

St Louis Catholic Primary School



PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE OUTCOMES 2014

This is what you think!

Thank you to all our families who replied.

We sent out 215 questionnaires and we received 95 replies. Your views are important and help the staff and Governors make the right decisions for your children.

Particular thanks go to all those people who made suggestions about how things can be improved. Answers on the next two pages are given in %. Every 1% represents 1 person's answer.

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First, we counted up all your ticks and wrote them as a % of the total answers. The higher the % the more people ticked the box. Please note that because numbers have to be rounded up or down, it is not always possible for each row to add up to 100%.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know or didn't answer
1	My child is happy at this school	81%	19%	0%	0%	0%
2	My child feels safe at this school	83%	17%	0%	0%	0%
3	My child is making progress	57%	40%	1%	0%	2%
4	My child is well looked after at this school	73%	27%	0%	0%	0%
5	My child is taught well at this school	68%	32%	0%	0%	0%
6	My child receives appropriate homework	52%	44%	4%	0%	1%
7	The school makes sure children are well behaved	74%	26%	0%	0%	0%
8	The school deals effectively with bullying	51%	25%	1%	0%	23%
9	The school is led and managed well	78%	22%	0%	0%	0%
10	The school responds well to my concerns	73%	26%	0%	0%	1%
11	I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress	55%	41%	1%	1%	2%
12	My child has the opportunity to participate in a wide range of non-curriculum activities such as sport, singing and drama	57%	35%	3%	2%	3%
13	Arrangements for my son/daughter to settle in when he or she started at the school were good	77%	21%	0%	0%	2%
14	My child knows who to go to in school if he/she has a problem	68%	32%	0%	0%	0%
15	Staff expect my child to work hard and do his or her best	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
16	Staff encourage my child to become mature and independent	66%	33%	0%	0%	1%
17	Staff explain how I can help my child at home and help me to support my child's learning	59%	34%	6%	0%	1%
18	I am pleased that my child attends a Catholic School	79%	21%	0%	0%	0%
19	I am happy with the opportunities for prayer and worship in the school	75%	23%	0%	0%	2%
20	The school provides a strong religious and spiritual ethos	76%	23%	0%	0%	1%

Then we added up the positive responses (agree and strongly agree) and the negative responses (disagree and strongly disagree) and ranked them in order, starting with the statements which had the most positive responses:

		Strongly agree/ agree	Disagree/ Strongly disagree
1	My child is happy at this school	100%	0%
2	My child feels safe at this school	100%	0%
4	My child is well looked after at this school	100%	0%
5	My child is taught well at this school	100%	0%
7	The school makes sure children are well behaved	100%	0%
9	The school is led and managed well	100%	0%
14	My child knows who to go to in school if he/she has a problem	100%	0%
15	Staff expect my child to work hard and do his or her best	100%	0%
18	I am pleased that my child attends a Catholic School	100%	0%
10	The school responds well to my concerns	99%	0%
16	Staff encourage my child to become mature and independent	99%	0%
20	The school provides a strong religious and spiritual ethos	99%	0%
13	Arrangements for my son/daughter to settle in when he or she started at the school were good	98%	0%
19	I am happy with the opportunities for prayer and worship in the school	98%	0%
3	My child is making progress	97%	1%
11	I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress	96%	1%
6	My child receives appropriate homework	96%	4%
17	Staff explain how I can help my child at home and help me to support my child's learning	93%	6%
12	My child has the opportunity to participate in a wide range of non-curriculum activities such as sport, singing and drama	92%	5%
8	The school deals effectively with bullying	76%	

Although the % answer to question 8 looks low this is because 22% of people who returned their questionnaire either did not answer or said they did not know. This type of response tends to happen when people have no experience of something.

Only 1 person said they did not agree that we dealt with bullying effectively. We know who this family is and we believe that this has now been dealt with. The Parent Focus Group will look at how we communicate our Bullying policy to parents to see how this can be improved. If you are not a member of the Parent Focus Group and would like to join or find out more, please contact the school office.

We are obviously pleased that your responses have been so positive but we are not complacent. For example, although you are generally happy with after school activities we know that parents of children in Years 1 and 2 would like more. This we are going to try to address. We are pleased that you have offered suggestions about how we can improve our school. We are going to listen to all your ideas.

On the back of the questionnaire was a space for the things you liked the most and the things you wanted to improve. The following pages show what you wrote:

THINGS YOU LIKED THE MOST

The School and Staff

Multicultural school; diversity is celebrated

School is traditional

Small, close knit like a family/unity of school, everyone knows one another

School is high achieving/have high expectations and standards

Teachers have positive attitudes, hard working and know the children well

School leaders are always trying to improve our school/ lead our school well

School is friendly, welcoming and helpful

Staff are professional/ continuity of staff

Kind, caring, safe or good atmosphere

Parents are treated well/are welcomed into the school/encouraged to work with the school

Staff are approachable/ caring/ fantastic/ kind/ helpful/ friendly

Well-being of children is important to all the staff

Good balance between discipline and respect

Children and staff are happy - people 'want' to be at this school

Staff explain how I can help my child

Office staff are kind and helpful

Most teachers are always at the end of the phone and supportive

School is well organised

Good morals and code of conduct

School works with parents to improve behaviour

Problems are dealt with quickly

Staff give the children confidence/ treat them as individuals/ with dignity

Children are inspired by adults in the school/ strong ethos of aspiration

Children and staff are happy - people 'want' to be at this school

THINGS YOU LIKED THE MOST

The Children

Children are encouraged to have positive attitudes

Children are well looked after

Children are taught respect/ good manners

Children are settled and secure

Children are encouraged to work hard

Children are given lots of praise

Children are responsible for setting and achieving their own targets

Good discipline and behaviour

My child feels safe

Children respect adults

Children are happy/ happy atmosphere

Children are polite

The whole child is nurtured, not just a focus on academic results

Children are excited to come to school

Children can progress at their own speed

The Buddy system

Children are encouraged to become more independent and mature

Good conduct and behaviour of the children/ children encouraged/ helped to behave well

My child is making good progress

Children are friendly

THINGS YOU LIKED THE MOST

Learning & the Curriculum

Lots of singing and music opportunities

Children are given opportunities to excel

Good/ excellent teaching

Good learning opportunities, including trips out of school

Support that children get both for learning and for personal development

Standards in school are high

Children who are bright are given a chance to learn with older children

Good information about how the children are progressing

Interesting activities

Children's potential in music or singing is recognised

Lots of opportunities to come into school and see what the children are doing

Rewards for doing well e.g. merits, stickers etc

Termly topics are interesting

THINGS YOU LIKED THE MOST

Religion & Worship

The school is a Catholic school

Good links with St Clare's

Thoughtful assemblies which parents are invited to and feel part of

Good opportunities for prayer and worship

Catholic/religious teaching and Catholic ethos

Good ethos

THINGS YOU LIKED THE MOST

Extra Curricular, Buildings & Other

Lots of events that parents can attend

Good variety of activities

Breakfast Club

School diary keeps parents informed of what is going on

Wide range of after school clubs

Rhyme challenge and Story evening in Reception

Grand Parent's day

Smart uniform

Good opportunities

Twitter update

PTA always work hard

School is secure/ safe

Thank you on behalf of all the staff and Governors of St Louis for all your positive comments. Knowing that you appreciate all that we do makes us feel valued and appreciated.

The following pages show your suggestions for things you would like to change or improve. The comments in bold are those of the parents and in italics are the school response.

THINGS YOU WANT TO CHANGE OR IMPROVE

After School Activities

An after school club for working parents (7 people mentioned this)

We have previously considered having an after school club for working parents and have completed two feasibility studies. There are two main reasons why we have not been able to go ahead:

- *the amount we would need to charge to cover salaries, energy, resources etc would make it too expensive for parents and we do not have enough money in our budget to subsidise the cost to make it cheaper*
- *the space needed would encroach on existing after school clubs that we currently run.*

However, we know that being able to work and have your children properly cared for is important to you so we are going to look at this again. More information will be coming to you shortly.

More after school clubs for Year 1/2 & 3 children (8 people)

More opportunities for sport, drama and singing after school lower down the school

Science, maths or language club

We agree with your comments and know there is an imbalance with not enough for our younger children. This we are addressing. All of our staff currently run at least one after school club so it may be that we have to 'buy in' external people to run these additional clubs. However, the leadership team are looking at all aspects of this and will try to incorporate your ideas for singing, drama, languages and science as well as sport and creativity. We are also currently looking at 'Golden Time' on a Friday afternoon to see if this can be improved to include a wider range of activities.

More and longer after school activities

Unfortunately, our staff are already offering as many clubs as they can and they also have meetings and work, including marking, to do after school. However, we are looking to see if external people can offer clubs and it may be possible that the clubs they run can be longer.

More after school clubs to support learning, particularly for those children who are falling behind e.g. in maths and English (2 people mentioned this)

We feel that our children with additional needs are already well catered for by the extra resources they are given during the day and before school starts eg 'Word Shark', 'My Maths etc. However, if this is something you are concerned about please contact the class teacher.

Do more for the most able children e.g. children who are gifted and/or talented

Our most able mathematicians in Key Stage 2 can attend a free club on a Thursday night and if they are good at sport, singing or drama they have more opportunities at our school to show and develop their talents than they would do at other primary schools. However, we are always looking for further ways of developing our most able children so as the new Curriculum is introduced in Sep 2014 we will be certain to keep these children at the forefront of our minds.

THINGS YOU WANT TO CHANGE OR IMPROVE

Homework

More maths homework (2 people)

Regular 'My Maths' homework

More homework (3 people)

Too much homework at times which causes too much pressure

More shorter homework which addresses very specific things like punctuation

Homework diary in Year 4

Inconsistency in the amount of homework that is given out. Sometimes more is given to younger classes than older

Homework is always a contentious issue with people being equally divided between those that want more and those that want less. We tend to use homework in our school to practise things, finish work off or research ideas in preparation for lessons coming up. Many of our children use our Homework Club at lunchtime so when you think your child does not have enough it could be that they are being proactive and getting it done before they come home! All children have been given log on details for 'My Maths' so they should be doing it at home independently without being asked by the teacher.

Some important things to bear in mind:

- *Research shows that homework has no direct impact on academic success and time would be better spent on other activities such as sport and music which help produce a 'more rounded' child*
- *activities such as beavers, brownies, cubs etc develop social, team building and problem solving skills which are proven to have an impact on a child's success*
- *the one indicator for a child's potential to succeed is related to the amount of books a family has at home. Extensive research has gone into this and this factor is more important, and has been consistently so, than wealth, social class, housing conditions, size of families etc*
- *Your children are TIRED when they come home at night! Think about yourselves when you have had a busy day at work. Do you want to do more of the same? Or do you want to give your brain a rest and do something different like watch TV, read the newspaper, see friends or go out to an exercise class? It is the same for your children!*

With regard to your general comments about inconsistencies in homework and whether diaries can be available in Year 4 I have asked for Miss Tobin, Mrs Markwick and Mr Horsfield to review the homework that is being set in the Key Stages they are responsible for so we can address your more general queries.

THINGS YOU WANT TO CHANGE OR IMPROVE

Classroom Organisation

Smaller class sizes

More support for children with additional needs

More support for gifted and talented children

When working in a group some children are held back

We would love to have smaller class sizes as we know this is important. However, we are a very popular school with 4 times as many children applying to our school as we have places for. Every class currently has a waiting list and as soon as one child leaves another one joins. However, we do have at least one teaching assistant per class who is well trained to support your child's development and learning.

It is always a challenge to ensure that children of all levels are having work which is appropriate to their needs. We know, because we look at the information carefully, that different groups of children do as well as each other in our school. So there must be something in the way that we target our support and resources that works. However, we also know that there are times when things get overlooked too because schools are busy places. If your child has additional needs that you think are not being met, you can:

- *contact the school office who will arrange for the most appropriate person to speak to you. It could be the class teacher, the person in charge of additional needs learning (called the Sendco) or a Key Stage leader*
- *If you feel your child is gifted and talented in one or more areas and has been overlooked, then either complete the form attached to this document or you can ask the office to make an appointment for you with our Assistant Head Teacher, Mrs Perkins, who has responsibility for this area.*

Children

Bright children can be overlooked, particularly for awards like 'Pupil of the Week' (2 people said this)

Children are disappointed if they don't get 'Pupil of the Week'

This has been discussed with the teachers and lists of children who have received 'Pupil of the Week' are being kept so that no children are now inadvertently overlooked. It is important that children remember that the award is given for recognising achievement that is extra special but can only be given to one person so this may lead to disappointment.

Greater celebration of children's achievements in assembly

Our Friday assembly is for 'Celebration and giving thanks' and children know that they can bring in awards etc from home to be shared in assembly. They can and do share their successes with their House captains and Vice captains and these go in their 'House Book'. If you are aware of something that has been overlooked, please let the office staff

THINGS YOU WANT TO CHANGE OR IMPROVE

Children

know and they will ensure it is mentioned to the teaching staff concerned or the person who is leading assembly that week.

More information about how my child is doing

More opportunities to discuss a child's progress

More information about progress

More information about what my child is learning

Would like to know what sort of week my child has had

Parents evening in Autumn term rather than a 'drop in'

It is very important to us that you feel you know how well your child is doing. We currently offer:

- *A 'Welcome' meeting at the start of the Autumn Term with the new class teacher so you know what your child will be learning throughout the year*
- *A parent consultation evening by appointment for Foundation Stage, Years 1, 2 and 3 in the Autumn Term and a 'drop in' on the same evening for parents of children in Years 4, 5, and 6. If your child is in Years 4, 5 and 6 and you want an individual appointment, then please let the class teacher know. However there must be a reason for this other than a 'chat and meet the teacher' otherwise the drop in is what is appropriate to you.*
- *A parent consultation evening in January to discuss the results of the Autumn Term assessments*
- *A Spring Progress Report*
- *A further parent consultation evening in June (by invitation only)*
- *A final report in July*
- *An opportunity to discuss this report with the class teacher*
- *Arrangements in Foundation Stage include additional opportunities e.g. 'stay and play' or the opportunity to come into class on the day of the welcoming ceremony.*
- *At least three extra appointments (SEN Review days) are offered throughout the year for parents of a child with additional needs.*
- *An individual appointment to meet with the class teacher at any time if you have any concerns.*

We do try to keep you informed whenever we can. However, we have nearly 220 children in our school and it would be impossible to give an individual level of feedback for every child on more occasions than we already do. You can assume that 'No news is good news' and if you hear nothing everything is going well! If we have concerns we will contact you. If you have concerns which you want to talk through with a teacher you can make an appointment through the school office.

More detailed school reports (but did not say in which way)

Our school reports cover attainment (national curriculum levels for Years 1 to 6), progress, attendance and punctuality and how well a child is doing generally. I am not

THINGS YOU WANT TO CHANGE OR IMPROVE

Children

sure what else they could cover. We changed our reports to ensure they were manageable for the teacher, easy to read and understand for the parents, up to date and personal to the child. If you are not sure about anything or want more information, you can always come into school and discuss a report with the class teacher. This is one of the reasons why we give out our school reports two weeks before the end of term so this can be organised if a parent would like it. This is different to some other local schools who give out reports close to or on the last day of term. I do agree that some schools have reports that have a lot more 'words' but they are often from a computer-picked bank of statements that could apply to any child or have little relevance or meaning to the parent. Think - when you read the report do you recognise your child and what the teacher has written? If you do, then the report has captured what you need to know.

Give the children a questionnaire so their views can be collected

We will be doing this once our analysis of the parent questionnaire has finished.

Communication with Parents

There are times when information is given late or changes are made at the last minute. This can cause problems with childcare

We know this is very important and we do not want to inconvenience you. It is something we have worked hard to improve but we know that things can still go wrong. Sometimes it is just the nature of schools – they are very busy places. If a member of staff is sick or the weather is adverse, then events can get cancelled at the last minute. We try really hard to minimise this but if we do need to get in touch with you, then we will use twitter or contact you via your mobile phone. We know that at the moment it is difficult to access twitter on a tablet but we hope the new version of the website will sort this out. In the meantime follow our school on twitter by having alerts sent to your phone. It is easy to do! And we will continue to keep cancellations to the minimum and/or give you as much notice as possible.

More information about the 11+ (Year 1 parent)

Up until last year we held information evenings for parents in Years 3 and 4 about the 11+. However, as the 11+ changed in 2013 and none of the primary schools really knew what the new test was going to look like it was not possible to hold the meetings. Now that we know what the new test is like we will hold the information evenings again during the next school year. However, Year 1 is too early to be thinking about the 11+ as it could and probably will be different by the time your child gets to Year 6.

Individual diaries so that parents can see what children are learning during the day

This would take too long for either the child or the teacher to complete and would eat into valuable teaching time, meaning that some activities or lessons could not be taught.

THINGS YOU WANT TO CHANGE OR IMPROVE

Communication with Parents

More advice about how to help my child at home

Please see the previous answer about homework for the types of things a child can be doing out of school that will help them.

If your child has specific things that they need help with, then the class teacher should be telling you how you can do this. If this is not happening, then ask the school office for an appointment.

In general, no matter what the age of the child:

- *Listen to your child read every evening. It does not have to be a school book - it can be a comic, newspaper or subtitles from the TV. If you cannot do it every night, then do it as often as you can.*
- *Make sure your child sees you reading so they know how important reading is.*
- *Read your child a bedtime story - they are never too old for this!*
- *Encourage your child to keep a writing notebook so they can jot down things they think of, or want to write about or interesting phrases they hear that they can use in their own writing. Encourage them to bring their notebook into school so they can share it with their teacher.*
- *Sit down and watch the news or factual programmes together and discuss them. It does not have to be a long event - just 'Wasn't that interesting when.....' 'I never knew.....' This will not only help your child's general knowledge but improve their speaking skills. Good speaking skills are essential for good writing.*
- *Ensure your child has a good bedtime routine - no TV or computer on in the bedroom when they get into bed and 7 pm is the latest time for children in years up to Year 3.*

Religion & Prayer

More emphasis on the Rosary, particularly in October

The Rosary is an important prayer and we focus on it in October and in several of the Come and See RE topics in Key Stage 2. We also have a Rosary prayer club that children can come to during lunchtimes in October. All they need is a set of Rosary beads.

More opportunities for Mass to be at 9.15am so parents don't have to go home and come back

Unfortunately, we have to be guided by the commitments and responsibilities that Father John has. As Dean he has many commitments beyond his two parishes and we are lucky and privileged that he comes into our school as often as he does. First Friday Mass is offered at 8.30am so parents can come to Mass as they drop off in the morning. Our recent 'Way of the Cross' Holy Week assemblies were at 9.10am so that parents could stay on. Our Leavers Mass which everyone is invited to (not just year 6 parents), is at 2pm.

THINGS YOU WANT TO CHANGE OR IMPROVE

Children - Other

Opportunities for children to make 'Christmas boxes' to be sent to Charity

We will consider this as an idea when we decide which charities we are raising money for at Christmas. Each year we always support a range of charities and these include CAFOD, the Florence Nightingale House, schools in Kenya and the British Legion.

School day to start earlier than 8.55am

Arrangements for changing the start and finish time of the school day have to be made by the Governing Body. If you have some good reasons for wanting to do this, then please contact the school office who will forward your correspondence to the Clerk to the Governors. Please remember to explain why you think there should be a change.

Would like to pay for lunches on a monthly basis

We provide weekly menus and accept weekly payments because that is the simplest arrangement. The experience of offering multiple weeks of menus does cause confusion and often parents ring up more often to check what their child is having or when their child has a meal booked because there is a longer time lapse and they simply cannot remember. In this way much more work is created. Most parents want weekly arrangements as it is more affordable for parents. However, if you wish to receive 4 weekly menus and make a four weekly payment, please contact Mrs Bellingy and she will see if this can be arranged for you.

Contributions to extra curricular activities e.g. discos, trips clubs are too high

We only charge what we need to to cover the cost of running the trip or activity. If you would like your child to attend an event but cannot afford it, please contact Mrs Bellingy in confidence. Wherever possible we will try to support you financially. If in doubt, please contact us. Your confidentiality is assured. If your child is in receipt of free school meals, we can support your child in lots of ways so please let us know how we can help.

Children do not get taken in promptly at the start of the school day

We are sorry that this has happened. Only in very exceptional circumstances should there be a delay; for example sometimes this happens on First Friday Mass days if Mass has overrun. Our staff will be vigilant in making sure each day starts promptly.

More opportunities for my child to drink water

Children have lots of opportunities to drink water during the day though some children seem to suddenly want a drink when hard work is involved!! Our teachers are pretty adept at spotting those children who have a genuine need for a drink and those that are time wasting. Your child should have a drink before they come to school or at Breakfast Club. Then they can have drinks every break time and lunchtime and drinks at appropriate times during lessons, including Foundation Stage. In Key Stage 1 the children use the water fountains; in Key Stage 2 they have their own water bottles. On hot days the lunchtime supervisors provide extra drinks on the playground for all children. Obviously if your child has a medical condition which would cause them to need individual arrangements not covered by the above, then please let us know.

THINGS YOU WANT TO CHANGE OR IMPROVE

Children - Other

Younger siblings not being able to attend school discos (2 people)

Younger children can attend if their parents are helpers but it is too noisy and busy for very young children to be left on their own. Supervision would be too difficult and we would not be insured for younger children.

Better supervision in the lunch hall so that all children eat their lunch

Our children are well supervised in the hall and the youngest children have the longest time to eat their lunch. However, we do have two sittings so it is not practical for children to stay longer than 40 minutes. Mrs Bellingy and Mrs Schmidt keep a very close eye on who is eating what and will contact any parents where we think there is a problem. Provided children have an amount of food which is in proportion to their age and something they like then most children will eat their lunch in 40 minutes. If your child has a medical reason (or something else we need to know about) that would mean this is not possible then please let Mrs Bellingy know and she will take this into consideration.

More opportunities for parents to do things with other parents

This is a great idea! We will bring this up at the next PTA meeting and they will hopefully be in contact with you about what ideas you have.

Premises

Convert some of the field into a car park or create a car park somewhere else

Improve parking (2 people)

Improve drop off or pick up

Improve parking by either creating a car park or altering drop off/ pick up times

We would love to do any or all of these things as parking is a nightmare for children, parents and staff. At times it is unsafe for children and causes great difficulty with the office staff having to deal with many telephone and written complaints from our neighbours. While we look into this (by contacting the Sisters of St Louis and the local council) to see what options we have, remember to take care and wherever possible set off sooner and park further away where it is less congested.

Better lighting outside on the playgrounds to make walking safer, particularly after school discos, parents evening etc

We have recently repaired all the lighting on the playground but will check again to see if there are any 'blind spots' that can be improved. We also have to be mindful of our neighbours so they are not annoyed by bright lights coming on and disturbing them.

THINGS YOU WANT TO CHANGE OR IMPROVE

Premises

Bigger cloakrooms and better toilet facilities

Our toilets have all recently been refurbished and are of a good standard. However, we know our cloakrooms are cramped. We would like to extend our school so that all our facilities are larger and should we secure the funds to do so our cloakrooms will be our number one priority.

On wet days allow the children into school earlier

This we already do. The outside doors to the classrooms will be open and the children can come in straight away (but not before 8.40am).

Stop adults and children cycling/scooting up the drive

Pedestrians have priority on the drive. Cyclists should proceed with caution and dismount when they get to the black gate. The same rule applies to scooters. We do not want to stop cyclists because we want to encourage our families to cycle to school but we will remind all families about cycling with care.

Curriculum - Maths

More information about how maths is taught

Change the way we teach maths so it is more like secondary school

Would like more guidance in supporting my child at home e.g. in maths (2 people said this)

In September 2014 there will be some changes to what is taught in each year group. This is because of changes to the National Curriculum. The way in which we teach mathematics won't change because we follow current guidance and thinking. However, we know that this can be very different to how we were taught as children or the way mathematics is taught in some other countries. Therefore, from September 2014 we will be offering Parent Workshops that will hopefully explain more about how we teach maths and how you can better support your child at home.

We prepare our children well for secondary school and in comparison to many other primary schools we have much higher levels of achievement at the end of Year 6. For those children who are ready they experience ideas and methods that they will meet at secondary school but this is not appropriate for all children. We work closely with our secondary school partners and take advice from them so that our children make a successful transition.

Record progress made on My Maths

We do not really understand this comment as all progress is logged centrally on our computer. We know which children have been doing My Maths at home and the areas they have done well and the areas that have been more difficult for them.

THINGS YOU WANT TO CHANGE OR IMPROVE

Curriculum - Reading

Should be more comments in reading diary by the teacher

Children should be able to change their reading books each day

Guided reading should be done by the teacher

Reading is an essential skill, which is taught in a variety of ways. Reading will be taught in school every single day, but not in the way that we remember it from our own school days. Gone are the days where teachers would sit and listen to every child read, every day. There is not the time to do this any more. Now, the emphasis is on the teacher teaching reading skills in lessons and there is an expectation that these skills will be practised at home by you listening to your child read. This means that your child will be taught to read but the reading diary will not necessarily show this or be signed by the teacher. It is just not practical to do so. The length of time it would take for this to be completed would mean that many other things would not get done.

Children who have difficulties in learning to read do have extra support, either through the teacher, teaching assistant or Reading Buddy and they will read more often. If you think your child falls into this category and you have concerns, please contact your child's class teacher. Every child from Reception to Year 3 has small group phonic work every day for 15 min, another essential skill in being able to read and spell. Our teaching assistants are very well trained in teaching reading through Guided Reading sessions and working with children who need extra support.

The issue about changing reading books is just to do with time practicalities, particularly lower down the school. Children as a group can take up to 20 min to change their reading book, by the time they have read the front cover, looked at the pictures, decided whether they want to read it or not. While they are doing this there are obviously other things they are not doing or learning. As the priority for our school is to develop writing skills in our children we try to give more of the time to this wherever possible. This can mean that some aspects such as book changing do not occur as often as you would like. If your child does not change their book very often, remember that reading books from home or the library or other sorts of reading such as comics, signs and notices are just as important.

Curriculum - Writing & Communication

Weekly spelling tests (2 people)

The children do have spelling tests in school where appropriate but the best measure of whether children have learned their spellings is whether they use them correctly in their writing. This is often the way teachers assess spelling. Tests can be very useful but sometimes the children do well in tests (which leads to a false sense of security) but then do not apply it to their work.

THINGS YOU WANT TO CHANGE OR IMPROVE

Curriculum - Writing & Communication

More help given for individual children (writing)

We spend a high proportion of our budget on resources (including people) to provide extra help and guidance in class. This is across all curriculum areas. However, we know that writing is harder for children than reading and so this is a key priority for the school. Every child should know how to improve their work and get the right level of support to do this. But we are always reviewing what we do and how we do it so we will consider this comment carefully.

Curriculum - Languages

More language lessons

French throughout the school

As part of the changes to the National Curriculum due to take place in September 2014 all children in Years 3, 4, 5 & 6 will learn a modern foreign language. In this school we have chosen to teach French. Once this has been successfully implemented we will look at whether it is feasible to teach French at Key Stage 1. At the moment our emphasis at Key Stage 1 is to get all children to a good standard of reading and writing in English. But we are looking at whether it is possible to offer an after school language club for our more able children at Key Stage 1.

Curriculum - Sport

Different sports like tennis and archery

More PE and sport

We are currently reviewing all our PE provision, including what we offer and whether it is during the day or after school. We would love to offer more unusual activities like archery and if you are aware of anyone who runs such activities, we would love to have their contact details. We currently have a tennis coach who is working in our school and hope to develop this further.

THINGS YOU WANT TO CHANGE OR IMPROVE

Curriculum - IT

More opportunities to use IT (in and out of school)

Improving the availability of IT for our children is a key priority for the school and we have recently made a bid to the William Harding charity for £30,000 which would enable us to install wireless throughout the school, install more interactive whiteboards and purchase tablets for the children to use. Keep reading our newsletters to see if we have been successful!

Curriculum - Other

Workbooks for children to follow at home

Unfortunately, we don't use workbooks in school as they tend to be expensive and can only be used once. However, we are always looking out for new resources so we will bear this comment in mind when making purchases.

Curriculum - Other

Would like more interesting or better trips (3 people)

We are not quite sure what these comments mean as there were no suggestions of what might be more interesting or better than the trips we currently offer. In deciding which trips or visits to undertake we look at the educational value of the trip versus the cost. Does it fit in with what the children are learning or is it something that we are not teaching and it is therefore 'plugging a gap'? We know that due to the cost of transport (e.g £200 upwards) trips can be expensive so we try to include trips that are walking or town based and wherever possible we subsidise them. Obviously if we are subsidising trips that is money which can't be spent on other things.

We also arrange for several visitors to come to school, for example Farmer Moore with his farm. This was a fantastic opportunity for all the children in the school to experience farm life 'up close and personal'. We have also had Punch and Judy in Year 2 and the Royal Shakespeare company in Key Stage 2. All in all we think we have the balance right but if you know of any good places to visit that are of a reasonable cost, please let Mrs Bellingy in the office know and we will listen to all your ideas!

THINGS YOU WANT TO CHANGE OR IMPROVE

Other - Website

To be kept more up to date

More things online

More communication by text and email

We are currently in the process of upgrading our website so that it 'can do more things' and our aim is to have this ready by September 2014. In the meantime please follow us on Twitter (via messages sent to your phone) and keep your mobile phone details up to date so we can text you if necessary.

Other - Uniform

Uniform available locally (2 people)

Girls being able to wear trousers in the winter

A few years ago we had problems with the kilt manufacturer when they went out of business and no-one was able to supply us. John Lewis were the only company who were prepared to help us by sourcing a manufacturer of our specific tartan and having it made into kilts. Because of this we have asked them to stock all of our uniform and in this way we can be certain of always having a supplier including those items which are difficult to get or that other local suppliers can't or don't want to supply. Trousers and white shirts are available from any shop including supermarkets and ties are available in school. This year we have changed the summer dresses for girls to make it easier for you to buy them as we know this has been difficult for you. The green and white check dresses are available locally. With regard to girls' trousers our school has decided that this is not part of our uniform as we want to be distinctive from other schools.

Other - Playground

Better playground equipment (2 people)

Better zoned areas on playground so that children can do activities like skipping without anyone running across

Better playground

We work closely with our children to listen to what they want for the playground (within reason!). We are limited by the space we have and unlike some other schools our children are separated by age to help them feel more happy and secure. We have recently spent a lot of money renewing the playground markings and buying playground equipment. Unfortunately, our Key Stage 2 children are not always very good at taking care of equipment and as a result equipment gets lost or damaged. We can spend quite a lot of money only to find the equipment does not last long. There is no easy solution to this but I will ask the School Council to consider this at their next meeting.

