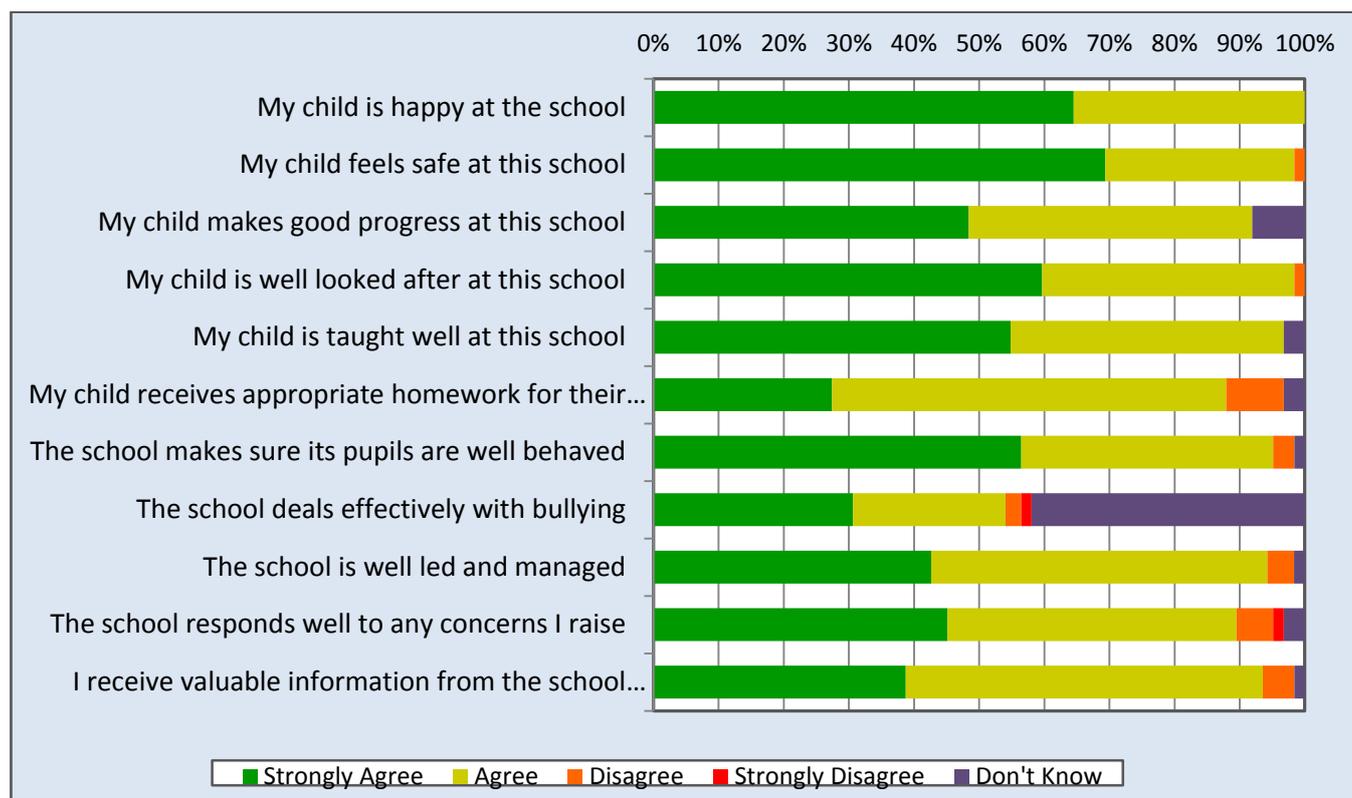


2015 Parents' Questionnaire



	Question	% responses 'strongly agree' and 'agree'
1	My child is happy at this school	100.0%
2	My child feels safe at this school	98%
3	My child makes good progress at this school	92%
4	My child is well looked after at this school	98%
5	My child is taught well at this school	97%
6	My child receives appropriate homework for their age	88%
7	The school makes sure its pupils are well behaved	95%
8	The school deals effectively with bullying	54% with 42% 'don't know'
9	The school is well led and managed	94%
10	The school responds well to any concerns I raise	90%
11	I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress	94%
12	I would recommend our school to another parent	95% Yes

2015 Parents' Questionnaire

Some of your comments on what our school does well:

Great communication between the school and parents

Breakfast club and afterschool club are fantastic

A relaxed and friendly atmosphere but discipline when required

There is a positive and serious approach to teaching and learning which is evident

Lessons are interesting and fun

Open door policy for parents

My daughter is very happy and progressing well. Very happy!

Offers a safe and happy environment

The school build confidence to learn. Always plenty of activities going on. My son is very happy at school.

All children appear to be encouraged, challenged and stretched

Friendly and supportive staff - good 'community feel' to the school

The school keeps children inspired and stimulated and developing a love for learning

Older children support younger pupils

The school expects high standards regarding behaviour, manners and respect

Involvement of parents is good, eg parent open morning

The main two issues from your suggestions for improvement were as follows:

Homework

I sometimes feel that too much homework is set and this eats into family life

Homework is sometimes far too easy for ability

Lack of quality with homework – some are very easy and others too challenging – there needs to be a balance

The homework can be too long and very time consuming for parents.... it really does become my homework

Homework often seems onerous and takes up precious family time especially with mandatory topic work

The quantity and level of homework is manageable and being able to opt in/out of the termly projects can be a huge relief

Responses on homework are a regular feature of our parents' questionnaire - but it was interesting that this year there seems to be more of a consensus that our children are set too much homework.

We reviewed our Home Learning policy last year and currently the amount of homework set is as follows. Children are set one piece of English or Maths homework weekly from Years 1 – 4 and one piece of English and Maths weekly at Years 5 -6. This homework is always set on Fridays and handed in by Wednesday. A lunchtime homework is available in school on Thursdays for anyone who has not been able to complete their home learning at home.

The main purpose of home learning is to consolidate and extend each child's learning by building on what they have learned at school and the weekly Maths and English homework are our most effective way of doing this. These tasks also give you an insight into what children have been learning that week at school, which allows you to recognise their successes as well as supporting and extending their learning.

Additionally, topic home learning is set each term, where children can pick from a range of open-ended tasks. Topic homework is optional at Years 1 – 2 and expected at Years 3 – 6. Children often need some guidance and support with these tasks – they often become 'family' projects rather than a piece of work that children can do by themselves. I know that many families enjoy these activities, but I also understand the point of view expressed by the parent who said "...it really does become my homework!"

As a result of this, we have looked at our expectations for the frequency and amount of topic home learning throughout the school. From next term, topic home learning will still be set, but will be

optional throughout the school. This will give you greater flexibility on how to spend your time on home learning tasks, which I know many families will welcome.

Does every child matter?

I think that the brighter, well behaved children are sometimes overlooked and it is necessary to remember that they benefit from 1-1 attention as much as less able children.

We feel that the school is only really interested in children who are 'more able'! We don't feel that 'middle' ability children are encouraged to develop and flourish.

I am concerned that the brighter children receive more support. They seem to be pushed. Those that struggle also get extra support but those in the middle seem to be forgotten. They are where they should be but don't seem to be pushed to be better.

This is another fascinating set of comments, reflecting a theme found in several parents' responses.

At Ryarsh we are very proud of the high levels of academic achievement that our children reach. We are a high achieving school with a strong track record of children making excellent progress and achieving standards which are consistently very high compared with national and local benchmarks. Despite our high level of achievement, it is important to emphasise that our main focus is on progress – ensuring that all of our children make progress from wherever their starting points are. We do this by ensuring that every child's learning is tailored to their needs, through accurate assessment and differentiation, alongside high expectations of what every child can achieve. We do not focus our attention on particular groups of children – staff work incredibly hard to ensure that all of our children's learning needs are being met.

Recent initiatives such as our focus on 'Growth Mindset' have made it clear to the children how important individual learning success is – at every level of ability. As a result, all of our children understand ideas such as the Learning Pit to help promote positive learning behaviour. Additionally, all of our staff recognise that the most important aspect of learning behaviour we should praise is effort, not attainment. For example, a subtle but important shift has been made in the way in which I give Headteacher's Awards – the gold board outside my office highlights the way one child's work has improved, using a 'before' and 'after' piece of work to illustrate the difference that effort makes. The emphasis on Growth Mindset is important because it illustrates how we value each individual child's learning journey. However, parental comments such as the examples in this section tell us that our focus on each individual child is not currently communicated to parents as clearly as I would like, so this is something for us to work on.

As always, we would always want to know if you were concerned that your child wasn't receiving the support they require, so please speak to your child's class teacher in the first instance to allow us to address your concerns.

And finally...

Thank you for your comments, which were insightful, interesting and relevant. Every questionnaire has been read and your responses will feed into our whole school self-review process.

This summary is a general response to some of the main issues raised in the parents' questionnaire. If you have any further thoughts, or would like a specific response to an individual concern, please contact me to discuss this further.

Overall, I am pleased to say that effective home-school communication is a strength of our school and one which contributes to our fantastic community spirit – at Ryarsh we are proud to be genuinely at the heart of the local community. We recognise that although we are a successful school, we can always improve further - as of course we are always 'forward thinking for a brighter future'!

Ruth Austin

March 2015