

Dear Families

Riverside School - New Joiners' Survey 2017

Thank you so much for completing our recent family survey. The comments you made were combined into one report for Governors by our survey lead and school governor - Carolyn Thwaites. This report has been discussed at our Governing Board meetings this term. Hearing from you, our families, is so very important to us in our role of supporting and challenging the school's Leadership Team to ensure Riverside School is the best it can be. Thank you.

We were delighted to read, from all families, that your first impressions of Riverside School are very positive. Many of the comments centred around the friendliness, warmth, professionalism and dedication of Riverside's staff. Additionally there were comments on the excellent facilities, teaching and the activities your child does at school.

First impressions ...

"A very friendly, caring school. A very happy environment. I feel every child is just as special as each other and everyone at Riverside shows this"

"A friendly, safe environment where our son is understood and encouraged. The staff are passionate about their roles in the school community and seem to genuinely care about the children"

"Excellent facilities. Friendly staff"

As you are no doubt aware by now, our core purpose as a school is "to transform our children's lives and the lives of their families". We wanted to know what you are most looking forward to about your child being at Riverside School and what 'transforming lives' looked like for you. We are never complacent in thinking that what was relevant to our families who joined us 15 years ago is the same as what our new families expect from our school today. Comments centred around your children achieving their potential and the support they need in order to progress not only in a traditional educational way, but in their social skills and skills for life too.

Looking forward to ...

"[My child] reaching his set targets, to be able to make friends, socialise and develop his skills"

"Making friends for the first time"

"We would like for our child to be confident and able to express himself and communicate his needs in whatever form of communication he learns through his time at Riverside School"

"All the little progress he is making put together will make a big difference"

"Every day when [our child] comes to school I know he is learning life skills and being taught the best way for his ability. He loves coming and we love the support you all give us"

Transforming lives is about

"For [my child] to be happy again"

"[My child] learning to speak and extending her vocalisations into words"

"My son to be happy and independent"

"My child/children to be accepted in society. For them to be allowed to take part in the normal lives like others. For people to see them as being special in our lives."

"We are so much happier since [our child] started. No stress waiting for transport because [our child] loves her new school. We are all so pleased when [our child] tells us what she has done that day"

"My son to be happy during his learning process and make progress"

As a Governing Board we are hearing that the importance of your child 'finding their voice', however that may look, is important to you. You would like your children to be happy and have friends and enjoy learning; you would like your children to be as independent as they can be. You would like your children to *'achieve the motto of Riverside'*. You value the support you receive. These are all important to us as a school too. This term, as we conduct our annual strategic planning review, we will ensure our school development plan continues to support and evolve these wishes. We appreciate there are a lot of demands on your time - thank you for taking the time to complete our family survey and we look forward to hearing your views again soon.

Katrina O'Leary - Chair of Governors Riverside School