Parent & Child Survey Report 2015



Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you very much for giving us your feedback. The Pre-School Staff and Committee believe that in order to learn from your experiences we need to regularly ask for comments and as such we are extremely grateful for your support. This report has been put together using the 23 questionnaires which were returned at the end of the summer term 2015. As advertised there was an option of not revealing your name and these questionnaires will remain confidential. All names have been removed from this report. When we refer to ‘parents’ in this report we refer to parents, carers and other family members who have taken part in this survey. If you have any further feedback that you would like to share with Pre-school please contact us via our website <http://stleonardspreschool.org.uk> as we would love to hear from you.

With best wishes,

Helen Daitz (On behalf of the Pre-School Committee)

**Satisfaction and Enjoyment**

We asked you to tell us how satisfied you felt with your pre-school experience. We are pleased to find again this year that the majority of you (20/23) report feeling ‘very satisfied’, and the remaining state they feel ‘satisfied’. You also tell us that 21/23 parents are ‘very likely’ to recommend our Pre-school to another family which we are delighted to hear.

*“Excellent, dedicated staff.”*

*“When I leave her she is in safe, nurturing hands.”*

*“I love the way the approach is child led and in a genuine way.”*

Parent confidence in the quality of staff was a recurrent theme, with many appreciating the knowledge and experience of our pre-school staff. Positive comments were made about how well the children are engaged with a good variety of structured activities, and the happy and caring atmosphere of the Pre-school.

*“My daughter loves going there in the mornings, which I feel is because she feels secure, enjoys the activities on offer, but probably most of all likes the staff.”*

Your child’s enjoyment and engagement is vital to their development so we are pleased to hear that again the vast majority of you feel that your children enjoy Pre-school ‘very much’. Responses talked about how your child would like to go every day, about the positive friendships they were making and the how much they have got out of different topics. The Pre-school staff work hard to plan topics around the children’s interests, so it was very pleasing to hear from many parents that this approach had had a very positive impact on their child’s enjoyment.

*“Children have a great sense of achievement bringing home what they have made and showing it off.”*

*“She feels very loved.”*

*“It is obvious that he feels valued and he looks forward to his days at pre-school with great anticipation.”*

**Resources**

Every respondent was ‘happy’ or ‘very happy’ with resources and toys. Variety and range of resources were noted and many of you felt the changing themes helped to maintain interest. It comes as no surprise to find that woodwork and the guinea pigs were consistently highlighted as ‘resources’ the children loved.

*“The woodwork is spectacular. It’s a favourite for all of us.”*

*“I am very happy with the resources. This is obviously due to the hard work of the preschool staff and their creativity and imagination rather than financial resources.”*

The computer based resources were commented on by a couple of parents. This is an area which seems to split opinion every year, and for every parent asking for modernisation of IT resources we have others who are pleased that the limited and somewhat dated IT resources mean that the children are not distracted from more traditional play based activities. We believe that it’s a matter of balance and we aim to provide the children with a wide range of opportunities. Our yearly fundraising helps us update and replace resources where necessary. The committee has now reviewed IT resources for both children and staff, and we are currently looking at possible upgrades to hardware and software, including observing the introduction of electronic learning records in the Foundation Stage at St Leonard’s Primary School, with a view to introducing this at Pre-school in the near future.

*“I think the laptop & games & learning DVDs need modernising as a priority. Some toys need a ‘freshen up’ but only to be expected in a heavily used environment*.

*“good variety, not afraid to get children messy and expose to proper woodwork. Love the pets and the chicks”*

Offering children a range of resources and learning experiences which reflect the diversity of our world is always a key consideration in our planning. Feedback from one parent highlighted concern that more could be done in this area. They also felt that more could be done to challenge gender assumptions.

*“It’s great that children decide their own activities, but it is probably possible to do more to challenge gender assumptions. For example, I sometimes feel that assumptions are made about girls’ preferences – in terms of activities and paint colours.”*

This is useful feedback which has been passed on to staff, to review in their planning. The staff do make every effort to challenge gender assumptions and the committee is currently drafting an Equality policy which will set out our principles, practice and commitment to this.

**Approachability of Pre-school Staff**

We are very pleased that the majority of parents (20/23) felt that they would be ‘very confident’ in approaching a member of staff with a problem or concern. Reasons given for this confidence were good relationships and staff who are friendly and sympathetic to the needs of the family and child.

*“I’m always chatting to the friendly and approachable staff, it is sometimes very busy but I know I can have a private chat if need be.”*

*“I was made to feel extremely welcome and could approach anyone.”*

*“From the start staff have taken to trouble to get to know me as well as my son, so I feel comfortable talking to them if an issue comes up.”*

*“…always quick to pick up on cues when I didn’t even realise I was particularly worried so that they have almost dealt with a concern before I’ve really registered it!”*

Constructive points were made by parents who felt ‘neutral’ about being able approach a member of staff with a problem or concern.

*“The open space, an advantage in many ways, is a disadvantage in lacking easy space in which to discuss issues without being in front of the children.”*

*“Depending on the issue, perhaps signposting who to go to for which particular issue would be good.”*

Providing parents with a private space to raise issues with staff is very important to us. Working within the confines of our space and within limits of ratios for child supervision we hope to be able to offer this, but we know our current premises are not perfect. In planning for our new premises, having a dedicated quiet space is one of our key priorities. Our noticeboards in Pre-school display information about who to contact and how when you have a problem, and periodically we circulate this information by email too, especially to new parents.

**Finding Information**

When asked about the ease of getting information prior to starting over 90% of responses said it was ‘very easy’ or ‘easy’. Four of our parents felt neutral. A number of responses simply referenced the fact that an older sibling had already attended, and we take pride from the fact that families are sufficiently satisfied with their experience with an older sibling to return with younger ones.

*“(\_\_\_) was my second child to come to pre-school so I was very familiar with how things worked. However I always found the website helpful.”*

*“I was able to arrange contact easily when needed and information was available during the ‘drop-in sessions’ prior to the start date.”*

*“The website provides very clear information about the Pre-school and its admissions procedures”*

Members of our committee have reviewed our website this year, comparing it to information provided on websites of other local pre-schools. It was felt that ours was providing the quality and quantity of information needed, and was more comprehensive than others we looked at.

A few comments highlighted some difficulty accessing information and wondered if this was to discourage applicants as the pre-school was already full. We are very proud to be so successful but as a result there is high demand for spaces, this means that we have taken the decision not to advertise to minimise disappointment and waiting list numbers.

*I felt I needed to do a bit of chasing & investigation work to find out everything I should for pre-school. I think the website could be used more to provide greater information on the ‘pre’ pre-school process. As a first timer to pre-school I felt that there was some information it was assumed that I would know. A step-by-step guide (similar to what seems to be provided by primary school would be valuable).*

Currently an information pack is sent out to families prior to their start, and this information is also available at our drop-in sessions and on our website. Our committee is also looking at how this information could be presented in other user-friendly ways.

When asked how well informed you feel in regards to the management and day to day running of the Pre-school 21 out of the 23 parents who answered this question were either ‘very well informed’ or ‘informed’. Many comments talked about getting most of their information through the weekly emails. Two respondents were neutral, and both said this was because they didn’t feel they needed to know more about the day-to-day management.

*“Information from the staff about Pre-school is clearly displayed. The weekly Parentmails help to keep us up to date.”*

*“Emails are very informative and useful.”*

*“Not sure I need to know about management and day to day running as long as I’m informed about activities, which I am very well informed about, and progress of my child.”*

We asked you if you were happy with receiving information from Pre-school via notices, letters, emails and social media, and the vast majority of you were happy and didn’t feel it needed improvement. We did receive a few comments suggesting we could make more of social media. We will continue to use social media to publicise pre-school events but we feel it is more appropriate to circulate weekly information about pre-school, some of which often contains quite personal information such as phone numbers, by letter or email only.

**Your Childs Progress and Development**

19/23 responses felt ‘very well’ or ‘well’ informed about your child’s progress and development, and the remaining 4 responses were neutral. This question produced a range of experiences, from wholly positive, to several that felt frustrated by some problems in the delivery of information.

*“Always feel like I can look in her book or chat to [staff].”*

*“I enjoy looking at his book and take it home regularly. I also get told on the day if \*\*\* has done something new or great.”*

*“Constant feedback verbally and good written record.”*

For those parents regularly dropping off or collecting their child it was evident that they enjoyed reading their child’s book, and felt comfortable accessing this information and receiving verbal feedback. However, several working parents who weren’t able to drop or collect their child commented that they felt more out of touch.

The pre-school currently offers one parent meeting in the autumn term once the children have settled in, and their transition meeting in the summer term. A few responses indicated that whilst they had verbal updates on a daily basis, they would have appreciated more regular meetings so they were aware of areas that their child needed more support in. We welcome this feedback and as already mentioned, the pre-school committee is looking at the possibility of introducing electronic records which could be accessed by parents online, which we hope would facilitate easier information sharing on a child’s individual development.

**Settling in to Pre-school**

We’re very pleased that 21/23 of you felt ‘welcome’ or ‘very welcome’ when starting as a new parent at the Pre-school. Feedback included how you’d felt welcomed and supported.

*“I felt listened to and fully supported.”*

*“I was very pleased about all the help and all the concern the staff had..”*

*“Supportive, encouraging, welcoming. Happy to ask questions or be told information about my child. No question too big or too small.”*

Two responses were neutral and we welcome the suggestion made that more information about who the committee were and how pre-school was run would help to make parents feel more welcome and involved. The committee will look at how this information could be delivered to new parents, beyond the information displayed, and provided on our website.

The majority of you were very pleased with how well your child settled into Pre-school. Several of you highlighted the value of the ‘stay and play’ sessions that we offer in the term prior to your child’s start.

*“It was good that you could stay with your child to begin with to help them get used to it.”*

*“She settled in instantly and although I was welcomed to stay she was happy to start her pre-school adventure from day one.”*

*“It was an excellent experience for \*\*\*, fully supported by the staff.”*

*“My child initially found pre-school daunting and was slow to settle in. They were welcomed and the environment was a warm one. I am not sure there was an awful lot more that could have been done to improve the early weeks and months. We found the weekly emails valuable to try to help prepare him for week ahead. More information = more confidence”*

*“I love getting the pre-school newsletter every week and it gives us a chance to chat about the week’s activities with her, as she doesn’t often give us lots of details in the evenings.”*

One parent told us that they would like their child to be more supported in their toileting; we do work hard to support our children in their personal care, however in light of this feedback we will consider ways in which we might be able to improve upon this. It was also noted that children who did not have English as their first language took longer to settle. We were pleased that feedback given showed these children, once settled, felt happy in the pre-school environment but we recognise the initial challenges faced can be daunting for a child. We will review our staff training and resources in light of this.

**The Pre-school’s Future**

As we search for new premises for Pre-school, we have welcomed your feedback about the hours we currently offer, our capacity and premises. Responses indicated that parents were ‘very happy’ or ‘happy’ with both the hours we offer and our premises. A number of ‘neutral’ responses were given for our capacity, in terms of the number of children we can take. We recognise that high demand for places this last year has prevented some children from attending more sessions and some younger children have not been able to start. We regret that we are unable to offer the places needed currently, but when looking for new premises our committee will reconsider this situation.

Useful comments which the committee will take on board when looking for new premises included the fact that several of you appreciated the Pre-school’s size, and would prefer not to see any enlargement of session numbers. On the wish list was: larger outside space, an eating area which could be left set up, so that staff didn’t have to spend time setting out and packing away tables, and a quiet space for children to rest.

We know from your comments that you really value all that Pre-school has to offer, and in turn we really value our parents’ support. We will continue to update parents on our search for new premises and we will consult, where appropriate, if any significant changes to capacity and hours are being considered.

*“Long may you continue. As parents we feel very lucky that our girls have had the opportunity to attend such an amazing Pre-school.”*

**Your Child’s View**

When asked if your child would make any changes at Pre-school, most of you (again this year) told us that you didn’t think they would. Many of you said that your child would do more of their favourite activity if they could; such as feeding the animals and woodwork. The popular activities at Pre-school are offered in rotation and the staff have systems in place to check all children are given the same opportunities.

From the children’s own questionnaire page, the range of favourite activities was extensive and wide ranging. It was evident that every child had found their own individual Pre-school favourite, and reflects the effort of the staff put into finding and encouraging each child’s interests.

For the section asking children to indicate a time where they feel sad at pre-school, responses included when a parent leaves, a problem with a friend, hurting themselves and when they have been upset by another child. The staff work very hard to support the children in their social interactions with one another. Inevitably there will always be occasional times when a child will feel sad but parent feedback has indicated that you feel that staff are quick to pick up on problems, settle disagreements fairly and provide comfort and reassurance when needed.

Many of the children said that they would go to Pre-school everyday if they could and this is wonderful to hear, as your children clearly feel very positive about the Pre-school environment and the care we provide. Ideas which we can consider for the future include: “I want to fly at Pre-school”, to “have cooking every day” to be able to “stay forever”!

**Other Comments**

Many comments reflected on the quality of the staff and how you consider this as being essential to the success of the Pre-school.

*“It seems like the success is entirely dependent on the staff and if they were to change then [my child’s] experience of pre-school would not have been so good.”*

*“I believe the staff are its greatest asset.”*

The committee is very aware of the importance of high quality staff to your child’s pre-school experience, so we know we are very lucky to have a great team of dedicated professionals. Our staff are encouraged and supported in their continuing professional development, and they enjoy sharing good practise with students who are on placement at the Pre-school. Any personnel issues are addressed at our half termly committee meetings, and senior staff are supported where necessary by committee members.