

Purwell Primary School

12th May 2022

Thought for the week: 'If you can imagine it, you can achieve it; if you can dream it, you can become it' - William Arthur Waldo

Parent questionnaire

At the end of this newsletter, you will find the results of the parent questionnaire that we sent out recently. We would like to thank parents for taking the time to complete the survey. Some returns included useful feedback and comments, which we have also added at the end of the newsletter. Feedback of this kind is invaluable to us when making plans for further school improvement, so we are very grateful.

You said, we did

Following the recent parent survey, school leaders have been meeting to agree how best we can respond to the suggestions parents have made for school improvement. Parents can expect this, 'you said, we did' section to be a regular feature of the newsletters for the rest of the term. *You said, we did* will also be the title of a new display board going up in the entrance lobby of the school. It will detail what the school is putting in place to improve what we currently provide for pupil and parents and the return to some post-Covid ways of working. The school governors will also play a big part in this as they will have the opportunity to discuss the outcomes of the questionnaire, at a meeting, later this month.

PSA Non-Uniform Day - this Friday

This Friday, we are having a non-uniform day, where pupils will be able to come to school dressed in their home clothes. In return, we are asking pupils to bring with them donations of a decorated jar, full of sweets.



PSA to run sweet tombola at the Walsworth Festival

On behalf of the school, the PSA will be running a sweet jar stall at the Walsworth Festival, next Sunday 22nd May, so, we need as many sweet jar donations from parents as possible for the event. As usual, there will be lots of exciting things to see and do on the main field and at St Faith's Church.

PSA helping hands

The PSA requests that if any parents can spare an hour to help on the stall at the Walsworth Festival on Sunday, could they let Mrs Tart or Mrs Campbell-Phillips know, or look on the PSA Facebook page for further details. There will be a doodle poll on the Facebook page for people to fill-in to volunteer. All help will be VERY gratefully received.

Pupils to vote on school values

Recently, the topic of values and ethics has been the topic of school assemblies. Next week, pupils will get the chance to vote for which key values they want the school to adopt. Mr Cano has been collecting ideas for values from the school community for the last few weeks and sharing them with pupils and staff. The suggestions must represent what the school values the most and should be things we can uphold, demonstrate, and adhere to. Some of the values that have been suggested already include friendship, kindness, respect, perseverance, positivity, valuing others' ideas and being helpful. The most popular suggestions, as voted on by the pupils, will eventually be presented on the school website and in our prospectus.

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Chicks on our live nest-cam

The children at school have been closely following the progress of the nest of 5 chicks that we have in the school grounds. Children have been able to watch them via a camera that is linked to a screen in our canteen. The chicks have grown quickly and have been observed preening their feathers ready for their next big step - leaving the nest, which they did today.



Year 4 to learn about road safety



On Friday, Year 4 will be training to improve their road safety knowledge and pedestrian skills. The class will be taken out in small groups by members of staff, to learn how to identify traffic hazards and how to cross the roads safely.

Jubilee School Lunch on Thursday 26th May 2022

We will be having a special Jubilee Dinner on Thursday, 26th May 2022. If your child has a Home Packed lunch and would like to have a Jubilee Dinner on this day, please complete the tear-off slip at the end of letter sent out to you yesterday and return it to the Office. Please return the slip before Wednesday 18th May. The meal cost is £2.78, payment by Cash or School Gateway. NO CHEQUES will be accepted. If cash please send the money in an envelope clearly labelled 'Jubilee Dinner', with your child's name and class. Don't forget school meals are free for Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and FSM children.

Dates for Summer Term 2022

Mon 9 th May - 13 th May	Year 6 SATs week commences
Friday 13 th May	Non-Uniform Day, Sweetie Jar Donations
Friday 13 th May	Year 4 pedestrian skills training.
Sunday 22 nd May	Walsworth Festival
Thursday 26 th May	Queen's Jubilee celebratory school lunch
30 th May-3 rd June	Half-term
Friday 10 th June	The Queen's Jubilee Disco
Thursday 16 th June	Year 5 swimming commences
Friday 24 th June	Sports Day
Friday 1 st July	School closed for Inset Day
Saturday 16 th July	Purwell Rocks Event
Friday 22 nd July	Last day of term - Finish at 2pm

Academic Dates for 2022/23

Autumn Term 2022

Thu 1 st September	Children return to school
Fri 23 rd September	School closed for Inset Day
Mon 24 th Oct-Fri 28 th Oct	Half term
Mon 31 st October	School closed for Inset Day
Fri 2 nd December	School closed for Occasional Day
Wed 21 st December	Last day of term - Finish at 2pm

Spring Term 2023

Thu 5th January Children return to school
 Mon 13th Feb-Fri 17th Feb Half term
 Fri 10th March School closed for Inset Day
 Fri 31st March Last day of term - Finish at 2pm

Summer Term 2023

Mon 17th April School closed for Inset Day
 Tues 18th April Children return to school
 Mon 1st May Bank holiday
 Tue 30th May - Fri 2nd Jun Half term
 Fri 30th June School closed for Inset Day
 Fri 21st July Last day of term - Finish at 2pm

Parent questionnaire results summary

These are the results from the survey that we issued to parents last month. The return rate was 47% responses from our parent body. Thank you to everyone who took part, some of whom provided comments, which are included at the end. The following results are given as percentages.

	Strongly Agree/Agree %	Disagree /Strongly Disagree %	Neither/ Don't Know %
My child likes school	93	7	0
My child feels safe at school	96	4	2
Pupils behave well	86	14	0
Incidents of antisocial behaviour are dealt with appropriately	73	5	22
Teaching is good	96	0	4
Parents evenings and reports inform me about how my child is getting on	100	0	0
I feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions	96	4	0
I use the school website	70	28	2
The school celebrates my child's successes	70	23	7
The school is well led and managed	86	11	3
Staff treat my child fairly	91	4	5
The school seeks the views of parents and takes into account their views and concerns	80	11	9
The school provides appropriate homework and staff explain how I can help my child or	86	12	2
Staff encourage my child to become mature and independent	100	0	0
There is a good range of after school activities available	65	28	7
The arrangements for my son/daughter to settle in when he/she began school were good	98	0	2

The school encourages my child to be healthy	87	9	4
The school has a good reputation locally	73	15	12
I enjoy coming to the social and fund-raising events at school	85	7	7

Parent Questionnaire Comments and Suggestions for Improvement

Thank you to those parents who took time to provide us with some feedback. Here are all the comments that we received, divided into the general themes of gratitude, clubs, homework, communication, rewards/celebrating success, bullying, sanctions, reputation, and health.

Gratitude

Our family has had to deal with several very difficult problems over the past year. The support that has been offered has been exemplary and staff have gone above and beyond to help and guide our children through this challenging period. I have an excellent dialogue with all our children's teachers and their support staff, and I feel completely confident that if I contact the school about anything that my comments, concerns or suggestions are taken seriously and that the leadership at Purwell always takes my news and the other news of parents seriously. I have been more than happy to send all our children to Purwell and regularly recommend the school to other local parents. The school has worked immensely hard to maintain its standards and provision throughout the lockdowns, the pandemic and beyond and constantly strives to improve always with pupils' wellbeing and education at the forefront of all they do. Thank you!!!

We are very happy with the teaching and management at the school and love the community feel. Thank you for all that you do.

My child has settled back in to Purwell School – thank you!

It was a brilliant start for my daughter, and she likes school very much in addition to the teachers, especially her teacher. Thank you. Appreciated.

Thank you very much for the hard work you are doing for my child.

We are very happy with Purwell School. My child is so engaged and responsive to the daily routine and enjoys being there. We have found the school to be supportive, caring, and inclusive on so many levels and the staff are always willing to listen. So, thank you!

Our child loves the school more than anything and looks forward to coming to school daily. That speaks volumes. Thank you for being dedicated and passionate about teaching our child. We can never repay you for your remarkable contribution to our child's growth and development. Our child had a hard time with mathematics. Many thanks for taking out extra time and helping our child after school hours. We have seen lots of improvement in our child's confidence level and approach. Overall, the experience in Purwell was great and thanks again for all your efforts in making a positive impact on our child.

On clubs

There is currently very little in the way of extra-curricular provision at the school; it is largely sports-based, and there isn't a lot on offer for children with interest in other areas, such as the Arts. There was a much broader range in the choice of activities prior to the pandemic, so I appreciate that clubs and activities might still be in the process of being re-established post-Covid. Here's hoping!

After school activities are very few and usually sports based, more variety for children who are not interested in sports would be good. It would also be nice if classes had the opportunity for a day out somewhere in the summer term - many at the school haven't had the experience of any off-site visits yet and I hope this is something the school will begin to offer.

Would recommend providing more sports or activities during school time or after school time. I understand that it may be due to covid situation in the past. Appreciate all staff's hard work. Thank you.

We would like more varied after-school activities, especially for younger pupils. Also, more information on these – for example we've only just found out that piano lessons were an option!

I am not aware of any afterschool activities. Extra-curricular activities which should be happening for Year 6 have not been arranged leaving these pupils disadvantaged. Example: Cycling Proficiency.

I think it would be great if the school could have a book club. I think the school has a library. It would be an idea if some of the older children could run the library. It might instill a love of books and encourage responsibility. A creative writing club is also a suggestion.

My child has not been offered opportunities for after school activities in the last 3 years.

I am not aware of any current after-school activities that my child could take part-in (lunchtime only) and the communication around football matches for Year 5 was poor. I am so grateful for the support that my child's teacher (and other teachers over the years) have given my child and would not have wanted him to attend primary school anywhere else.

On homework

My eldest child has had virtually no homework this year, just weekly Athletics and very occasionally some spelling. More recently their learning has been heavily SATs-focused, with no home-learning in other subjects. This is such a shame, as children of this age are so interested in learning about the world around them, and it's a pity not to capitalise on their intrinsic motivation to learn at this age. My youngest often has no interest in doing their homework due to it being too simple. I have mentioned this repeatedly at parents' evenings over the years, but I don't feel that there has ever been enough extension for my youngest child.

Homework has been sporadic at times this year. It would be nice to have more recognition of good things. The children used to like Friday assembly and now feel this is missing. Staff are approachable and have taken time to get to know my boys. I have overheard conversations about personal likes/dislikes etc which makes the children feel valued.

My children have both got on well at Purwell and there are lots I like about it. I do think that the variety of clubs dramatically reduced pre-pandemic activities, which is a shame. The choices beforehand were broad – 'something for everyone'. I know the pandemic affected opportunities, but my son has missed out on things I know other primary schools have been involved with like competitions, school trips etc. So, the experience of Year 6 has been different, and I feel he is less ready for secondary school partly due to this.

I would like my son to have more homework. I feel the school does a very good job and we are very impressed with the teachers and all the staff.

On communication

Communication from school to home needs to be clearer. However, when we have contacted the school, we have received prompt and worthwhile responses. There are some behaviours from certain individuals (repeated instances of swearing) that we don't feel have been addressed and dealt with.

I feel communication between teachers and parents can be improved too.

There is room for improvement regarding scheduled events – updates are put on Twitter – not all parents have Twitter accounts. Some events have had short notice, this is very difficult to organise time off work, or arrange cover. Important information not given to parents awaiting an assessment for ADHD and Autism. I was not made aware that the school had no Senco for a period of time. Communication could be better. My children's teachers have been very supportive over the last 2 years.

I would be comfortable approaching my child's class teacher and think that the general level of teaching is good across the school. I do not feel that senior management are visible or approachable and they don't like to be challenged. Decision making is poor and poorly explained. Governor roles are not well publicised.

I feel that more information should be providing assistance/guidance regarding gender-neutral changing pupils. It is a difficult subject for such young children (and adults for that matter). It should be taught more for more understanding and less confusion for the children, rather than punishing them for calling he/she incorrectly. Gender still stands and children are bound to be confused.

On rewards and celebrating success

Celebration of success - our family really liked the certificates that used to be provided to children. It helped to encourage development and acknowledged their hard work and determination. We appreciate this uses a lot of cards and due to covid it is not ideal to be handing out certificates. Maybe electronic certificates would be an alternative. The lunchtime supervisors appear to be unhelpful and rude. Some remarks from teaching staff to pupils are abrupt, discouraging, and unhelpful. Office staff are always very welcoming and helpful.

Commendations used to be given out in assembly with good conduct awards which my child used to be so proud to receive – I understand why this had to stop over lockdown etc, but it would be great if these could be re-introduced.

It would be nice to have certificates back.

As we have not been at the school for long, it is impossible to answer several of the questions firmly. I would say the school on a whole comes across quite laid back than what we are used to. I think that the children's efforts and behaviour could be rewarded more regularly, helping them be more motivated during class time.

Commendations used to be given out in assembly with good conduct awards which my child used to be so proud to receive – I understand why this had to stop over lockdown etc, but it would be great if these could be re-introduced.

On bullying

Bullying is not dealt with properly. Parents of other years talking about bullying and not enough being done to support the victim. Informing parents as soon as an incident takes place does not happen. Need more praise in assembly for kids who try hard, not just win. More Senco communication would be great.

Overall leadership demonstrated has declined over recent years. Bullying, while not directly impacting my child, is not dealt with satisfactorily. This has led to repeat offenders continually misbehaving.

On sanctions

Both my kids generally feel happy and safe at school, they have good friends, they like the staff and feel well supported. But there have been a few issues. I don't feel that the needs of more timid pupils are being considered enough. My youngest feels intimidated by the behaviour of others in their class at times, most recently during off-site class activities. Unfortunately, some nasty gender stereotyped comments about their appearance have resurfaced again, after two years. I did mention this at the recent parents evening, and the teacher is aware and has been supportive. I don't feel that my children are always treated fairly. My eldest son, who is an avid reader and who reads for pleasure daily, received a detention for their reading record book not being filled in. I spoke to the teacher about my concerns with this at the time. My child had not made me aware of the warnings of a sanction, and so this was a good learning experience for them in terms of taking personal responsibility and being organised. However, I don't feel it is fair to punish a pupil for the fact a parent has not filled in a reading record. The school did not make any effort to find out why it hadn't been filled in. I am at school drop-off and pick-up every day and this could have been quickly and easily mentioned to me. My child was extremely upset by this incident. Another example is when my

youngest was once kept in at break for not completing home-learning that had been set while they were off school unwell!

Both my children have felt very frustrated at whole-class sanctions meted out for the behaviour of just a few pupils (and from what they tell me, it is always the same few pupils). My youngest has noticed that the most disruptive pupils in the class receive the most points towards certificates. We have explained to our child that there can be different expectations for different children. They understand the reasons for this, but for my child, the fact that points seem much harder for themselves to gain is demotivating. I think that the school could do more to extend able pupils.

On reputation

I think in terms of the 'local' school community, the school has a good reputation. Current parents speak highly of the school and teaching staff. I think in terms of the wider local community the reputation of the school is not so favourable – I think this is undeserved and may be associated with the 'Purwell Estate' connotations.

Sadly, I don't think the school's reputation reflects how good it actually is. We appreciate how action has been taken on the points raised in the latest OFSTED report.

On health

Would like to see better food served at school, focusing on the latest research in the reduction of meat and dairy – more vegan/vegetarian options. More focus on calcium from green leafy vegetables instead of cow's milk. Would like some more mental health wellness techniques to be used. Meditation or Yoga maybe. Recommend Jane from Happy Little Yogi, who comes into schools.

Being healthy is only discussed in PSHE.

I think the school would benefit from bright colourful play equipment – in both infant and junior playgrounds. I worry a little about the safety of the play equipment near the gate in the junior playground. I realise funding is tight, but I think it would be money well spent. It would be great if the school could teach children outside more and make use of Wymondley Woods etc...to learn more forest type activities.

My child is encouraged to be healthy in terms of education and activity but often does not eat his lunch.

Other comments

There are frequent cake sales and parents feel under pressure to give their child money for cakes.

More school trips please.

Lack of textbooks (ok it is up to the County) but the supportive documents provided are often lost/not treated to be kept – if we don't teach children to hold onto these learning for future preferences, all the knowledge may fade, unless they have a very good memory of something learnt months/years ago. Also, there are too many "stars of the week" type of awards – kids need to truly compete for things that matter – also I'd encourage them to wear PE outfits to school on the day of PE rather than changing at school.

More open mornings to be able to see the children's work and classroom would be nice. I have sent my child back in to get left behind items and he gets upset and says he can't go back in! we haven't even left the playground. This seems unfair.