

Update on Heathlands Parent/Carer Survey 2016

As you know last year one of development priorities was working with parents so we wanted to assess the impact of our efforts. Our PTA "Friends of Heathlands" was established, we had many more parents attending key events e.g. parents evenings or the residential trip meeting and the year culminated in a very successful family learning day.

At the end of the summer term we sent out our annual parent s survey which is part of school self -evaluation. 41 forms were returned, some from families with more than one child in school. Your responses were overwhelmingly positive but we also appreciate knowing what your concerns are. In most cases the issues were raised by just a few parents but I am sure all parents will be interested in our response.

Behaviour – *Two parents commented that they feel poor behaviour may impact on their children's learning.*

We have now implemented a new behaviour strategy in school, have a designated focus room for pupils who need time out and have employed a behaviour mentor.

Site Security / School Gates – *One parent was concerned about the school gates because this could allow strangers access to the site and pupils could abscond.*

We are investigating how the gates could be closed and how there could be remote access to the office. This is complicated by our desire for it to be fully accessible for all. We also need to be sure that whilst making any change the normal functions of the school can continue. The land outside school is not ours so we cannot locate a keypad before the gate. At this time the land outside school is being considered for development so this also needs to be included in our planning.

We have therefore considered and strengthened the other arrangements in place to ensure pupils' safety which include rigorous procedures for signing in visitors and monitoring them on site. We have secure access to the premises e.g. coded keypads and mag locks on many doors. We have drafted "lock down" procedures for use in any emergency.

We have very good staff/ pupil ratios and each child is registered at the start of every lesson. If any children are missing this is quickly spotted and our missing child procedures are followed. We have also a curriculum focus this term on "keeping safe" so are teaching the children about how to protect themselves and make safe decisions.

Activities – *Some parents would like to see more extra-curricular activities available for pupils.*

In the past some after school activities have not been well attended because pupils are tied to the home school transport provided. Never the less we continue to offer after school

study club and youth club for older students and younger pupils can attend golf and gymnastics.

We have tried to increase the activities available to all ages of pupils during lunch breaks so there are a range of options including choir, film club, gardening, crochet, sewing, library.

We also work with other providers to support pupils' attendance at ballet, football, cubs and guides.

Speech and Language Therapy – *Two parents raised concerns about the amount of speech therapy children receive.*

Speech and Language therapy is provided in school by staff from the local NHS Trust. We work closely with therapists but it is their professional assessment which informs the amount of therapy each child receives. Heathlands teachers have additional specialist training in working with deaf children so therapy and communication targets should be addressed by all adults working with the children and integrated into the working day.

How do you like us to keep in touch?

In this year's survey we especially asked you as parents how you prefer the school to communicate with you. We want to make sure that all parents are kept informed and can feel involved in the school even if they live some distance away.

Most parents prefer us to communicate using text which we can do easily for short messages. This was closely followed by letters or email which are better suited to longer messages when more detail is required.

Only one parent preferred not to use any electronic communication. Some parents commented that they would like more detail in children's home school books. We have to carefully decide how much of teachers' time can be given to this instead of working directly with the pupils. . It was really pleasing to see how many of you are using the school App, Facebook page or website to keep informed.

We recognise that English is not the first language of all parents and some would especially welcome more translation into BSL. We are therefore investigating how to include more BSL on our website, have some key notices/letters translated into BSL and hope the next parental survey will be available in BSL.

Thank you

Our thanks to all the parents and carers who participated in the survey. Your views are really important to us!