



# Mill Water School

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Bicton, East Budleigh, Devon, EX9 7BJ | Headteacher: Sarah Pickering

13 March 2017

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Dear Parents and Carers,

**RE: Parent Voice Questionnaire (2017)**

Thank you for supporting our recent Parent Voice Questionnaire, it has been very helpful to canvass your views and to prioritise appropriate actions. The responses were very positive and constructive and this has helped us greatly with our School Development Plan and to prioritise future action planning.

A detailed breakdown of the of the full questionnaire results is included with this letter together with an outline of the actions we intend to take to address those areas that we need to improve upon.

Summarised below are some of the areas where, from the questionnaire results, you feel that we are doing well (90% or more of respondents Strongly Agree / Agree).

- ✓ The school has a happy and pleasant atmosphere (97%)
- ✓ The school provides a safe environment for my child (97%)
- ✓ I am made to feel welcome when I come into school (100%)
- ✓ I find it easy to approach the school with questions and issues regarding my child (97.5%)
- ✓ The school is well led and managed (90%)
- ✓ Newsletters are helpful and informative (94%)
- ✓ School reports and parents' evenings keep me well informed about how my child is getting on (92.5%)
- ✓ My child is making good progress at school (90%)
- ✓ My child is safe in school (97%)
- ✓ Pupils get help and support to do their best (93%)
- ✓ The school provides an interesting range of activities (97%)
- ✓ My child likes school (95%)
- ✓ My child is treated fairly at school (90%)
- ✓ School buildings are kept in good order (95%)




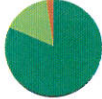
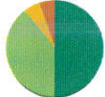
Thank you once again for the time and consideration you gave to this survey, your views are very important to us.







Yours sincerely,

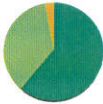





Clive Padgett  
Interim Headteacher

## PARENT VOICE QUESTIONNAIRE (2017) – SUMMARY OF RESULTS

39 responses / 40% of 103 families



Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<p>The school has a happy and pleasant atmosphere</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>	3%			23%	74%	
<p>The school provides a safe environment for my child</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>		3%		30%	67%	
<p>I am made to feel welcome when I come into school</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>				20.5%	79.5%	
<p>I find it easy to approach the school with questions and issues regarding my child</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>		2.5%		16%	81.5%	
<p>The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>		5.5%	5.5%	39%	50%	

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<p>Staff and Pupils respect and trust each other</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>			15%	30%	55%	
<p>The school is well led and managed</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>		2%	8%	45%	45%	
<p>Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>	3%	14%	8%	39%	36%	
<p>Newsletters are helpful and informative</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>		3%	3%	54%	40%	
<p>School reports and parents evenings keep me well informed about how well my child is getting on</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>		5%	2.5%	42.5%	50%	
<p>My child is making good progress at school</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>		3%	7%	44%	46%	

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<p>My child is safe in school</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>			3%	36%	61%	
<p>Pupils get help and support to do their best</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>	2.5%	2.5%		27.5%	67.5%	
<p>We know how to support our child to work on their specific targets at home</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>		10.5%	5%	55.5%	29%	
<p>The school provides an interesting range of activities</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>		3%		31%	66%	
<p>My child likes school</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>			5%	19%	76%	
<p>My child is treated fairly at school</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly Agree</li> <li>Agree</li> <li>Don't Know</li> <li>Disagree</li> <li>Strongly Disagree</li> </ul>	2.5%	7.5%		22.5%	67.5%	



Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<p>My child is happy at playtimes and lunchtimes</p> <p>             ■ Strongly Agree              ■ Agree              ■ Don't Know              ■ Disagree              ■ Strongly Disagree           </p>			28%	31%	41%	
<p>My child does not have a problem with bullying /or exclusion by his/her peers</p> <p>             ■ Strongly Agree              ■ Agree              ■ Don't Know              ■ Disagree              ■ Strongly Disagree           </p>			21%	18%	61%	
<p>Behaviour in the school is good or better</p> <p>             ■ Strongly Agree              ■ Agree              ■ Don't Know              ■ Disagree              ■ Strongly Disagree           </p>			18%	38%	44%	
<p>School buildings are kept in good order</p> <p>             ■ Strongly Agree              ■ Agree              ■ Don't Know              ■ Disagree              ■ Strongly Disagree           </p>			5%	23%	72%	
<p>The school is well thought of in the local community</p> <p>             ■ Strongly Agree              ■ Agree              ■ Don't Know              ■ Disagree              ■ Strongly Disagree              ■ Not applicable           </p>	3%	3%	30%	18%	43%	3%
<p>The Governors are a visible part of the school team</p> <p>             ■ Strongly Agree              ■ Agree              ■ Don't Know              ■ Disagree              ■ Strongly Disagree           </p>	8%	8%	42%	17%	25%	

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
<p>The Headteacher or a senior leader is available to support parents</p>  <p> <span>Strongly Agree</span>  <span>Agree</span>  <span>Don't Know</span>  <span>Disagree</span>  <span>Strongly Disagree</span> </p>		3%	18%	46%	33%	
<p>The school is aware of and respects our family's views and beliefs</p>  <p> <span>Strongly Agree</span>  <span>Agree</span>  <span>Don't Know</span>  <span>Disagree</span>  <span>Strongly Disagree</span>  <span>Not applicable</span> </p>		6%	14%	34%	43%	3%

## 1. What are the main strengths of the school as you see them?

School Strengths	For Pupils
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fantastic staff!</li> <li>• Individual staff members - Kayleigh Price and Sarah Clark in particular - most staff in general to be fair. The dedication, knowledge and passion. The environment and grounds. The way children are seen as individuals. The availability by telephone/email of the teacher. The great support given by school when dealing with external provision. Clive's dynamic, quick responses – a real 'can do' attitude.</li> <li>• The school has some fabulous teachers and TA's.</li> <li>• Layout of the school is very good and position in the Bicton campus. Positive attitudes of staff.</li> <li>• Excellent support for both the parent and pupil. You are made to feel welcome and nothing is ever an inconvenience. They adapt to suit any situation. Professional, friendly staff.</li> <li>• Very well maintained. Safety is amazing with the doors.</li> <li>• Happy atmosphere, good relationships between staff and pupils.</li> <li>• The school is very friendly and professional. The school is always working hard to better themselves and improve.</li> <li>• The staff are great – my son really enjoys school. The TAs work really hard. I feel welcome when I contact school by phone or come in. Dee is lovely.</li> <li>• Reviews are good – Sue calls me back when she says.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is helpful and dedicated and taught my son a lot.</li> <li>• My son is thriving.</li> <li>• The Calvert Trust residential is a huge strength and gives us our only break of the year. He gets so much out of the week. Who knew he would be into rock climbing? The Mill Water feeling when you come into school is very special.</li> <li>• Making each child feel safe, happy and important.</li> <li>• Inclusive atmosphere where pupils feel confident and happy (at least our child does!).</li> <li>• Caring of the children. Clear vision for each child and work hard to achieve it. Responsive and supportive to parents when approached.</li> <li>• A safe caring environment that enhances my child's abilities and self-confidence.</li> <li>• The building is great. Staff are very friendly and approachable.</li> <li>• Any problems with my child that arise – the school have always fixed/sorted the problem in a way my child understands.</li> <li>• Its size – small enough that every child known individually. Teaching staff and assistants – very good. We also like the new review meetings and enjoy attending.</li> <li>• Safe, calm and relaxed environment. Children with specific requirements can develop at the correct pace.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caring environment.</li> <li>• Mill Water is a really good school. And the school Home book is really helpful</li> </ul>	<p>Excellent, friendly and helpful staff who always seem to go the extra mile.</p>
Curriculum	For Parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Range of facilities and activities on offer. Continuing development of the orchard.</li> <li>• Individual expertise and commitment of certain staff. Middle management - heads of certain areas. Range of opportunities for children. Environment – in and out of the school building.</li> <li>• Incorporating the outside world into daily school life, so the children don't struggle when leaving Mill Water.</li> <li>• Fantastic setting. Teacher really understands my child. Opportunities to support communication for adults.</li> <li>• Safeguarding the children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a strong sense of welcome and friendship/respect.</li> <li>• A very safe and secure place for my child.</li> <li>• Caring, safe learning environment. Staff, teachers respond very well to questions and help with problems.</li> <li>• Parents are made welcome, and that's good.</li> <li>• Supporting our child and supporting us as a family. The staff are fantastic and work as a team.</li> <li>• The good relationships between teacher and pupils.</li> <li>• Really good and informative Annual Review. I could see a big difference in his achievements from last year.</li> <li>• Approachable staff. Variety of activities/lessons.</li> <li>• Friendship and openness. Non-judgmental supportive and always open to discussion.</li> <li>• The new site buildings. The staff are very friendly. I like the review meetings and look forward to going as news is all positive and I have a chance to raise any concerns – Sue does what she says she will do – e.g. getting in touch with info.</li> </ul>

## 2. What are the main areas for development as you see them?

Communication	For Pupils
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More open communication in home school book! Need to know not just the positives, but also the negatives to get a full picture of behaviour displayed on arriving home.</li> <li>• Continuing to develop communication between SLT and parents. Helping parents to contact one another i.e. Facebook page -it can be lonely being a special needs parent.</li> <li>• Communication and collaboration with parents. It should be 2 way. We would like more than one parents evening a year. We would like to see some open afternoons that would allow us to join our child in class. I feel very separate from what my child does in school and can barely picture their classroom, let alone what they do. Also, the school must develop better links with the local community (who mostly don't know we exist). This needs to be driven and implemented by the SLT.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech for my son and feeding. Old school had no help.</li> <li>• Every child develops in their own time.</li> <li>• Outside school activities have dropped off i.e. swimming, forest school. It concerns me that the range of our offer is diminishing.</li> <li>• Homework to be set reading books at appropriate level especially. After school activities/clubs to be provided.</li> <li>• More music and dance therapy.</li> <li>• Not many. It would be nice if the swimming pool next to the school was to be refurbished and swimming was increased?</li> <li>• I'm still a bit baffled as to why things such as Grid Player, PECs, and Swimming has all come to a stop for my child when he went into 6<sup>th</sup> Form. I don't know if a speech/language therapist still visits him. He was going to Exmouth pool?</li> <li>• Fine balance between pushing a child and encouragement. I have a more able child who takes</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hydro Pool open more. Electronic communication with parents. More parent involvements – assemblies etc.</li> <li>• Some aspects of communication – particularly with staffing, we should have been kept up to date and informed of staff absence. Felt very let down by school. This needed to happen to allow/account for changes of behaviour. Use of social media to inform and ‘advertise’. More parent/teacher meetings on progress or a more formal report on progress more often.</li> <li>• Would like more communication of my child’s developments/achievements e.g. reading, writing a bit more often.</li> <li>• Communication, particularly regarding staffing. Changes at the school and staff being off and outcome of the investigations into significant events. A robust leadership structure which can cope and continue seamlessly when the Headteacher is off. Discussion with parents about significant changes for their child, rather than telling parents about decision after they’ve been made (for example about changing a child’s class).</li> <li>• Communication. My child is trying to talk a lot more at home – he is so much more relaxed going to school compared to his old school.</li> <li>• More info for parents.</li> <li>• More info when staff change – Headteacher / Class teacher.</li> <li>• Dinner money – we have ended up with a large bill – we should have been told sooner.</li> <li>• You need to raise awareness of the school’s existence by interacting with the local community/schools.</li> </ul>	<p>every opportunity to sit on her laurels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers often away from classes leaving TA’s alone. Pupils need higher targets – not currently pushed hard enough. Stop pigeon-holing children – they are all individuals – education should reflect this. Expand the range of visits externally (fire station, vets, factory, post office, library etc.)</li> <li>• Higher aspirations for pupils. Attempts to teach ALL children basic literacy and numeracy concepts. More personalised learning rather than trying to make children follow text book strategies which can prevent them moving forward, as there may be some steps they may never be able to do but they may be able to do the step 5 steps ahead.</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>For Parents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There seems to be the need for more stability in the senior management side, and parents should not be made to feel they are not part of the school by keeping them in reception, and not allowing them to visit class as they used to.</li> <li>• Counselling for parents and extended family for children with special needs.</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>For Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TA’s should be given a form like this too, to feed back. More training for TA’s.</li> <li>• More training courses for TA’s needed.</li> </ul>

### 3. Would you be interested in attending parent support groups?

See below – Areas for Development / Planned Actions

### 4. Is there anything that you would like more information about?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home/School books to tell us about the positives/negatives of the day, as opposed to ‘did ... in art’ or ‘swimming this morning’.</li> <li>• The school dog and how her training is progressing.</li> <li>• Any school initiative/technique for delivery we may not be familiar with e.g. ‘Attention Autism’ – information sent home to parents via internet/newsletter.</li> <li>• No, I am very happy with the school.</li> <li>• I would like to think my child is safe in school, but I think all parents were entitled to information about the incident in the hydro pool last year. We did not get an explanation.</li> <li>• First Aid course for parents. Information from Mill Water for Year 5 and 6 parents about what happens when children move to Key Stage 3.</li> <li>• Governors. Short of researching these on your website, which I’m sure I can do, I have no idea who they are or what they bring to the school.</li> </ul>
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- I would like some Makaton sign info – especially what is being used at school – so I can do at home as well. My child is very good at understanding Makaton so I think it would be good to learn as well!
- We are always well informed by the school.

## 5. Are there any other comments or suggestions that you would like to make?

- Keep up the good work; you're all doing a great job. Never seen my son so happy to go to school and comes home happy ☺.
- Cannot praise Mill Water high enough for the development of my child.
- New parents to be given a 'buddy' if they want one. Regular SLT open meetings for parents. Advice on how to help my child achieve their targets (not just be told what they are). Also – can the school look at employing an OT?
- Would be nice to have end of term newsletter from head with school and class updates, info and achievements.
- More after-the-event write ups on the website so parents can see what is going on.
- I feel strongly that the new build is amazing, but since the move, the school has become like an institution rather than the family orientated lovely atmosphere school that it used to be!!
- Just to say what an outstanding school it is, and how much of a difference it has made to our little girl. Thank you.
- Coffee mornings on different mornings to meet other parents.
- Mill Water is an amazing school and everyone should be so proud of the support you give the parents and pupils!!
- It is a great school but feels as though everything has been unsettled with staff under a lot of pressure. Thank you for all you do.
- I think developing the role of sign-poster is a valuable one.
- Keep up the excellent work. Many thanks ☺
- Our son loves school and we have never had a problem getting him to go. He comes home happy and tired. He is kept busy I appreciate the staff dealing with his personal care and I think he benefits from the work experience he has been encouraged to do at the Nursery.
- Just thank you to everyone.
- I do think that the school has made a lot of progress over the last few years and I know that everyone at the school works very hard.
- Thank you for giving our daughter the wonderful opportunity to be happy at school.
- I am so happy with this school! My son in my eyes has made fantastic progress, and the teachers are fantastic at their jobs (and the TA's).
- Communication with parents is still way behind the methods used by other schools. As we do not have the opportunity to interact at the school gates this should be of paramount importance!!
- Our son loves Mill Water School. He is relaxed and happy and is enjoying learning.

## Areas for Development / Planned Actions

Key Themes	School Plans
Communication	<p>Improving communication is a key theme that came through from a lot of parent responses. We are very keen to consider all options for improving this between home and school and we have a number of actions underway to address this. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using ICT – a parent text service, Twitter, Facebook to be introduced to compliment the Home/School diaries and phone &amp; email service already in place.</li> <li>• Opportunities for parents to come in to school more frequently to visit the</li> </ul>

	<p>school / classrooms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are also planning to deliver an exciting programme of parent support groups, these will include training opportunities, coffee mornings and information sessions (more information below).</li> </ul>
Parent Support Groups	<p>Parents have identified a broad range of topic areas they would like information / training on including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication (signing, PECs, Speech and Language support)</li> <li>First Aid Course</li> <li>Autism Group/ Attention Autism information</li> <li>Cerebral Palsy group</li> <li>Manual Handling training</li> <li>Sensory Workshops</li> <li>Positive Behaviour Management training</li> <li>Emotional Development information</li> <li>Help with paperwork (e.g. DLA applications)</li> <li>Guest Speakers e.g. Adult Services, Enabling &amp; Respite Services, DIAS</li> </ul> <p>We are planning a rolling programme of support to cover many of these topics – look out for more information on this shortly.</p> <p>Please contact Susan Spiers if there are other topics that you would like considered.</p>
Activities	<p>A number of parents have asked for an increasing amount of activities for their children in school. We will always take every opportunity to enrich the curriculum for all of our children and we already have a strong enrichment programme in place across all key stages to support this. If you have ideas for how you would like us to develop this further then please do get in touch with Clive Padgett.</p>
Homework	<p>Thank you to everyone who completed the recent Homework Survey. Parents gave a very broad range of responses. We are committed to supporting children at home on an individual basis. Homework activities will be led by the class teachers and teams working directly with parents.</p>
Music & Dance Therapy	<p>A number of parents have requested a greater access to a range of therapies. Currently, we are supported by the Local Authority for Speech and Language, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy – we would always wish for more support. The school does pay for additional music therapy; however, we are bound by our budget. If the opportunity for dance therapy arises, we will look at the possibility of introducing this.</p>
Swimming & Hydrotherapy	<p>A number of parents responded that they would like their children to have more regular swimming and hydrotherapy sessions. We feel strongly that this is a key part of the learning curriculum for all ages. However, we are bound by the need to balance strict health and safety requirements alongside staffing arrangements to make this a safe, secure and positive learning experience.</p>
Range of External Visits	<p>Some parents indicated that they would like their child to take a more active part in trips to the community. We will always do this where it supports the curriculum; we have good transport resources in place to call upon to make this happen.</p>
Aspirations	<p>The majority of parents (89%) indicated that they felt that the school expects their child to work hard and achieve his or her best. A small number of parents indicated that we should have higher aspirations for our pupils. I can assure you that I and all staff have the highest expectations of learning and progress for each</p>

	individual child. The pupils aspirations are a key part of our work with children and their families, it is important that every parent works with the school to set challenging but realistic targets to support learning.
Governors	A number of parents indicated that they would like to know more about the work of the governors. Our school governors support Mill Water school very well, however many of the hours of work that they put in supporting us goes unseen. We will make every effort to publicise the work of the Governors through newsletters and school events such as Governor Meet and Greet sessions. If you have the capacity to support the work of Governors in the future, why not come and join them– there is more information on the school website about what they do and how you can become involved.
Dinner money	Dinner money has caused an issue for a small number of parents – we will make every effort to help parent keep up to date with payments. If there are any issues with this please contact Clive Padgett.
School Dog – Lucy	Lots of parents have asked how Lucy is getting on - she is wonderful to have around and we will ensure that there are regular newsletter items and website news updates about the work that she does with our children.
Mill Water in the Community	Some parents have commented that we are hidden away here at Bicton and that we need to do more to be better known in the community. We will take every effort to join in with community events and will also publicise the work that we do in the local media to raise our profile and that of our pupils.
Sign posting to Services -	Working with fellow professionals is essential in ensuring successful transitions for our pupils. We will take all opportunities to sign post new services to parents as well as guide parent to existing services. Please contact Susan Spiers for more information.
Behaviour	<p>Some parents have queried how we support and improve behaviour for children, particularly at lunchtimes. This can often be a difficult time for our young people because of the timing and structure of lunch and play. We work hard to make sure that all children are well supported at lunchtime, particularly with staff that know and understand them and can support developing play and interaction. To help staff in this work we are having large spend planned (supported by the PTFA) on playground equipment across the school this coming year.</p> <p>We take each and every incident of bullying very seriously and would wish to work closely with parents and children on this matter - if you have any concerns at all, please speak to Clive Padgett or Sarah Pickering.</p> <p>Improving behaviour and interaction skills for all children is a main focus of our work alongside teaching and learning - we keep detailed records of behaviour incidents and monitor behaviour over time to ensure we get it right - please do contact the school if you have any concerns, it is vital we work together for improvement at home and school</p>