mobile farm visit, theatre groups, history days, workshops and other visitors) and it is great to hear that this is welcomed by our children and parents.
- **Community ethos of the school.** Strength of community has always been a huge part of Ryarsh Primary school and this continues to be recognised. Parents joining the school community for the first time feel welcomed and supported.
- **Value of each child.** We have 201 unique, wonderful children in our school and our staff work hard to ensure that each and every one of them is valued.
- **Good behaviour.** We have extremely high expectations for children's behaviour, which results in a calm and orderly learning environment, with very few disruptions to learning.

Some of your comments on what our school does well:

I think Ryarsh is a fantastic school. We continue to feel very lucky our children attend such a warm and friendly school. You all work so hard and it really is appreciated! Well done :-)

We are really happy with the progress that our daughter is making. The standard of teaching we both observed as part of the open days was outstanding.

Discipline is good and the ethics that the school installs in the children is great.

Breakfast and After School Clubs are excellent.

Interesting range of topics covered, 'themed' days that enhance the children's learning.

Our daughter is really challenged to achieve her very best.

Our child settled quickly at Ryarsh school and is very happy at school.

Encourages growth mindset which leads to a hunger to learn. Makes my child feel like an important part of the school community.

A warm, positive environment welcomes you as you enter the building. A strong ethos of giving children a rounded education. Well done Ryarsh Primary School!

The best thing about the school is the rounded development of the children, absolutely to academic progress but also the leadership/ sports/ arts/ music/ performing/ social opportunities too.

I am very pleased to see more sporting events and opportunities being offered to the children!

I am very happy with Ryarsh, I am confident in the leadership and direction of the school. I believe that all of the staff have the children's best interests at heart,

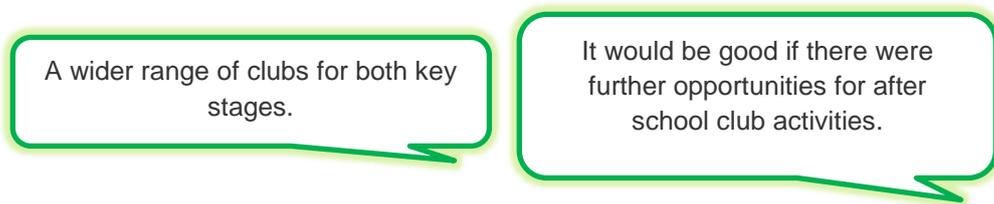
Ryarsh is a fantastic school. The school continues to impress me by continually going the extra mile with regards to my child's learning and stimulating her imagination. Everyone in the school take such pride in their roles and contribute to a wonderful environment for the children.

We do welcome constructive feedback so it was fascinating to read your suggestions for how we could make our school even better. There were a number of great ideas which we can put into practice straight away:

- **Send assessment information home prior to parents' evening.** This is a good idea, especially as the information we give you has been in a new format this year. It makes sense that looking at this in advance will help you to make the most of your 10 minute appointment. We will implement this for our next parents' evening.
- **Operate a wait list for extra-curricular clubs.** This is important when clubs are often full, such as Gymnastics club. We have included reference to this in the summer term's clubs letter.
- **Broaden the range of achievements in Superstar Corner.** We are happy to use Superstar Corner to celebrate a wide range of out-of-school achievements, not just sports awards. If you would like to nominate your child's achievement for Superstar Corner, please email us at office@ryarsh.kent.sch.uk and we can usually include it in the next weekly newsletter.
- **Run a swap shop for barely used uniform.** In previous years, the PTFA have operated a second hand uniform service, but this was not used as much as they had hoped. We will try running an in-school service on a trial basis and see if this is a success. So to start us off, please donate any 'barely used' Ryarsh school uniform to the office.

The recurring themes of 'what our school could improve' are:

- **Extra curricular clubs**



We have worked hard to increase the range of extra-curricular clubs we offer to children and I would like to thank our staff for committing their time to running clubs. This year, we have introduced extra opportunities for KS1, new clubs such as Dance and clubs run by our Sports Coach. Additionally, we offer extra lunchtime clubs led by Year 6 children – this was an idea suggested in our 2014 Parent Survey that has been a success ever since! Overall, I am confident that we do offer a good range of extra-curricular opportunities compared to other schools of the same size. We even do well when compared against some much larger schools.

Clearly there is still room for improvement and this should be possible once building work to provide the school with an adequately sized hall is complete. Currently, we run after-school club in the hall every day (with the exception of Thursdays when Gymnastics is in the hall). If we had a larger sized hall and a spare classroom in which to run after-school club, we could then increase the number of extra-curricular clubs that run in the hall, creating more opportunities for our children. I hope that this will be possible in the future.

- **Communication**

General communication with home; what we could specifically help with at home, so that teacher and parents can be working together to address any difficulties

Communication between teachers and parents.

As one of you noted in your response this year, it's difficult to 'over-communicate' when it comes to children's learning! We already do prioritise information about learning in our home-school communication, which is the reason for devoting the back of each week's newsletter to each class's learning. Also, parent meetings and workshops have worked well and seem to be meeting your needs. Your responses show that these actions are well-received. Homework is another way in which you can find out about this week's learning and how to help at home.

As a reminder, we do have a genuine open-door policy and are always available to talk to you about your children's learning and progress, in addition to the formal parent consultation evenings. You can chat to teachers at the end of the school day or make an appointment via contact books or the school office.

Additionally, we are planning to make more use of email as a means of communication with teachers – this will be formally launched at the start of next academic year as it will, in part, replace the use of the current contact books.

- **Stability and continuity of staff**

We have been concerned about the number of teacher changes - particularly in the middle of the academic year.

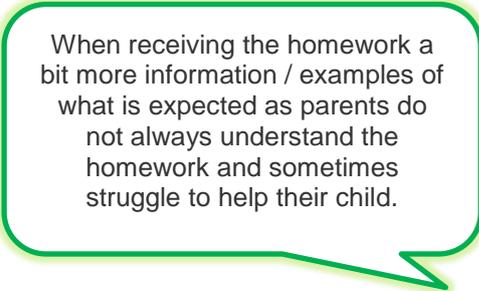
Continuity of staff is key and recruiting staff that are energetic and keen.

There were a number of comments about staffing, partly due to the large turnover of staff that occurred at the end of last academic year. On this occasion, we were extremely unfortunate to lose almost half of our teaching staff due to their relocation away from Kent (former colleagues now living in Tanzania, Dubai and Leicestershire). In a smaller school this has a large impact overall. It is also more likely in a smaller school that staff move on to promotions at larger schools, who have more positions to offer.

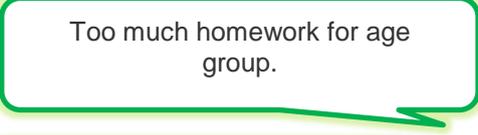
There were also comments about continuity of learning in year groups taught by part-time staff. In all of our job-share arrangements, staff have a dedicated time once per week when they work together in school on handover and transition. This is the most valuable way to ensure continuity in children's learning, whilst also making the most of the advantages of having two members of staff working together.

Currently we foresee only one change of teaching staff for September 2016. We have recently appointed Natalie Snow as our new teacher to teach Lion class, replacing the current temporary teachers, Mrs Allen and Mrs Donoghue, who are teaching the class for the remainder of this year. Our intention is for all other teachers to remain teaching the same year group for next academic year, minimising the amount of change ahead.

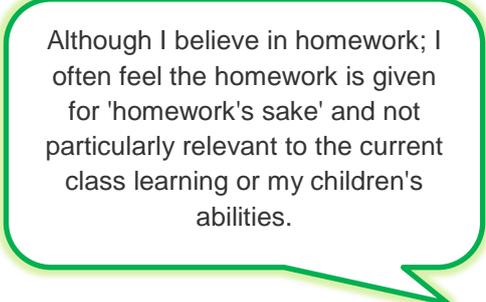
- **Homework**



When receiving the homework a bit more information / examples of what is expected as parents do not always understand the homework and sometimes struggle to help their child.



Too much homework for age group.



Although I believe in homework; I often feel the homework is given for 'homework's sake' and not particularly relevant to the current class learning or my children's abilities.

Homework is always a contentious subject and this year has been no exception. Once again, there are a greater number of parents mentioning 'too much homework' than those mentioning 'not enough homework'. Last year, we reviewed our Home Learning policy and reduced the amount of homework that we set. This year, we will review in more detail the quality of the homework, connections to class learning and whether we should add further explanation to help you help your children. This will form part of our work in the summer term and I will let you know the outcome.

Finally, I would like to thank you once again for all of your comments and contributions to the Ryarsh school community – it is a very special place! Thank you also to our caring and dedicated staff who work exceptionally hard to make our school successful. If you would like to discuss the themes of the survey or anything else in further detail, please let me know.

Ruth Austin

April 2016

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