

July 2018

Dear Parents,

Thank you to those of you who completed this term's parental questionnaire. We had a total of 129 responses. We really appreciate hearing your views as these are really important to us in helping to improve Parkfield.

This letter contains a summary of your views and a response to some of the key points parents raised.

Thank you again for your continuing support and the many wonderful comments that were made about our school on the questionnaires.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Williams
(Headteacher)

		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
1	My child is happy at Parkfield.	56%	40%	3%	2%	-
2	My child feels safe at Parkfield.	60%	39%	1%	-	-
3	My child makes good progress at Parkfield.	51%	46%	2%	1%	1%
4	My child is well looked after at Parkfield.	46%	50%	3%	-	1%
5	My child is taught well at Parkfield.	53%	43%	2%	1%	1%
6	My child receives appropriate homework for their age.	47%	43%	7%	2%	2%
7	Parkfield makes sure that its pupils are well behaved.	53%	42%	4%	-	2%
8	Parkfield deals effectively with bullying.	45%	44%	2%	2%	8%
9	Parkfield is well led and managed.	46%	48%	3%	1%	2%
10	Parkfield responds well to any concerns I raise.	45%	40%	5%	2%	8%
11	I receive valuable information from Parkfield about my child's progress.	50%	47%	2%	1%	3%
12	I find the weekly class newsletter useful.	54%	40%	2%	1%	3%
13	Would you recommend Parkfield to another parent? Yes – 96% No – 3% Don't Know – 1%					

Please note that percentage totals may not total exactly 100% due to rounding.



Parental improvement suggestions

Thank you for all of your suggestions. I have looked at every single one of them and we will try to improve using as many of these suggestions as possible. I am unfortunately unable to respond to every suggestion, but I have picked out a selection of the points raised to respond to formally. Hopefully you will be happy with these responses.

(1) "There was a new clock in the playground."

Good news! These will be appearing soon in the playgrounds.

(2) "They had better parking facilities instead on the headteacher standing there and starring at all the parents. Why doesn't the school collectively ask their neighbours from across the road in the garages not to obstruct the school gates? Very Important."

Parking is still an issue at Parkfield and this can be very frustrating to parents and staff. This is one of the reasons why myself and Ms Ikhlq are outside (in all weathers) most mornings to help discourage **illegal and unsafe** parking, which causes so many issues and puts our children in danger. Incidents of these, I am glad to say, have been reducing recently. Unfortunately, we are limited by the road size at the front of the school and we have no spare space within the school grounds to dedicate to parental parking. Although we do what we can to encourage more children and parents to walk to school, many parents who live within walking distance still drive their children to school. If all of these parents walked to school with their children, it would be much calmer on the roads outside of school and the children's health would be enhanced through the exercise this would provide.

In terms of the garage across the road, we do ask them not to park in front of the school gates as this is clearly not safe particularly at home time. We will however raise this again with them. If this does occur, please let a member of our office staff know about this and we will challenge them over it.

(3) "There was more equipment in the playground."

This is something that we have invested in this year. KS1 now have new equipment to use during their play and dinnertimes and the provision for KS2 has also been improved, particularly at dinnertimes. This is something that we will however continue to review and to develop further.

(4) "Homework was made more simple for children."

At Parkfield we have high expectations for all of our pupils in class and at home. As I'm sure you are aware, the new National Curriculum has been made more demanding for all children in all year groups. We like to think that we do a good job of pitching homework appropriately so that it is challenging, yet achievable for all children. If your child is struggling with their homework, please see your child's class teacher who will be happy to support you and/or will adapt future homework tasks for your child.



(5) “Children need more homework.”

Children “had literacy work set, similar to the Mathletics. Comprehension questions.”

At Parkfield, children, depending on the year group they are in, get regular homework to complete online (such as Mathletics and Literacy Planet – an English version of Mathletics). Our children also are expected to read with parents, practise their spellings and to learn their timetables. If all children regularly did these tasks, it would really help their progress. They also from time to time get additional homework on top of this.

I am aware that many of our children attend mosque school when then finish Parkfield and for many children this can last for 1 or 2 hours. Some children also go to tuition classes. I am also very aware that children also need time to interact with parents – and other family members, play board games (think of Monopoly and how much they can learn from playing this or the logical thinking promoted from playing draughts or chess), to relax and... to be children. By giving even more homework to children, we run the risk of children being exhausted, which can lead to behaviour issues both at home and in school and can lead to them become disengaged from education.

If you do have children who are bored, particularly during the holidays, set them a project to complete, such as what can they make from this cardboard box (<https://cardboardchallenge.com>), let them research about their favourite topic such as football, a pop star or Star Wars or let them be express their artistic talents by painting or producing work with clay (materials available from retailers such as The Works, Amazon, WH Smiths and Hobby craft).

(6) “Parkfield would be better if they stop setting.”

Parkfield stopped setting in all year groups (apart from some lessons in Year 6) nearly two years ago. We also moved away from children sitting in ability groups within classes. We follow the Mastery National Curriculum where all children experience the same pitch of teaching, although some activities may be differentiated according to a child’s responses and teacher assessment during individual lessons.

(7) The “school office should sell more workbooks, not just for KS2.”

A good suggestion – I would really like to do this. We are however limited in the office for space in terms of storing these materials. I will however investigate this to see if it is possible. In the meantime, retailers such as WH Smith and Waterstones have lots of these workbooks for sale to help develop your child’s skills across the curriculum. Please see you child’s class teacher if you require any support with this. They will be happy to help.

(8) “There was a secondary school.”

As you may or may not be aware we, as an academy, are trying to create a new secondary school which Parkfield’s children will be able to attend. We have completed most of the very long application form for this and we are awaiting the opening of the next round of applications, so we can proceed further. At present



though, the department for education are not accepting any applications from Birmingham. We will let you know if this changes.

(9) “We had the school gate close at 8:45.”

When I first started Parkfield over 13 years ago, we did actually start school later at 8:45. In my first year, we had over 4500 late marks. This is part of the reason why we now have a 10-minute window for children to arrive. School is now open from 8:30 to 8:40. Thanks in part to this, our number of late marks as a school have reduced significantly.

I understand that the occasional bout of heavy traffic, or a car break down, or the odd I forgot to set the alarm clock can lead to children being late and I do not have an issue with this. There are however very few excuses for being consistently late and we do have some children who have been late over 20 times this year. If you are having difficulty with being late, and you are only usually one or two minutes late, please try to get into the habit of leaving home a few minutes earlier. Being on time is a really important life lesson for children and it really makes the start of the school day much calmer and less distressing for them.

(10) The school “gave more notice for workshops and meetings. As a working parent I cannot come as short notice of 1 day.”

Parents should usually get advanced warning of workshops in your year group newsletters (given out at the start of a year) and a reminder in the school weekly newsletter. Occasionally, workshops are planned later than this or dates are changed. I agree that one days warning is not helpful to many parents and I can only apologise for occasions where this may have occurred, and you have been unable to attend. The teachers and I, naturally want as many parents as possible to attend each workshop. I will talk to each year group leader to try to minimise the occasions when this occurs and to give you as much warning as possible about these events.

(11) “More support with parents.”

At Parkfield we have over 300 different families. We support parents in many different ways. Examples of this include our class and year group Inspire workshops; parent mentoring (organised by our SEAL room); activities, clubs and educational lessons (including English classes) organised by our home school liaison - Mrs Ikhlq - and all of our teachers are available in playgrounds at the end of the school day to discuss with parents any concerns you may have. If you have any suggestions about what we could do to support parents further, please speak to any of the class teachers, Mrs Ikhlq or myself. (I’m usually available on the front school gate before school each morning). We would be really interested in your ideas.

(12) “Parents’ concerns not taken seriously.”

“They looked into all parents concern rather than just saying your child etc.”

I apologise if there have been a few occasions where you have felt that you haven’t been listened to. I know, as a staff, we are often approached by parents on a daily basis. We all try our very best to help parents, and nearly all parents seem happy with our rigour in these matters (over 95% agreed or agreed strongly with this on this questionnaire). Occasionally you may feel though, that we fall short of the high

standards we set ourselves. If you do feel this way again in future, please speak to a member of the leadership or myself again.

(13) “More after school clubs for Key Stage 1 children and reception.”

We do from time to time have after school clubs for KS1 children, but our provision of after school clubs is something that we are always trying to develop and improve. We do not offer any after school clubs for children in EYFS. This is because these children are too young to stay in school for longer than the school day and they are often very tired at the end of a normal day.

(14) “More information is needed about what children learn at school.”

“More information is given regarding the syllabus.”

Firstly, may I say thank you. It is great to have supportive parents who are interested in this and supporting their children at home. Each year group produces a termly newsletter, which outlines the key learning intentions for that term. If you do not receive one of these, please speak to your child’s class teacher. There is also a curriculum overview on the parent’s section of the school website which should tell you about the topics covered in RE, science and topic lessons. If you do require any more information, please speak to your child’s class teacher who will be happy to help you.

(15) “The school menu has better options. Children would enjoy their lunch more.”

“They got larger portion of dinner.”

“They changed the menu as my child is concerned.”

“The school should accept other things in lunch boxes because it’s not fair like this.”

In terms of school dinners, I have been and will continue to look at portion sizes and menu choices with our school chef. We currently do provide a range of food choices, but, as I’m sure you understand, it can be difficult to put things on the menu that every single child who has school dinners will like. We will however continue preserving though.

This term, I’ve asked the school council to look at school dinners and menu choices. They will be questioning children about them and then presenting their findings and recommendations to myself and the head of the kitchen staff. We will then try to take on as many of these recommendations as possible.

In terms of packed lunches, we do have advice in the parents’ section of the school website. Our school chef, and his team, do spend a lot of time trying to make sure that our school meals are as healthy as possible, and we do expect the same with our packed lunches from parents. Unhealthy options, such as sweets and chocolate can lead to children having a ‘sugar rush’ which will adversely affect their concentration and learning in the afternoon sessions. It also encourages unhealthy lifestyle choices. This is why we do not allow these choices.

(16) “You get fines for getting late to collect children and the school creates a big issue of this.”

“I don’t like the fining of £5 if parents are late when picking up the children.”

I really wish that fines for being late were not needed. Unfortunately though, we have had certain parents who have been consistently late when collecting their children. Being late once during a term is not an issue, and we do not fine parents for this, particularly if they call us letting us know about this or if it happens more than once due to a genuine emergency. We are very happy to support parents here. However, when parents are consistently late collecting their children (particularly after clubs) this is an issue. We have had some parents who have been 30 minutes to an hour late and this has happened on multiple occasions. As a school, we have to pay staff for additional time that they have to spend supervising children after school. It is not fair that the school has to cover these costs, so unfortunately these costs have to be passed on to parents. I apologise that such measures are necessary.

(17) “It supported pupils better. My son has hearing problems and I have complained many times, yet I don’t think he is being supported.”

I’m really sorry to hear that you feel that we are not supporting your son appropriately. As a school we want the best for every single pupil who attends Parkfield. Mrs Evans (our school SENCO), I know, is currently investing a lot of time in meeting every single parent who has a child with learning difficulties at Parkfield (along with their child’s class teacher). I would really like you to arrange an appointment with Mrs Evans as soon as possible. I know that she will be eager to help you and your son. Please then see me if you have any further issues.

(18) There was a pedestrian ‘zebra crossing’. It is very dangerous for parents and children to cross.”

“I think Parkfield should have a crossing warden to make it safe for Parkfield children.”

This is something that we would really like for our school and we have asked and will continue to ask Birmingham City Council (BCC) for. Unfortunately, BCC due to ever decreasing budgets are unwilling to fund either of these currently. We will however continue to preserver with this. If, as parents, you would like to help with this, please contact your local councillor.

Thank you again to you all for completing the questionnaires and for your ongoing support. It really is appreciated. Hopefully, by working together, we can continue to be both an outstanding school and school community.

Mr Williams (Headteacher)