

Castle Lower School Governing Body

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Title : Summary of 2009 Parents Survey Results

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Status : For discussion

Executive summary : The attached report summarises the main results from the recent parents survey. Governors are invited to consider the results in conjunction with the Staff and Pupil Surveys, in terms of both the evaluation of the school's existing policies and activities, and the implications for school development priorities for 2009/10.

Castle Lower School Governing Body

Summary of 2009 Parents Survey Results

Responses Received

1. 115 surveys were completed and returned, which represents a response rate of roughly 31%. This is slightly down on the 2008 response rate of 34%. The breakdown by year group is shown below :-

Year Group	Number of Responses	% of total response
Nursery	2	2%
Reception	29	25%
Year 1	23	20%
Year 2	20	17%
Year 3	24	21%
Year 4	17	15%

2. 53% of the responses were from the parents of boys, 42% from girls. 5% of respondents did not specify the gender of their child.

3. In terms of ethnicity, 73% of the responses were classified as "White British". Representation of the other ethnic groups is broadly in line with the picture for the school as a whole.

4. Most respondents were able to answer all of the questions that applied to their year group. Overall, 4% of responses were "don't knows" - with most of these relating to questions on the school website (Q22 and Q28), and on the International Primary Curriculum (Q6).

Summary of Results

5. The full results of the questionnaire are set out in the graphs and tables attached at Annex. Most questions showed strongly positive scores, with on average 77% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing, 15% being undecided, and 5% disagreeing. However, within that overall picture there were some interesting variations.

6. The whole school questions for which the responses were most positive (i.e. the greatest proportion of respondents answered "Strongly Agree" or "Agree") were :-

Question	strongly agree	agree	Score ¹ (out of 5)
2. My child is making good progress	33%	61%	4.2
3. Teaching is good	36%	58%	4.3
12. My child is safe at school	36%	60%	4.3
14. The school is led and managed well	58%	37%	4.5
21. The Newsletter helps me keep in touch with what's going on at school	42%	56%	4.4

7. The questions for which the responses were most negative (i.e. the greatest proportion of respondents answered "Disagree" or "Disagree Strongly") were :-

Question	% disagree	% strongly disagree	Score (out of 5)
7. I am kept well informed on how my child is getting on	8%	1%	3.8
17. Staff explain how I can help my child at home	6%	2%	3.8
28. I would find having my child at parents consultation evenings useful	35%	9%	2.8
29. I find the school website useful in supporting my child's education	12%	1%	2.5
30. I understand the benefits of the school becoming part of a trust	8%	5%	3.1

8. It should be noted that although these questions showed the greatest proportion of negative responses, the net balance in the responses was still generally positive.

¹ This is a composite score where 5 = 100% strongly agree, 4 = 100% agree etc

9. The questions for which respondents were most undecided (i.e. the highest proportion of respondents answered "Neither agree nor disagree") were :-

Question	% neither agree nor disagree	Score (out of 5)
22. The Website helps me keep in touch with what's going on at school	38%	3.2
27. I find the new target book useful	35%	3.5
28. I would find having my child at parents consultation evenings useful	26%	2.8
29. I find the school website useful in supporting my child's education	50%	2.5
30. I understand the benefits of the school becoming part of a trust	31%	3.1

Comparison with 2008 Results

10. The last survey was carried out in 2008. 23 questions used in that survey were carried across to the 2009 survey. For 19 of these 23 questions, there was an increase in the percentage of respondents agreeing. The questions which showed the most significant improvements in comparison to 2008 were :-

Question	strongly agree / agree		Strongly disagree/ disagree	
	2009	2008	2009	2008
7. I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	71%	52%	9%	15%
16. The school seeks the views of parents and takes account of their suggestions and views	83%	75%	0%	2%
17. Staff explain how I can help my child at home	77%	68%	8%	10%
18. The school provides appropriate homework	82%	66%	7%	11%
19. There is a good range of activities outside of lessons, including visits and trips	83%	76%	3%	11%
23. I understand the school's main policies and how they apply to my child's education	86%	76%	3%	5%

11. It is particularly pleasing that many of the questions showing the greatest improvement were those that tended to attract the more negative responses in 2006.

12. The two questions which showed a significant apparent decrease in satisfaction in comparison to 2008 were :-

Question	strongly agree / agree		Strongly disagree / disagree	
	2009	2008	2009	2008
24. I understand the role of the Governing Body and the decisions it makes	66%	71%	7%	10%
25. My child is well prepared for moving on to the next school (Yr 4 only)	70%	79%	0%	4%

13. The fall in positive responses to Q25 was caused exclusively by the responses of parents of boys. The responses from parents of girls were 100% positive. This reverses the pattern found in 2008.

Analysis by Gender

14. We have only been able to analyse responses by gender where this was information was given on the form.

15. There were few differences in the responses when analysed by gender. This contrasts with the picture in 2008, when the responses from parents of boys (78% positive) were marginally less positive than for girls (82% positive). There were also few differences in the responses to individual questions, aside from the Year 4 question on moving to the next school noted above.

16. In 2009, girls' parents were less positive about being kept in touch with how their child was getting on (Q7), and the usefulness of the target booklet (Q27). Boys' parents were more positive about teaching (Q3), and settling in to school (Q20, Yr R only), but more negative about the prospect their children attending parents consultation evenings (Q28).

Analysis by Ethnicity

18. Given the relatively small numbers outside of the "White-British" group, for the purposes of this analysis, all such responses have been aggregated into a single "minority ethnic" group.

19. In general the responses of the minority ethnic group are more positive than the White-British group (84% vs 74%). This repeats the pattern found in 2008. This was the case against a wide range of questions.

Analysis by Year Group

20. Numbers of responses from Nursery were too small to analyse reliably. For the other years, we have highlighted below some of the issues where responses were significantly better or worse than average

Year Group	Better	Worse
Reception		Progress (Q2) Teaching (Q3) IPC (Q6) Work Hard (Q9) Activities (Q19) Website (Q22) Governing Body (Q24) Parents Consultation (Q28) School Website (Q29)
Year One	Progress (Q2) IPC (Q6) Target Booklet (Q27)	Kept well-informed (Q7) Questions / complaints (Q8)
Year Two	IPC (Q6) Kept well-informed (Q7) Benefits of Trust (Q30)	
Year Three	Childrens views (Q15) Activities (Q19)	Values (Q5) Kept informed (Q7) School leadership (Q14) Benefits of Trust (Q30)
Year Four	IPC (Q6) Kept well-informed (Q7) Work Hard (Q9) Activities (Q19)	Healthy /exercise (Q11) Homework (Q18) School Policies (Q23)

	School Website (Q22) Target Book (Q27) Parent consultations (Q28)	
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Written comments recieved

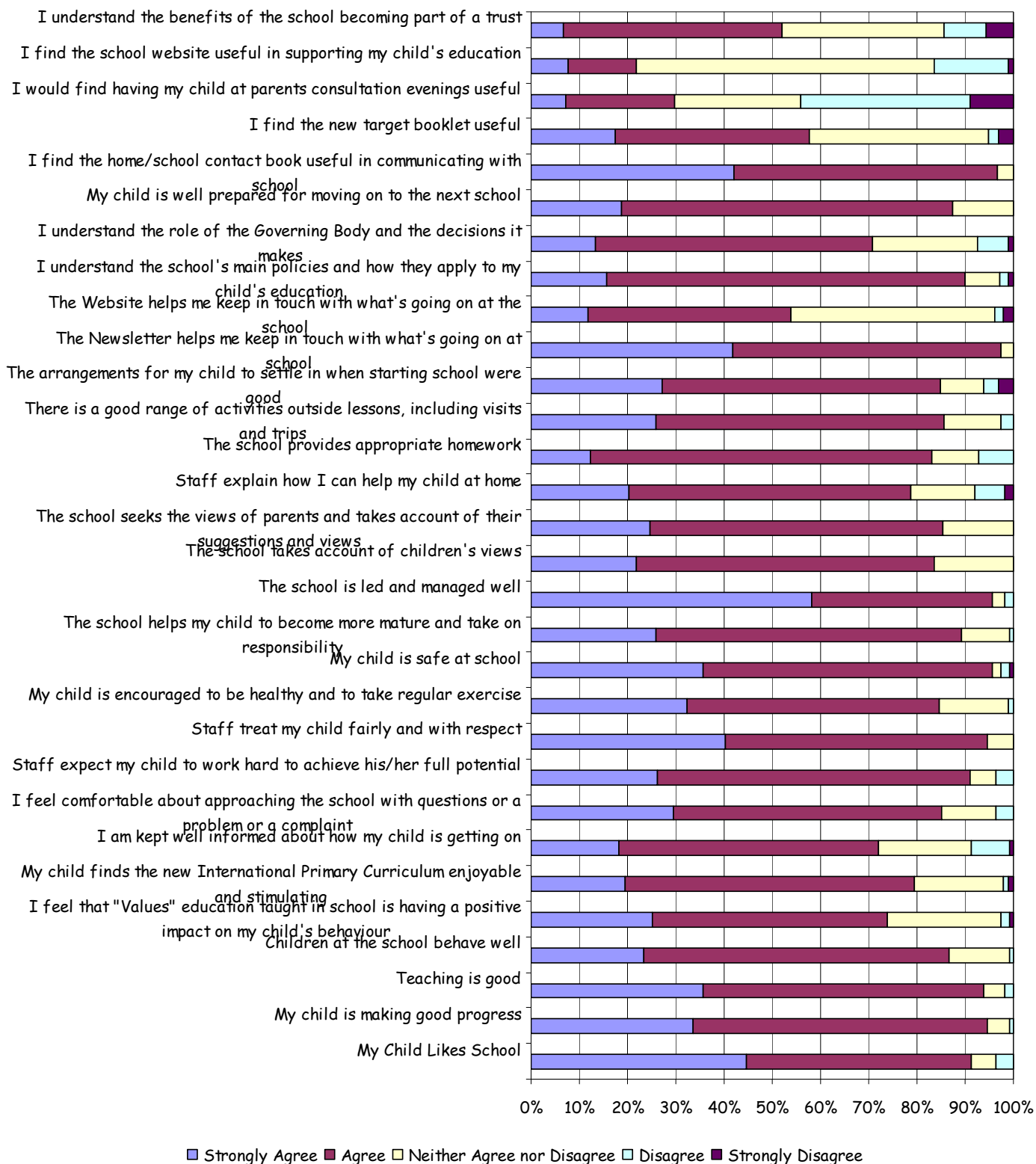
21. Verbatim comments are attached for information.

Attachments :-

Summary Chart

Table of Results

Verbatim comments



		ALL RESPONDENTS							
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	% Positive	% Negative	Score out of 5
1	My Child Likes School	44%	46%	5%	3%	0%	90%	3%	4.3
2	My child is making good progress	33%	61%	4%	1%	0%	94%	1%	4.2
3	Teaching is good	36%	58%	4%	2%	0%	94%	2%	4.3
4	Children at the school behave well	23%	62%	12%	1%	0%	84%	1%	4.0
5	I feel that "Values" education taught in school is having a positive impact on my child's behaviour	25%	49%	23%	2%	1%	74%	3%	4.0
6	My child finds the new International Primary Curriculum enjoyable and stimulating	17%	52%	16%	1%	1%	68%	2%	3.4
7	I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	18%	54%	19%	8%	1%	72%	9%	3.8
8	I feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem or a complaint	30%	56%	11%	3%	0%	85%	3%	4.1
9	Staff expect my child to work hard to achieve his/her full potential	25%	63%	5%	3%	0%	88%	3%	4.0
10	Staff treat my child fairly and with respect	39%	53%	5%	0%	0%	92%	0%	4.2
11	My child is encouraged to be healthy and to take regular exercise	31%	50%	14%	1%	0%	82%	1%	4.0
12	My child is safe at school	36%	60%	2%	2%	1%	96%	3%	4.3
13	The school helps my child to become more mature and take on responsibility	25%	62%	10%	1%	0%	87%	1%	4.0
14	The school is led and managed well	58%	37%	3%	2%	0%	96%	2%	4.5
15	The school takes account of children's views	21%	59%	16%	0%	0%	80%	0%	3.9
16	The school seeks the views of parents and takes account of their suggestions and views	24%	59%	14%	0%	0%	83%	0%	4.0
17	Staff explain how I can help my child at home	20%	57%	13%	6%	2%	77%	8%	3.8
18	The school provides appropriate homework	12%	70%	10%	7%	0%	82%	7%	3.8
19	There is a good range of activities outside lessons, including visits and trips	25%	58%	11%	3%	0%	83%	3%	4.0

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	% Positive	% Negative	Score out of 5
20	The arrangements for my child to settle in when starting school were good	27%	58%	9%	3%	3%	85%	6%	4.0
21	The Newsletter helps me keep in touch with what's going on at school	42%	56%	3%	0%	0%	97%	0%	4.4
22	The Website helps me keep in touch with what's going on at the school	11%	38%	38%	2%	2%	48%	4%	3.2
23	I understand the school's main policies and how they apply to my child's education	15%	71%	7%	2%	1%	86%	3%	3.8
24	I understand the role of the Governing Body and the decisions it makes	12%	54%	20%	6%	1%	66%	7%	3.5
25	My child is well prepared for moving on to the next school	15%	55%	10%	0%	0%	70%	0%	3.3
26	I find the home/school contact book useful in communicating with school	41%	53%	3%	0%	0%	94%	0%	4.3
27	I find the new target booklet useful	17%	38%	35%	2%	3%	54%	5%	3.5
28	I would find having my child at parents consultation evenings useful	7%	22%	26%	35%	9%	29%	43%	2.8
29	I find the school website useful in supporting my child's education	6%	12%	50%	12%	1%	18%	13%	2.5
30	I understand the benefits of the school becoming part of a trust	6%	42%	31%	8%	5%	48%	13%	3.1
31	Do you have access to the internet at home ?						96%	4%	

Key to shading

	“Significantly” (e.g. 10%) better than average for all questions (Agree / Strongly Agree Only)
	“Significantly” (e.g. 10%) worse than average for all questions
	“Significantly” (e.g. 10%) more “neither agree nor disagree” than average for all questions

Year	Question	Comment
Y2	4	My daughter has felt unsafe with XXXXX's behaviour in her class but the teacher has handled it well and Mr Marsh seems on the ball and treats XXXXX well
Y2	4	I have notice that not all children say thank you when the door is held open for them in the mornings. A problem parents need to deal with as well as the school. Also there have been one or two issues with "relationships" between my child and other children. Again, not necessarily the school's problem
Y3	5	I agree strongly with the values taught in school and also promote these at home. I do feel that my child often asks why she has never had one, so I think this can have a negative effect because she knows she is carrying out the value most days
Y2	6	Enjoys "WOW" days
Y1	6	Agree - but sometimes finds it [IPC] confusing - pace too fast?
R	7	When I ask!
R	7	(Also 26) Communication is very poor. We have no idea of how our child is progressing. The home school book is a great idea but is under-utilised - no detailed feedback from teacher and no comment on anything we write.
Y1	7	A <i>brief</i> end of term report would be useful
Y1	7	I feel as a working parent that the home-school communication for myself and my child's teacher is very lacking. I am keen to keep a close link with her teacher because of the hours aren't school time [sic], but I feel this year has been very lack[ing] and I have to keep chasing or writing letters to find out what is happening whilst my child is at school.
Y1	7	I haven't particularly felt this [being well informed on child's progress] to be the case, where I had concerns which turned out to be well-founded, I'd approached the school. However the target book is a good move, updating each term would be useful.
R	9	I believe Reception children have too long a day at school and are pushed too hard, less emphasis should be applied to 'learning' and a little more time playing, going beyond education in the play / school ground. Whilst I appreciate children have to learn, I often feel the school have too high expectations for children of only 4/5 years old. Less learning, more structured play!
Y3	11	P.E. is <u>rarely</u> twice weekly
Y3	12	I feel that the playground is not secure at breaktimes when adults are dropping off at nursery. Anyone could enter the playground and any child could leave if they chose to.
Y4	12	Through the many years I have had dealings with Castle Lower I have felt and have indeed expressed my concerns previously that security at the school is desperately lacking. Anybody could and indeed has walked in to the school at playtime and could very easily walk off with a child. I believe as do many other parents that Castle should have a keypad operating entry system (as per Goldington Middle) thus enabling parents / civilians to be buzzed in if expected

- Y3 14 Extremely disappointed to hear not all children living in catchment can go to Castle for reception in Sep 09 - the impact may be large - poor judgement as this is the first time for 10+ years. Castle has always been able to accommodate all catchment children (for at least 10 years). The sense of community will be lost, and of course has negative environmental impacts. Is keeping "outstanding" for the few better than "good" for all catchment children ?
- Y2 14 Current admissions procedures are disgraceful by not considering siblings
- Y2 18 Whilst I agree that the homework is appropriate, I feel that it is sometimes too much or too difficult for a Yr 2 child and that it would be good if some half terms the child and parent were allowed to enjoy the time without homework pressure, again, they are only very young and need to enjoy their childhood too
- Y4 18 Sometimes feel that they get too much homework. In comparison to other lower schools or even Yr 5 middle schools. They are bring more than they are for homework
- Y4 18 Some of the homework appears to be at a higher level than my daughters in Year 8. I feel as I have to put in a lot of support for homework as when he completes it himself it often is returned with very negative comments
- Y1 18 Homework is never checked
- Y1 18 I would like to see more homework especially spellings, times tables and maths questions geared to the level of the child's abilities. This would also help parents to know how we can help our child's literacy and numeracy skills.
- Y1 18 Spellings and the odd bit of maths is fine but sometimes a mini-project relating to topics taught in class can motivate and inspire children to learn at home. My son often initiates activities at home which relates to what he has done in class.
- Y3 19 I do feel the children could access more things, places in the community i.e. trip sor visits. I do feel these are very limited.
- R 20 Away on visit. Asked if could visit another time. Request not met with approval!
- Y2 21 Letters and newsletters : often I don't get them sent home, I only find out from other parents about them, often too late for some events. Not all dates are correct on newsletter for events e.g. parents evening
- Y2 21 For some reason I often don't get newsletters, and when I check newsletters on the website they're not always there. I didn't know the target booklets were due back on Monday 9th and had no idea what was happening on Red Nose Day. I had to come into school to chase up this newsletter and I still need to get another questionnaire for my other child at the school.
- Y2 22 The website is not very interesting - it is more of an information page than a site. Needs spark. As of 16 March 2009 only minutes of governors meetings up to 1st Dec 2008 on site. Where are minutes for 2009 ?
- R 22 (Website) could be better - sometimes out of date
- R 23 We are new to school and school system, have no knowledge of policies etc- need to take time to find out - will do so!
- R 26 As the parent of a child in reception I find the home-school book extremely useful. The book seems limited to Reception only. I would like to think this is used in

other years.

- Y1 26 I feel strongly that the home-school book should still be used in school years other than Reception. For any immediate concerns parents have - especially those who work and are unable to meet with the teacher on a daily basis. This view has been supported by one or two other mothers I have spoken to.
- Y4 27 It is useful to know our childrens' current level but specific information of what we could do to support learning difficulties would make it more meaningful
- Y3 28 Don't most people already take their children to Parents' consultations ?!
- Y1 28 My child already comes to parents' evenings.
- Y1 28 I have experienced both [child present and not], the problem with a child being there is that I find to can prohibit [inhibit?] what is said a little. This applies to both parents and teachers -sometimes private conversations are illuminating.
- Y3 29 Have not checked lately as my PC has been out of use but was not aware the website had learning games or activities on it. This sounds good - more please !
- Y4 29 Although very good in part, the Castle Website isn't updated often enough. When looking at my elder child's website for middle school the site is effectively and regularly maintained. I know that this is time-consuming for the secretarial staff, but when for example we had the extreme weather conditions every other school had the emergency announcements on their home page and yet Castle's hasn't been updated for quite a while. Also, whilst other friends and neighbours received text alerts, although I have given my mobile number in repeatedly I still didn't receive an alert and the website was no help at all
- Y1 29 The school website is essential and hopefully will be predominantly used instead of paper letters!
- Y1 29 Had no idea there were useful resources on there [website]! Would be valuable if you could access wordlists / resources for your child.
- Y2 30 I put my trust in Mr Marsh as headmaster to make the correct decision with the "Trust" situation
- Y3 30 I read the Trust letters through a few times and could not really see what would be different than just co-operating with other North Beds schools as I believe happens currently. The benefits all seemed a bit abstract with no concrete examples given
- Y2 I especially value the staff's commitment, the values education, the new IPC which my son very much enjoys. It's a creative, fun approach to education
What I'd still like to see more of : engagement with the community the school is part of e.g. through visits / external activities for the children, bringing members of the community to school
In all, it's a great school with dedicated, hard-working staff and we're very glad our children can go to Castle School
- Y4 Good, strong leadership ... finally. Fantastic teaching, with very few exceptions. Communication much improved but still not perfect. If the website was as good as GMS or Hills the school would score a 10/10 from us !!

- Y4 Mr Marsh and his team are doing a fantastic job ! My son is having a terrific year - well prepared to move up. Mrs Vassell is a wonderful teacher - outstanding level of feedback in her comments to children - verbally and also in work and homework books. I hope he is this challenged and stimulated at middle school ! Thank you to everyone at Castle !
- R Friendship groups from Nursery not requested or maintained into Year R