

Parental feedback from July 2021

Stars (the things you really like about St. George's Central CE Primary School and Nursery)

'Similar' responses have been grouped together

Many thanks for all your 'stars'. It is great to receive feedback on things you feel are going well. It is also encouraging to hear that amendments we make in school are having a positive impact on the children and yourselves.

Parental star – Staff

- *I love that there are always staff outside school who are always friendly and approachable.
- *The staff are very friendly.
- *My child has only been at St George's Central a short time but staff are friendly.
- *The way the school looks and the staff are excellent.
- *The school staff are very good.
- *How friendly everyone is.
- *Mrs Davies and the nursery team are so brilliant with the children. My daughter has loved nursery so much this year, I was apprehensive of my daughter going back to nursery with the pandemic etc as she's more vulnerable but Mrs Davies always makes you feel at ease.
- *I like St. George's Central because of all of the hard work the teaching staff put into schooling our children, in my opinion they go above and beyond looking after my son, he is a child with additional needs and his class teachers and teaching assistants are fantastic.
- *I always get great help and advice when calling the school, the office staff are on hand to answer any questions, Mrs Smith has been amazing and supportive whenever I've needed help.
- *Most of the staff are very friendly and helpful.
- *The teaching staff, Mrs Kearns is an amazing learning mentor for the children who have experienced trauma. She has made such a difference in not just the children's well-being but that of the children's families as a whole. All the teachers and the head master are amazing, nothing is impossible for them and they create a we can do attitude. All the way through the pandemic this school has kept its doors open and moved mountains to keep the children and staff. Very creative forward thinking bunch of staff members, my grandchildren would go Saturday and Sunday if it was open they absolutely love school.
- *I like the personal touch of knowing who I am dealing with at school for instance, the business manager Mrs Smith has been a tower of support in helping me as a grandparent on an SGO understand the systems of the running of the school. She has been a big help for us oldies whose school days with children were many years ago and so different.
- *How the headmaster and teachers greet us in the mornings and after school, the news updates and picture of the learning and activities the school is involved in
- *I like the friendliness/personal touch from the school, clearly all staff go above and beyond to know all the children regardless of which class they teach.
- *Being greeted by a teacher/member of staff at the gates every morning.
- *Staff are always warm, friendly and caring.
- *Fantastic nursery staff who are friendly and genuinely care about the well-being and happiness of the children.
- *Commitment.
- *Supportive.
- *Caring.

Parental star – Extra-curricular activities/Community events

- *They like to keep the children on their toes by doing different themed days, sports events and for example support England day with food donations. I recently spoke to a friend whose daughter came to nursery but left when going into reception at another school and she said that is one thing she misses about St George's as her new school does nothing like that.
- *The afterschool clubs.
- *I love the way school interacts with the local community for example the food bank collections.
- *I love how children get to experience a range of sporting activities and events. My son leaves for High School this time and I would like to thank all the wonderful staff at St George's Central. He has had a fantastic eight years as my daughter also had. He has had brilliant experiences and made memories to treasure forever.

Parental star – Communication

- *Communicates well with parents and we receive regular updates and can easily contact teachers for a chat. Rather than waiting until parents' evening.
- *I like that school communicates with parents on a regular basis, regarding all events and dates to remember etc. As a busy working household we find it really helps us keep on top of things and be more organised.

Parental star – COVID 19

- *Makes me feel my child is safe, especially over the last 12 months. I don't think there's another school that could have done as well as St George's throughout the ongoing pandemic, in keeping children/families feel safe, whilst managing to also keep some normality and not scare the children.
- *I was extremely impressed by the way in which St George's stepped up to the plate, during the lockdown early in the year. The school took responsibility for being able to keep as many pupils in school as possible and organised a consistent and exemplary home learning programme for the pupils at home. On top of all that, pupils and parents alike were entertained by the highly imaginative and hilarious weekly videos by Mr Grogan and Mr Young: my daughter and I eagerly looked forward to each "episode". They certainly helped brighten the winter days. Thank you so much to all the staff of St. George's for all their hard work both during that period and throughout the year.
- *The Seesaw app used by St. George's has been brilliant. During the periods of whole-class self-isolation, my child had work to keep her busy and engaged and she did not lose out on her learning. The daily videos from her teacher were also very encouraging and helped to spur her on, combined with the feedback from the teacher was very prompt and supportive.
- *Trying to keep everything as normal as possible during this pandemic.
- *Home phone calls and home visits from Mr Grogan during the lockdown. Thank you to all the teachers and to Mr Grogan who made phone calls and door stops to check on the children during the difficult time. It showed the level of care for the children, not just for their education but also their mental health.
- *During the pandemic, the school has been brilliant, sending my child work home, accommodating when I had a change of mind and asked to send him in because of his special needs, always listening to me, his class teacher and his TA always have time to chat to see if there are any concerns that may affect his school day, they are always friendly and supportive.
- *The way the school has handled the social distancing at drop-off and pick-up times as there is always a slow and steady flow.
- *The school has worked hard to keep things as normal as possible for the children, despite the current situation.
- *I was very impressed with the lockdown learning programme that was provided via Seesaw. Fantastic communication from Mr Cooke and wonderful support.

Parental star – Provision/Ethos/Facilities

- *The Reading Plus programme the school has signed each up pupil for is just wonderful. It tracks each pupil's progress and improves reading speed and fluency, vocabulary and general knowledge. I like the fact that my daughter's teacher comes up with various incentives that encourage the children to use the programme such as class competitions with little prizes and rewards.
- *There are lots of things to do outside.
- *The children are challenged but in a nice and calm experience.
- *Puts the children's needs and welfare first.
- *Encourages the children especially if they struggle learning or may find it difficult settling in.
- *Makes the children feel comfortable when they enter their class room.
- *Keeping children safe.
- *Constantly improving facilities. There is always something new and that's great, the new outdoor stage area looks great. My daughter had an occupational therapist come visit her in school and she told me how impressed she was with the school's continuous provision and the plans to further this to Year 1.
- *Does lots of variety within the classes.
- *Shows the children lots of different styles of learning, and showing them how to explore their feelings and emotions.
- *My child loves going to school every day.
- *The teaching standard and nurturing they offer in nursery. Also the opportunities the child get regarding clubs etc and experiences they may not get without school.
- *The facilities are superb again in nursery and look to be throughout the school.
- *The children being introduced to all different activities such as yoga, football etc.
- *I love seeing pictures of things my children have been up to in school! Whether it's on Facebook, Twitter or Seesaw.
- *The site is always clean and well maintained.
- *Great facilities compared to a private nursery. Brilliant opportunities for children to learn using computers, sports hall, outdoor space, library etc.
- *Impressive range of topics covered each term for example Italian week and mindfulness.

Wishes (ways that you think we could improve St. George's Central CE Primary School and Nursery)

Multiple responses in the same box are from the same survey

Parental wish: Extra-curricular activities	School response
<p>After school clubs and breakfast club to help the working mums and nanas like me.</p> <p>Maybe a few tents and school sleepovers on the back field a couple of night a week ha ha.</p>	<p>We have a Breakfast Club in school that you are able to use. Please email breakfastclub@saintgeorgescentral.wigan.sch.uk to book a place for any children in your care.</p> <p>We usually have a wide range of after-school clubs in place for children. Our offer has been reduced during COVID times. Over this Summer Term, we slowly started to build up the number of extra-curricular clubs for children and we are aiming to return to 'normal' levels during 2021-2022.</p> <p>We have no 'regular' after school provision in place at our school. With the staffing levels needed to meet the basic ratios for this, the financial charges that would need to be in place for this are what I would consider to be 'very high'. When it comes to after school provision, I often think:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Is being in the same school environment from 7:30am until 6pm ideal for children?</i></p> <p>I am aware that people have roles/responsibilities that require them to work long hours and know how arrangements need to be made for before and after school. Making use of one the child minders who regularly pick children up from our school could be an option. Through using one of the local child minders, you will have that after school care and your child will have a change of environment. For me, this will help support their mental health and well-being as they 'relax' in a homely environment after being in the school one all day.</p> <p>I have actually informally discussed with some staff, the idea of arranging 'sleepovers' with tents set up on the school field. So this is something we have thought of and will be considering as we develop our 'Forest School' (see next 'wish').</p>
Parental wish: Forest School	School response
<p>Implement some "forest school" time/activities each week and get the children doing more outdoors.</p>	<p>We are lucky that we have a large site with fantastic outdoor facilities. Our staff do make use of this, but you are right, there is always room for improvement and I would love to see all our classes undertaking activities outdoors on a more regular basis. To support this, I have recently met with representatives from Manchester Diocese and Wigan Council about making use of the forest land at the back of our school field for a 'Forest School'.</p> <p>These meetings have been ongoing since February 2021. We have started to make some progress, however, these things take time and so I am limited and somewhat restricted by the timescales set by the other parties involved. I will update you via our newsletters over the coming year with the progress we make in this area.</p>
Parental wish: Playground equipment	School response
<p>I'd like it if the infant side could use the outdoor exercise equipment as well as the junior side, my child loves using the exercise equipment in our local park and does so with confidence and is of a age to safely use it .</p>	<p>The outdoor gym equipment we have in the middle section of the playground is for 'Junior aged' children only. This means that the risk assessment we were provided by the company that installed it, covers children in Year 3 – Year 6 during the school day, or when supervised by St. George's Central staff. This is why we are keen that no younger children (or adults) access the equipment before or at the end of the school day.</p> <p>There are lots of resources and activities on the 'infant side' of the playground. There is a large climbing frame, the tyres and the large trim trail on the school field. Staff also lead activities with your children each lunchtime and playtime.</p> <p>You are able to 'risk assess' yourself your own child using the equipment in the local park as you take full responsibility for them whilst they are in your care. I would not wish to deviate from the formal risk assessment we were provided and have in place. This will give your child something to look forward to when they eventually enter Year 3.</p>

Parental wish: Sharing information	School response
<p>While the communication with parents is good I would like to see more of the daily activities my child has been doing (my child doesn't easily share what he has been doing in that day) so that we can talk about it and also so we can incorporate it at home where possible if they enjoyed it.</p>	<p><i>It is funny how most children, who are kept very busy during the day at school, are reluctant to share what they have done in school when they arrive home.</i></p> <p><i>Could this be because they are tired?</i></p> <p><i>I sometimes find myself that I do not want to 're-live' the days events when I get home as I want to relax for a bit and sometimes reflect on things myself before I am ready to share with my family. Maybe children are the same?</i></p> <p><i>I know our younger children are not always able to fully tell their families about what they have been doing in school and so that is why more information is shared via Seesaw in our early years settings. I know of some families who incorporate this as part of their 'evening meal routine' where everyone talks about their day around the table whilst eating. As with everything with children, if they are not keen on doing something, you then have to think of ways to make them do it, without them knowing they are doing it (maybe through a game?).</i></p> <p><i>In order to see the daily activities children have been doing, I ask teachers across our school to post an update on their class Twitter page at least once a week. I want teachers to be teaching your children and not continually looking at their mobile devices in lessons and so I think at least once a week is fair. As with everything, staff have developed their own little systems and routines with this and you will see that some teachers post on Twitter more than the agreed 'once a week'.</i></p> <p><i>If you would like further information about what is being covered in your child's class, you could access the class page of the school website where all long term plans and knowledge organisers are easily accessible. You could also speak with the class teacher who will provide you with all the information that you need. On Monday, you will receive the key dates letter which will contain information about the 'Meet the Teacher' meeting for you to attend in September.</i></p>
Parental wish: Online observations	School response
<p>I know it's difficult but I would like more individual observations instead of mostly group ones.</p>	<p><i>Across our early years settings, I would agree that, it is time consuming for staff to do a lot of individual observations when there is a full class of children. We want the staff busy teaching, observing and interacting with your children and not solely focused on taking photographs and writing down notes for observations.</i></p> <p><i>The observations are primarily to show parents/carers some of the learning that is going on in our early years settings as the children are not always able to fully tell their families about what they have been doing in school (as mentioned above). We want to make our families feel included. Please speak to our early years staff at any time to ask them about any assessments or observations on your individual child and how they are progressing.</i></p>
Parental wish: Nursery uniform & sharing information	School response
<p>Consider allowing the nursery children to wear more casual jogger style trousers and comfy trainer style shoes as the current guidelines can be difficult to find in the right size and not all that comfortable for such young children.</p> <p>I would also love to see more pictures/videos of what the children in nursery get up-to day to day but appreciate what is already shared.</p>	<p><i>The more casual uniform has been considered in the past for our younger children but we decided to continue with the more formal uniform. We will discuss this at one of our senior leadership meetings when we return to school after the summer holiday.</i></p> <p><i>We know it is lovely to see pictures/videos of the children but just like the older classes, the staff in early years need to be focused teaching and talking to your children and not too much on taking photographs and videos. As previously mentioned as part of another 'wish':</i></p> <p><i>I ask teachers across our school to post an update on their class Twitter page at least once a week. I want teachers to be teaching your children and not continually be looking at their mobile devices in lessons and so I think at least once a week is fair. As with everything, staff have developed their own little systems and routines with this and you will see that some teachers post on Twitter more than the agreed 'once a week'.</i></p>

Parental wish: Communication	School response
<p>At Lancaster Avenue Nursery maybe a bit more information about how your child's been while at nursery, as 9 times out of 10 my child just gets sent out and I have to ask has she been OK?</p> <p>In school it's different as the older ones can say in more depth what's happened at school. With them being younger at nursery it would be nice and comforting to know what they have been doing.</p>	<p><i>It is not always easy to speak to every person who collects the children. Our Early Years Leader will speak to the staff about giving some feedback wherever possible.</i></p>
Parental wish: Reading Plus	School response
<p>Pushing reading via reading plus etc.</p> <p>My son has really, really not enjoyed Reading Plus this year but feels he has to do it because that's what the class is told they must do. I feel it's much better to promote reading for pleasure. Between Reading Plus, practising his spellings, completing the maths work and reading his school book it leaves little time for reading his own books.</p>	<p><i>Reading Plus has been highly successfully in engaging more of our KS2 children with their reading. The children are continually assessed and so it stretches the children to develop their reading. Children are also able to access genres of text that they prefer, which will help to promote a love of reading as texts the children read should be based on their own interests. I do agree that there needs to be a balance of online reading using programmes such as Reading Plus as well as reading 'hard copies' of school and own books. In the KS2 section of our recently updated Home Learning Policy, with regards to reading, it states:</i></p> <p><u>Key Stage Two</u> Children in Year 3 – Year 6 will be asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>read daily for a minimum of 15 minutes (three signatures/comments from parents/carers in planners per week and three exercises on Reading Plus);</i> <p><i>Therefore, within the 15 minutes daily reading, your child could read their school reading book for 5 minutes and then their own book for ten minutes, or the other way round. You are able to manage that time how you see fit at home with the full range of texts that your child has at their disposal.</i></p> <p><i>Our school reading motto is 'Reading....it's a kind of magic'. We do want children to love reading and see it as a magical skill that will help them to unlock their learning across all areas so that they can access all life has to offer. Children access Reading Plus in school and so I would speak with your child's teacher in September so that you can ensure we support them and find a balance, to help to get the very best out of him in term of the passion for reading.</i></p> <p><i>I agree that it can be difficult to fit everything in, we find that too in school. The way that we manage this sometimes is through covering areas of learning through other subjects. For example: we may do some historical writing in English or we may cover some maths work in science. Could this be applied at home with the learning of spellings? Could they be learned on the way to/from school verbally or when you have your evening meal? This may free up some additional time for other reading activities.</i></p>
Parental wish: Rooms in school	School response
<p>To create more rooms for students because parents likes St. George's Central Primary and Nursery School.</p>	<p><i>It is good that you think parents like St. George's Central Primary and Nursery School. We are very lucky that we do have a fantastic learning environment I am continually looking at ways to develop this further. Inside our school we have a fantastic library, a computing suite that can fit a full class in, a specific music room, a recording studio (our Green Room) and two rooms where children can undertake specific well-being activities with staff. We would love to continue to grow as a school. This would be largely dictated by Wigan Council and Manchester Diocese and there are many factors that are taken into account when deciding to develop schools, many of which are beyond our control (birth rate in the area etc). Let's hope that parents continue to like us for many years to come so that we can create more learning spaces for more children.</i></p>

Parental wish: Y6 leavers memento	School response
<p>I would like to see all children receive a memento at the Y6 leavers' assembly not just the award winners. I would happily pay for this.</p>	<p><i>Every year the Year 6 children do receive a memento from school and they are usually presented with it during their leavers' assembly. This will happen again this year. We are always open to suggestions to the type of memento the children receive and so please let Mrs Malley or Mr Cooke know if you have any suggestions that we could consider for future years.</i></p> <p><i>We do have some awards that are presented to some children in a wide variety of areas. I do still think there is a place for some children to receive awards at the end of their time at primary school for excelling, in a particular area. We could maybe look into how we manage this so that the final leavers event is solely focused on the children leaving our school as a whole.</i></p> <p><i>It would be great if during the next school year, we could get back to undertaking some fundraising activities (like Bingo nights etc) so that we could raise the money ourselves to pay for these leavers' gifts and events. It is from these fundraising events that we usually fund these 'extra things' in school. Once restrictions fully allow, I will organise a meeting for parents/carers to come together and meet to discuss fundraising opportunities for school.</i></p>
Parental wish: Year 6 arrangements	School response
<p>I would really like to see all year 6 students together in the same class for their last year. (Or at least see them spend more time together as a whole year) I know from experience with my older 2 that the year 6 children in the year 5/6 mix, do miss out on certain things. They still talk about how they hated being in the younger mix, especially in the last year.</p>	<p><i>We have mixed aged classes, organised through using the age of the children, from Year 1 – Year 6. We will never be in a position where all 45 children in Year 6 can be in the same class together as that would be too many children. In Reception, the way that we manage this is through us having 2 Reception classes.</i></p> <p><i>Could we have two separate Year 6 classes like we have two separate Reception classes?</i></p> <p><i>Unfortunately, not with the space and staffing we currently have. To have two separate Year 6 classes would mean we would also have to have two separate Year 5 classes. This would mean that, based on the current number of rooms and staffing levels, we would need one additional classroom to be built and one extra teacher salary to account for. This is something that we would be unable to financially accommodate at this time.</i></p> <p><i>I know that both Mr Cooke and Mrs Malley work closely together to ensure that they both deliver the same consistent message to the children. The recent changes with our staffing means I have had 'time to think' and through the changes I have made, there will be more opportunity for the Year 6 children to come together for longer at key times during the next academic year and beyond.</i></p>
Parental wish: After school clubs and staff comments	School response
<p>Don't not pick children for sports events in school just because they do afterschool clubs (said by a teacher). It isn't fair on the children that want to be involved, my child doesn't want to do afterschool clubs now because of this!</p> <p>Also please make staff aware of commenting in front of the pupils about non uniform days, if a child isn't wearing the correct colour. Some parents cannot afford new clothes just for one day.</p>	<p><i>Please come into school to speak with me as I am unsure if you are referring to after school clubs provided by St. George's Central or those provided within the community. I will be able to provide you with specific feedback once I know the details with this.</i></p> <p><i>We never expect anyone to have to buy new clothes for a non-uniform day. Please come into school to speak with me about this so I can investigate it further.</i></p>

Parental wish: Positives	School response
<p>Really not sure! Keep up the good work!</p> <p>At this moment in time I don't think there is any need for change or improvement</p>	<p><i>Thank you very much! I can assure you that over this last 'difficult' year every staff member at St. George's Central has worked extremely hard.</i></p> <p><i>Thank you for your comment. During my nine years as headteacher at St. George's Central CE Primary School and Nursery, I am always looking to change things for improvement and I will continue to do this so that your children receive what we consider to be the very best offer.</i></p> <p><i>The one thing I have not yet changed over the last few years is this final comment that I always leave in this section of the feedback, when I look at all the 'stars and the wishes' as I say:</i></p> <p><i>"We do our best, but when you have over 300 sets of parents/carers who are different ages, come from different backgrounds, with different life experiences, it is sometimes difficult to please everyone. At the fore front of our mind, when we do anything at school, is the children and their long term benefit. That is why we are here! Without them, we would have a building with no life or soul. We will continue to work hard and ensure that the mantra of 'NEVER SETTLE FOR LESS THAN YOUR BEST' is something that every staff member carries out and every child leaves our school knowing and living."</i></p>



Mr M Grogan, Headteacher, Friday 16th July 2021