

A Love of Learning, for Life, for All

Parent Consultation Survey

April 2016

Joy Lane Primary School



Joy Lane, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 4LT

Tel 01227 261430

www.joylane.kent.sch.uk

Overall Survey Results

137 parent families completed our survey.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Percentages					
My child is happy at this school	63%	35%	1%	1%	0%
My child feels safe at this school	72%	26%	0%	1%	1%
My child makes good progress at this school	51%	43%	5%	0%	1%
My child is well looked after at this school	64%	34%	1%	0%	1%
My child is taught well at his school	60%	38%	1%	0%	1%
My child receives appropriate homework for their age	35%	51%	11%	1%	2%
This school ensures the pupils are well behaved	50%	42%	1%	1%	6%
This school deals effectively with bullying	31%	30%	4%	1%	34%
This school is well led and managed	48%	46%	1%	0%	5%
This school responds well to any concern I raise	47%	40%	4%	0%	9%
I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress	36%	54%	9%	0%	1%
I would recommend this school to another parent	64%	33%	1%	1%	1%

My Child is happy at this school

Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't know
98%	2%	0%

We are delighted that 98% of children are happy at school. We know it is important to our parents and carers that the children are happy, it is important to us too. We strongly believe happy children will develop a love of learning which will enhance their learning opportunities throughout their education. We have two family liaison officers (FLOS) who are available to talk to children and adults about any well-being issues on a regular basis.

We assess the well-being of children on a daily basis but also use PASS analysis (Pupil Attitude To Self And School) twice a year to inform us on how children feel about their school experience. 94% of parents and carers who attended our well-being workshop in term 4 agreed or strongly agreed that this presentation was useful.

My child feels safe at this school

Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't know
98%	1%	1%

My child is well looked after at this school

Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't know
98%	1%	1%

Child safety is of paramount importance to us and we are pleased that 99% of our community feel that the children are safe and well looked after. We recently commissioned an independent audit of our safeguarding procedures and are delighted to report that our systems were reported as robust. We will continue to review our procedures on a regular basis to ensure our children are safe and well looked after. As a reminder each Friday morning Mr Ashley Jones and Mrs Godden are available on a 'drop in' basis for you to discuss any safeguarding concerns or issues.

My child makes good progress at this school

Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't know
94%	5%	1%

My child is taught well at this school

Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't know
98%	1%	1%

I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress

Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't know
89%	9%	1%

We are thrilled that so many parents appreciate the hard work and dedication of our outstanding teaching team. Parents have had the opportunity to attend an information session explaining the changes in the National Curriculum and the removal of levels and Joy Lane's response to this. Our presentation is available under the parent and curriculum tab on our school website. We are currently offer two formal consultation sessions with class teachers, sharing learning drop ins and a whole school 'Open Afternoon.' From September we hope to offer additional progress updates so that you are kept informed each term about your child's learning.

My child receives appropriate homework for their age

Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't know
85%	12%	3%

Reading, spelling and Key Facts in Maths continue to form part of our homework programme. The practice this gives the children is invaluable. We have introduced an on-line Maths homework programme this year designed to reinforce key elements from the lessons taking place at that time. We will evaluate the impact it has had at the end of the summer term and adjust accordingly. A few parents raised concerns about the quantity of homework for the younger children. The Senior Leadership Team, Early Years and Key Stage 1 team will discuss this over the coming weeks. As requested we have also ensured that there is an opportunity for children to complete homework at our After School Club, should they choose to. We also currently run homework clubs during school time for Year 4, 5 and 6.

This school ensures the pupils are well behaved

Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't know
92%	2%	6%

This school deals effectively with bullying

Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't know
60%	5%	34%

We strive to ensure that the children are well behaved at all times as we strongly believe excellent behaviour promotes excellent learning. We encourage children to take responsibility for managing their own behaviour with our guidance. In our vision we expect children to be caring, friendly and respectful of others. Of the 34% of parents that responded 'don't know' to the question about whether the school deals effectively with bullying, most commented that they didn't know because they hadn't had any experience of bullying; which we think is a positive message.

This School is well led and managed

Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't know
94%	1%	5%

This school responds well to any concerns I raise

Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't know
86%	4%	9%

It is pleasing that so many parents feel the school is well lead and managed. During this year we have introduced two Assistant Heads and five Phase Leaders to strengthen the Leadership Team. We believe this has enhanced the consistency of good practice across all phases of the school. As the school grows we are keen to build capacity for leadership and ensure that we talent spot future leaders from within. We regularly have leaders from other local schools and prospective headteachers who undertake leadership projects within Joy Lane which challenges our current policies and procedures.

Last term we introduced 'drop- ins' for parents and carers to see our Family Liaison Officers and two members of the Senior Leadership Team should they wish to. This is proving successful and will continue to the end of this academic year when we will review this initiative. We strive to respond in a timely manner to any concerns raised by parents and will continue to look at ways to improve our leadership as the school enters its next exciting phase on the journey to outstanding.

I would recommend this school to another parent

Strongly Agree or Agree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree	Don't know
98%	2%	1%

We are overjoyed that so many of our parents would recommend Joy Lane Primary School to another parent. We have had our highest number of applications for reception school places in September 2016. We always try to discuss any concerns or unhappiness with our systems and procedures and believe that issues can be resolved so that children and parents thrive in a positive learning environment.

We believe the survey results and positive comments endorse what we do for the children and these comments subsequently spur us on to continue to develop and improve. It is our vision to create a love of learning, for life, for all and we are delighted that Joy Lane is a school of choice in Whitstable.

Parent and carer responses to comment sections:

Thank you so much for all the positive comments about your child's experiences at Joy Lane Primary School. We endeavour to support and encourage all children's learning by being positive role models, providing stimulating learning opportunities and having high expectations and aspirations.

Communication

The majority of parents expressed a preference for communication by email. We will, of course, continue to send paper copies of letters to parents and carers that request them. We are considering other methods of communication, such as Facebook, and will keep you informed of anything we decide to introduce or trial.

We have considered giving parents a direct email to their child's teacher but have decided against this. We believe that the teachers focus must remain with the children in the classroom. If you wish to communicate with a teacher by email, please email the school office on office@joylane.kent.sch.uk and any message will be passed on to the relevant person.

We are currently looking at starting a school Facebook page which would include a diary/calendar. If our research shows this is a plausible option which will benefit our community, we will advise you.

Some parents have asked for more notice of events. We believe we have improved in this area and continue to strive to improve further. Our Senior Leadership Team is meeting next month to start looking at the diary for the year ahead. We will plan the dates for as many events as possible and early in the new academic year share this information with you.

The improvements we have made in communicating with parents and carers has been acknowledged, thank you. We continue to look at this area and to consider different ways that we can keep you informed. Teachers are always available at the end of the school day for a quick chat or an appointment can be made if you need a more private or lengthy meeting. We have introduced 'drop ins' as mentioned earlier and have already planned regular classroom 'drop ins' for parents so that you can share your child's learning on a more regular basis.

Next year we are going to introduce a reward system called Dojo's. This is an on line system which will allow you to see what rewards your child has achieved and will allow your child's teacher to communicate with you as an individual and with all the parents of that class. Over time we are hopeful that teachers will be able to write a running blog, keeping you fully apprised of what they are doing in class that week. We are hoping this will keep you up to date without inundating you with emails or adding to the teacher's work load too much.

Nutrition

We have been asked about healthier options for breakfast at our Breakfast Club. We have appointed a member of staff to take the lead in the Breakfast Club and she is looking at the available food options and the range of activities provided for the children. Improvements will be implemented over the coming weeks.

We introduced a new lunch menu last term and will be introducing another next term. It is our aim to offer the children a wide variety of healthy, nutritious meals and always encourage parents and carers to give children healthy snacks for breaktime. We always offer salad and fruit in addition to hot meals and vegetarian dishes. We talk about healthy eating in our PSHE programme and actively encourage the children to make healthy choices.

All of our catering staff undertake regular training, including food allergy training.

A suggestion was made that the children don't bring in cake or sweets to celebrate their birthdays with their classmates. This is something we will consider and discuss further before any changes are implemented.

Curriculum

In line with the New Curriculum we are looking at all the subjects we teach, including ICT and computing, to ensure that our children have an interesting and broad learning journey through the school. We will continue to review all subjects and introduce new topics as appropriate. We follow the Kent County Council RE syllabus which includes information about many religions. Our School Council and Eco-Reps meet regularly to discuss current issues and 'Pupil Voice' always feeds into the development and future direction of the school. We are currently conducting an impact assessment of how pupil voice works in partnership with school leaders and how the children's opinions and ideas can shape our policy. The pupils have recently represented Joy Lane at a School Council Meeting in Herne Bay.

A great deal of research has been carried out regarding teaching children to write. The latest research favours teaching children cursive handwriting. This style of writing has been shown to allow a more free flowing style which has, in turn, encouraged children to write more as they are able to write more speedily and with less effort. If you would like an example of how each letter is formed, please ask your child's teacher.

We will organise parent information sharing events and workshops whenever we feel necessary and will repeat 'old favourites' to allow our parents to stay informed.

Homework

Completion of homework does have a significant impact on a child's progress, especially in reading. Some parents have asked us to reduce the quantity of homework for the younger children. As explained earlier we will be discussing this as we are conscious of ensuring a balance between quality home life and homework, we will update you as discussions progress.

Some parents have expressed a dislike of the homework wheel, others say they like it! If you have concerns about completion of homework from the wheel, please see your child's class teacher to discuss further as there is always a solution to a problem. We are currently researching programmes that offer English homework online, similar to the Maths programme we are currently using. If the review of the Maths programme is positive we may introduce an English version next year.

Our Site

Many of you have asked if the pathway by the swimming pool can be widened. You have also asked for improved parking, a school bus, a lollypop Lady in Valkyrie Avenue and better playground facilities. Unfortunately we are unable to provide a school bus or a lollypop lady or enforce parking controls on the public roads. We do, however, have plans to broaden the pathway around the pool area and improve the playground facilities as part of our expansion plans. We are hoping to ease the parking pressure on the road by operating a one way system through the school grounds incorporating a drop off zone. The outline plans for the expansion indicate that work will begin on the school driveway and car park very early in the project so hopefully these benefits will be felt sooner rather than later. Lighting of external spaces will be addressed as each area is completed. The architects and designers have also been very conservative regarding the spread of the new building; very little of the outside space will be lost and the playground areas will be enhanced.

Some parents have asked us to consider alternative ways for parents collecting children from Year 3 and above. We are currently looking at the logistics of alternatives without compromising safety. We will let you know as soon as we have any alternative idea.

We will keep you fully informed regarding the school's expansion plans and how they will affect the school's day to day business as they become clearer. Meetings are taking place on a very regular basis with the school, Kent County Council representatives and various contractors and service providers, and as decisions are made and plans implemented you will be advised. There will, inevitably, be some disruption, but we will keep this to an absolute minimum. Please be assured that the children's safety will be paramount at all times.

Schools becoming academies is once again in the press. Our Governing Body is looking at the implications of this change and the various routes open to schools like ours. You will have recently received the proposed plans for Joy Lane and the intention to become part of a co-operative trust. We are currently in the middle of the consultation process.

Workshops for Parents

We have been asked about running workshops in the evenings for working parents. We have done this in the past and will offer this again. We have recently held a wellbeing workshop in which we discussed our safeguarding procedures and pastoral support programmes. We have also run workshops in maths and phonics. We are planning to run a programme of workshops in the new academic year covering a range of topics for parents. When planning the programme we will bear in mind your requests for a repeat of our Wellbeing workshop, maths and helping with homework. We are always open to any further suggestions for future workshops or sessions.

Other matters

A couple of people expressed concerns about bullying and unkind comments amongst a small number of children. Please be assured that we take bullying very seriously. We talk about bullying; what it is and how it can impact on children, in class discussions, in whole school assemblies and through our Behaviour and Discipline policy. If anyone has any concerns, however small, please see your child's teacher or drop in to see Mrs Elton or Mrs Allen any morning, or Mr Ashley-Jones or Mrs Godden on a Friday morning.

It is the parent's choice whether a child is entered for the Kent Test. 31 of our pupils were entered this year and 39% were found to be appropriate for a grammar school placement. Coaching and teaching children at school specifically for the Kent Test is not permitted. We teach all children a rounded curriculum, not just test specific subjects, as we believe this leads to a better education overall.

Asking parents for money will always be a controversial area. Some parents are keen for their children to experience as many different opportunities as possible and are happy to contribute financially to enable us to do this, others feel less able to contribute. We understand both sides of this argument and try to structure our extra-curricular opportunities so all can enjoy. We do ask for financial contributions towards some trips and we and The Friends of Joy Lane heavily subsidise trips and events. We also encourage teachers to fund raise within their classes or year groups. As you are all aware the government is cutting budgets year on year, so the only way to allow trips and events to continue is to ask for a contribution. We have now got our own minibus which has reduced the cost of some trips; the running cost of the minibus being lower than hiring a coach or minibus. We will continue to evaluate all trips and events to ensure they offer good value for money and a worthwhile and enjoyable experience for the children.

We are extremely lucky to have our own swimming pool and feel that, living so close to the sea, learning to swim is an essential life skill. Unfortunately the swimming pool costs a lot to run. We recoup some costs by hiring the pool out for private lessons but cannot recoup all the costs and as such we ask parents to contribute toward the cost of the lessons the children receive. We hire an excellent swimming coach and we believe the standard of the lessons the children receive is outstanding so please keep contributing to the cost of the lessons. Unfortunately timetable restrictions mean we cannot offer more lessons than we do now however it is our intention to continue offering swimming lessons 3 terms out of 6 for years 1-6 and for two terms for reception. If a family is suffering genuine hardship please come and talk to a member of staff to see if there is any financial assistance that can be offered.

Some events have to have a limited number of places offered for practical or health and safety reasons. There seems no fair way to do this other than to offer the places on a first come first served basis. We limit the number of seats for each family so that as many families can come as possible and if there are places available at the end, these are offered out for additional family members.

We have been asked to extend the After School Club beyond 5.30pm. Unfortunately we are unable to do this at the present time. We open our doors to children from 7.30am in the Breakfast Club and close them at 5.30pm with the After School Club. We staff both clubs with existing members of staff to ensure the children have a familiar face to greet and care for them. The staff are also aware of events and topics being covered in school at the time so can help children prepare or help with homework. We have considered using an outside company to run the clubs but feel that we can offer a more personal service keeping it in house. We don't offer a 'tea' at After School Club however, it is something we will consider in the future. We do offer a range of snacks. We are currently looking at the opportunities offered to the children and we are planning a regular cooking activity.

One parent commented that one of the classrooms is small and crowded. Unfortunately not all of our classrooms are the same size. When planning for the next academic year we take this into account when allocating children to their next class and ensure a smaller class is put in the smaller room. We are very limited for space currently but this situation should be remedied as soon as the expansion plan is complete. We will also benefit from an all-weather, multi-purpose sports area. This will enable all year groups to take part in more sports all year round, including reception.

We believe our school uniform promotes a sense of community amongst the children and all children must follow our uniform guidelines. Occasionally, for a variety of reasons, a child may not be in full uniform, each case is assessed on its own merits and corrected at the earliest opportunity. We do not believe a child should miss a day of education because of a uniform malfunction!

This year we decided to split our parent consultations into two groups following comments about how busy, noisy and crowded it was last time. A few parents have had the inconvenience of having to attend on two different days however the majority have said they much prefer it this way. We have been asked about more frequent opportunities to find out about how children are progressing. We have decided to add parent 'drop ins' to the annual diary, as well as parent consultation evenings, enabling you to see how your child is progressing throughout the year. If you are concerned about your child's progress you can always see their teacher at the end of the day or make an appointment to see them or speak to them on the phone at a more convenient time.

We are extremely lucky to have such a wide range of very talented staff at Joy Lane. Last summer we held our 'Lounge on the Field' music spectacular. Parents were all welcomed and came to socialise and enjoy the music. We have recently held a similar extravaganza 'Light up the Hall'. We will continue to arrange events showcasing the extraordinary talents of our pupils and staff. The Friends of Joy Lane also organise a variety of fundraising events throughout the year, enabling parents to meet one another and raise money at the same time.

At the end of each academic year we reorganise the classes for the next academic year. We take a number of things into account including friendship groups. We ensure there is a good spread of ability in all classes and that children are in good learning partnerships rather than just friendship groups. All classes in each year group have playtime together so children can socialise with those in the other classes if they choose to.

Thank you!

We would like to thank those of you that completed our survey and thank you for your comments. There were so many positive comments and thank you also for the hard work and dedication of the staff; this really is appreciated. We do read everything you write and have tried to answer the majority of your questions and queries in this response. If you would like to discuss any of the matters raised, or anything else, please let us know and we will arrange a mutually convenient time. You are all valued members of the Joy Lane community and your opinion matters to us.

A few quotes from parents and carers in praise of Joy Lane Primary School:

'Joy Lane is well managed with children at the heart of all activities'

'Good community feel and a very safe environment'

'Feels more like a family than a school'

'Very inclusive and responsive'

'The teachers, leadership team, office staff, premises staff are amazing. The facilities are fantastic and opportunities great'

'The school encourages input from parents'

'Breakfast and After School Clubs are well staffed and fun for the children'

'The fantastic teaching staff give so much time and effort to ensure all children are well cared for and supported'

'The school deals with every aspect of the child's life, not just education'

'A lovely school full of friendly people I trust to look after my son'

'My child has good interaction with teachers and concerns raised are followed up by staff'

'We feel the school is great for leaning and understanding a child's needs'

'All the children are polite and well-mannered in and out of school'

'Friendly, quality teaching, lovely staff, good leadership encourages positive, polite behaviour and teach relevant topics. Includes parents.'

'Lovely after school clubs'

'Joy Lane is well managed form Head to teaching Assistants'

'Children feel welcome every single day'