

Two Stars and a Wish

Parent/Carer Survey

St Michael's Primary School

March 2015



Introduction

- Following the success of the parent/carer survey 2 years ago, governors decided to ask parents/carers for their current view of the school in the form of “2 Stars and a Wish”
- The key objective of the survey was to identify what the school is doing well and what could be improved, so the results can be used to inform the School Improvement Plan
- Governors were in the school foyer during parent consultations on 24th and 26th March to encourage parents/carers to complete the slips
- Parents/carers were informed of the survey in advance by letter and on the school website
- They were also given the option of responding to the survey by completing an on-line form on the website

Response

- 140 parents/carers responded to the survey, representing 32% of all families with children at St Michael's
 - 123 parents/carers completed written slips, a further 17 responded via the school website
 - An additional 20 pre-school parents/carers completed written slips, representing 50% of families using the St Michael's pre-school
- **Clearly a better level of response can be obtained from parents when they are approached directly; they are less motivated to respond via the website**

Key Findings



STARS

- There was a general consensus amongst respondents that St Michael's is a very welcoming, nurturing and inclusive school, that values all children as individuals
- Staff are very highly regarded by parents; there is a feeling that staff always “go the extra mile” for the children
- Children are excited by the topic based approach to learning, with hooks and outcomes, and the practical experience of school trips
- The school listened to parents' views expressed in the last survey and parents generally seem to feel better informed and engaged as a result
- The new website, improved use of on-line learning and introduction of on-line payments has been very beneficial for parents

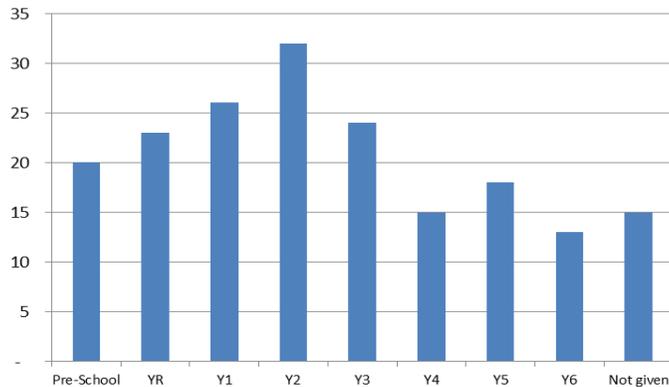


WISHES

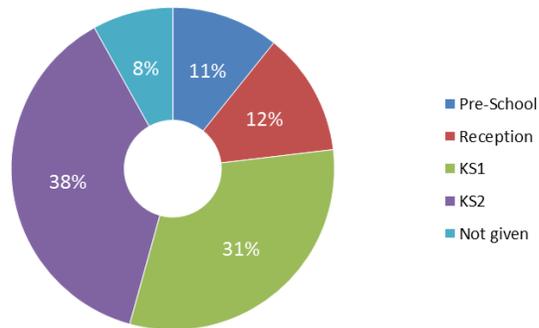
- The most common wish amongst parents was for more regular communication about their child's progress to help them support their learning more effectively
- Following the expansion to the school, many respondents felt that the outdoor space could now be improved, with the provision of more play equipment or access to green space
- Respondents would like to see greater focus on non-core, creative and sporting activities in school

Respondent Profile –

Number of respondents' children by Year Group



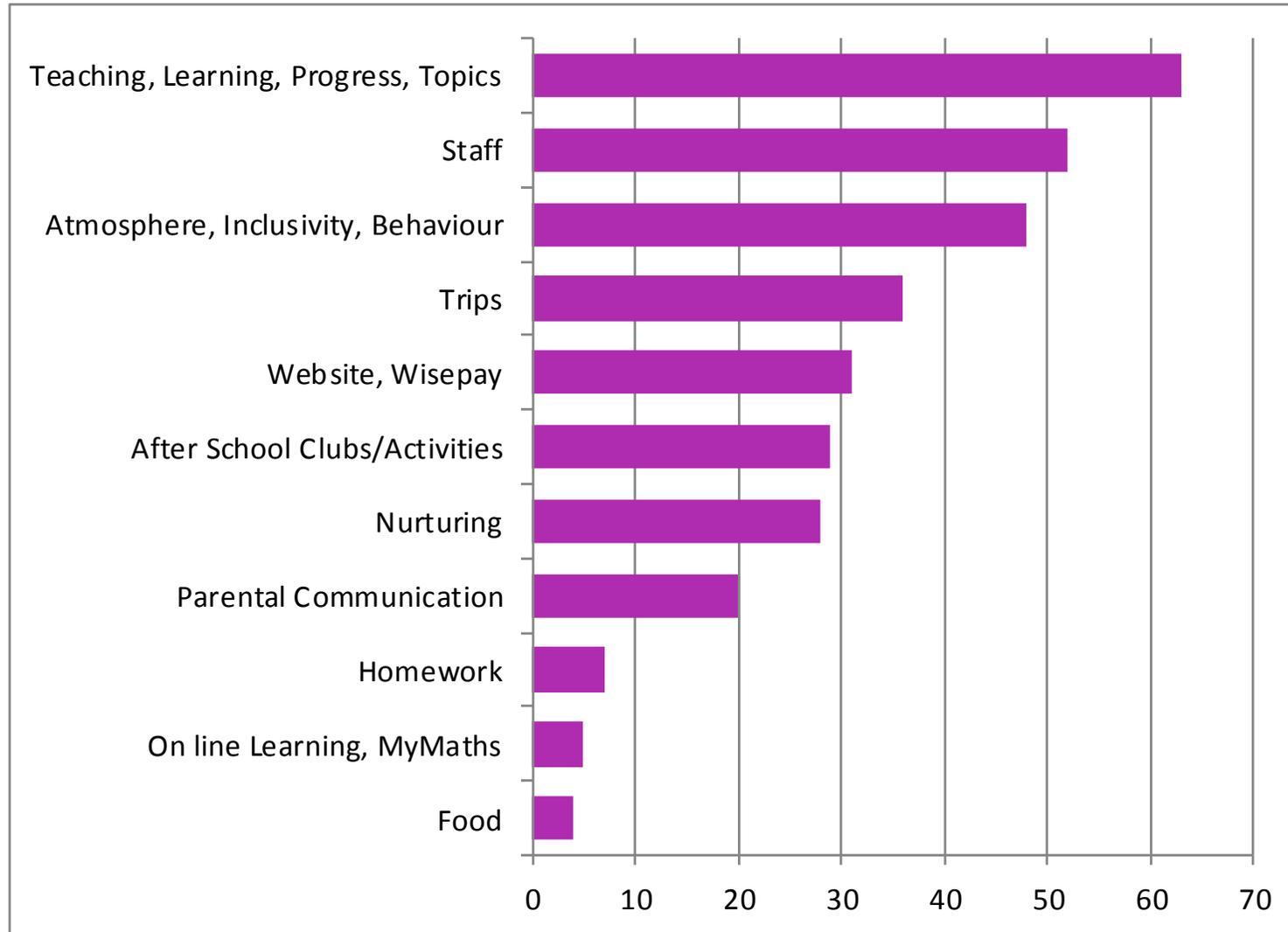
Number of respondents' children by Key Stage



- All years were fairly evenly represented
- Proportionately, Year 2 had the highest response rate and Year 6 the lowest
- Note: Pre-School has 42 children, Reception and Years 1 to 3 each have 90 children, Years 4 to 6 have 60 children per year group



STARS – Key themes from parent/carer responses





STARS – Key themes from parent/carer responses

- The most valued aspects of the school are the good teaching (particularly the topic-based approach to learning) and the dedicated and supportive staff
- Parents really appreciate the practical learning experience that their children gain from the many school trips
- The happy, nurturing and inclusive atmosphere of the school was frequently mentioned
- Parents felt that every child was valued and cared for as an individual

Quotes & comments:

- ❖ *“Often said but it's true: there is a wonderful, warm atmosphere as you come into the school. I feel I'm leaving my child in good, safe, nurturing hands. For a parent, this makes the school drop off a joy.” (Y2 parent)*
- ❖ *“Really positive learning environment - firm and encouraging, good teaching, great topic work and trips.” (Y3 parent)*
- ❖ *“Teachers' dedication and skills make children's time at school a wonderful experience.” (Y1 parent)*
- ❖ *“The school cares about each child as if they were the only pupil in the school.” (YR parent)*
- ❖ *“There is a sense that EVERY child really counts, whatever their ability.” (Y2 parent)*



STARS – Key themes from parent/carer responses

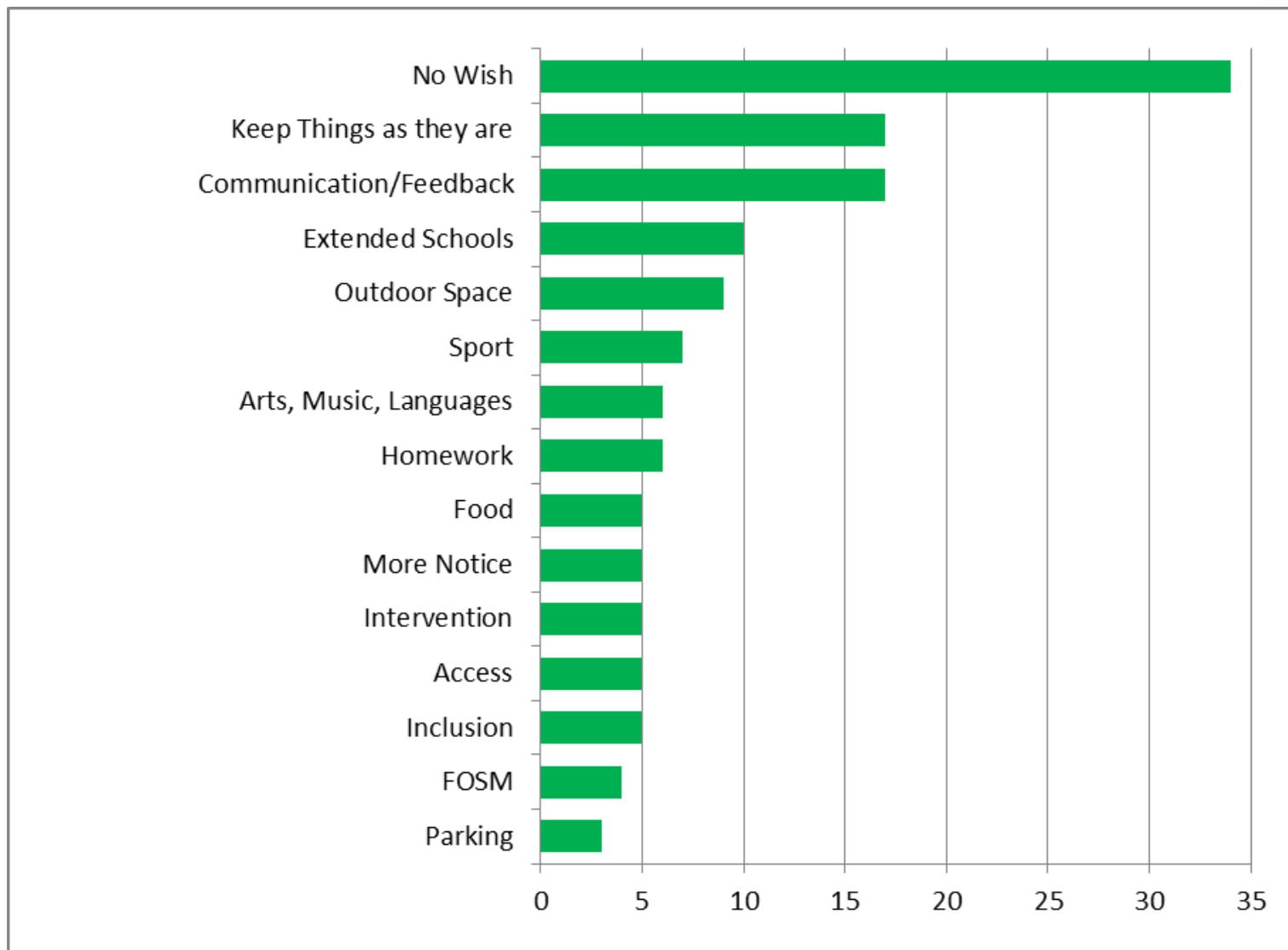
- Since the last survey, parents feel much better informed about events in school and more engaged with their children's learning
- The new website is a great communications tool for parents and they like the on-line learning resources, such as MyMaths
- Parents find it convenient to pay on-line via Wisepay
- Many parents mentioned the extended schools provision and the great range of after school activities that have been introduced this year

Quotes & comments:

- ❖ *“The website is fantastic, I love the whole set up and the homework pages and letter pages make it easy to reference and keep up to date as a parent.” (YR parent)*
- ❖ *“Overall the school staff are very helpful. As a parent I feel connected with the school. Excellent” (Y3 parent)*
- ❖ *“Communicating with and so including parents as true partners with the school, in the education of our children. As parents, we really appreciate being invited and welcomed into the classroom for outcomes, and for assemblies. And all the more so when the dates are given in advance. Thank you.” (Y2 & Y4 parent)*
- ❖ *“A fantastic range of clubs and after school activities this year.” (Y6 parent)*



WISHES – Key themes from parent/carer responses





WISHES – Key themes from parent/carer responses

- Parents/carers are clearly happy with the school and are not looking for major changes
- 37% of respondents either had no wish or wanted things to continue as they are
- The most common wish was for more regular feedback on children's progress so parents could support their learning more effectively
- There were several comments about improving the outdoor space, updating the play equipment and having access to green space (eg, Meyrick Park) for sports
- Many parents would like to see greater focus on non-core subjects, particularly arts, music, foreign languages and PE

Quotes & comments:

- ❖ *I wish....“More information is given to parents about kids, how they are doing in class, where we as a parent need to give attention on.” (Y2 parent)*
- ❖ *“A grassy area? Newer play equipment in playground.” (YR & Y2 parent)*
- ❖ *“The children had a little bit more time to explore their talents through arts and crafts within the classroom setting.” (Y3 and Y5 parent)*



WISHES – Key themes from parent/carer responses

Other recurring themes included:

- Extended schools – longer/more flexible hours (including pre-school), more after school activities for younger children and opportunities for children to play in musical groups/orchestra
- Parents would like more notice for special events, particularly when they involve the children dressing-up
- Parents valued the various interventions and would like to see some continued, eg, reading every day in Year 1, “Fun with Phonics”
- Access to school could be improved by opening all the gates or having an in/out system to reduce congestion; poor parking was also mentioned
- Some parents thought homework levels were excessive and limited the scope for other leisure activities/family time after school
- More specific comments and suggestions have been included in the Appendix

Quotes & comments:

- ❖ *I wish....“For more time to prepare for days of dressing up or making things.” (Y1 parent)*
- ❖ *“More green space, more competitive sports - inter school from earlier age. School orchestra if poss.” (Y4 & Y6 parent)*
- ❖ *“That expectations of time for R/KS1 homework were more respectful of children and families.... After school time is precious family connecting time.” (YR & Y2 parent)*

Many of the wishes reflected very positive messages.....

I wish.....
The children
could stay
forever.

I wish.....
My younger child
could also get
admission at this
school.

I think the
school is
fantastic.

I wish.....
I was six years of
age to learn here.

I wish.....
Mrs Shiner could be
duplicated. She is an
asset to the school
and British education.

I wish
For everything to stay
the same as I think
it all works perfectly.

We like everything.
Superb!! Keep it
up and thanks.

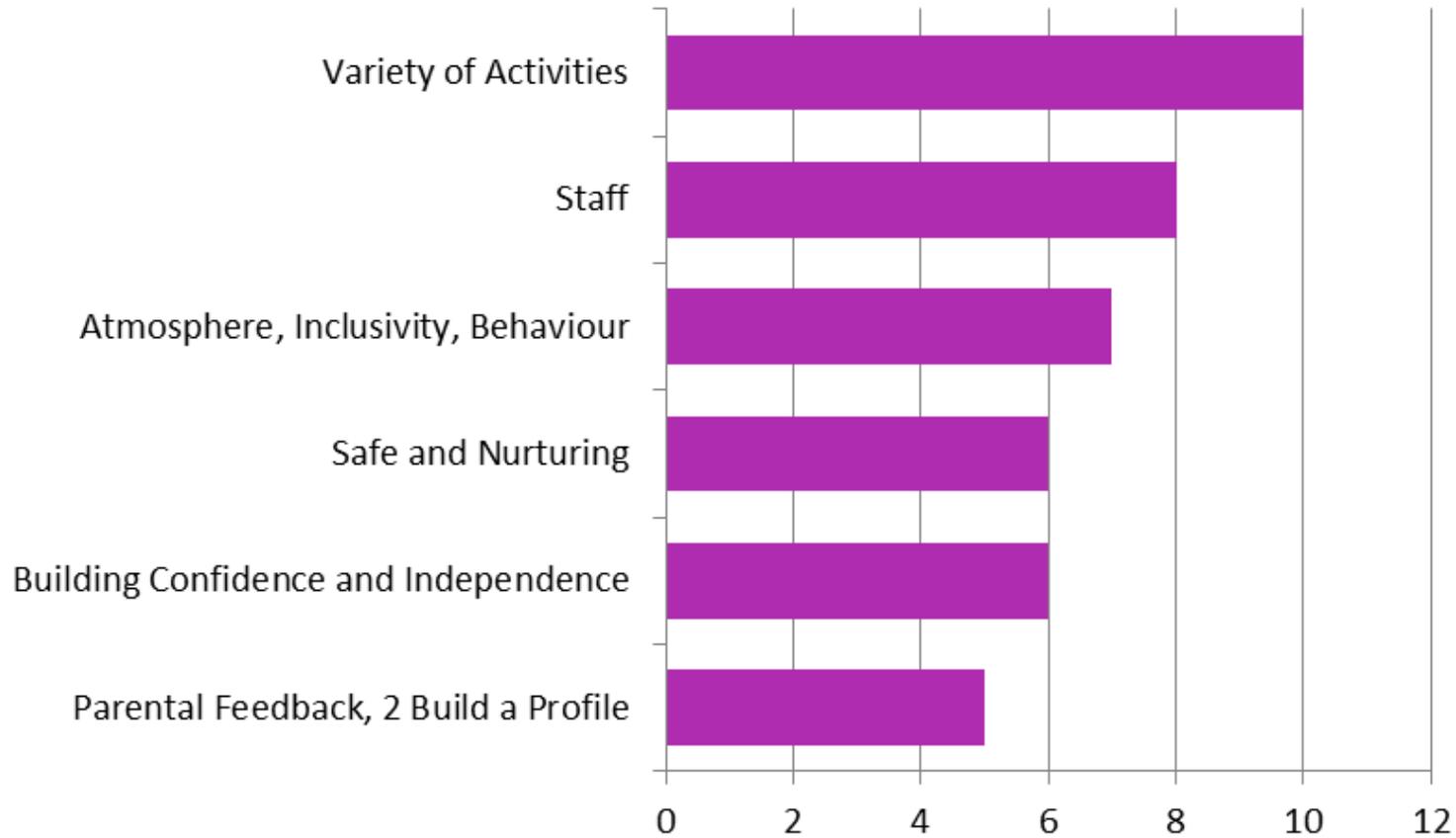
I wish.....
You would keep
doing what
you're doing!

Conclusions from Parent/Carer Comments

- Parents highly regard the standard of teaching and progress at St Michael's and recognise the hard work and dedication of all the staff – many respondents asked that their thanks be expressed to the staff
- Parents love the happy and caring atmosphere at St Michael's and the feeling that all children are treated as individuals; it is really important that this ethos is not lost as the school continues to grow and develop
- The website has been successful in improving parental communication, however, the low website response rate suggests that there needs to be greater emphasis on using the website as the primary communication tool
- The school should consider ways of providing parents with more regular (monthly?) feedback on areas they can work on with their children; could this be an output from Pupil Tracker? Perhaps consider this in conjunction with a review of homework expectations
- Improved outdoor space/play equipment could perhaps be the next focus for FOSM fund-raising?



STARS – Key themes from pre-school responses





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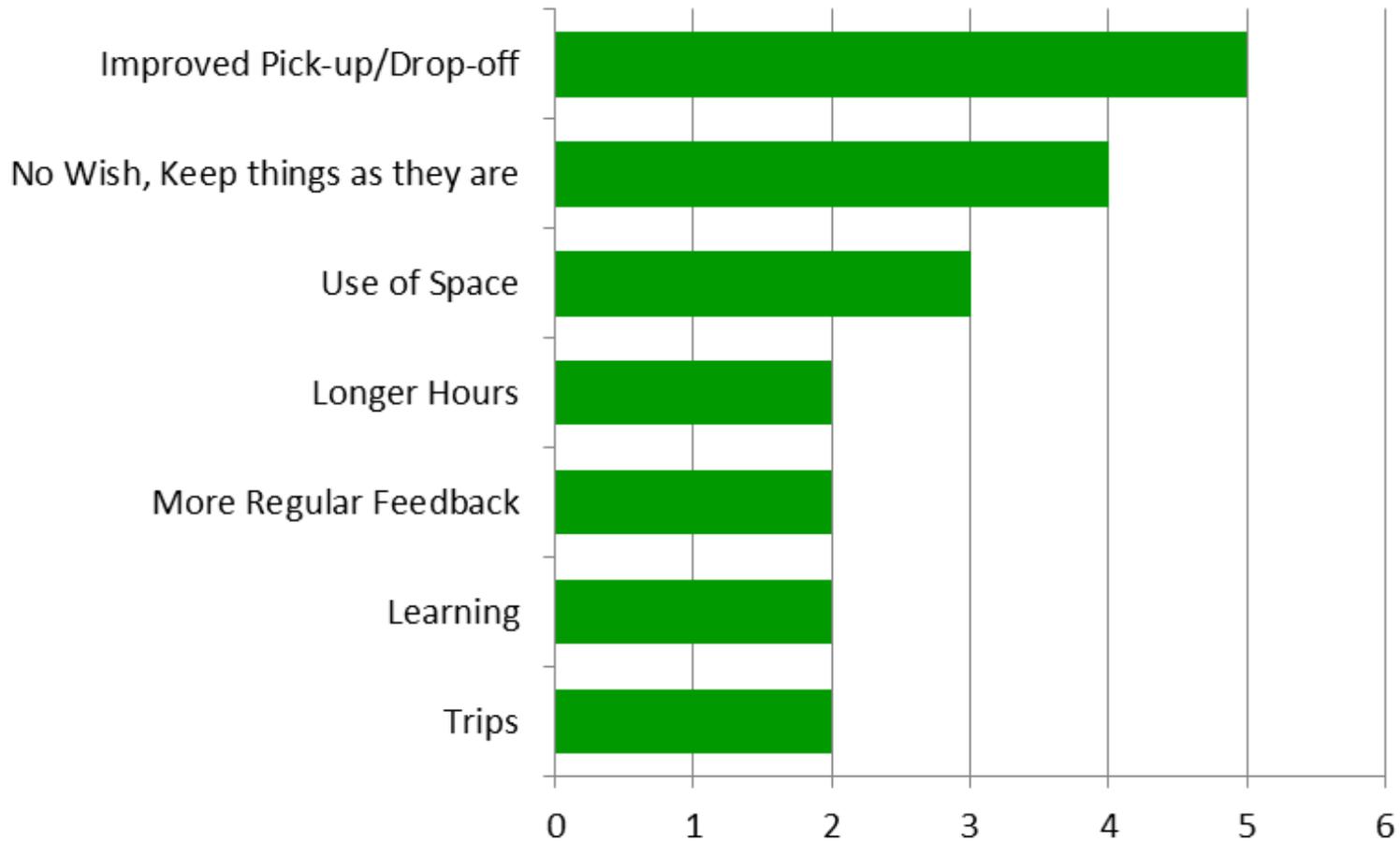
- Parents value the wide variety of indoor and outdoor activities that are on offer at the pre-school
- There is a general consensus that the pre-school has a friendly and welcoming atmosphere which means the children are happy coming to school
- Parents feel that staff are always helpful, caring and supportive and keep the children safe
- Communication with parents has improved and several respondents mentioned the “2 build a profile” reports
- Parents feel that the pre-school has helped to build their children’s independence and confidence, preparing them well for the move to full-time school

Quotes & comments:

- ❖ *“The pre-school offers a wide variety of activities for the children every day.”*
- ❖ *“Friendly, supportive and encouraging staff that are always helpful.”*
- ❖ *“Treats the children with lots of love and care. We feel safe leaving them here every morning.”*
- ❖ *“Setting a good foundation for further education particularly well through promoting independence and building confidence.”*



WISHES – Key themes from pre-school responses





WISHES – Key themes from pre-school responses

- The most common wish was for the pick-up/drop-off to be improved, as there was a general feeling that it was crowded and a little chaotic at these times
- 20% of respondents did not express a wish or wanted things to stay as they are
- Some parents would like the pre-school to be open for longer hours, to fit in better with the school day
- Parents thought it would be beneficial for the children to be taken out on local trips occasionally, to the park or the beach
- There were some comments about providing more educational activities and more regular feedback to parents on their child's progress

Quotes & comments:

- ❖ *I wish.... "We didn't have to queue - coming in and going out."*
- ❖ *"It would be great if pick up/drop off could be a little less hectic."*
- ❖ *"It would be helpful to have more regular feedback, perhaps one little comment about their day."*
- ❖ *"For them to be taken out on small trips like nature walks or to the local parks on nice days."*

Conclusions from Pre-School Comments

- Pick-up/drop-off procedures should be reviewed to try to make these times more orderly – children could perhaps be better prepared and ready to leave at pick-up times?
- In conjunction with this, opening hours could be reviewed to fit around school hours, with perhaps a staggered drop-off time (from 8:40) to reduce congestion?
- Consideration to be given to whether the pre-school could be open all day, in line with the government's pledge to increase free childcare provision for 3-4 year olds
- Consider whether more regular information could be provided to parents about their child's progress (more access to their learning observations, meetings with key workers, parents invited in)?
- Think about planning some local trips (park, beach) for sunny days

Appendix

Other Actions suggested by Parents/Carers

- Weekly class e-mail with notices (or e-mail notification of website updates)
- Outcomes could be later in the day so that working parents could attend
- Ensure children have the option not to participate in trips and don't chase up trip money if the parent has indicated that the child will not be going
- Children to choose their own reading books and have a wider and more interesting range of books (include poetry, plays, etc)
- Coffee morning for each of the reception classes once the children have settled in, so the parents can get to know each other
- Use Facebook as an additional communications tool
- More consistency in quality/portion sizes of school meals
- More understanding of multi-nationality families and the difficulty of helping with homework, etc
- Re-introduce second lollipop person
- Part time options for children starting
- Swimming lessons for Year 3
- Learn modern foreign language from KS1
- More use of the library and newer books
- Better coordination of volunteers based on need (organised centrally rather than with individual teachers)
- Toilet accessible from playground

Other Actions suggested for Pre-School

- Plan more activities with different groups of children, so they get to know each other better (not just their best friends)
- More educational activities, number songs, etc
- Children to have opportunity to wear uniform (school polo shirt/sweatshirt?) and have a school book bag
- More space for coats/bags and lower pegs so children can see their names
- More use of sandpit or better use of this area
- Covered area to wait at drop-off/pick-up when it is raining
- Reduce queueing (so children don't have to wait on street)
- More photos of the children

Comments re Website/Wisepay

- Have a full calendar of events on the website, which can include dates for special events such as dressing-up days
- Ability to check after school balance on Wisepay and pay exact amount
- Set up child accounts to pay into
- Be able to book meals on Wisepay for the whole term, as it is easy to forget mid-term
- Ensure children get vegetarian meals ordered
- More on-line teaching/homework tools (like MyMaths), perhaps for English and science?

Comments for Extended Schools

- Make sure parents receive all communications (notices on classroom window/by gate not seen by after school parents) – could these be sent by text?
- Allow more or less time for homework (dependent on child's needs)
- More relaxed atmosphere/interesting activities
- Extend hours to 6:30 pm
- Start breakfast club at 7:00 am
- Full time pre-school
- More choice of clubs for younger children
- Football club for Year 2
- Use sports grant to fund more free sports clubs/activities
- Have more focus on IT, consider IT club (technology is the future)
- More opportunities to play in music groups/orchestra

Comments for FOSM

- More accountability of FOSM
 - Notification of how much raised for every event
 - Explanation of what funds are used for
 - Running total for minibus fund (or other fundraising) – on website?
- Less sweets/coloured drinks to be offered/sold at events (in line with healthy schools!)
- Consider environmental impact (releasing balloons at end of every school year)
- More parents to get involved
- Fund raise for outdoor play equipment?