

FEEDBACK TO PARENTS ON SURVEY FINDINGS

ST MARY'S CAMBRIDGE, JUNIOR SCHOOL

1. BACKGROUND

We are pleased to provide this independent summary of the main findings from the online survey we undertook in October on behalf of St Mary's Junior School. Many thanks to all the parents and guardians who responded.

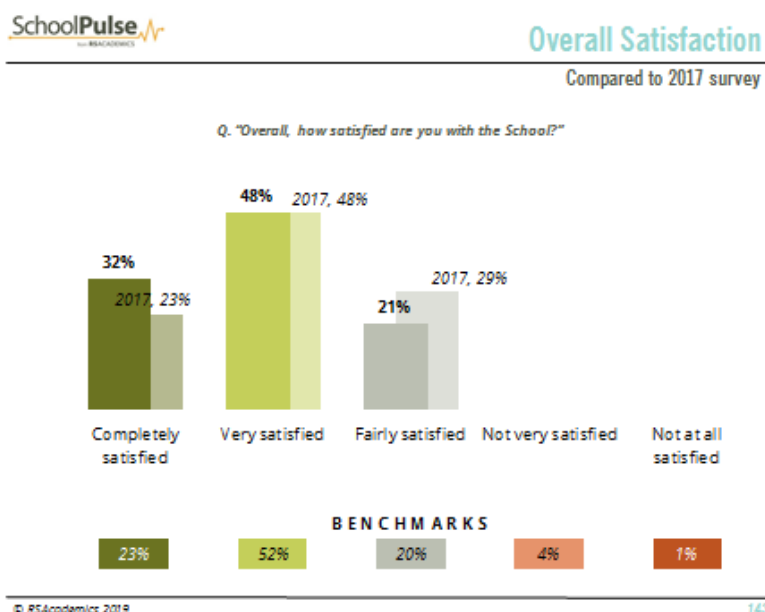
The aim of the survey was to find out what parents particularly value about St Mary's, where they would like to see the School invest and develop in the future and to find out their opinions on a wide range of aspects of school life.

There was a 59% response rate which is typical of the response rates from other independent prep schools who have undertaken this type of survey.

2. ST MARY'S EXCEEDS ALL OF OUR KEY BENCHMARKS

Parents are strong advocates for the School – almost all parents (99%) would recommend St Mary's to friends. 76% say they would 'definitely recommend' St Mary's and a further 23% say they would probably do so. For 35% of parents, St Mary's has 'exceeded' expectations and it has 'met' them for 60% of parents. The number of parents for whom the School has 'fallen short' of expectations is low at 5%, and lower than our average compiled from similar surveys conducted with other independent junior and prep schools across the UK. 80% of parents describe themselves as 'completely' (32%) or 'very' (48%) satisfied with the School. The remaining fifth described themselves as 'fairly satisfied'. No parents expressed dissatisfaction with the School.

On the measures for satisfaction and advocacy, the School is ahead of our benchmarks and has also seen improvements on the highest ratings since we undertook a similar survey in 2017.



3. IMAGE AND ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

We asked parents to select five words which together best describe St Mary's. A list of 21 words was supplied containing both positive and more critical words.

The word most frequently selected by parents to describe the School was 'welcoming', chosen by 85% of parents. This was closely followed by 'encouraging' and then 'ambitious' and 'inclusive'.

These word choices highlight the impression created throughout the survey of a dynamic and welcoming environment where individual girls are encouraged to develop their skills both inside and outside the classroom.

4. RATING ASPECTS OF SCHOOL LIFE

We asked parents to consider a list of 40 different school features covering many aspects of school life and rate each one as 'very good', 'good', 'average', 'poor' or 'very poor'.

The School's results were excellent with at least 75% of parents rating 38 of the 40 features as either 'good' or 'very good'. Indeed, 100% of parents rated 'the quality of teaching' and 'the relationships between pupils and teachers/staff' features as either 'very good' or 'good'.

Parents' scores for a number of areas were much higher than in 2017, notably communication, transport arrangements and leadership. St Mary's significantly outperforms the SchoolPulse benchmark scores on 10 individual features, which encompass a range of aspects of school life, from 'pupils' use of IT' and 'preparation for transition to Senior School' to the provision of musical opportunities' and 'the organisation of 'parents' evenings'.

The following features were rated particularly highly by parents:

- The leadership of the School
- Behaviour and manners of pupils
- The School's concern for each girl's wellbeing and the way pupils are treated as individuals
- The quality of teaching, teachers' ability to inspire pupils and the teaching of literacy and numeracy
- Musical opportunities
- Individual communication with the class teacher and general communication keeping parents informed about what is happening in school
- The relationships between pupils and teachers/staff

Overall, these findings demonstrate a rounded picture of excellence rather than strengths being focused on particular specialist areas.

5. AREAS WHERE SOME PARENTS WOULD LIKE TO SEE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Every good school continuously seeks to improve and, as always, there are areas where parents would like to see further development and investment. We asked all parents to identify up to five areas in which the School should invest time, effort or money. Parents rate most of these areas highly already – they simply wish to see a continued focus. The following areas were highlighted:

	% of parents selecting as a priority
Provision of sports opportunities	27%
Provision of creative and performing arts opportunities	23%
Feedback on your daughter's progress	22%
Provision of food at lunchtime	22%
The way your daughter is stretched and challenged	21%

Provision of sports opportunities

Some parents would like to see more opportunities to engage in sport, and more broadly in exercise, both within the curriculum and in after school clubs and matches. This was highlighted more by parents of children in Years 3 and 4. Some parents felt that more opportunities should be provided for those girls who do not excel in sport but need encouragement to participate and develop their skills.

Creative and performing arts opportunities

81% of parents rated the School's provision in this area as 'very good' or 'good' and the School is ahead of the benchmark. However, some parents, in particular those of the younger girls, would like to see more opportunities in this area with the introduction of some new clubs and activities.

Food

Parents would like to see more varied and nutritious choices at lunchtimes with fewer sugary snacks. Some felt that there had been a slight deterioration in the quality of food provided recently. Other parents would like girls to be able to bring packed lunches, particularly if they continue to be unhappy with what is on offer at school.

6. COMMUNICATION

In the last survey, communication was identified as an area requiring improvement at St Mary's. We asked some specific questions in the survey about the School's current communication methods and parents overwhelmingly endorsed the School's approach. Some suggested further improvements to the volume and management of email communication and the Parent Portal, but

comments were very positive and showed that there has been a marked improvement over the last two years.

7. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

As in the last survey, parents would like to see the School continue to invest in teaching staff both in terms of recruitment and training. Sports facilities were also highlighted as a priority for development. Just over a quarter of parents think the School's buildings require investment.

8. ACHIEVING SCHOOL AIMS

When presenting the results of the 2017 survey, we noted how effectively parents felt the School was meeting its stated aims. The School's aims continue to be strongly endorsed by parents in 2019 and more parents consider that the aim of 'valuing the parent as the first educator of the child' is being met 'very well' or 'well' than in 2017.

9. SUMMARY

The overall picture is one of a thriving school providing an excellent education for the girls in its care which is enthusiastically endorsed and appreciated by parents. The comments below represent many of the positive accolades shared by parents while they were completing the survey.

"It's a wonderful, dynamic and loving place and we have been truly blessed to have had the opportunity to send our girls there."

"The Junior School has changed our daughter's life. She is happy and inspired every day and we are really grateful to everyone at the Junior School for the support they have given her."

Please note that all responses remain totally confidential and anonymous. Although quotations have been used as part of this feedback, they are representative and cannot be attributed to an individual.

Written by Rachel Hicks, RSAcademics Ltd, November 2019