

FEEDBACK TO PARENTS ON SURVEY FINDINGS ST MARY'S CAMBRIDGE. SENIOR SCHOOL

1. BACKGROUND

We would like to thank the parents and guardians who took the time to respond to the survey we carried out on behalf of St Mary's Cambridge during October 2019.

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 develop in the future and to find out their opinions on a variety of areas of school life,

There was a 54% response rate which is broadly in line with the average response rates from other independent senior schools who have undertaken this type of survey and with 245 individual responses received we are confident that the results are robust and representative.

We are pleased to present this independent summary of the findings.

2. ST MARY'S ENJOYS HIGH LEVELS OF PARENTAL SATISFACTION AND ADVOCACY

St Mary's Senior School is a high performing school which parents are happy to recommend to others. Parents feel the School offers a good rounded education in a supportive welcoming environment with a focus on pastoral care.

92% of parents would recommend the School to others and over three-quarters (81%) felt 'completely' or 'very satisfied'. Almost a third of parents (32%) felt that the School exceeded their expectations and over 90% felt that their daughter was happy at St Mary's Senior School. The results on all of these measures are above the RSAcademics benchmarks from other senior schools.

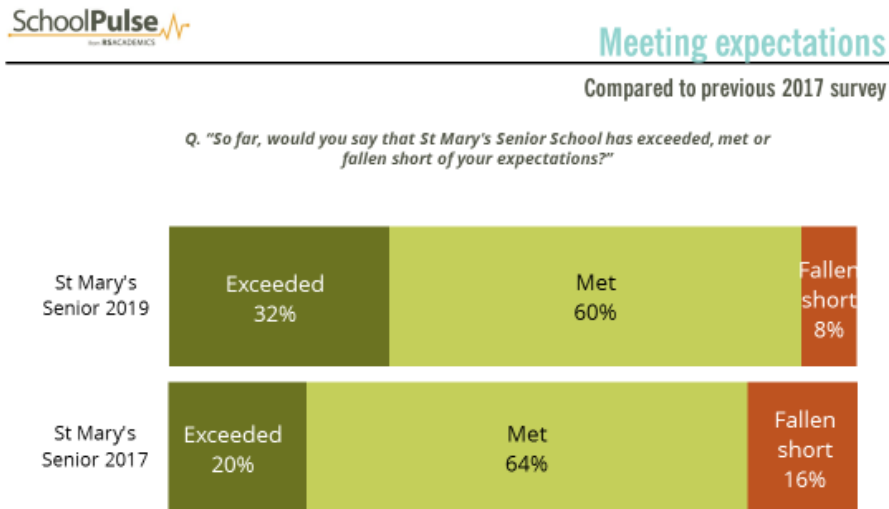
The following quotations are typical of the positive comments made many parents:

"We are delighted with the school. Our daughter is very well cared for and the staff teach excellently. She is achieving excellent academic results and blossoming in a loving community."

"We have been very happy with St Mary's so far and love the enthusiasm seen in both the girls and the staff."

3. POSITIVE COMPARISONS WITH 2017

We undertook a similar survey for St Mary's in 2017 and the results for the key measures of satisfaction, recommendation, expectations and pupil happiness have all improved with a greater proportion of parents awarding the highest ratings.



The 'very good' ratings for 11 out of 45 individual features have improved significantly since 2017 with the greatest change recorded in 'the quality of teaching': 16% more parents rated it as 'very good' in 2019 than in 2017.

4. IMAGE AND ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL

From a list of adjectives provided, parents chose 'welcoming' and 'encouraging' followed by 'inclusive', 'rounded' and 'dedicated' to describe the School.

5. RATING THE DIFFERENT SCHOOL FEATURES

We asked parents to consider a list of 45 different school features covering many aspects of school life and rate each one as 'very good', 'good', 'average', 'poor' or 'very poor'.

- Parents positively endorse many of the individual features of the School with all but two of the 45 individual features rated as either 'very good' or 'good' by at least 75% or more of parents.

- Pastoral care is seen as a real strength of the School including 'the concern for your daughter's well-being', 'the way your daughter is treated as an individual' and 'the behaviour and manners of pupils'.
- Parents also value communication with the School. The approachability of staff to parents, general communication, and the way the School handles specific concerns/requests are all rated highly.
- Other features also rated highly included the leadership of the School and the quality of teaching.
- Compared to the RSAcademics benchmark groups of other senior schools, many of the features at the School are rated significantly higher than average. These include aspects of pastoral care, teaching, communication, leadership and site security.

6. AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

We asked all parents to identify up to five areas in which the School should invest time, effort or money. The following areas were indicated:

- Nearly a quarter of parents (23%) would like to see the provision of more curricular and extra-curricular sports opportunities.
- Similarly, 23% of parents would also like more bespoke or in-depth feedback on their daughter's progress. They also request more regular or frequent feedback.
- Whilst 'the way their daughter is stretched and challenged academically' was rated very highly overall at the School with 86% rating it as 'very good' or 'good', 20% selected this aspect as an improvement area. Some parents would like to see their daughter challenged even more effectively.
- 91% and 90% of parents respectively rated 'the School's results in public exams' and the 'quality of teaching' at the School as 'very good' or 'good'. However, 18% of parents also selected these as areas for continued focus signifying their importance to parents.

7. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Looking ahead to the future, parents were asked to identify the areas the School should prioritise for investment. Continued investment in teaching staff in terms of recruitment and training is a priority for just over half (54%) of respondents. The next highest priorities for parents were school buildings (39%), sports facilities (30%) and bursary provision (27%).

8. SUMMARY

When taken as a whole, the survey reveals a highly satisfied parent body who are enthusiastic advocates for the School. The School has outperformed our key benchmarks for satisfaction and advocacy when compared with other senior schools or specific sub-groups – girls' schools, boarding schools and day schools. The School should also be congratulated on the improvements seen since we undertook a similar survey two years ago with quality of teaching achieving a significantly higher rating. As this final quotation demonstrates, parents really do feel St Mary's staff are experts at bringing out the best in their daughters.

“We love St. Mary's and the balanced education it offers our daughter who, in no small part due to the support and guidance of St. Mary's faculty and staff, has become a resilient, kind, and self-confident young woman.”

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, December 2019