

Let's Talk Education - Our National Discussion

Connect is a long-standing independent parents' organisation and the only Scottish charity which is dedicated to supporting parental engagement in education. We provide membership services to Parent Councils and PTAs, as well as offering advice and information to individual parents/carers about any aspect of the education of their child or the wider education system.

We support education professionals in developing their skills and understanding around effective partnership working with families and the wider community through online professional learning via the Connect Family Engagement Academy. Our evidence-based approaches reflect both the recognised significant role of families in the learning of their children and young people, and the stated policies and legislation which pertain in Scotland.

The National Discussion: Parental Engagement

While the scope of the National Discussion on the future of Scottish Education is very broad, for its contribution on behalf of parents/carers, Connect focused on our remit of parental engagement and parents' experiences in schools and nurseries while encouraging parents and carers to respond to the discussion, and to support their children in expressing their views, directly. We would like to point to our response to the Professor Muir Review from November 2021 on our website [here](#), which takes the broader overview and is still relevant.

Regarding the National Discussion, we would like a statement in the principles that come out of the National Discussion to reflect:

- the importance of parents, carers and families in children's learning;
- the importance of positive relationships between home and school/early learning centres; and
- the importance of effective two-way communication (especially about health, wellbeing and children's learning) between home and school.

We would also hope that the findings of our survey are reflected in the Learning Together Action Plan and in updated Parental Involvement Act guidance. We invite local authorities to look closely at these findings as they establish their Parental Engagement Strategies.

Why does parental engagement in children's learning and school lives matter? Because children tell us that it does!

Here is what children told their parents:

I like you knowing what I'm doing and I like seeing you. I like showing you all the things we do and you get to be with me. We always thank the Parent Council and it's good you are working for the school (P5)

I think you have the right to know what I am learning, so that you know what I am learning and then we can do it at home (P4)

I think you're really helpful and think you are what the school needs. I am very happy that you are involved in the school (P4)

You're helping in trying to help the kids tell the school that we all have rights (P4)

Connect

Mansfield Traquair Centre, 15 Mansfield Place, Edinburgh EH3 6BB

0131 474 6199 | info@connect.scot | www.connect.scot | [f](#) @ConnectScot | [t](#) @connect_scot

Connect is a trading name of Scottish Parent Teacher Council, Company No SC151086 and Scottish Charity No SC019168

It is nice because I sometimes see her around the school which is a pleasant surprise. I like her knowing stuff about school because then she can remind me if I forget (P7)

I'm proud of my mum's role in helping the parents be more involved in my school. I used to hunt her out when she helped at my old Primary school. I liked that all my classmates knew she was my mum rather than her role, but I made sure they knew her role too. I got on well with the younger kids who thought mum was a school teacher who did everything. At primary I had to go along to meetings with mum, sometimes I would be sitting in, most times listening at the door - I liked knowing things before my classmates. For high school meetings, I enjoyed listening in on the Teams meetings during last few years, I'm not so keen on her going into school for the meetings now, but still proud mum's trying to help my school how she can (S2)

I know you're on the parent council. It's good that you know what's happening at school. You used to be at most of the primary school events when I was there too which was nice and sometimes I got to help too (S1)

Parental Engagement in Schools Now

Research has evidenced that parental engagement matters - when parents show an interest in, and are positive about, their child's learning in and out of school, children do better. "Parental engagement is a powerful lever for raising achievement in schools. Where parents and teachers work together to improve learning, the gains in achievement are significant." (Harris & Goodall, 2008)

So - what is parental engagement looking like just now in Scottish schools? We conducted a survey of parents and carers which ran from 31 October to 27 November 2023. Full details of the survey findings are in the Appendix.

We asked about home-school partnerships, school-home communications and about whether parents felt their school/nursery valued them and their contribution. We also asked whether parents thought their priorities for their child were delivered by their child's school/nursery.

There are many positives in the findings of the survey. Clearly, satisfaction levels are high for many parents/carers which is heartening.

However, bearing in mind that parents do need to have some understanding of their child's learning in order to show interest and be supportive to gain the benefits of parental engagement for improving children's outcomes, findings from survey questions on communications between school and home about children's learning were concerning.

- In terms of reporting to parents about children's learning, **40%** say they are kept informed about their child's learning sometimes; more worryingly, **24%** say they are not kept informed about their child's learning at all.
- Contact from school to home to share positive information about children does not happen at all in **47%** of responses. **40%** do not know how to find information about their child's progress. **29%** are not provided with information by the school to support their child's learning at home. **38%** say the school/nursery does not seek parents' views to better understand their child/family and **26%** say they are not encouraged to share information with the school about their child's wellbeing.
- When asked if the school/nursery offer all parents opportunities to discuss their child and their learning nearly, such as parent evenings, other meetings, or calls, **10%** said none of the above or they didn't know.
- A majority said they knew how to get in touch with the school but unfortunately nearly a fifth said they didn't know.
- School communication works well for **68%** of respondents all of the time or most of the time. However, **10%** say school communications do not work for them at all.

The majority of parents feel that schools do deliver for their children all or most of the time in terms of parents' priorities. However, there is a consistent fifth of respondents who do not feel this is the case. As

the survey delves further into communication between school and home about learning, or contact which shares positive information about children, there are clearly gaps.

Connect also asked some big picture questions about the parent representation and about some current discussions in Scottish education. The responses to these are as follows:

- Local authorities must make sure that parents have access to all information they need to make informed decisions about their child's education. Local authorities must also make sure that the information provided to parents is accurate, complete, and up-to-date eg on their websites; given verbally or in writing by council officials etc. **87% agreed (235)**
- There should be at least one parent representative on every local authority Education/Children and Families Committees. **72% agreed (196)**
- School/nursery inspectors should have school buildings, spaces and grounds in their remit for inspection as all spaces have a role to play in Curriculum for Excellence. **69% agreed (186)**
- There should be an independent complaints procedure (separate from the local authority) for parents/carers and parent councils about education and school-related matters. **69% agreed (186)**
- It should be easy and affordable (or free) for parent groups to book school/local authority spaces/buildings when they are holding social and fundraising events for their school community. **67% agreed (182)**
- Parent Councils/parents should have a legal right to have a say in the way local authorities organise school leadership eg shared head teachers. **61% agreed (166)**
- There should be an independent complaints procedure (separate from the local authority) for children and young people in education. **57% agreed (154)**
- There should be a dedicated national discussion on extending Scotland's play-based early learning/kindergarten stage of education and on making appropriate adjustments to the formal school starting age. **51% agreed (139)**

In summary

In terms of the future of Scottish education, there is much more work to do on:

- the sharing of information about learning with parents, so parents can support and encourage their child and have meaningful conversations with them
- encouraging schools to further develop the sharing of good news about children and young people with their parents
- valuing all families and getting to know them, to build positive relationships as the bedrock for supporting children's wellbeing and learning.

These become particularly important for laying the groundwork for trust-based relationships between home and school when difficult conversations are needed or when young people are struggling or facing challenges. Positive contact with families over time is 'banked' and then helps when there are problems to deal with. It is great that nearly **70%** said they do feel there is a positive partnership; however, over a fifth say they do not think there is a positive partnership and another **8%** said they didn't know and **38%** either feel they cannot contribute ideas around their child's learning or answered 'don't know.'

The past few years have shown just how important positive relationships between home and school are, when school life was upended by the pandemic and resulting lockdowns. Almost overnight children and young people, parents and families, and teachers had to rise to the challenge of new ways of working to support children's learning. [Connect's surveys of parents](#) (with over 10,000 responses across four surveys) during this time highlighted just how vital the home-school link was in managing this, and how it benefited children when positive relationships between home and school had previously been established. These were a lifeline for learning and support.

Parental engagement needs to be seen as something worthwhile, an important part of ensuring young people are supported in their learning rather than a tick box exercise or an add on, and the education system must consider parents as valued partners. There is excellent work going on in schools across the

country, however the issue is one of consistency. School leadership is an important factor in determining school culture, but parental engagement also needs to be embedded in teacher education from the start.

Connect

8 December 2022

Appendix: Survey Results

Survey Demographics

Our survey ran from 31 October to 27 November 2022 and received **273 responses** across **28 local authorities**.

85% (230) of respondents said their child attends school or nursery, with **15% (42)** saying they didn't.

If yes, what kind of school/nursery does your child attend?

- **94% (225)** said local authority-run school
- **4% (9)** said local authority-run nursery
- **0% (0)** voluntary sector nursery
- **1% (2)** independent/private school
- **2% (4)** independent/private nursery

At what stage/age is your child/young person?

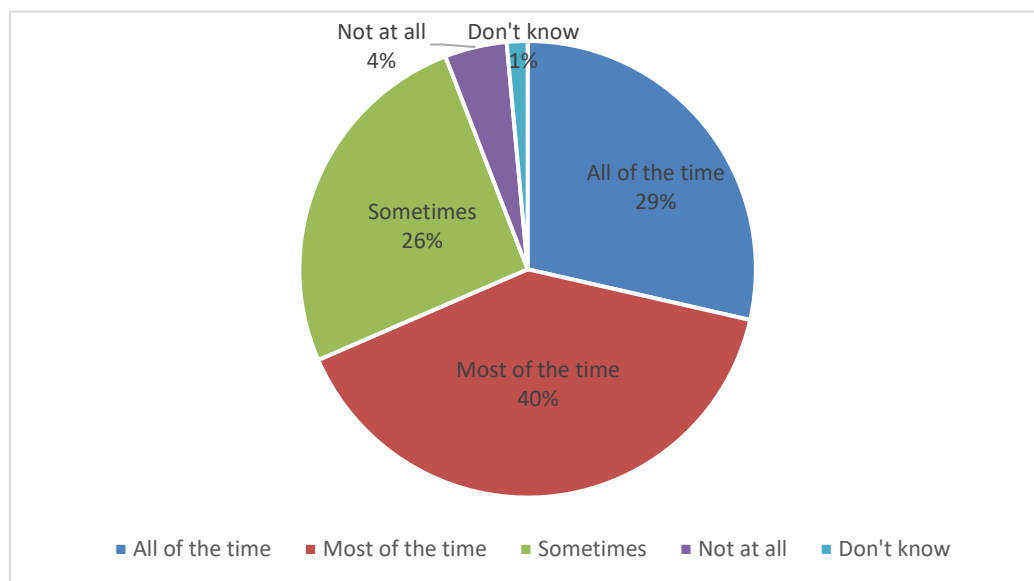
- **5% (13)** Early years/nursery
- **15% (42)** P1 - P3
- **33% (90)** P4 - P7
- **29% (78)** S1 - S3
- **9% (25)** S4
- **5% (15)** S5
- **4% (10)** S6

School Meeting Child's Needs

We asked parents if they think their child's school/nursery focuses on, and delivers, the care and education they feel are the priorities for their child, by asking to state if they agreed with a series of statements.

When asked to respond to a variety of statements about whether schools/nurseries delivered the care and education their child needed, two thirds of respondents said all of the time or most of the time. However, a persistent one third said sometimes or not at all.

My child's school/nursery focuses on and supports:



My child's health and wellbeing

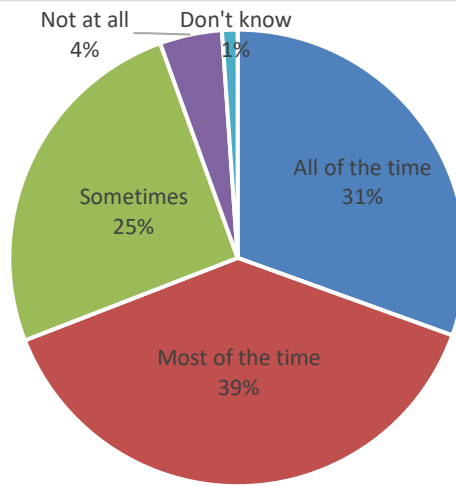
29% (78) All of the time

40% (109) Most of the time

26% (70) Sometimes

4% (12) Not at all

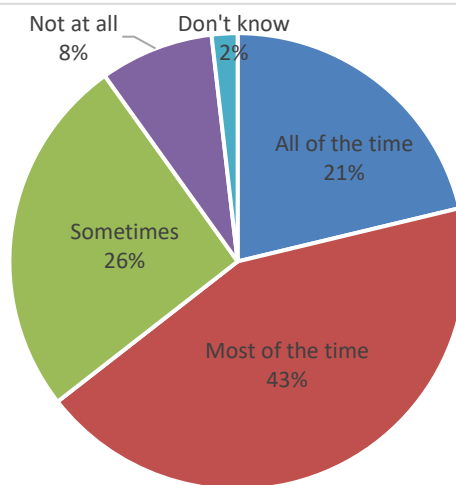
1% (4) Don't know



■ All of the time ■ Most of the time ■ Sometimes ■ Not at all ■ Don't know

My child's safety and happiness

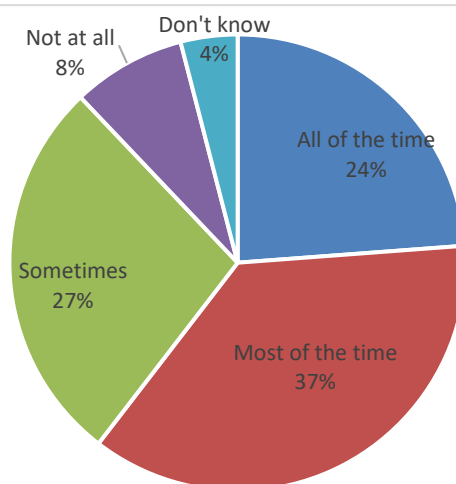
31% (83) All of the time
39% (105) Most of the time
25% (69) Sometimes
4% (12) Not at all
1% (3) Don't know



■ All of the time ■ Most of the time ■ Sometimes ■ Not at all ■ Don't know

Meeting my child's needs

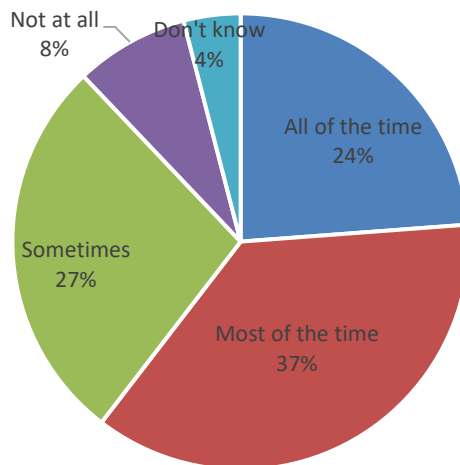
21% (58) All of the time
43% (118) Most of the time
26% (70) Sometimes
8% (22) Not at all
2% (5) Don't know



■ All of the time ■ Most of the time ■ Sometimes ■ Not at all ■ Don't know

My child's learning and educational achievement

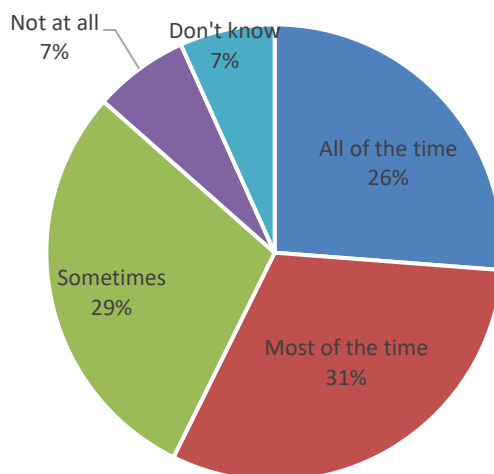
24% (73) All of the time
37% (107) Most of the time
27% (72) Sometimes
8% (18) Not at all
4% (3) Don't know



My child's social skills and ability to make friends and form positive relationships with others

24% (65) All of the time
37% (100) Most of the time
27% (75) Sometimes
8% (22) Not at all
4% (11) Don't know

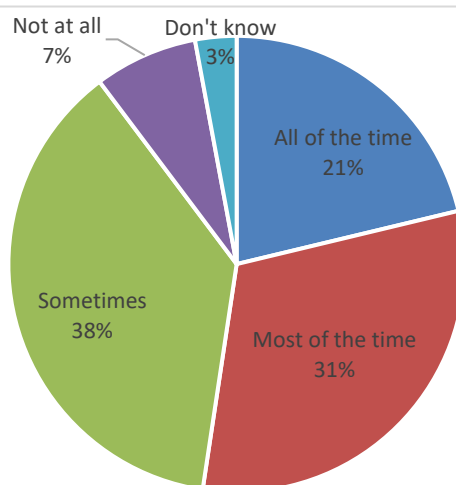
■ All of the time ■ Most of the time ■ Sometimes ■ Not at all ■ Don't know



My child's opportunities to play

26% (70) All of the time
31% (83) Most of the time
29% (78) Sometimes
7% (18) Not at all
7% (18) Don't know

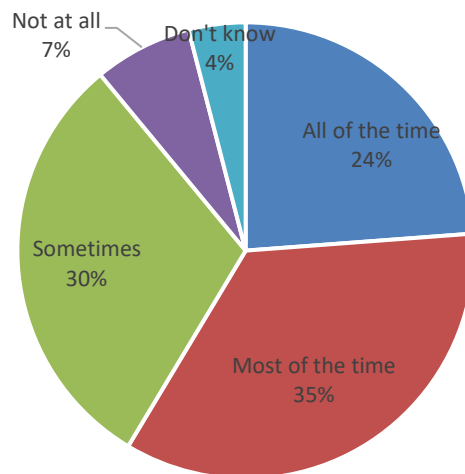
■ All of the time ■ Most of the time ■ Sometimes ■ Not at all ■ Don't know



New experiences for my child

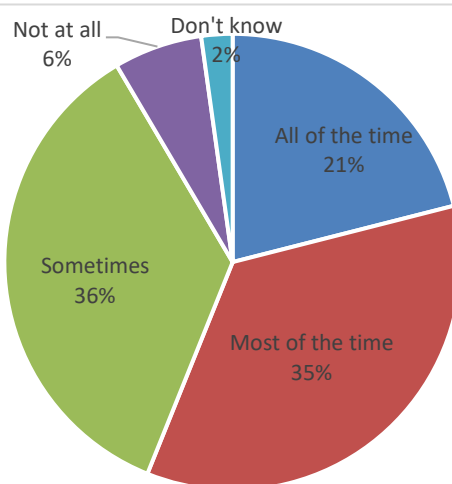
21% (58) All of the time
31% (85) Most of the time
38% (102) Sometimes
7% (20) Not at all
3% (8) Don't know

■ All of the time ■ Most of the time ■ Sometimes ■ Not at all ■ Don't know



Developing my child's confidence, resilience, and independence

24% (65) All of the time
35% (95) Most of the time
30% (83) Sometimes
7% (19) Not at all
4% (11) Don't know



Developing my child's physical skills

21% (57) All of the time
35% (95) Most of the time
36% (96) Sometimes
6% (17) Not at all
2% (6) Don't know

Current Parental Involvement and Engagement

Communication

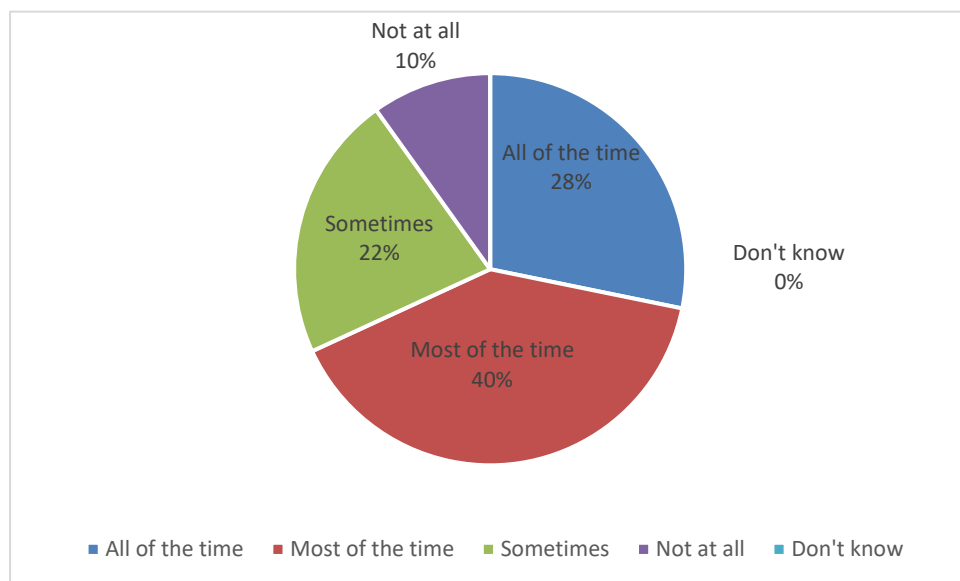
When asked if the school/nursery offer all parents the following opportunities to discuss your child and their learning:

- **85% (232)** said parents' evenings/consultations
- **47% (127)** said other meetings in person
- **25% (68)** said other meetings online
- **60% (163)** said telephone calls
- **6% (15)** said none of the above
- **3% (8)** said don't know

When asked if the school/nursery gave clear information about how to get in touch if you have a worry or concern about your child (or good news to share!) **83% (226)** said yes, **14% (39)** said no, and **3% (8)** said don't know.

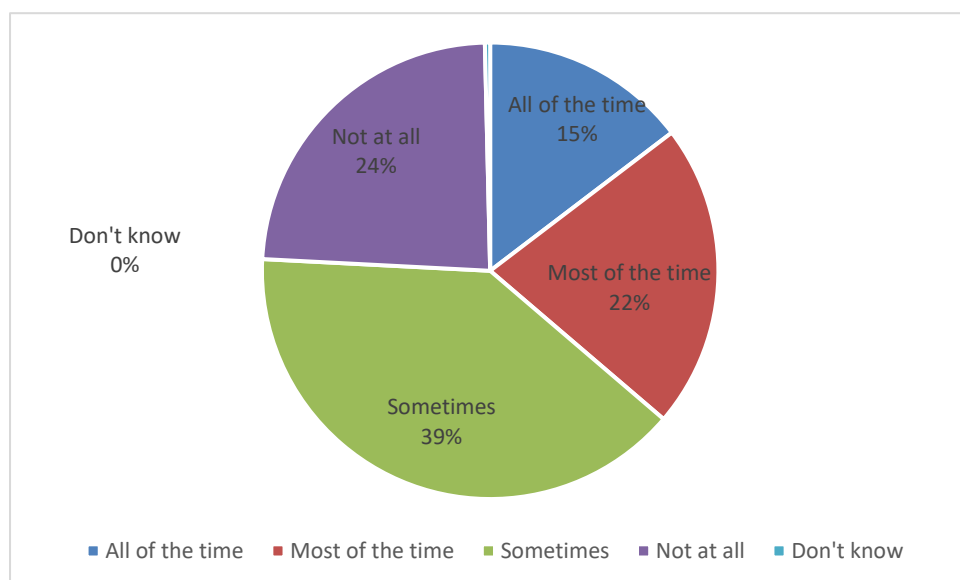
Asked if they have opportunities in your school/nursery to attend informal events eg shows, events, social activities **77% (209)** said yes, **15% (42)** no, and **8% (22)** don't know.

We asked parents how much they agreed with the following statements on communication:



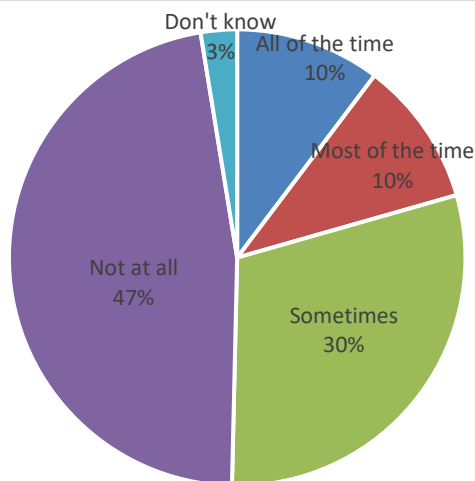
The school/nursery communicates with me in ways that work for me

- **28% (77)** All of the time
- **40% (109)** Most of the time
- **22% (60)** Sometimes
- **10% (27)** Not at all
- **0% (0)** Don't know



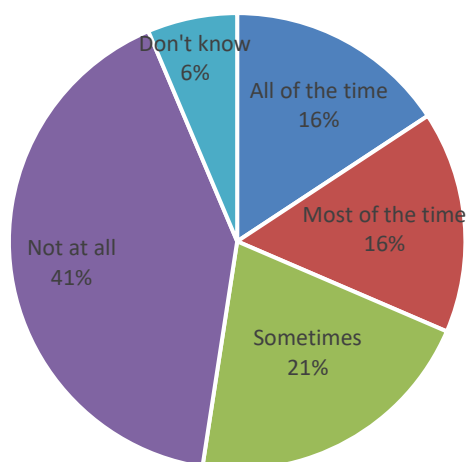
Teachers regularly inform me about what my child is learning and how they are doing in a way that works for me

- **15% (40)** All of the time
- **22% (59)** Most of the time
- **39% (108)** Sometimes
- **24% (65)** Not at all
- **Don't know 0% (1)**



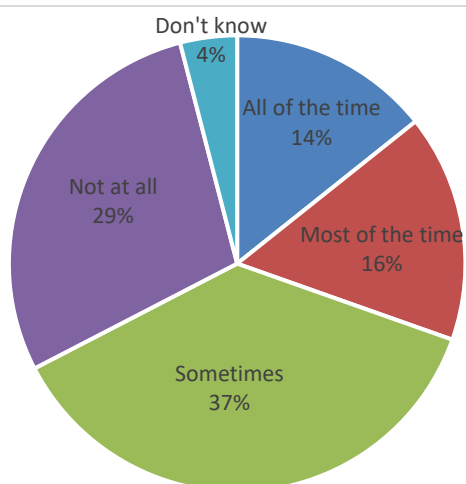
School/nursery staff contact me outside of normal reporting (eg parents evening) to tell me positive things about my child

- 10% (28) All of the time
- 10% (28) Most of the time
- 30% (81) Sometimes
- 47% (128) Not at all
- 3% (7) Don't know



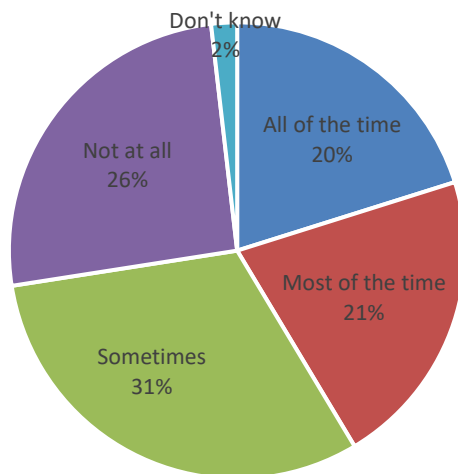
I know how to find information about my child's progress (eg assessments, assignments, attendance) if I want to

- 16% (42) All of the time
- 16% (47) Most of the time
- 21% (56) Sometimes
- 41% (110) Not at all
- 6% (17) Don't know



My school/nursery provides helpful information about how to support my child's learning at home

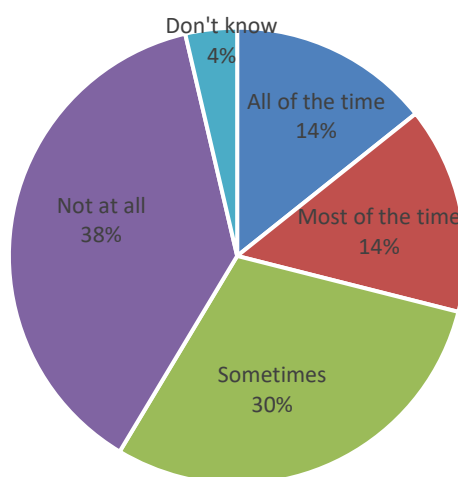
- 14% (39) All of the time
- 16% (44) Most of the time
- 37% (101) Sometimes
- 29% (78) Not at all
- 4% (11) Don't know



■ All of the time ■ Most of the time ■ Sometimes ■ Not at all ■ Don't know

I feel as involved in my child's school/nursery day as I want to be

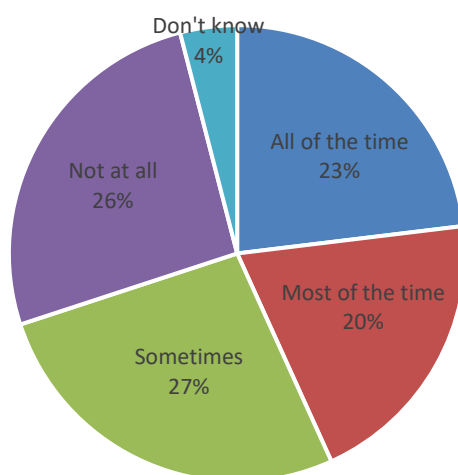
- **20% (55)** All of the time
- **21% (58)** Most of the time
- **31% (85)** Sometimes
- **26% (70)** Not at all
- **2% (5)** Don't know



■ All of the time ■ Most of the time ■ Sometimes ■ Not at all ■ Don't know

The school/nursery seeks my views to better understand my child and family

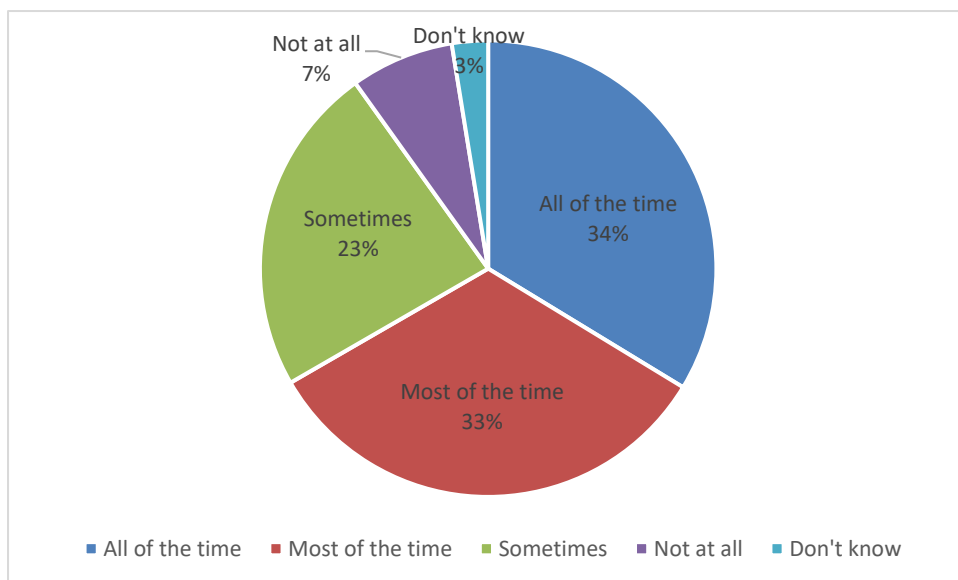
- **14% (39)** All of the time
- **14% (40)** Most of the time
- **30% (81)** Sometimes
- **38% (103)** Not at all
- **4% (10)** Don't know



■ All of the time ■ Most of the time ■ Sometimes ■ Not at all ■ Don't know

The school/nursery encourages me to share concerns about my child's academic, social, and emotional well-being

- **23% (63)** All of the time
- **20% (55)** Most of the time
- **27% (73)** Sometimes
- **26% (71)** Not at all
- **4% (11)** Don't know



I receive communication from the school/nursery that use words that are easy to understand, ie doesn't use a lot of jargon

- **34% (92)** All of the time
- **33% (90)** Most of the time
- **23% (64)** Sometimes
- **7% (20)** Not at all
- **3% (7)** Don't know

Does the school/nursery provide essential information in other languages and formats for parents?

- **4% (11)** Yes, and I make use of this
- **18% (50)** Yes, they provide this, though I don't need this service
- **8% (23)** No, they don't provide this
- **69% (189)** Don't know

Parent Comments

I would welcome more involvement and proactive communication from the school. I only seem to hear from them when it is negative - homework related mainly. It would be more beneficial to work together on how best to support my children as parents also have a responsibility with their child's education and how they can support outside of school.

Day to day activities reported on twitter feed, very much dependent on the teachers' preference. Small children often don't have the ability to recall their whole day- having photos of what they have been doing on twitter is helpful to start discussion at home.

Parental engagement is hugely important to our school, and I take full advantage of every opportunity given to be involved in my children's learning and school life. I feel this helps with each of my children's journey, as my engagement encourages them to be more engaged and involved in their school life.

The engagement between myself and school is a level that is appropriate for our family and our child's needs. We are very aware of the school's open door policy and know we can approach staff, including the headteacher at any time to discuss concerns or to seek support. This is something we have done previously and we were extremely grateful and appreciative of the support offered. We are still provided with check ins at the school gate and reminded help is there shall we need it.

Report cards that are not just the tracking codes printed out. Would like words!! Would also like teacher/parent meetings. How are we expected to support child when no face to face discussions have happened?

I don't think Teachers should be as easily accessible to parents as the trend is becoming. They have better ways to make use of their teaching time than to respond to emails and messages throughout the day. The school office should remain the first point of contact if a parent has a query, Teachers should not be expected to interrupt lessons to respond to parents. That being said, more proactive information sharing from the teachers would be appreciated to give a view of the child's day.

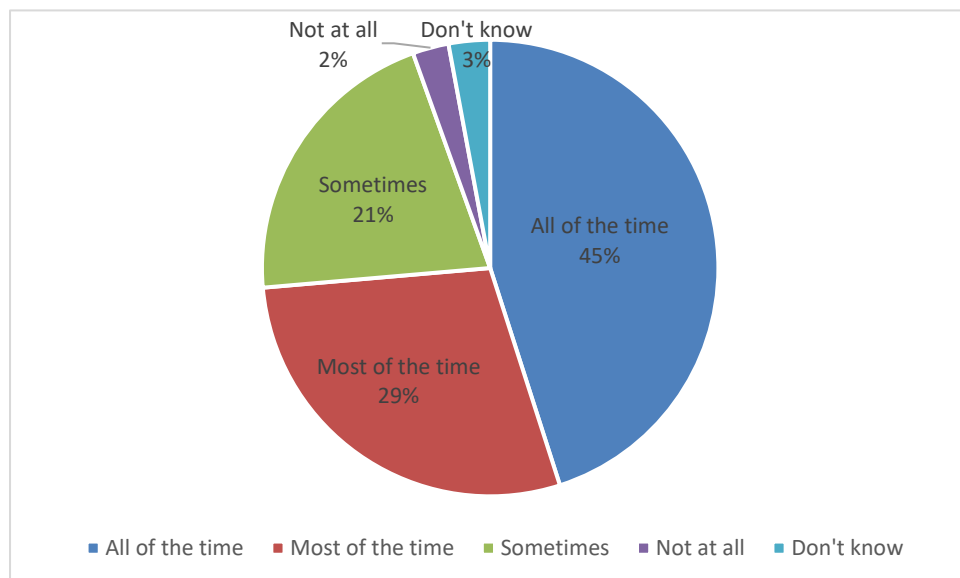
Not enough time is given to communication. Schools are unresourced. There are often too many sources of information, School Facebook, Parent Council Facebook and school website. For some parents/carers it

will be hard to know where to find up to date information. Clear routes of communication could make things alot easier and lead to less misunderstandings.

Welcoming Schools

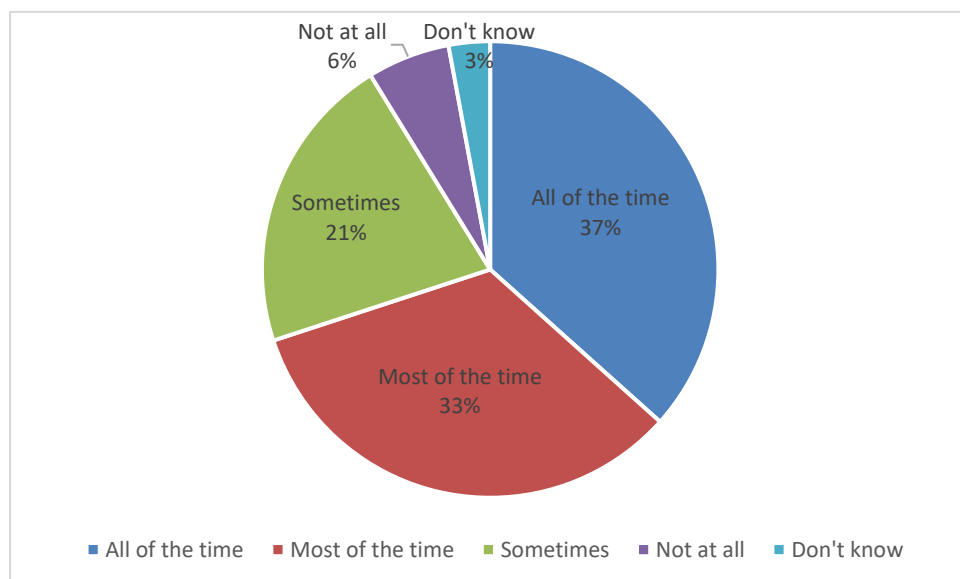
We asked if, in general, do you feel there is a positive partnership/relationship between yourself as a parent/carers and the school/nursery. **69% (186)** said yes, **23% (62)** said no, and **8% (23)** don't know.

We asked parents how much they agreed with the following statements:



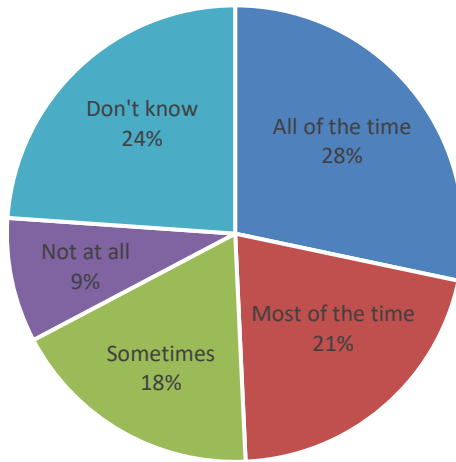
I feel school/nursery staff (headteachers, teachers, classroom assistants, office staff) are welcoming to my family

- **45% (123)** All of the time
- **29% (78)** Most of the time
- **21% (57)** Sometimes
- **2% (7)** Not at all
- **3% (8)** Don't know



I feel my child is valued and cared for in their school/nursery

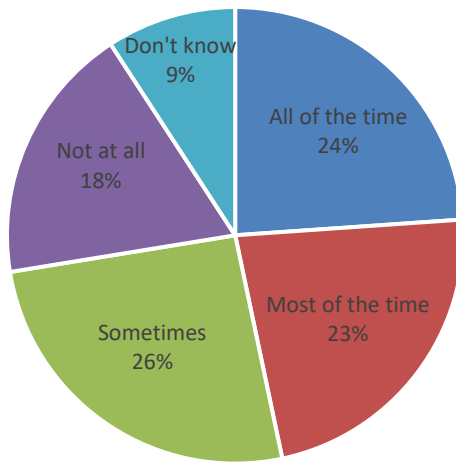
- **37% (100)** All of the time
- **33% (91)** Most of the time
- **21% (58)** Sometimes
- **6% (16)** Not at all
- **3% (8)** Don't know



■ All of the time ■ Most of the time ■ Sometimes ■ Not at all ■ Don't know

I feel school/nursery staff value the diversity and uniqueness of my family

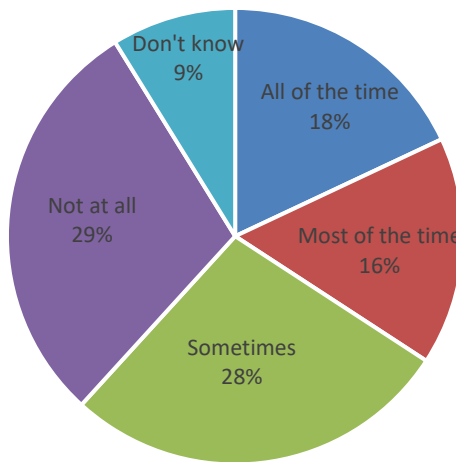
- 28% (77) All of the time
- 21% (57) Most of the time
- 18% (49) Sometimes
- 9% (24) Not at all
- 24% (65) Don't know



■ All of the time ■ Most of the time ■ Sometimes ■ Not at all ■ Don't know

I feel school/nursery staff consider me an important partner and make me feel valued in making decisions that are in the best interest of my child

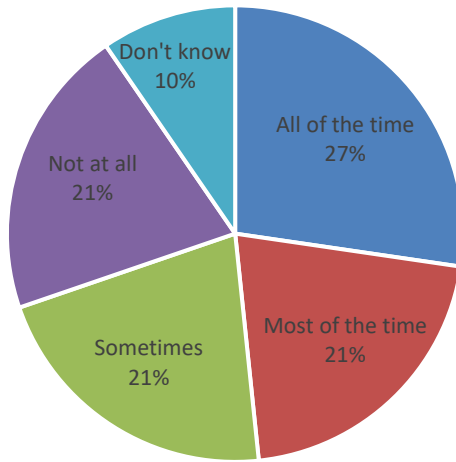
- 24% (65) All of the time
- 23% (62) Most of the time
- 26% (70) Sometimes
- 18% (50) Not at all
- 9% (25) Don't know



■ All of the time ■ Most of the time ■ Sometimes ■ Not at all ■ Don't know

I feel I can contribute ideas around my child's education/learning, and these are acted upon

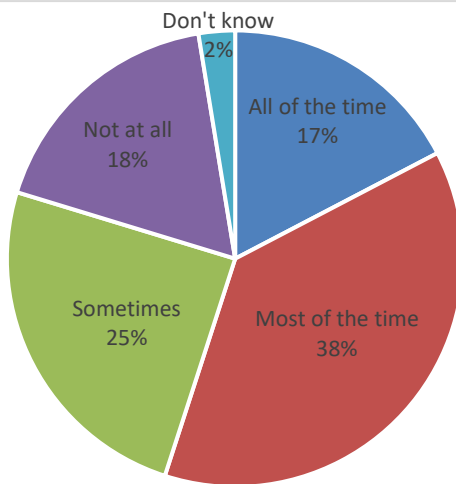
- 18% (49) All of the time
- 16% (44) Most of the time
- 28% (75) Sometimes
- 29% (80) Not at all
- 9% (24) Don't know



■ All of the time ■ Most of the time ■ Sometimes ■ Not at all ■ Don't know

I would feel comfortable in seeking support from the school/nursery about matters in my personal life that affect my child's school/nursery life

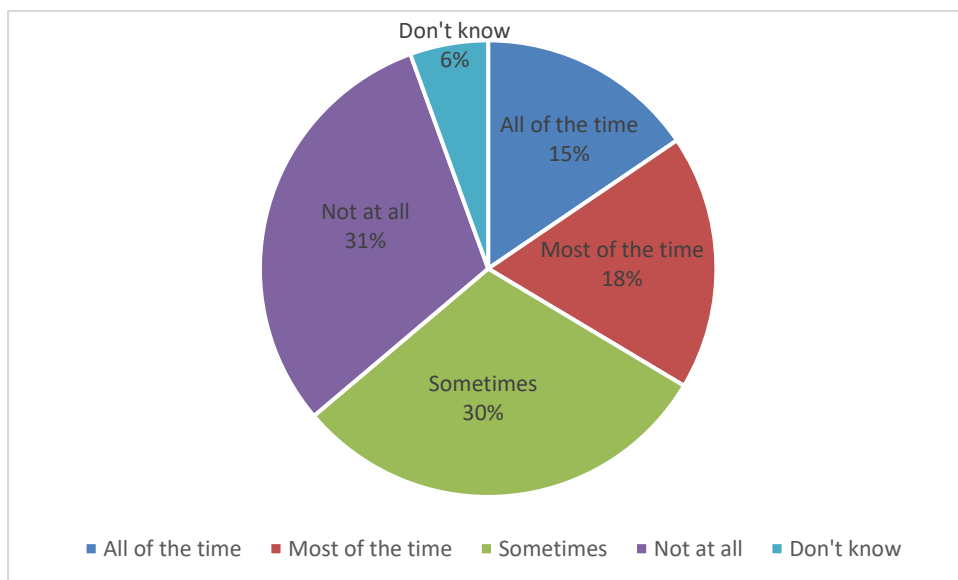
- **27% (74)** All of the time
- **21% (57)** Most of the time
- **21% (58)** Sometimes
- **21% (56)** Not at all
- **10% (26)** Don't know



■ All of the time ■ Most of the time ■ Sometimes ■ Not at all ■ Don't know

I feel all of my child's needs are currently being met in school/nursery

- **17% (47)** All of the time
- **38% (102)** Most of the time
- **25% (67)** Sometimes
- **18% (48)** Not at all
- **2% (7)** Don't know



The school/nursery actively seeks my views on matters regarding wider school/nursery matters (eg input into schools' policies such as school uniform, anti-bullying, how budgets are spent, school improvement)

- **15% (42)** All of the time
- **18% (49)** Most of the time
- **30% (82)** Sometimes
- **31% (83)** Not at all
- **6% (15)** Don't know

Parent Comments

I feel that, even in answering the above questions, my answers would be different in talking about class teaching/teachers versus school leadership/head teacher. I find our schools teachers to be supportive, encouraging and excellent. However school leadership is very different - lacking on information sharing, communication and parental/family involvement feels very unwelcome. I have heard this view point from many parents.

I am as involved as I need to be at the moment. The school are receptive and we work well together.

It feels very unwelcome currently in that very little is shared other than headline information. So little is shared on how my child, and overall, the school is doing in general re education/attainment, and any mention of asking for this is very unwelcome from school leader. In my experience, it feels like parents are seen as contentious or overstepping the mark in wondering how their children are doing, especially in terms of where they would be expected to be - e.g standardised assessments at P4&7. If they are behind the stage at these points I would like to be aware in order that I could help them at home and support them. But I feel I am in the wrong to even consider asking anything about this subject from school leadership. Even though I can see clearly as a parent that my child has fallen behind the curve, and I'd like to understand in what areas so I can help them. If I didn't have positive relationships with the class teachers, whom I rate highly throughout my experience at the school, I would have no idea how my child is progressing. The school also seem to focus so much on inclusion to the detriment of other children. I appreciate this must be very difficult to manage and get right.

Being given opportunities to learn with my child, like a workshop class. Parents need to be re-educated in how literacy and numeracy is taught as its different from when we were at school. This makes home learning harder and confuses children. I want to be involved in key decisions that affect my child at all stages of education

Good home-school partnerships and relationships

We asked parents what their top three essential ingredients are for good home-school partnerships and relationships. **Communication** was the most repeated word, mentioned by the majority of respondents who answered this question. Following this were:

- Partnership
- Listening
- Trust
- Transparency
- Working together
- Openness

- Mutual respect
- Welcoming

Parent Comments

Communication with families, listening to their needs and working with them NOT just ticking boxes to satisfy what they have to do.

Good communication both ways between school and parents. Open channels for discussion. Both parties being receptive to ideas and concerns.

Access to what they're learning and how we can help. Communication so we can keep aligned. Very little information is on parent portal which I thought would do this. I want to support my child more but I don't feel connected to the school. Its down to luck which teacher you get - they all have different communication styles. As we approach a more virtual world some are better than others and I feel it's effect my experience as a parent. I want to be a lot more involved and support the school but I haven't seen the opportunity. Occasionally emails will come out but the window is always so small that doesn't give working parents the flexibility to make plans.

I would like the school to embrace the "child at the centre of education" philosophy and involve me more in decision making as an advocate and spokesperson for my child.

I appreciate this is an incredibly difficult area to navigate but would love to see a more open dialogue between home and school

Other themes from parent comments

Importance of leadership

Overall my child's school and head teacher tries their best to involve parents. Their efforts are stifled by the many barriers they face with understaffing and being over worked. For that as a parent I have no blame or negativity towards the school/ SMT. Instead the issues are about the relationships parents have with local authorities, directors of education, senior education officers, local councillors and the education convenor/ committee. Parents are locked out, pushed out, prevented from sitting in Education Committees, having their voices heard at locality level within the Council both by Council employees (via the leadership team) as well as local elected political representatives. Therefore rather than this question asking about being involved more in school life, and parental engagement. My question is how local authorities both Council employees and elected representatives need to work harder to include children and families into the centre of policy creation, decision making, implementation, evaluation and delivery

It has got better with the change in headteacher this year, so still a work in progress but heading in the right direction.

My communication is excellent with the head of support department but failing with the rest of the management team. One acknowledges struggles and talks like we are individuals, the other pretends there are no issues.

No comment about communication between school and home. Major issues about communication between the local authority education department via the senior leadership team and local councillors. Local councillors are elected to work in our councillors and fail to delivery on their mandate. Promises are made, but parents cannot hold them to account. Complaints go nowhere. Cover ups, and strategies to silence parents and vocal head teachers means that relationships are tarnished and child outcomes cannot be met. Parent councils exist but issues impacting on school life come from the centre, where policies are made, and were decisions are made (via senior management team). There is no point in having national guidance that can be freely interpreted and translated by local authorities any way they want including against the wishes of parents/ teachers/ children and young people. It takes multiple complaints, going to the Ombudsman, contacting the local newspaper and creating a media storm before a director of education or local councillor will pay any attention to what parents or young people have to say. UNCRC and children's rights are just words. The actions of my local authority continues to demonstrate their failures in

including children and young people in decision making by the fact that they don't sit in the education committee. They are never consulted with regarding policy decisions or creations. Relationships will always be tense until these power dynamics are resolved

It's really hard when the headteacher can be defensive if/when you provide feedback or make suggestions. I feel I need to limit that, as my child has special needs, so I need the headteacher's support for the, and can't risk the relationship by complaining about other things. I tried to join the parent council but it's not well run- not the fault of the parents as I think parent councils are asked to do too much. I think the council should set up the meetings and parents turn up so they get to have their say but don't have all the admin to consider.

Difference between primary and secondary

At the high school there has been very little parental/family engagement in school life, outside of the PC meetings. There are parental reps on the 'equalities' group who have never met, seems like a ticked box. I informed school of my child's autism diagnosis in August, not heard anything or been asked to go in to update her YPP

High School is very different to Primary School. Our daughter has struggled but I am not convinced the school are proactive enough. There does not appear to be any kindness or help for the quiet ones that don't want to go into the hub. My daughter would struggle in the hub environment and that is not acknowledged. It is not a safe, quiet place. You are very much just a number. Apart for the Maths HT, who is amazing, kind, supportive and caring. I wish the Pastoral Care teachers were as proactive. Our child is noted as vulnerable, but I have never had a call from anyone to chat. In S1 she was put in a class with NO-ONE she knew. She has struggled. I have contacted the school twice and felt the person I spoke to was distracted and not listening.

I have found that the culture of Parental Engagement is great at primary school and pretty non-existent (outside of the formal Parent Council) at secondary school. It only works if the school wants to engage!

My daughter is now in S2 so started high school at the height of COVID. I think the level of involvement of parents at high school is really poor. I was chair of my child's parent council for 7 years and would welcome the opportunity to do more for the high school. I don't feel like there has been any involvement at all

I feel not as involved in my child's learning since they have went to high school. However, is this the stage of growing up and them taking ownership of their learning?

I feel many high schools are powerless to actually deal with the issues young people are facing. More "parental engagement" needed at the senior stages.

Additional Support Needs

I would like to be more involved so I could provide better support to my child who has some difficulties. The information provided is too infrequent for someone with challenges that impact learning. Staff are too busy to provide additional information for children who may benefit from this.

Son with ASN and have been excluded from planning. Support agreed not given. Little to no details provided re progress or level of learning

As a parent of a child with additional support needs I would like to have more regular updates on WHAT they are learning so I could help at home. Have asked for this many times but nothing forthcoming. Would be helpful to have a termly update of what they are learning in each subject. My daughter not always able to share this info

When my SEN child started high school I was made to feel that I was too involved, too attached, and that I was wrong to question them. Over a year later they have accepted they were woefully unprepared for dealing with him and I do feel listened to more. But the damage has been done to my son and my relationship with the school

Poor communication generally about issues that matter - it's all very well sending weekly school update emails, but I wasn't even told that my child had been assessed as requiring additional support. When I went to parent consultations, the learning support teacher hadn't spoken to the class teacher so was told different things by each. Complete lack of joined-up thinking. Ultimately I get the impression from school that they have their way of doing things and that we're lucky to be there. Questions / feedback are brushed off and I feel palmed off / like I'm being 'managed down' rather than being given a comprehensive response.

More needs to be done to communicate with families of children with additional support needs. Needs to be ways to communicate successes of children not able to achieve exam success.

Our grandson is autistic. The lengths the LA and the school have gone to, so that he can attend mainstream, be happy and achieve are exceptional. Well done, Renfrewshire!

Parent Councils/other parent groups

I would like to be approached by the school, for my opinion, on matters involving school life and learning. At present, as part of the Parent Council I feel I am mostly used as a cash cow.

I am currently actively involved in school discussion through parent council. It would be useful if management team wanted to hear bad points and not just focus on what THEY think they do well.

We should have a functioning PTA that isn't simply a mouth piece for the HT and responsible for fundraising. Parental views are seldom sought on anything. The PTA is basically run by the school and doesn't listen to parents.

I would love to be more involved in every way but get the feeling the school don't really want parents to be involved. The PTA only seems to be there for fundraising for the school.