

SMMA Primary Parent and Carer Survey November 2020

The school usually provides a physical copy of the survey to fill in at Parents' Evening. Due to restrictions, this was online this year which meant we had less opportunity to receive information and as a result have about half of the surveys completed than we have in previous years. We are very grateful to everyone who was able to access and fill it in.



The percentage responses to the standard questions we ask annually are below, but considering the exceptional circumstances of 2020, we were particularly interested in the individual responses to certain questions. We have provided a sample of responses (in italic and grey) and a response to them below.

1. What do you think the school did well over lockdown?

You were ready from day one, much better than other schools, and we could see the effort put into creating lots of activities and reviewing them. Great job from The Staff and X.

They provided good teaching resources on line and physically. The teachers were responsive and encouraging about the work that was being handed in

Stories video uploads by teachers, calling parents to check how we were doing and if anything needed and providing children with materials/chrome book.

The school did extremely well and X did a fantastic job. She provided support even out of school hours and set some art lessons that were fun/enjoyable which I think the kids needed at that time. She also gave ample warning about the art materials needed for these lessons so they could be collected from the school or ordered.

Communicated fantastically and made learning fun with videos and competitions. I felt proud to be a part of the school community.

The online provision was great, but I don't think online learning works well for young children

They were look forward every day challenges, story time and assembly. Thank you so much for the great effort for them.

I appreciate all the feedback here. We worked hard to be ready for school closures which were clearly on the horizon so that we could get going straight away. It was a huge learning curve for us in terms of the technology and I think that in particular has been a positive experience. We have learnt a number of lessons which are in our Digital Strategy which will soon be available on the website.

We really wanted to be able to offer a feeling of belonging and community so I was pleased when we got into the swing of the daily assemblies and story-telling. I am extremely proud of the staff who went above and beyond in a time of uncertainty to be in school with keyworker children and those who put together physical resources and delivered them to families. I have to credit the staff for their efforts, as I know that this was not the case in all schools.

Is there anything you think that the school could have improved in their provision of lockdown learning?

There was no 'live' teaching to the class from the teacher, or class meets.

Maybe independent classes e.g a whole class online, as was hard for me to do work with my child sometimes due to work commitments (working from home)

It would of been good to have the teacher leading an online class even if just for an hour a day. This could of included show and tell each week. For working parents with more than one child it was pretty impossible to mirror the school day. We ended up focusing on core subjects i.e. maths and English (phonics, writing, comprehension etc). At reception age there is not a lot the child can do without supervision.

When schools were permitted to return as lockdown restrictions were gradually lifted, it seemed that SMMA Primary took fewer year groups back and for fewer hours a week than most other local schools. This was disappointing given how much children needed this support.

Not really - you did an amazing job with the resources you had available.

Give more work online lesson

Maybe cut down the amount of online work, stressful for the parents and children

This was a challenging area for Primary pupils. Our teaching and leadership unions advice was not to do live lessons from home for teachers with younger pupils due to a number of safeguarding reasons. We have spent time working through the issues the unions raised with our staff. In addition, we were concerned about whether this would add additional pressure for families who may be sharing devices etc. I think on reflection though, that the chance to do online meets once a day, as we offered towards the end of term (and in the closure of one bubble this term) is a good idea. We now have additional devices we can loan out, if we have to close any bubbles in the future which will make this easier for families to be able to access this and it is in our Digital Strategy. We will be unable to offer live from the classroom lessons for individuals self-isolating for a number of reasons which I am happy to discuss with parents.

I share the concerns about the difficulty of offering online learning for younger pupils. We know that it is not the ideal mode of learning for those pupils – so much of their development is around the physical, interactive and social opportunities within the classroom. We have considered making up packs which contain more physical items so that we can provide parents with activities which try to replicate the classroom where we can. It is most definitely an area to work on.

I noted there a couple of challenges to how the school reopened. In the summer term we communicated about the agreed strategy for reopening the school. We shared a letter from the head of Islington council which asked that parents not compare schools as we each had our own individual challenges to overcome in terms of staffing, key worker and vulnerable pupil provision and space. I attended numerous briefings over the months from Public Health and the local team and headteachers were open and supportive of one another in making these decisions.

Space for us was a major issue – one classroom was needed daily for key worker pupils, and we were unable to use the classroom linked to the nursery which also became completely filled with all the furniture we had to remove from other areas in the school as part of meeting risk assessment requirements at the time. My priority was to be able to offer some form of in person schooling to every child whose parent and carer wanted them to return – this was why we went for the two days a week on a rota model. We opened to Rec, Year 1 and 6 in the beginning as instructed by the government and then reintroduced the other year groups in on different days and weeks once we were allowed. While we did not offer a full week to anyone other than key worker and vulnerable children, we did offer something to every pupil whilst also sticking to the limited class sizes, providing online learning for pupils who did not return (which we would have been unable to do if all staff had been in at the same time), and adhering to the requirement for deep cleaning between cohorts. While some local schools were unable to open, others only reopened to the three year groups, and others opened more year groups but would only admit 15 pupils per class. We not only opened every year group, but we ensured that every parent who requested that their child would return was able to do so. Therefore, by the end of the summer term, we had seen in person nearly 75% of the pupils and had the capacity to have seen 100% of them if parents had requested that.

This was achieved by taking a slow and cautious approach to build trust in parents and staff that we had taken every precaution necessary to make it safe. And many in the parent community responded once they saw the system working, with people changing their minds about returning. It was a complex system to manage and coordinate, and we took extra care to keep siblings in on the same days to ease burden on parents. I am extremely proud of what we were able to achieve together.

How do you think lockdown affected your child? This could be positively or negatively

Missed out on learning, I could never replace a teacher

They found it hard to be away from friends (and with their siblings!). They did take initiative and work hard at the work that was set for them.

She enjoyed working independently but she did miss her classmates

My children really enjoyed lockdown as it was a positive time at home. We're very privileged to have a small garden and we were all well health wise. They loved being "home schooled" for that period and didn't feel too disconnected from friends at school. We carried on having social time (youth club at church, chats with friends etc) on zoom and encouraged together family time as much as possible. They definitely looked forward to going back to school to see friends and get back to normality.

Negatively. School is a community for the child, social interaction, better teaching, clear routine for the child. School is not all about the 3 R's which can be part done at home, its more than that. I worry about the mental wellness of my children if not at school and we did see heightened bad moods/ mild depression when in lockdown.

I think our child was ok in spite of the circumstances. We were surprised to see how diligent he was at doing his homework.

It had more positive effects than negative ones. Only downside of it was missing and not able to see friends and family

It is interesting to see that this is a mixed response and think it goes to show a few key points:

School is more than just the academic learning. This is something we have always recognised in our team at SMMA. Part of our mission in Church of England schools is to live 'life in all its fullness' which is beyond the attendance at lessons. School is part of a holistic experience where learning how to be part of a community rather than just an individual comes alive.

Some families really enjoyed their time together and children were learning in a number of different ways which is extremely important. We loved reading about and seeing all the baking and gardening and craft that you and your children were getting on with.

Some families struggled – it was and continues to be a challenging time for those key workers, those working from home and those out of work or furloughed. We recognise that some children experienced personal challenges with the nature of independent learning and/or being away from the structure of the school day and their friends and extended families.

Everyone's context was different and we respect all of your experiences. We believe that, for our community, it was important that pupils get back into routine as quickly as possible, that in doing so are shielded as much as possible from unnecessary anxiety and they can instead focus on learning and fun.

Do you have any feedback from the functionality of the online Parents Evening application?

Was very straight forward and easy to use

Worked well and very strict at keeping everyone to time!

It was not difficult to access to application. But I had to waste about 2-3 minutes of appointment time trying to get application/camera fixed in order to see the teacher. Unfortunately it didn't work and we had to carry on, at least we could hear each other.

I received so many emails.....

It was all smooth and straight forward. The time ticking down as you talk is a bit disruptive but I understand it's also there to ensure you fit everything in.

We were really pleased with the ease of booking and would continue to use this aspect in the future instead of the sheets in the playground. We recognise that it is difficult for some parents to be here in person, so even when we can resume face to face, I think this is a helpful piece of technology to tap into and give people the option.

We still needed to do a number of telephone meetings. While this on the face of it may seem easier – it is actually pretty difficult to get 7 people on school phones in rooms by themselves for confidentiality and stick to time for the 30 pupils in each class.

Teachers said they became more confident with the system the more we used it. I do apologise for the number of emails beforehand! I think now we have done it once, it will be easier if we have to do it online next time.

Statement	Strongly Agree or Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
My child is happy at school.	97.9% (47)	2.1% (1)	
My child feels safe at school.	97.9% (46)	2.1% (1)	
Staff treat my child fairly and with respect.	100%		
My child is encouraged to treat others fairly and with respect at school.	100%		
I would find it easy to approach a member of staff with a question or a concern.	100%		
The school has supported my child if there has been friendship problems	68.7% (33)	4.2% (2)	27.1% (13)
Staff have high expectations of my child's learning	97.9% (47)	2.1% (1)	
The school offers me information about what my child will learn during the year.	95.9% (46)	4.2% (2)	
The school lets me know how my child is doing	97.9% (47)	2.1% (1)	
There is a good range of subjects available to my child at this school	95.9% (46)	4.2% (2)	
My child is doing well at school and has made progress this year	95.9% (46)	4.2% (2)	
My child regularly reads at home	85.4% (41)	14.6 (7)	
My child practices their maths regularly at home	75% (36)	16.7(8)	8.3 (4)
I read the weekly newsletter	100%		
I look at the school website	64.6% (31)	33.3% (16)	2.1 (1)
The school encourages pupils to be punctual and to have good attendance	100%		
I would recommend the school to other parents	Yes	100%	No

I am delighted with this feedback. We will endeavour to keep putting up information about the curriculum and assessment through the website and through workshops this year and share that in the newsletter too.