



# Coleham Primary School

*For every child, an Excellent Education*

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**Headteacher: Ms C Jones**

11<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

Many thanks to those parents who completed our recent Parent Questionnaire, the results of which are attached at the end of this letter.

The School Leadership Team has looked closely at the questionnaires and comments (130 replies were received) and we have considered our response. For the most part, there was a very positive response, with many respondents expressing support for the school through their answers and comments given in the comments box.

In considering our reaction, we have added up the responses that were either “strongly agree” or “agree” and presented the information accordingly. Where the totals are over 90%, we are pleased, however where it is lower, we have discussed actions we need to take. For some questions, (e.g. “*The school responds well to any concerns I raise,*”) quite a high proportion of parents answered “don’t know,” we assume because they have not had to raise any concerns and so we have not taken this as a negative issue.

I have, therefore, taken each question in turn, where the response has caused concern, and below I have hopefully provided some response, explanation and reassurance of our determination to improve:

## **5. *My child receives appropriate homework for their age and ability***

You may remember that 2 years ago, following on from parental feedback and from discussions with staff, we decided to change our homework policy and children do not receive formal weekly homework. Generally, we have received support from parents regarding this decision and less parents disagree with the above statement, as compared to last year’s results. However, 12.5% of those who responded did disagree, which was higher than we would like to see. I would therefore like to explain our reasoning for this decision.

It is our belief that our children get a good education and work very hard at school and they need to be resting, exploring hobbies and enjoying time at home with their families in the evenings/at weekends. Research also shows that the impact of homework in primary schools is minimal, though we know that the stress and anxiety that it can cause in households and individuals is great. We wanted to reduce this pressure and be mindful of children’s wellbeing. This links to our school ethos in developing the ‘whole child’ as children need space to learn and grow, free time to master things by themselves and create genuine self-esteem and inner drive to be in charge of their own challenges and development. Despite this, we do have **daily expectations** for parents/carers to support. We insist that all children read **every** night at home with an adult and learn their spellings/times tables/number bonds. A short burst of focused, quality support with an adult will be valuable to a child’s progress. We also continue to set holiday work in the form of projects to be completed at home; we find that the children love completing these projects with parents at home and usually produce amazing work. We also set Year 6 revision homework in the run up to the SATs tests and provide revision books for the children to complete. If you

would like to do some extra work at home with your child and need some ideas and support, we are happy to point you in the right direction.

### **7. I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress**

The number of parents who selected "disagree" to this question was higher than we would like (12.31%).

Parents are invited to come to 2 formal parents evenings and 2 separate informal sessions, which parents can come along to the classroom in order to look at their child's work and discuss progress with the class teacher. We have also introduced an extra transition meeting at the end of June, during which parents can meet their child's new class teacher. We also write a formal end of year report to all parents. In addition to the above, you are always welcome to make an extra appointment with your child's class teacher if you would like to discuss their progress or any other issues that you have. We have an open door policy at Coleham and welcome all parents into school to come and talk to us. We have also worked hard this year, following feedback from parents in last year's survey, to ensure that the information given out at Parents Evenings is consistent across school and clear/useful and we are pleased with progress made in this area.

### **8. This school deals effectively with bullying?**

The number of parents who disagreed or strongly disagreed with this question was 10.85%, which is higher than we would expect. Incidences of bullying do occasionally occur at Coleham and they are taken very seriously and dealt with in line with our Anti-bullying Policy. We constantly teach our children to treat others as they would wish to be treated and we reward our children for adhering to our school values. Sometimes, children make mistakes; this is part of growing up and school is a safe environment in which they can occasionally make mistakes. When children make the wrong choice, there is always a consequence and we support, where necessary, to ensure that such mistakes are not repeated. Incidents, such as these, are usually not defined as bullying and sometimes the word "bullying," which is clearly very emotive, can be used incorrectly to describe a particular behaviour by parents and children.

We would urge you to come and talk to your child's class teacher, in the first instance, if you are concerned about how they are being treated by other children. We will then be able to investigate situations and provide sanctions and support, where and if necessary. It is not always appropriate to inform parents of the exact actions that we have taken in relation to sanctions given to other children, however, please trust that we do deal with behavioural and/or bullying incidents in a consistent and robust manner.

In the comments section, some parents commented that the communication could be improved across school. Good communication between home and school is essential and I am sorry that some of you feel that it has not been as effective as it could have been recently. We agree and have taken on board your comments and after Easter, we will be introducing a Coleham Bulletin. This information sheet will provide you with a weekly note from myself, along with reminders regarding key events for the week ahead. This should make planning for school easier and will mean that less individual emails will be sent out to you, which should relieve your inbox of so many emails! Class teachers will also provide you with a Termly Class Bulletin, providing important class related information. We will continue to use our website to post all important dates on the school calendar, upload Letters sent home and update you with photos of Stars of the Week and special events in school that have taken place. If you would like a hard copy of any letters, please look on the carousel in the Reception foyer.

Communication has also been raised as a concern by staff, especially in this modern era where emails are frequently used to communicate. It is often tempting to fire off emails instead of requesting a face-to-face chat with staff, which is often a much better way of solving a concern or issue. Teachers are not office based but instead spend the vast majority of their days teaching and engaging with the children. If you do send an email to a member of the team, please be aware that we are not always able to reply quickly

(though we always do our best) and members of staff will not be able to reply to emails after work hours or at weekends.

In the comments box, we received a number of comments about the quality of school dinners and the quality of food served at the breakfast and after school clubs. Please be assured that we are continuing to improve catering and realise there have been some issues regarding portion sizes, which have been addressed. Portion sizes should be generous and larger for the older children and we are reminding children that there is no limit on any of the sides, vegetables, carbohydrates and salad; we want them to have a full plate of tasty, wholesome food. All of the menus are compliant and nutritionally balanced across the three week cycle and many of the sauces, such as the pizza base topping, have hidden vegetables contained within them. We will be providing you with this nutrition information soon and Catering Academy will include a Nutrition section on their monthly newsletter. Some of you mention puddings being available everyday. We have reduced the number of hot puddings available in a week and, whilst there is always a cake or biscuit daily, there is also yoghurt, jelly and fresh fruit to choose from. Parents opinions regarding food choice can often be quite diverse and we aim to strike a balance. The Pupil's Suggestion box indicated the children wanted to see more child friendly, easily recognisable dishes, such as: pizza, sausages, shepherd's pie and vegetables (e.g peas, carrots, broccoli and sweetcorn). Therefore, you may have noticed that the menu from Easter reverted back to simpler meals that the children had requested. These meals are still compliant with the School Food plan, for example the burger is once every three weeks and made of 80% beef. Lunchtime is an important part of the school day and we are working hard to make the dining experience a positive one for all of our children. If you have a concern about your child and lunchtimes, then please email the Catering Manager, Miss Perry or the school Business Manager, Miss Othen, to provide some additional support or food options. Last week, we invited Year 3 parents to have lunch with their children and we intend to invite other year groups in soon to do the same, so you are able to see service for yourselves.

We had a few comments about Outdoor Learning and this is something we love to do at Coleham. We changed our Trip Consent procedure last year to enable classes to partake in local fieldwork visits more. This has been successful and something we will be encouraging more of in the summer term. This allows teachers to have the freedom to react to the children's needs and have more flexibility to explore the local area and historic town centre spots. Some examples of what classes have been up to include: visiting the town centre churches, sketching by the river and EYFS have been litter picking in the local area. One of our Teachers is currently obtaining a Forest School qualification and we have set aside some money in next year's school budget to develop the Conservation Area and outdoor learning on our school site.

I was pleased to read so many positive comments regarding the community ethos of the school and praise for our dedicated staff within school. Some interesting parental comments centred around how we organise the children within their year groups. Going forward, we have decided to regularly mix classes within some year groups, at the end of each year and there will also be some changes in terms of the organisation of teachers, to develop them as professionals. The mixing of classes within year groups will occur each year, in order to allow children to broaden their friendship circles and develop stronger relationships within school. Next year the children will be mixed at the end of Reception, Year 3 and Year 5 classes (those children entering into Year 1, Year 4 and Year 6 for 2019-20) More information about these changes and the allocation of teachers will be sent out in the Summer term.

As we head towards the end of the Spring term, all that remains is for me to wish you all a very restful and relaxing Easter break. Thank you, once again, for your valuable feedback on our Parent Questionnaire.

Yours sincerely,

*Clare Jones*

Headteacher

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## Parent Questionnaire Responses 2019

130 respondents

Number on role: 420

		Agree	Disagree	Don't know
1	My child is happy at this school.	94.57%	4.66%	0.78%
2	My child feels safe at this school.	96.9%	3.10%	0%
3	My child makes good progress at this school	93.8%	4.66%	1.55%
4	My child is well looked after at this school.	96.9%	2.33%	0.78%
5	My child is well taught at this school.	94.57%	3.11%	2.33%
6	My child receives appropriate homework for their age?	82.03%	12.5%	5.47%
7	This school makes sure its pupils are well behaved?	86.82%	6.98%	6.20%
8	This school deals effectively with bullying?	48.06%	10.85%	41.09%
9	This school is well led and managed?	86.92%	6.14%	6.92%
10	This school responds well to any concerns I raise?	80.0%	7.69%	12.31%
11	I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress?	87.69%	12.31%	0%
12	Would you recommend this school to another parent?	89.24%	6.15%	4.62%

**THANKS FOR ALL THE RESPONSES, QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS!**