



Leadership Team:

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Dear Parents and Carers

Hello again and this week the vast majority of my letter to you relates to the recent surveys. I plan to summarise the results and indicate how they will inform our school improvement planning.

Meanwhile, my thanks to those parents and carers who have been in touch in response to [my letter about smartphones](#). I plan to write to this smaller group of parents and carers in the next few days and will provide them with some more thoughts on the proposals I intend to share with all of you in the next week or two. And one more quick item – current and future parents and carers in the Middle Barton area ought to have received some information from me yesterday regarding school buses. If you have not received this communication then please contact my PA, Morag, on office@chippingnortonschool.org.

Stakeholder Surveys – Introduction

We are pleased that various initiatives led to a significant increase in participation this year. The number of students who took part rose from 644 to 826, whilst parent and carer engagement rose from 125 to 313. Overall, the results were more positive amongst students and parents in 2024, compared to 2023. Given that this is the fifth year of the survey, we are able to monitor responses at CNS over time, but also against the other secondary schools within the River Learning Trust (RLT).

You may recall that participants were presented with a series of statements and then asked to indicate if they strongly agreed, agreed, were unsure, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with those statements. When we look at the results, we look at the percentage who are positive (those who agreed and strongly agreed), but also look at the other types of responses as well. When I use figures (below) I shall refer to the proportion that agreed and strongly agreed with various statements in 2024 and compare that to 2023.

The Parent and Carer Survey

Taken as a whole, parents' responses are more positive in 2024 than in 2023 and are more robust given the 250% increase in participation. Nonetheless, the results are mixed and, to some extent, slightly confusing. For example, parents are notably more positive with regards to believing their child is doing well (from 80% to 86%), knowing how well their child is doing (from 74% to 81%), and recommending CNS to another parent (74% to 82%) – and yet there is a sharp fall in perceptions around knowing [what their children are learning](#) (61% to 52%) and support for their [child's wider personal development](#) (78% to 69%). We certainly need to reflect on our communications with you and find better ways to share what we are doing that go above and beyond either our website or my letters to you. **Meanwhile, whilst responses around the support given to students with SEND is stable, it has not risen as we had hoped and, therefore, remains a priority next year, alongside improving communications to you on curriculum content.**

The Student Survey

Students were more positive about CNS than any other secondary school, with our students providing the most positive responses in nine statements and the second highest in a further five. All of our student responses were above the RLT average of all secondary schools.

We saw significant upward shifts in a number of areas:



- *Overall satisfaction with school life* rose from 69% in 2023 to 79% in 2024.
- *Teachers help me to do my best* rose from 74% to 82%.
- *My school encourages me to read* rose from 81% to 85%.
- *I enjoy learning at this school* rose from 55% to 62%.
- *There is an adult I can talk to if I have a problem* rose from 66% to 70%
- *The behaviour of other pupils in my lessons is good* rose from 53% to 61%
- *I feel safe when I am at school* rose from 77% to 79%
- *My school encourages me to respect people from other backgrounds* rose from 83% to 88%
- *I would recommend this school to a friend* rose from 56% to 62%.

Whilst there were no causes for concern in terms of downward trends, we have taken note of two results in particular:

- *The behaviour of other pupils around school is good* remained the same at 58%
- *Is bullying a problem in your school* fell from 78% who said no to 76% in 2024. Interestingly whilst the proportion who reported 'yes' remained the same, those who were 'unsure' rose slightly.
- *My school encourages me to look after my physical health* fell from 67% to 64%.

Whilst the temptation is to provide you with endless data I shall stop there and instead summarise our key responses. **Firstly, we need to revisit the messages we provide in PE and elsewhere about heathy lifestyles and diet. Secondly, we must continue to prioritise the reduction in our students' experience of bullying.** One part of that strategy will relate to the misuse of social media (more on that to come) and to go back to students and seek much more detailed information on the precise nature of their experiences of bullying or prejudice-related comments or treatment in and out of school. As I have written several times over the years, bullying and harassment is no less prevalent in our society than it was many decades ago, but it has taken on new forms and in some ways is more subtle and persistent.

Please do not believe for one moment that the annual survey data is our only source of feedback on the progress of our school. RLT schools go farther and deeper than most in this regard, but it remains just one of a number of ways we self-evaluate and inform plans for the future. There will never be any complacency at CNS and, if anything, we have to guard against over correcting our school improvement activities and adding unnecessary complexity that can overwhelm colleagues, students and families on the basis of a single survey.

And finally

You may recall I mentioned Sophia in my letter to you last week. I am pleased to tell you that she came second from 250 entries on Saturday. Mrs Drinkwater attended the event with Sophia and her parents and described a two hour up-cycle challenge to make a new garment from old clothing. Her work and that of others was judged by a panel of industry specialists and no doubt inspired Sophia to pursue her passion and be a top designer of the future. More in the end of term magazine.

Do have a really lovely weekend.

Yours faithfully



Barry Doherty
Headteacher

