



Parent Survey 2019

Thank you for all of your contributions to our Parent Survey this year. At Ryarsh we are 'forward thinking for a brighter future', meaning that as well as celebrating the many successes of our school, we also strive to improve and take action to address any areas of concern. Your responses via the Parent Survey are a key route to further school improvement, so thank you for your time and effort in completing this year's survey.

This summary reflects on some of the key themes emerging from our 2019 surveys. As always, there is much to celebrate, with many different areas of the school identified as strengths. This year, we are including a wider range of direct quotes from the surveys, with commonly occurring strengths as follows.

Parent comments on 'what we do well at Ryarsh' for our children's learning:

My children often exceed their own expectations with their learning, which makes them proud and encourages them to continually challenge themselves.

The school has well selected teaching staff whom teach well.

Makes children feel happy and safe.

Creates a supportive and interactive learning environment which is stimulating and encouraging.

1. Fabulous, dedicated, hard working, friendly teachers who recognise that each child is an individual. 2. Provides fantastic outdoor learning - forest school. 3. Is aware of the importance of mental health and doesn't just pay lip service to this critical issue but provides support where necessary.

They encourage her and let her go above the school curriculum if she wants to progress at a faster pace which she often does.

Learning is tailored and extra support given if needed for a certain subject/area of learning.

Encourage them to be the best they can be. Encourage and reward their achievements.

Lots of enrichment. Builds confidence.

The quality of teaching at Ryarsh is very high. The teachers look at different ways of teaching to work with each child recognising that they are all individuals and perform better when taught and rewarded in a manner appropriate for them. The school has excellent values and embeds these very well. I feel very grateful for the quality of staff at Ryarsh including both the breakfast and after school staff, the administration team and the parent governors. I believe absolutely everyone is working to do their best for our children and I want to say thank you for that.

Behaviour management is at a high expected level therefore my children know the boundaries and therefore their learning progresses.

Interesting extra activities. I believe the homework is pitched at the perfect level for the children. Both my children are able to complete the work independently with a little guidance. The topic work set is great.

My child is stretched and challenged. This is what they need and our child responded well to this.

The learning is inspiring and creative.

The school does update us regularly on progress and if any problems occur then this is addressed in best way possible.

Parent comments on 'what we do well at Ryarsh' in any other areas:

The extra-curricular clubs are fantastic - they love the sport, music and craft options!

The school provides for the needs of the whole child. My child is happy, secure and loves coming into school every day!

Very organised with events and sports coaching etc. I feel the school is well run. Great approach to parents, staff are friendly and respectful. Excellent communication to parents, website revamp is good. The school exchange programme swapping teachers, meeting other classes from other schools etc I think is an excellent initiative. School listens to parents eg changes in catering after feedback. The wrap around care and range of after school activities is brilliant. I know they require considerable time from staff and they should be thanked for these efforts.

Strong ethos on helping each other, good manners and community.

Promotes good behaviour and kindness. It's a lovely, small, safe school with a great ethos. I am so glad we put her in Ryarsh compared to some other local schools that were on our shortlist.

The school has a good ethos and sense of community.

My children are very happy and enjoy being at school. After school activities and PTFA events are very good.

Behaviour is fantastic in the school. Good communication and everything is well organised.

Very supportive in terms of children feeling comfortable in their environment e.g buddy system.

Lunchtime clubs allows my child to keep busy at lunchtime as they are not keen on playing outside all the time.

Offer lots of clubs outside school time.

Fantastic school values that will equip our children for life. Demonstrating passion in every area and willing each child to be the best person they can be.

Information levels are good keeping parents informed of progress. Continued improvement of facilities.

Supporting children with medical concerns.

Wonderful, caring teachers. Facilitates all years to interact with each other, the buddy system is wonderful. Promotes fantastic values, caring, kindness, looking out for one another, treating all with respect.

PE is good with a good community spirit.

Creates a lovely warm and friendly atmosphere within the school community. Listens to ideas and supports the children. Afford the children some independence and responsibility.

The school offers a nurturing environment. It offers additional learning opportunities through the school fund which are varied.

A summary of the overall responses 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	92%
My child is well looked after at this school	100%
My child is taught well at this school	92%
My child receives appropriate homework for their age	83%
The school makes sure its pupils are well behaved	95%
The school deals effectively with bullying	93% (including 'don't know')
The school is well led and managed	98% (including 'don't know')
The school responds well to any concerns I raise	93% (including 'don't know')
I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress	78%
I would recommend our school to another parent	93% Yes

This year we received 60 responses to our annual Parent Survey, compared to 82 responses received in 2018.

Every year we also conduct our surveys for children, staff and governors. Together with parents' views, these responses build up a rounded picture of our school.

Children's comments:

I think one of the best things is that the teachers make lessons fun. It then makes learning interesting.

We're all friendly and welcoming and make a great team.

Children are nice to each other most of the time. We learn a lot from what we do. Also our values help make the school a better place.

The teachers make me feel safe.

Everyone is kind.

The best thing is the friendliness of 99% of people. The people who aren't in the 99% are dealt with very well.

The best things about our school are that we have adults we can trust.

Staff comments:

Staff always put in 100% and every child is important.

It has always been a great school. We constantly strive to make things better so I think it continues to improve all the time.

Teaching is a high standard and the children enjoy coming to school.

Overall I think that all the members of our school community are positive, forward thinking people. We all (children, staff, governors, parents) strive to do our very best every day. I think that there is a lovely atmosphere here. I love working here and feel very honoured to be part of this school.

Governors' comments:

Ryarsh is safe friendly environment for the children to learn.

Completion of the school hall is a significant tangible improvement that will benefit the school.

There have been improvements in the schools ability to target the right intervention for pupils, which has improved results. Also the school has developed a system for monitoring the pupils in other subjects like science, history and geography not just core subjects.

The focus on learning is sharpened, and the standards of expectation for all are higher.

Feedback on specific issues from this year's Parent Survey are as follows.

Changes to feedback and marking policy

This year, we asked you a specific question about the change to our feedback and marking policy, which is that since September we have made greater use of verbal feedback and reduced the amount of written marking that teachers are expected to complete. This is in line with government advice on marking and teacher workload, which you can read in full at www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teacher-workload-marking-policy-review-group-report

However, this change does make it more difficult for an 'external audience' (eg parents, Ofsted, school leaders) to understand the detail of the feedback which teachers have given children to support their learning. For this reason, Ryarsh Governors requested that we include a question on this in our annual survey, as we had no idea how positively this change would be viewed by parents. We were interested and really pleased to have received an overwhelmingly positive response, with 93% of parents who expressed an opinion making a positive comment, such as:

My child understands the feedback received from teachers, and explained it to us at parents' evening.

I support actions that reduce the pressure on teaching staff whilst allowing them to effectively perform their roles.

Great idea.

I have seen the marking in books and think it looks very effective as my child has been responding to the 'pink' comments which is hopefully then reflecting in future learning.

I think it's wonderful that the teachers concentrate more on verbal feedback as I believe it enables children to ask questions and get any support they need then. Also verbal positive feedback is always nice to hear.

One response summed up the difficulty of this approach with the following comment:

Children are not always forthcoming to parents on the verbal feedback they have received, so how outside of parents evening can parents monitor children's performance if the writing is not in the workbooks?

The key point here is that the evidence of the effectiveness of feedback given to children is in their future learning. Rather than looking at teachers' marking, you would be looking for improvement and progress in children's learning outcomes (eg by seeing better quality writing through the year in your child's English book, with previous errors or misunderstandings having been corrected).

SEN

At Ryarsh we strive to provide a high quality education for all of our children, including those with special educational needs. We were pleased to receive positive feedback from parents of our SEN children, with 100% of parents happy with the SEN provision for their child and 100% agreeing that the school communicates well and offers good support.

Information on children's progress

This year, only 78% of parents agreed with the statement 'I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress', making this the area with the lowest rating. These comments came from parents with children in every one of our seven classes, so clearly represent a whole-school issue. While we have not made any significant changes this year to our systems for communication on children's progress (eg data shared at parent consultations or annual reports to parents), your views on the value of this information has shifted, so it is important that we learn from this and take action to address your concerns.

At Ryarsh we do have an open door policy and are genuinely proud of our children's work. This means that we are always happy to talk about your child's learning, show you their books and discuss their current attainment and progress. Please contact your child's class teacher, either via the school office or a quick chat on the playground at hometime to arrange this.

We also have more formal methods for sharing information on children's progress, via our parent consultation meetings and annual reports in the summer term. As a result of your feedback, we will be reviewing our parent consultation meetings, both in terms of the way in which the sessions run

and the written information that you are provided with. A few parents commented that they do not value the written summary of attainment data and targets, so this can be improved for next year.

We are also looking to introduce additional opportunities for you to find out about children's attainment and progress. During the Spring term we trialled a new event, Koala class Reading Evening, where parents were invited into school from 5pm one evening for children to share their English work with them. This event was led by the children, who were extremely proud of their work and keen to share it with parents, but class teachers were also available to share and discuss learning. This was an informal and celebratory event with a positive atmosphere, which was well received by parents who attended. We are planning to timetable a range of similar events and additional opportunities for you to come into school to see your children's work.

Homework

Parental views on homework are usually diverse and this year was no exception, with a range of views on homework (too much, too little, too creative, too formal, just right) being evenly represented. Our homework policy strives to balance these issues, with optional and compulsory home learning elements and a progressive amount of homework set as children move through the school.

Road safety

We received fewer comments on responsible parking and road safety this year, in comparison to previous years. However, this remains an area of concern as the key factors (number of cars being used for the school run, narrowness of pavements, space for parking) have not improved since last year. Parents who do park and drive responsibly often despair at the behaviour of those that do not, with typical comments such as:

A need to constantly remind the parents who consistently have their own set of rules about the parking and the road situation. The same parents, time and time again, stop on the yellow lines and open their doors and throw their children out.

Please remember that our priority is children's safety, as of course we all want our children to arrive safely on their journeys to or from school. We also need to remember that our school values, including good manners, responsibility and respect, should be modelled by all adults within the school community, including parents.

Water temperature

As the survey is so open ended, every year brings a range of interesting points to our attention. This year, a number of you reported that children have said that the water in the toilet sinks is so hot that they avoid washing their hands when asked to do so. Sure enough, when we checked the temperature in the sinks, it was too varied, with some taps too cool and some taps too hot. This was dependent on their distance to the TMVs (thermostatic mixing valves) that mix the hot and cold water supply to the required temperature. Our new caretaker Mr Galbraith can ensure that the TMVs are serviced and checked, which will provide a simple fix to this problem. Despite a regular system of temperature checks which should alert us, staff were previously unaware of this issue, so thank you for letting us know.

Uniform

I am pleased to see that you have changed the uniform list from boy and girl to a non-gender specific list, but could you please speak to the parents/children about it so that girls know they can wear shorts in the summer? Many girls would be happier in shorts and this will be much easier for tall girls that can't easily get check dresses to fit.

We do like all of our children to look smart and appreciate your support in keeping to our uniform policy. Full details of the uniform policy are on the school website and have not changed since 2017 - as this comment recognises, guidelines are now more flexible for both girls and boys.

Thank you

Thank you once again for your responses, all of which are read by myself and our Senior Leadership team - every single view is considered, even if it's not specifically mentioned in this summary. I am a firm believer that all feedback is useful, so we do strive to be forward-thinking in our response to both negative and positive feedback. If you would like a specific response to any of your comments, please email me or just have a chat – along with the rest of the Ryarsh team, I am always happy to talk about our school and our children's learning.

One new initiative for 2019 onwards will be new timetabled opportunities for parents to discuss any key issues with us, such as SLT drop-in events at different times of day. We will start in the Summer terms with drop-in sessions where our key discussion point will be on the information we provide on children's progress. For these sessions, we will also invite feedback via email for those parents who would like to contribute, but are unable to attend. Further details will be available after Easter.

Thank you for your continued support in making Ryarsh a successful school.

Ruth Austin

April 2019

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Ryarsh Primary School - Forward thinking for a brighter future

Our Vision:

Here at Ryarsh Primary School we are dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing and happy learning environment. We are united by a strong sense of community and work together to enthuse and inspire all learners to give their very best.

