



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Dipton

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Headteacher: Mrs J Burgess
We follow in Christ's footsteps

Tuesday 2nd November 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Survey responses

Thank you so much to those of you who responded to the school survey, earlier last term. Here is a summary of the responses provided. In addition to the online responses, I made 14 follow-up calls.

We received 48 responses to:

'Tell us the most positive things about our school in your opinion'

Comments focused on:

The sense of community/family at St Patrick's e.g.

- *'St Patrick's is a great school where we feel it is a safe, loving environment where our child is able to practise/learn important values such as kindness, honesty. We feel part of the community. Our son grew so much since his first day at the school.'*
- *'Very friendly, willing to help not only the children but parents as well.'*
- *'The school has always been a warm and welcoming place for the children and you have managed to maintain that in difficult circumstances. Your handling of restrictions due to Covid have been excellent. You have kept staff and children safe but have eased restrictions once allowed which is fantastic for current pupils but great for future intake too. Well done.'*
- *'Warm, welcoming and approachable experience dealing with school so far. My child is valued and accepted as part of the St Patrick's community, encouraged in his gifts and I have seen great patience and care in helping him develop the aspects of learning he struggles with most. Reception class facilities are lovely and a great way to get kids settled into the school environment.'*
- *'Feels supportive, a good family feel. Teaching staff appear very good at picking up on children with special needs and working with parents to provide the best approach to the child's learning.'*
- *'The respectful way the children treat and are expected to treat each other providing a warm, school family.'*

The benefits of a smaller school e.g.

- *'Small school/classes positive for better learning.'*
- *'It is a small, friendly school. This means it is easy for children to all get to know each other and feel part of a community.'*
- *'Children seem to mix well with each other and not just stick to their own friends.'*

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The quality of teaching and the relationships between staff/pupils and parents e.g.

- *'So far, I've seen the school has a warm welcoming feeling. It appears to apply specific attention to each pupil as an individual which is reassuring as a parent...'*
- *'The school genuinely provides a sense of community spirit helping make pupils and parents/carers feel they are all supporting one another on the primary years journey. Having experience of a different primary setting in recent years, I am aware of how driven teachers are at St Patrick's to ensure pupils are provided with the full 'package'. While the school strives to achieve the highest academic outcome for all pupils it is certainly not driven by only those goals. I have never felt my child has been viewed as simply a league table statistic. If anything, social and mental well-being always appears to be at the forefront of the teaching concerns...'*
- *'Openness to discuss concerns and comments with parents, quick responses and always striving to support the children'*
- *'Lovely teachers, very supportive when child has problems/difficulties.'*
- *'So far, I've seen the school has a warm welcoming feeling. It appears to apply specific attention to each pupil as an individual which is reassuring as a parent.'*
- *'The door is always open and communication is easy and comfortable.'*
- *'I love this school - very helpful the teachers are brilliant my kids learn so much couldn't wish for a better school.'*

There were many other very supportive comments regarding behaviour, communication and level of education offered.

We received 42 responses to:

'Tell us about anything, in your opinion, you would like to see us improve.'

Comments focused on:

- Reinstating after-school clubs and organising trips and residentials
We are glad to say the autumn after-school programme has now been shared with parents and 2 residential visits are planned later in the academic year for Y4/5 to the Youth Village and Y6 to Weardale Activity Centre. To date, we have received 86 online responses regarding after-school participation. You will be informed of your child's place via text this week.
- Involvement in competitive sport
We hope to work towards developing opportunities for teams to represent our school this academic year. Competitive sport has always been a strong aspect of St. Patrick's and we would like this to be feature of our school. When we distributed information about our after-school clubs, we did ask if any parents felt they had the relevant skills and ability to regularly commit to support these after-school sports clubs/teams. However, we have had no response. If you feel you can support us in this area, we would love to hear from you.
- Bullying
Two comments referred to bullying. As wonderful as our school is, we would never shy away from the reality that bullying can be an issue in all schools. It would be remiss of me as a school leader to suggest otherwise. What I can reassure parents is that any suggestion of bullying is robustly and fairly investigated, involving all parties (parents and pupils). We regularly review all our policies. As we are fast approaching National Anti-Bullying week, we will be sending out our Anti-Bullying and Behaviour policies very shortly and welcome your comments. We are currently in the process of reviewing these with pupils, staff and governors.

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- School railings
I wholeheartedly agree! I would love to see these replaced or improved in some way. Unfortunately, at the moment, we do not have any funding to make this happen. Again, if any parents have the expertise/means to help I am sure we could drum up some volunteers! We are making significant improvements to our building overall, for example, the Reception class and outdoor area, children's porches and replacement of windows and it would be wonderful to be able to add renovating the railings to this list.
- More frequent updates on pupil performance/quick catch-ups
We will be looking into this to see what is possible. We will share our thoughts with you in due course.
- Other comments mentioned uniform/hair/new bag rules – some love our position/some feel it should be relaxed.
We have no plans to change our school uniform or expectations regarding general presentation including the introduction of school bags. Clear rules/boundaries provide equality, cost effectiveness and clarity for all pupils and parents. We are trying to make life as stress-free as possible, however, continuing with changes introduced during lockdown, such as allowing pupils to come into school in PE uniform on PE days.
- Purchasing additional resources for playtime/lunchtime
We have started to make some inroads with this but our newly elected Pupil Leadership Team (PLT) will be on the case.

It is also very pleasing to note, when some parents completed this section on ideas for improving St Patrick's, we received a number of comments such as those below:

Not one thing. I love St Pat's and more importantly so do my children.

Nothing

Can't think of any

None

Thank you, again, for those who took the time to make a response. When a large number of our school family respond, we can get a more accurate sense of your views. It is very important to remember that St. Patrick's is not my school, or now the Trust's school, it is *our* school and we all want to work together to continue to keep it performing as the great school it is.

I will continue to seek your views as we move through the year. Next survey will be a request to view and respond to our Anti-Bullying and Behaviour policies.

Regards

Mrs J Burgess

Headteacher

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