

## GOVERNORS' NEWSLETTER TO PARENTS AND CARERS

July 2020

Dear parents and carers,

At the end of an extraordinary school year, the governors wanted to write to you with our end of year reflections, and to thank you for your support of the school and the teachers' efforts in the most difficult circumstances. We are delighted that almost all children are back in school, learning and socialising with their classmates. We are particularly pleased to hear from teachers that children have settled in very smoothly, and that there is very little evidence that anybody has 'fallen behind' during lockdown. The buzz in the Home Zone gives a boost of energy to the whole area!

### Parent survey

Huge thanks to all of you who gave us feedback through the online parent survey - we had the highest response rate ever, with 153 responses! The full results are presented in the large table at the end of this newsletter. Governors met last week and discussed all aspects of the school's self-evaluation - children's progress, staff survey and parent survey. We were very pleased to see that parents are overwhelmingly positive in their evaluation of the school, with most results - as usual - well up in the 90% positive bracket. You were also extremely positive (99%) about the school's support and connection during lockdown. Thank you for your written comments too, which have helped us make sense of the numbers and given us useful pointers. For comparison, this 'Parent View' table below shows the national results of Ofsted's parent surveys in primary schools in 2019.

## Parent View



<b>National Primary</b> [232,863 Responses = 4.9% ]	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
Q1. My child is happy at this school	68%	25%	4%	3%	0%	93%	6%
Q2. My child feels safe at this school	70%	24%	3%	2%	1%	94%	5%
Q3. My child makes good progress at this school	56%	33%	6%	3%	1%	89%	9%
Q4. My child is well looked after at this school	63%	28%	5%	2%	1%	92%	7%
Q5. My child is taught well at this school	58%	32%	5%	2%	2%	90%	8%
Q6. My child receives appropriate homework for their age	45%	40%	9%	4%	3%	85%	13%
Q7. This school makes sure its pupils are well behaved	53%	34%	6%	4%	3%	87%	10%
Q8. This school deals effectively with bullying	39%	27%	7%	6%	22%	66%	12%
Q9. This school is well led and managed	56%	28%	6%	6%	3%	84%	13%
Q10. This school responds well to any concerns I raise	52%	29%	8%	6%	5%	81%	14%
Q11. I receive valuable information about my child's progress	49%	36%	10%	4%	1%	85%	14%
Q12. Would you recommend this school to another parent?						88%	12%

We focused our discussion on the 2 questions where parents were less positive. As in other years, several parents wished for more extra-curricular activities in school. We have considered this issue very carefully. Our view is that an exciting, broad curriculum enriched by diverse opportunities is central to an Eleanor Palmer education, and this is provided within the school day, rather than requiring after-school provision. As a small school with a small staff, who all use their classrooms after school to prepare, we simply do not have capacity for a more extensive programme of clubs.

We are also lucky to have a rich array of afterschool activities within walking distance. We are pleased that Eleanor Palmer is taking over the running of our after-school childcare which has been run by an external company, P3, for many years. We expect a more tightly-run and richer environment, when Playcentre's replacement, 'Club EP', opens, we hope at the start of the new term.

Responses to the question about unacceptable behaviour have improved in each of the last two years, but they are still slightly less positive than others. Taking into account the 'not applicable' response, which we assume means 'have not experienced', it is 7% who 'disagree'. This is a common pattern nationally. In fact, compared to the 77% who are positive about this question at Eleanor Palmer, nationally the 'agree' figure was 66% in 2019 (see table above). We have discussed the individual written comments, which were helpful - thank you - but they did not present a consistent pattern. We urge parents to raise any concerns they have with class teachers at an early stage, so that action can be taken where appropriate.

Among the written comments, a new theme emerged this year, inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, encouraging further attention to issues of racial diversity and equality. These are priority concerns for Eleanor Palmer across all its activities. A curriculum review is ongoing so that all children will benefit next year from a 'de-colonised' curriculum with more diverse books, teaching materials and topics.

#### Staff news

The governors are extremely grateful to the unparalleled efforts of all the staff to support children and parents with learning during lockdown and in the return to school. We welcome a new teacher to Year 4, Stefan Palejowski, who trained at our school. And we say goodbye to two stalwarts of EP who are moving on to new horizons. Helen Holgate has been a pillar of Early Years Education and we know that every child who has been in her Reception classes (over 14 years!) carries that strong foundation with them for life. Annie Fair has been an invaluable and much-loved support to those in the Juniors with additional learning needs and will be sorely missed by parents and children.

Finally, in the parent survey, the theme of 'community' was repeated again and again as a positive feature of the school. We would like to acknowledge the amazing response of the parent community in making a success of education during lockdown, supporting your children, teachers and school. You all deserve multiple medals! The creativity and passion driving the virtual Summer Fair is another inspiring example of the sense of community that makes EP so special.

We wish you all a happy summer break, and look forward to the 'new normal' in the Autumn.

Jen Allan and EPS Governing Body.

**Table showing percentages of combined 'agree' v 'disagree' responses over last 3 years at EP**

	2020			2019			2018		
	Agree	Disagree	N/A	Agree	Disagree	N/A	Agree	Disagree	N/A
My child enjoys school	100	0	0	95	3	2	95	5	0
The school keeps my child safe	100	0	0	98	0	2	95	5	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	95	3	2	95	4	1	98	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	97	3	1	95	4	1	95	5	0
The teaching is good at this school	99	1	0	99	0	1	100	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	96	3	1	99	1	0	99	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	99	1	1	92	7	1	94	4	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future	88	1	11	92	2	6	91	4	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	93	1	6	92	3	5	90	6	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	77	7	16	78	10	12	73	17	10
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	89	2	9	82	7	11	81	9	10
The school takes account of pupils' views	87	1	12	85	1	14	91	4	5
The range of extra curricular activities is good	77	16	7	81	15	5	81	15	4
The school is led and managed effectively	99	1	1	98	1	1	96	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	99	1	0	99	1	0	94	5	1