

Simonstone St. Peter's Church of England School



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Mission Statement - 'Keys to faith and knowledge'

Dear Parents and Carers,

Each year we conduct an anonymous parental questionnaire to try and find out the viewpoints of parents. As a School, we value the opinions of parents and try to address any concerns within budgetary complaints. This year we had 46 questionnaires returned (36.5%) which is above the local authority average of 27.7%.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond. Some of your comments from returned questionnaires:

What you like about our School:

'To be part of Simonstone School is to be a member of a big, loving family. My main concern is my son's happiness and he feels happy every day going to school.'

'A safe and caring environment that helps children to be motivated to learn.'

'The atmosphere is warm friendly and welcoming, encouraging an approachable open door place for families to feel that they can work with staff to support their children.'

'The school has a strong focus on building a sense of community across the whole school, where younger and older pupils often collaborate with one another.'

'High standard of discipline.'

'Fantastic new head who has already implemented changes to the school what have moved the school forward.'

'The safety of the children'

'Each individual is celebrated, regardless of ability, background etc. children are given the confidence to be comfortable in their own skin.'

'Great teaching staff who really care for the children and encourage them to do well.'

'Excellent teaching with a personal approach.'

'The school treats each child as an individual and responds to their educational needs accordingly.'

'The school's Christian ethos.'

'The school reinforces the morals and manners we teach our child at home. They also encourage and praise the children constantly for their achievements.'

'Strong links with the local community and Church.'

'Excellent focus on getting the core or basics right. Great emphasis from the beginning on Maths and English as well as encouraging support from parents which makes it feel like a partnership with school.'

'Fantastic outdoor space and facilities at the school.'

'Recent changes to the style and format of newsletters have made a welcome change, it is fantastic to see the children taking part and having ownership of articles.'

'Moving the school forward to support boys' learning: sports clubs etc. This used to be a concern.'

What you would like us to improve (and responses from the Governing Body):

'Permanent appointment of a male teacher'

As the governing body are equal opportunities employers, all vacancies are filled by the best candidate for the job. School workforce statistics released by the Department of Education show that the number of male teachers working in Britain has fallen for the fifth time in as many years. Compared to 2010, when a little over 1 in 4 teachers were men, last year the ratio had dropped to just 1 in 5. We have some very positive male role models who come into School on a weekly basis including: Rev'd Robert Fielding; Mr. Frayne and Mr. Galea (music teachers),

Mr. Aizlewood (chairman of the governing body), Mr. Pye (ICT technician), Mr. Clarke (football coach) and several other sports coaches.

'Road outside school is a concern with speeding drivers and poor visibility round the bend'

'A lollipop lady for the busy road, very dangerous crossing'

'Better parking for parents'

School Lane and the area around School has been designated a 20 mile an hour zone and we work closely with the Community Police and the Highways Agency to look at ways at reducing speeding and making drivers' more aware. One of our main concerns is that the speed limit changes from a 60 mile/hour zone to a 20/mile/hour zone. After a meeting in school, the Highways agency were looking into road markings to highlight this, however this has been hampered with Government funding cuts and is not considered a priority. We have also used traffic calming measures such as deploying the SPID (borrowed from Sabden) and the children have produced posters to display outside the school's gates reminding driver's to cut their speed. The children in school were also involved in a road safety campaign run by the Governors and Community Police to raise awareness.

There has always been concerns about the dangers children face when crossing the roads around school. In previous years the Governing Body along with Councilor Hill tried to secure a School Crossing Patrol, but school did not meet the necessary criteria. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to fund our own School Crossing Patrol Officer.

Inconsiderate and dangerous parking in the immediate area surrounding School continues to cause problems. In liaison with 'Safer Travel' we have now got yellow boards on the pavements outside school/by the yellow zig-zags advising parents/carers that this is a 'no parking/dropping off' area. We have regular patrols by our designated Community Police Officers who will issue fixed penalties to drivers who ignore this. Unfortunately, we are not in position (or are unlikely to be in the near future) where we have the available land or finances to build a car park.

'School hall on main site'

This is something that comes up every year. The governors would be very keen to facilitate this should the opportunity arise. We have previously applied to the Diocese for funding for a school hall adjacent to the playgrounds but the application was turned down. At the moment, due to financial cutbacks only essential building and maintenance works are being funded by the local authority and Diocese. However, as a governing body this is something we will continue to pursue.

'More diverse extra-curricular activities for all year groups'

'A greater range of after-school sports clubs rather than just football'

School have offered the following clubs throughout the school year. Some of them take place all year round and others are generally per half term.

Year 2 - 6 Nature and Eco-club (all year)

Year 5/6 Football (all year)
Year 3 - 6 Netball (2 terms) at Oakhill College
Year 1/2 Athletics
Year 3 - 6 Tennis Coaching at Simonstone Tennis Club
Year 5/6 Dance Club
Dads and Lads Club - Reception
Year 1/2 Christmas Craft club
Year 1/2 Christmas Baking Club
Year 5/6 Silk Painting Club
Year 5/6 Tag Rugby
Year 1/2 Street Dance)
Year 3/4 Multiskills
Year 3/4 Athletics
Year 5/6 Chess/Board Games
Year 1/2 Easter Craft club
Year 1/2 Athletics
Year 5/6 Cookery Club
KS2 Choir (2 terms)

We do try to run as many extra curricular activities as possible and over a range of activities, but we are restricted with the number of staff that we have available (as we are a small school) and also the space, in that it is not always possible to run more than one club at any one time. All the staff in school run either a lunchtime club or an after-school activity at some point during the school year. The staff in school work extremely hard and frequently have in excess of 100 books per night to mark ready for the following day. Assessment for learning is key to your child's development and progress and this, along with planning the following day's lessons is extremely time consuming. Staff do need to have a work/life balance and it would be unrealistic and unfair to put further demands on them.

We are unable to use the hall for before or after-school activities as this is used by OOSE to provide a much needed child care service. This means that we are unable to offer indoor sports, such as kurling and short tennis in the hall before/after school. We do work closely with OOSE and they have agreed to offer an after-school club/sports activity at least every term which will be open to all children in the school. Clubs they have planned are: Kurling, Street Dance and KS1 Football.

We continue to use part of our Primary School Sports Funding to increase the quality and frequency of our sporting provision and after school sports based clubs. Unfortunately, when running a club, there are restrictions on the number of children who can take part for health and safety reasons and therefore we cannot offer these to everybody. Some activities are more suited to different age groups and we are aware that many of the sporting activities are aimed at KS2 children. To address this, next year, we are planning on running additional after-school sports clubs in the Spring and Summer Term for reception. We will also look at offering clubs that are suited for a more diverse age-range eg running clubs.

We are keen to give the children as many sporting experiences as possible. This year, if we have had a large number of children wishing to access the sports club run by Mrs Topham/SportsCool on a Wednesday, then we have paid for an additional coach to come into school.

We do try to offer a variety of after-school clubs. This year we introduce 'Choir'; run on a Monday after-school and this is open to all the juniors. Next year, we are hoping to work closely with Read School and look at some joint after-school clubs.

The governing body is also very grateful to Mr. Clarke, one of our parents who is giving up his time to help with football and cricket .

If any other parents have the expertise to run an after school club, please let us know and we will make the necessary arrangements.

'More things in the infant playground'

'More opportunities to take the classroom outside and explore.'

We have been striving to make improvements in this area. The infant store has been relocated and the wooden play area dismantled; this has enabled us to enlarge the playground tarmac area and scooters have been purchased. A new 'Trim Trail' has been erected at the bottom end of the field for all KS1 children, not only for enjoyment, but to further develop their physical development as part of the curriculum.

A 'nature hut' has been installed in the school grounds, and FOSS funded the new Story Chair and benches for curriculum use.

An area that we are keen to develop is the 'Conservation area' which we would allow us to take the classroom outside. We are currently exploring the need for planning permission to replace the existing wooden fence with 'secure' fencing along the roadside. Once this is in place, we plan to replace/improve the pond area and create an 'outside classroom' for all age groups.

This is a priority for 2016 - 2017.

'Sessions for parents to educate them how to encourage and support their child with homework'

'More innovative and targeted approach to homework'

This is an area that school will consider in the future. Teachers set homework to reinforce or extend tasks that have been completed in class. Homework tasks are differentiated to meet the needs of the child and we always aim to make them as engaging as possible. The teachers try hard to ensure that homework guidelines are clear but if you are in any doubt you are very welcome to contact them via telephone or by calling in at School for clarification. We also offer curriculum meetings for parents of different year groups throughout the year to explain how certain skills and concepts are taught. In February we held an 'Information Evening' for parents regarding changes to the National Curriculum. School published an 'End of Year Expectations' booklet for each year group and these were sent home to parents so that they could support their child with their targets.

'Better and earlier communication regarding school events/dressing up days/awards'

'Text messaging service is inconsistent'

School subscribe to a text messaging service and Mrs Clarke at the beginning of each academic year, on receipt of the data collection sheets, updates the system and sends out a 'test' text. School have a record of all texts sent successfully, including the date and time.

Newsletters are sent out on a fortnightly basis. These are in a new format and now feature articles written by the children, which involves a lot more management. Thus it is not feasible to send out a newsletter every week. However, for important information, additional letters are sent out to parents. Important diary dates are featured in the newsletter at the beginning of each half term and the text service is used purely as a 'reminder' closer to the time. Paper copies of the newsletter are sent out with each child and there are always some spare ones in the reception area for parents to pick up. In addition to this, copies are available on the school website.

School are looking to make improvements to the school website in the next academic year and also to look at other on-line forms of communication.

Responses to individual questions

Below is a breakdown of the positive responses to each question asked in the questionnaire and a comparison given with the project results throughout the local authority.

It is important to note that in some questions, parents failed to put a response and therefore the response was neither positive or negative.

Question 1 - My child enjoys School - 100% positive response/LA 96.7%

Question 2 - My child is making good progress in School - 93.5% positive response/LA 93.9%

Question 3 - Children behave well in the School - 97.8% positive response/LA 93%

Question 4 - The School helps me support my child's learning at home e.g. with homework - 93.5% positive response/LA 91.7.

Question 5 - I feel welcome in School - 97.8% positive response/LA 96.4%

Question 6 - My child is always learning new things in School - 97.8% positive response/LA 95.9%

Question 7 - I am kept informed about my child's progress - 89.1% positive response/LA 85.5%

Question 8 - The school takes account of my questions, concerns or suggestions - 91.3% positive response/LA 87.3%

Question 9 - My child knows what he/she has to do to improve - 93.5% positive response/LA 84.4%

Question 10 - The School expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best - 100% positive response/LA 96%

Question 11 - The School works in close partnership with parents - 89.1% positive response/LA 88.2%

Question 12 - The School is helping my child to become mature, responsible and independent - 95.7% positive response/LA 95.4%

Question 13 - The School provides a range of 'extra' activities outside lesson time - 80.4% positive response - LA 85.8%

Question 14 - My child is safe and well cared for at School - 100% positive response/LA 97%

Question 15 - The School values children's views/opinions - 82.6% positive response/LA 89.5%

Question 16 - My child is not bullied or harassed in School - 91.3% positive response/LA 88.2%

Question 17 - The School is well led and managed - 95.7% positive response/LA 94.4%

Question 18 - My child is treated fairly - 91.3% positive response/LA 94.2%

Question 19 - The School encourages me to be involved with my child's homework - 100% positive response/LA 94%

Question 20 - I would recommend this school to a friend. know how to contact a member of the governing body if I had to - 100% positive response/LA 94%

Question 21 - Provides good additional support for my child - 91.3% positive response/LA 84%

Question 22 - I think that the teaching is good in the School - 97.8% positive response/LA 95.3%

Question 23 - I am happy with the values that the school promotes - 100% positive response/LA 97%

For questions 1, 10, 14, 19, 20, and 23 we got the highest possible ranking and were in the first percentile ranking of the local authority.

We appreciate the time taken to complete the questionnaires and for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Christine Smith

On behalf of the Governing Body

Actions

- School to further develop after-school clubs/extra curricular activities - working with OOSE and Read School, as well as looking at a more diverse range of activities.
- School to run sessions for parents on helping children with their homeworks. Focus on Maths reasoning and questioning.
- Improve the website and look at other forms of on-line communication
- Develop the conservation area.