# School Self Evaluation Survey 2013 – Parent's Comments & School Response

## Forge Integrated Primary School Self Evaluation Survey 2013

### Parent Comments

Below is a complete list of comments made by parents who completed our online survey in May 2013. We have read all of the comments and along with comments from pupils and from school staff this information has fed into our school development planning.
In the interests of transparency we have published all comments, positive and negative. The only revisions made are that we have changed the wording of one comment so as not to breach confidentiality and we omitted some repeated comments where some respondents had repeated previous comments verbatim.
We have written a brief response statement to some of the comments. Not every single comment has a response as some needed no response while others may have been covered by a previous or subsequent response to a comment of a similar nature.
We are very grateful to those of you who took the time to complete the survey and we hope that you find the publication of the comments interesting, along with the other data that is more numerical in nature in the Survey Monkey format that is also published on our website .
We endeavour to be a listening school and while we can't please everyone all the time we are always happy to talk.

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| Question/Parent Comments | School Response Statement |
|---|---|
| **1. The quality of teaching in this school is good or better.** | |
| • My children have made excellent progress not only in Literacy and Maths but also all those other qualities that make up a good character therefore the teachers not only fulfil the academic expectations but are also positive role models.<br>• I see my daughter's progress.<br>• Great teachers! Some great ideas.<br>• The Quality of teaching is excellent, I could not ask for a better teaching and supporting staff.<br>• Evident in my children's progress both academically and emotionally.<br>• In my experience the quality of teaching has been consistently high - both with permanent and temporary members of staff.<br>• I have nothing to compare it to, as my children only attend one school, but I suspect the standard is very high.<br>• My childs academic, physical and mental progress throughout the year was balanced, paced and nurtured.<br>• Children r excelling each year with marks | A very pleasing endorsement of our teaching body – the importance of hearing positive feedback can't be understated – thank you for taking the time to do so it means a lot!! |
| **Question/Parent Comments** | **School Response Statement** |
| **Q2. I am aware of the school's priorities in bringing about improvement.** | |
| • I am aware of the school's priorities in bringing about improvement.<br>• There is often a lack of communication within the school.<br>• Active headmaster.<br>• Behind the scenes planning is not communicated to parents, saying that, it is not a deal breaker , not all parents will even want this information, but some like to know about the planning process, aims prioritisation, direction, goals and evaluation methods – basic plans the school has for the future.<br>• Not sure what this is referring to therefore have answered as unsatisfactory<br>• I have nothing to compare it to, as my children only attend one school, but I suspect the standard is very high.<br>• extending for more classrooms | We do have our School Development Plan overview on the school website giving an outline of priorities and targets for the next 3 years. Year 1 is naturally more detailed than the 2nd and 3rd years and change is inevitable.<br><br>Class sizes, admission numbers and accommodation requirements often become clear during the year and require short term intervention. |

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| **Q3: Teachers have realistic, high expectations for all children.** | |
| • I feel the kids could be challenged more.<br>• One teacher did seem to misunderstand the level of literacy capability of my son. However another teacher paid particular attention<br>• to encourage specific verbal communication skills and offered extra support.<br>• No idea, I only know about teacher's expectation for my daughter and no other children.<br>• Thoughtful approach to teaching.<br>• Generally very good, but have niggling feeling expectations could be higher for academic achievement- needs to be individual based.<br>• I feel that Mrs Foster has a good understanding of my son's abilities and stretches him and encourages him accordingly.<br>• Work is set at children's level and they are stretched appropriately. May 9, 2013 2:11 PM<br>• Work is set at children's level and they are stretched appropriately.<br>• I cannot speak about other people's children! Teachers appear to have high, but realistic expectations for MY children.<br>• Would like to see a nightly, more structured homework coming home with my child from p2 onwards, as feel that they are not pushed enough at home. | We want the best performance we can get from our pupils and we do try to find the right balance. We'll certainly take note of parent's desires to have children encouraged to fulfil their potential! |

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| **Q4. Children are offered a broad and balanced curriculum throughout the school.** | |
| • The curriculum is OK, but I think the lack of spellings that children get is lacking as well as there being an alternative to the phonics system as not all children can grasp it.<br><br>• My Key stage 2 son is offered a range of opportunities for Friday afternoon clubs but has been allowed to chose the same one for most of the year. Whilst he enjoys being allowed to do what he likes, I have to admit that I'd rather that he was encouraged to vary<br>• his choice more.<br><br>• Very pleased with extra curricular activities and trips, and broad religious instruction.<br><br>• My son has learned a lot this year with a varied and well taught curriculum.<br><br>• The topics make the learning experience for the children much more meaningful and in context, than just teaching individual subjects with out any reference.<br>• Good range of topic work.<br><br>• I have nothing to compare it to, as my children only attend one school, but I suspect the children learn a lot more than the curriculum requires.<br><br>• In comparison to other schools homework is more fun based rather than concentrating on spellings and maths work to reinforce what they are learning in school. Hard to gauge what day to day learning they are involved with as homework doesn't reflect this. | Good to hear that the breadth of work is recognised.<br><br>We do concentrate quite a lot on spellings although phonics is used with P1 and P2 children to build the foundation for further development. We've had a focus on spelling for the past 2 years and standardised test results have shown an improvement.<br><br>Homework should certainly reflect day – day learning – we'll reinforce this during staff meeting time this term. |

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| **Q5. The school supports children who have a Special Educational Need.** | |
| • From what I have seen they seem adequate.<br>• Not sure?<br>• No idea, I do not know about any children who have a special educational need.<br>• More consideration could be given to the sensory impact a school environment has on those children with sensory needs, perhaps staff training could be accessed.<br>• Asd child in p2 class without help, teacher is best teacher puts so much in place for him and has so much time for his asd its Amazing<br>• Dont know.<br>• The class room support and strategies used are well thought out.<br>• All children have special educational needs. If we're talking about children requiring additional attention, I have no idea.<br>• Don't have first hand experience of this so not really able to comment. | Information about our SEN policy and procedures is available via the documents section of our school website – policy and information leaflet.<br><br>The majority of staff have undergone ASD Training through Oakwood ASD Service and we'll be scheduling training for new staff this year.<br><br>We are constantly working with parents and relevant professionals to address issues such as sensory impact. We are also trying to improve and enhance the resources we have – this year we have a 'sensory tent' which can be used by children to take calming time out.<br><br>SEN Development is likely to be a priority this year with key staff attending CPD Training at Stranmillis College and then training all teaching staff in school. |

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| **Q6. Teachers provide an environment that supports, challenges and stimulates learning.** | |
| • Teachers could challenge more. And the large classes can hinder children's abilities.<br>• The classrooms create a stimulating environment and learning begins as soon as the children enter the classroom.<br>• A recent topic exploring emotions and behaviour was particularly excellent. Accessible and thought provoking. I think the material was provided by Women's Aid.<br>• I do not give very good because I do not know my daughter's teacher's name. She is in P3 Mrs.Gowan and to be honest I am lost with the sharing teaching. It looks like the teachers change with no notice.<br>• Very pleased with teachers.<br>• My son is being challenged and encouraged according to his ability.<br>• The attention to detail in the classrooms, through use of themed displays and art work is great for the children, re enforcing what they are currently learning in each topic<br>• My children are enthusiastic about all their learning. Teachers manage to engage them in topics I never thought they would be interested in.<br>• I would remove them if there was any evidence to the contrary.<br>• Good atmosphere in school, good staff morale = happy children | Some very positive comments regarding topics and resources used,<br><br>We do strive to provide learning experiences that are pitched at a level that is accessible but also challenging. This in itself is a challenge at times and something we will maintain as a focus through our monitoring and evaluation programme.<br><br>The P3 Jobshare was communicated to parents via a letter. The children had a number of familiarisation days with Mrs O'Malley a regular substitute teacher with whom they're familiar. It's always a Wednesday when Mrs O'Malley takes the class. We do appreciate that letters in schoolbags sometimes don't make it home and for that reason we have tried to use a more comprehensive system of publishing letters online and using sms reminders over the past year or so. We aim to try and make our communication as clear as possible. |

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| **Q7. The learning experiences are of a high quality.** | |
| • I feel due to high class sizes children lose out when it comes to learning experiences and can often be left behind.<br>• My children come home having enjoyed school but don't seem to be able to talk about what they have learned!<br>• I believe that the number of changing teachers in my daughters class influence on her learning experience.<br>• Very good quality teaching.<br>• I think the methods used in teaching are fun and interactive and my son is thriving.<br>• Through the use of topics, the children really engage in wanting to learn more.<br>• Children are engaged in their own learning and bring ideas via learning boards.<br>• Again, I have nothing to compare it to, but if I thought the learning experiences were below par, I would tell you.<br>• Great school trips and good projects that link with their term topics.<br>• Good balance between classroom learning & educational trips.<br>• Feel there could be more emphasis on maths and spelling outside of school hours to cement in school teachings. | We'd like to keep class sizes manageable, however, classes of up to 30 are the norm in many NI schools and due to the way we are funded it is very difficult to maintain low pupil/teacher ratios.<br><br>Children in all classes have their 'class' teacher for most subjects but will have other teachers for some areas. This helps them get to know other teachers, benefit from a variety of expertise and become more adaptable. When teachers are ill or on training courses we mostly use regular, trusted substitute teachers whom the children will often know quite well to help keep things stable and comfortable. |

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| **Q8. Teachers provide an interesting range of out-of-classroom experiences to support the Primary Curriculum e.g. trips, outdoor learning.** | |
| • I am not sure as parents do not seem to be given evidence of this.<br>• School trips are related to the topic.<br>• Again, I can say only about P3, as I do not know about any other school trips.<br>• Great trips and good outdoor learning.<br>• Again, generally very good, but would like to see even more classroom time outside, not even school trips , just as much time spent.<br>• Outside, moving, self directing learning experiences- fresh air, change of environment.<br>• Good variety of trips and experiences for P1's.<br>• Sometimes the venues are not suitable and this can take away from the learning and enjoyment of the trip.<br>• Once again, the themed trips along with the topics reinforce the children's learning.<br>• Trips are directly connected to topic work and have been extremely varied. Always an educational link. Very positive reports from my children.<br>• Again, I have nothing to compare it to. I have been on class trips and out-of-classroom activities and I am pleased with them.<br>• Good trips<br>• Yes, as above<br>• There may be too many in the younger years. | Some very positive feedback.<br>We intend to try to enhance our 'on site' outdoor learning as part of the current School Development Plan. This will include an action plan for 'Outdoor Learning' and the development of an Eco Club to work towards the Eco Schools award.<br><br>We try to evidence the broad range of learning experiences our children have through a variety of means including regular updates about school events on the school website and on school social media pages. In any typical week we will publish 3 -4 online articles about school events and activities.<br><br>We use venues and trips that are known to us and/or in line with topics in school. Many of us have gone to visit a trip venue in the evening or at weekends to establish its suitability. We can never entirely eliminate a disappointing or below par experience on the day but this is thankfully, rare. |

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| **Q9. Parents / carers are regularly informed of pupil's progress and are encouraged to support their children's learning.** | |
| • I have had concerns about the way in which teachers have approached this as I have been told that my son is doing well in his reading yet when I work with him he seems to struggle. As I am worried about this I have hired a tutor to help with this.<br>• Home learning in the early years really encourages the parents to get involved.<br>• Parent consultation meetings and an open door policy are very much appreciated.<br>• Regular meetings and open door policy.<br>• Mrs Foster is very good at keeping me informed about my son's progress.<br>• I think having email access to the class teacher would be good for keeping each other informed of any arising issues that might need watched without the need for the child to know contact has been made esp as some parents would only have time to talk whilst their child is at school, maybe this could be set up via parentmail.<br>• Getting the weekly copy of what the children are working on/home learning sheet and homework diaries keeps parents spot up to date in knowing what each child is working on each week even if they can't get into the class. Also the open door policy is very much valued, knowing you can on a daily basis if needed sort any problem or just see the lovely art work. Happy with amount of parent interviews and parent information sessions.<br>• Several parental consultations, information events and training.<br>• More feedback would be useful<br>• X2 yearly formal meeting and end of school report , also as open door policy, concerns can be discussed as they become apparent.<br>• Feel that parents could be leaned upon for more support eg. Volunteer scheme for extra reading etc | A mixed bag here which is only to be expected. We're always happy to meet parents to discuss a mis-match of opinion on how a child is progressing.<br>We do want parents on board and a on a day to day basis, feedback suggests our informal open door approach works for most.<br><br>Parents wishing to contact teachers via email can certainly do so through the schools info account info@forge.belfast.ni.sch.uk with FAO Mr/Mrs ??? in the subject box. Obviously an immediate reply may not always be possible.<br><br>We do use parents and other volunteers for support when suitable or/or appropriate. Parents who have time and feel they've something to offer regarding volunteering can get in touch with the Principal. Obviously the school has to make a judgement call regarding the suitability/appropriateness of volunteers and put necessary checks in place. |

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| **Q10. Children are given the opportunity to develop their personal, social and emotional skills.** | |
| • suppose in regards to the 'show and tell' they are given this.<br>• I really like the Fantastic Forgies scheme but think that teachers often forget to hand out the stamps. I appreciate that they are busy but it is a shame not to follow through.<br>• Very good opportunities for group discussion.<br>• Although the system for choosing friday clubs could be mixed up a bit to ensure fairness to the younger classes.<br>• Show and tell is popular in our home.<br>• Positive ethos is reflected in my children and this is evident when they mix with others.<br>• Forge is excellent at this.<br>• Good interaction with other external school groups.<br>• Most emphasis is put into this area. | We hope to keep the 'Fantastic Forgies' alive – it's true that these schemes do need a boost every now again.<br><br>We intend to maintain our playground buddies system with KS2 pupils to and also develop a 'Peer Mediation' Scheme – which will form part of the current School Development Plan. |

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| **Q11. Children are given the opportunity to work independently and in groups.** | |
| • Cannot comment as I am unsure.<br>• Children seem very happy with working arrangements.<br>• Sometimes those children with special educational needs are grouped together rather than with the rest of the class.<br>• In talking to parents at other schools, I think children at Forge are encouraged more to think for themsleves and be more individual.<br>• Unsure if there is a pupil council/ ecoclub council etc? | We will be developing an Eco Club as part of our current SDP. Pupils' council has existed for some time and we will be continuing with an upper/lower council hopefully to allow a more coherent pupil voice. |

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| **Q12. ICT (computers and other technology) is used effectively to support learning and teaching.** | |
| • Cannot comment as I am unsure.<br>• Are there any plans to include IPads to enhance learning?<br>• Last year's teacher was excellent at this, however this year I have seen less evidence of ICT use. Maybe the increased class size has affected this?<br>• I do not know how effectively is using computers at school!<br>• Good use of good websites.<br>• My son particularly likes the white boards and has found this invaluable in learning to write.<br>• White board technology keeps the children up to date with how the world now operates in work/business, preparing them for the next<br>• step.<br>• Use of interactive whiteboard promotes learning in the classroom and laptops are available. Every school would benefit from more ICT equipment.<br>• I'm unsure. my youngest appears to think they just play computer games. I believe they're probably educational games.<br>• Seems to be integral to school life.<br>• My child has taught me powerpoint.<br>• I am generally not made aware from child that they use ICT. | We have looked into IPAD/tablet devices but don't currently have finance to facilitate that. We are currently in the process of having new superfast broadband cabling and wireless installed and there is a new system in terms of how and what devices can be used. When up and running this should improve what we can do and enable us to invest more in new equipment.<br>During 2012-13 we saw our existing hardware reach the end of its working life – computers are slow and prone to frequent faults.<br>Our Interactive Whiteboard stock is also close to the end of its expectancy and some boards have been out of order for periods with one or two simply unrepairable. We have, during the summer/autumn begun to replace the worst of the boards with 5 new boards installed. This required significant investment and we hope to replace the others next year.<br><br>In Spring 2014 we will have a new install of PC's and laptops and this will greatly improve the use and functionality of IT in the classroom, |

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| **Q13. The school has a clear vision for improvement.** | |
| • Unsure what the plan is. If there is a clear long term plan it is not communicated to parents.<br>• Don't know, we are left guessing whether the school's aim is to increase intake in order to make financially viable or if the aim is to do<br>• its best by the pupils already on the roll.<br>• I still do not know what are you going to do in September, to accommodate another two P1.<br>• Strong headmaster with ambition.<br>• Cant answer , not very aware of vision or strategy.<br>• Dont know.<br>• Don't know therefore have answered as satisfactory.<br>• No school wishes to just "tread water."<br>• I have no information about the vision for improvement.<br>• The fact that this survey is being carried out would reflect this!<br>• Being informed and kept up to date would be good.<br>• Again unsure of their vision for improvement. | We publish our targets for English and Maths and our results each year in our School Development Plan, the Governors Annual Report and in our Prospectus. This information is available via the school website and in hard copy on request.<br><br>Our strategic aim as a school is to be a sustainable, successful school providing an Integrated Education to this community we are not at an enrolment number at present that will allow that the school needs to achieve a sustainable enrolment number and continued with the demand for IE in this area we believe, as do BELB, that a two form entry primary school is the best solution in the medium – long terms.<br><br>We will try to ensure that we present information about our vision and strategic development as well as curriculum and school improvement targets as clearly as possible through our website, social media and a parent/pupil friendly leaflet. |

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| **Q14. There is effective communication between different levels of staff and between staff and parents.** | |
| • Classroom assistants and teachers seem to work well together. Classes working at the same level seem to work together well too.<br>• Too many messages passed on through children - email and text a much more effective way of making sure these are communicated.<br>• I do not know anything about communication between staff, between my daughter's teacher and my is good.<br>• Generally good on day to day basis, but some major decisions or timing of communications has been misjudged.<br>• I feel I am kept informed. It is helpful receiving texts and e-mail updates.<br>• Staff always willing to chat and make time if there are any concerns or even just for an update.<br>• See previous comment re e-mail.<br>• Can only comment on communication with parents but this is excellent.<br>• More communication between staff and parents, when required, would be good.<br>• I can't speak about inter-staff communications. Staff / parent communications are appropriate.<br>• I have experience of poor communication between staff and parent.<br>• Yes staff readily pass on all levels & details with regard to behaviour/ work ability - both positive & negative.<br>• I have had problems in understanding the instructions for my child's homework and in this school year have had to ask for clarification at least 3 times (which is difficult*) when it referred to sheets that weren't there or we received sheets that were not referred to. *Can be frustrating as I don't do the school runs and have no opportunity to ask the teacher.<br>• Things are sometimes sprung on parents eg composite classes.<br>• Feel this could be improved by deeper understanding of individual cases. | We have taken a number of steps to enhance communication with parents over the past 18 months. These include:<br><br>Use of SMS text messaging and email to notify parents of urgent changes and to alert parents to published or mailed letters and information leaflets.<br><br>Publication of all non-confidential home – school communications on the school website.<br><br>Regular updates and alerts regarding school events, changes, and general progress via social media – Facebook & Twitter.<br><br>Maintenance of established modes of communication – informal discussions through open door policy, telephone and written communication and through home – school diaries. Continue to review and enhance our record keeping systems for pastoral care, accidents and incidents and child protection and we have a more robust system than ever.<br><br>Despite our best efforts there will always be times when communication is inadvertently missed or confused – we will continue to review how we communicate on all fronts and put new or alternative methods in place when we feel it will improve things. |

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| **Q15. Staff work well as a team.** | |
| • In the early years the staff appear to work together. May 31, 2013 3:06 PM<br>• Sorry, but I do not know .<br>• The teachers and classroom assistants work well together and their approach compliments one another and has helped my son settle into School life.<br>• Staff communicate effectively and often with each other.<br>• I find it a very happy school and pulling off the amazing sports day last year will be remembered for a long time.<br>• Not obvious either way.<br>As previously stated - great atmosphere in the school - all feels very cohesive and positive. | We are very proud of the good collegiate relationships we have and we will work hard to nurture the positive atmosphere that prevails and helps make our school a warm and friendly place for all |

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| **Q16. The school is led and managed effectively by staff and governors.** | |
| • Admitting 2 classes each year until there is insufficient space, necessitating composite classes is not good management.<br>• Governors seemed to be unsure whether expansion of the school was the best way forward. I wonder if they agreed to expand for<br>• financial reasons rather than educational reasons.<br>• Role and input from governors not very visible or transparent.<br>• It's a very well run and organised school.<br>• Would benefit from more interaction with parents re important issues.<br>• Yes good support in place. | School governance of a growing school is complex and educational, financial and other issues have to be considered.<br>The governors have committed to seeking a double form entry admission to the school as they see this as being the best and most sustainable long term solution in providing integrated primary education to this community.<br>The dominant factor influencing this is the moral imperative to provide as many integrated places as is realistically possible.<br>We have written to parents in some detail regarding this during the recent Area Based Planning consultation.<br>The Board of Governors publish an Annual Report each Autumn. |

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| **Q17. All staff ensure that the pastoral care, health and educational needs of all children are met effectively.** | |
| • We would appreciate a little more supervision in the packed lunch room. Our son often doesn't eat his "healthy" lunch, opting to "share" others' less healthy options.<br>• I don't know if all staff.<br>• I have experience in the past year of the pastoral, emotional and health needs of my child not being met, in spite of attempts to raise issues.<br>• Yes excellent pastoral care by all teachers & support staff. | We take pastoral care issues very seriously and make great efforts to respond to all issues and queries. We do have to take into account the needs of all pupils in our care. |

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| **Q18. I am aware of the schools procedures relating to Child Protection.** | |
| • Leaflets, photos - communication is all very evident.<br>• Yes I have read the policy.<br>• This is regularly reinforced. | |

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| **Q19. I am aware of key policies within the school.** | |
| • Can't name any at the minute, but would know who to ask/ where to look if I needed to.<br>• Yes I am aware of key policies and the ethos of the school.<br>• Not aware of where to find info.<br>• I have found some confusion in relation to policy.<br>• Unsure of the key policies? | We try to keep key policies up to date and published on our website – there is a section on the 'documents' page when they are located. |

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| **Q20. The school works closely with parents / carers.** | |
| • Particularly outstanding at Key Stage 1, teachers always have time for a positive comment.<br>• Open door policy is very much valued to parents.<br>• Good rapport between staff & parents - as have rarely if ever heard a parent complain!<br>• Individual cases should be met more delicately and made allowance for. | It's obvious the open door policy is valued by parents. |

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| **Q21. The school is valued and respected in the local community.** | |
| • One parent from another school said "Integrated Schools always have a good name. How did you get your kids in there?"<br>• I feel that integrated education is definitely growing in popularity & will continue to evolve in the next few years. However unsure if the actual location of the school itself is widely known - not many people seem to know that it's tucked away beyond Wellington College?<br>• Comments have been raised over the lack of emphasis on education versus child development in a social setting as an individual. | We are confident that our ethos as an integral part of our daily work and of the prevailing atmosphere in the school.<br><br>We're not quite sure how to interpret this – the author can certainly get in touch and clarify. |

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| **Q22. The school respects diversity and welcomes members from all communities.** | |
| • Seems to reflect the proportions in the local community.<br>• Great<br>• I like how all cultures are valued and explored.<br>• Hearing of the assemblies each week and the themes is very encouraging.<br>• Also the multi cultural event a couple of years ago was very good.<br>• Yes I feel that the diversity of our population is well reflected by the range of pupils found at the school. | |

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| **Q23. The children in school are well behaved.** | |
| • The children generally do seem well behaved and if a child does do something it seems to get dealt with straight away.<br>• Positive approach to behaviour management and team work strategies work very well.<br>• I have noticed that the children are kind and polite and are supportive to the younger children.<br>• The children holding open the doors in the corridors is always noticed.<br>• Pupils are always well behaved and following instructions during pick ups.<br>• How might I know?<br>• There is chaos in the morning as children are pushing to get into school. It would be good if there was a system for entry in the mornings<br>• Yes think reputation is good.<br>• Don't often hear reports from child that others misbehave. | We are proud of our relatively informal but friendly and polite atmosphere. It does need constant maintenance and we do have a positive behaviour policy in place.<br><br>Peak entry and exit times can be very busy. We are particularly concerned about safety related to vehicle movement and we will be reviewing that aspect of our routines this autumn. |

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| **Q24. Inappropriate behaviour is dealt with effectively.** | |
| • I don't know about any, is that a proof of dealing with it effectively?<br>• Yes I had a problem with another child hurting my son. It was dealt with promptly and sensitively and my child was supported.<br>• There are times when an incident of harassment or bullying is maybe not taken as seriously as a parent may want it to be, clearer guidelines need to be set and adhered to.<br>• Pupils are encouraged to treat everyone with respect.<br>• How might I know?<br>• Yes think staff are well able to deal effectively with any naughtiness!<br>• As above, so can't comment | We work closely with parents to deal with bullying incidents and incidents of poor behaviour. Some issues are complex and can be difficult to resolve to the satisfaction of all parties. However, we are a caring school and we will continue to revise and develop our pastoral care policies annually. |

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| **Q25. Attendance rate of children is high.** | |
| • Lots of children seem to be there every day but I don't know if that is the case.<br>• Don't know<br>• Not sure what figures are for school as whole.<br>• I do not know.<br>• No knowledge of attendance rates, but word of mouth tells me that where children are missing inappropriate amounts of class time, it is addressed with parents.<br>• School is always well attended.<br>• Don't know.<br>• How might I know?<br>• Yes I believe that attendance is high.<br>• Feel there are many development days compared with other schools. | We encourage good punctuality and attendance and work with the EWO of the BELB to address difficulties.<br><br>We have the same number of development days as all schools in NI. |

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|---|---|
| **Q26. The school provides a safe and stimulating environment.** | |
| • The children feel safe at school. I particularly liked the discrete management of one issue last year and feel much safer in the knowledge that the issue has been dealt with.* comment edited for confidentiality reasons<br>• Safe environment, lots of open space and outdoor garden areas.<br>• Yes I agree as my child has settled very well and is learning a lot.<br>• The art work and displays in the school is second to none, I wish I'd gone to a school like forge.<br>• Car park is still an issue.<br>• Yes great environment - as none of my children has ever said that they did not want to go to school & this I believe shows that they enjoy Forge & are fulfilled socially, emotionally & educationally there.<br>• Apart from parking<br>• Emphasis on self awareness and development is high. | We are currently in the middle of an extensive refurbishment to our car park which is aimed at making it a safer place. We do have to accept that traffic is an issue that we will have to live with in Belfast. There will never be a parking space for every single parent in the school grounds. |

# School Self Evaluation Survey 2013 – Parent's Comments & School Response

| Question/Parent Comments | School Response Statement |
|---|---|
| **Q27. The principal provides effective leadership.**<br><br>• Open door policy; very visible.<br>• Mr Watson is a very pro active principal who engages well with staff pupils and parents alike.<br>• Under difficult changes having to be made regarding the change to composite classes was handled well and efficiently.<br>• Would benefit from more interaction with parents re important issues.<br>• Effectiveness is subjective and a relative term. He doesn't appear to be ineffective.<br>• Yes Mr Watson is a visible presence on a daily basis & is very approachable. Again all staff appear to be happy in the workplace & feel this must be at least partly due to his positive and inclusive leadership | |
| | |

# School Self Evaluation Survey 2013 – Parent's Comments & School Response

| Question/Parent Comments | School Response Statement |
|---|---|
| **Q28. The school is well resourced for learning and teaching.** | |
| • It is sad that there is no longer a library.<br>• I believe that it has ever resource that is needed although I think the school could make more use of the outdoor play areas especially the trees in the infant playground for outdoor learning and also larger structured play areas indoors for the infants would be good.<br>• Reading books are always in good condition<br>• A library and / or music room would be good - space is restricted.<br>• The school utilises its resources wisely and effectively, but could do with extra room / floorspace. Could benefit from extra technology eg laptops for older kids in line with developments in technology as a whole.<br>• Yes there are lots of resources and varied teaching methods.<br>• Very small and in need of updating. Purpose built premises?<br>• The lack of class rooms/space is becoming more of a negative point than when first viewing the school. Also having the use the hall for multipal purposes isn't ideal<br>• Due to composite classes. No school bus. A class and pre school in mobile accommodation.<br>• Feel that the playgrounds could do with more equipment to stimulate the children at break & lunchtime. | Outdoor learning is something that we have identified as an area that could be further developed and along with feedback from parents we have decided to make it a development target on our School Development Plan this year.<br><br>Our buildings have been updated and extended significantly over the past 5 years, however, we will continue to seek improvements and develop/refurbish when resources allow. |

| Question/Parent Comments | School Response Statement |
|---|---|
| **Q29. I feel valued and respected in this school.** | |
| • I am always made feel welcome and feel that my concerns and views are taken seriously and staff always take the time to talk to me.<br>• I have felt that I have had no voice in dealing with a difficult issue and that the effective running of the school took precedence over parental concern or opinion.<br>• Not when it comes to parking, a lot of very selfish parents about.<br>• Yes I'm proud to say that my children attend Forge. | We invest a lot of time and effort in trying to ensure that people have their opinions hear and receive a response. It is obviously hard to keep everyone happy all of the time in school with a diverse and vocal parent body and there will be times when compromise is the better part of satisfaction. We will keep trying through!! |

# School Self Evaluation Survey 2013 – Parent's Comments & School Response

| Question/Parent Comments | School Response Statement |
|---|---|
| **Q30. The children in this school attain good standards in literacy (English).** | |
| • I hope so!<br>• Difficult to compare with other schools without looking up the statistics but we are happy with our children's progress.<br>• I do not know, my daughter's standard is very good.<br>• From work that we see on the school walls.<br>• Yes as far as I know<br>• Can't comment but at this stage not too sure. | We publish assessment data in our prospectus, our School Development Plan and the Governors Annual Report. While performance fluctuates with different groups of children we have had good results for several years. We also endeavour to provide more personal feedback to parents during PTI's. |

| Question/Parent Comments | School Response Statement |
|---|---|
| **Q31. The children in this school attain good standards in numeracy (mathematics).** | |
| • Again, I really hope so!<br>• as above<br>• I do not know, I am happy with my daughter's numeracy level.<br>• Yes as far as I know<br>• As above. | As for English |

# School Self Evaluation Survey 2013 – Parent's Comments & School Response

| Question/Parent Comments | School Response Statement |
|---|---|
| **Q32. Children's work is marked regularly** | |
| • Homework is always marked with encouraging comments.<br>• Always marked.<br>• Weekly<br>• Yes as far as I can see | |

| Question/Parent Comments | School Response Statement |
|---|---|
| **Q33. Children receive feedback on how to improve their work.** | |
| • I believe so.<br>•<br>• Again, it is only about my daughter.<br>• great feedback<br>• There is always encouraging feedback on homework<br>• Teacher's comments are very positive with areas to improve highlighted.<br>• Not aware of this so have answered satisfactory<br>• Yes regular feedback given<br>• Wish stars and lists r a lot of encouragement for children to improve their work<br>• I have not seen anything toward this nature | |

# School Self Evaluation Survey 2013 – Parent's Comments & School Response

| Question/Parent Comments | School Response Statement |
|---|---|
| **Q34. Children are made aware of how well they are performing.** | |
| • Again, it is only about my daughter.<br>• great<br>• My son is always told how well he is doing and what he is good at and is encouraged to share his achievements with me.<br>• For Ks1 use of stickers is great but more could be used. Taking their good work to show other classes is really nice, a very friendly attitude.<br>• Yes feedback given | |

| Question/Parent Comments | School Response Statement |
|---|---|
| **Q35. Parents / carers are kept informed of how well their child/children are performing.** | |
| • It is only about myself<br>• regular feedback and meetings / books home<br>• I am kept informed about my son's performance. 4 Even if not told so, I can find out at anytime with out an appointment which is very reassuring.<br>• Yes informed twice yearly<br>• Yes regular informative meetings to which parents of certain year groups are invited. Could be useful to provide parents with annual or term outline of work to be carried out by their child - good point of reference for both school & parent?<br>• But I think p6 parents should have a further one to one to get advice on how the teacher feels that child is doing. | |

# School Self Evaluation Survey 2013 – Parent's Comments & School Response

| Question/Parent Comments | School Response Statement |
|---|---|
| **Q36. Parents / carers are informed of how they can support their children's learning at home.** | |
| • At KS2 the homework diary could be used more effectively to describe the LI of the task and as a means of communication between parents and staff.<br>• It is only about myself.<br>• Yes I have been given info on additional things I can do to stretch my child.<br>• The parent information evenings are good but if you can't get there handouts to all parents would be useful. May encourage more less willing parents to take more interest in supporting children's learning.<br>• Phonics training is provided. Areas to work on are discussed during parent consultations.<br>• This advice is often sought rather than volunteered.<br>• Homework could be more challenging to align with in school learning. | We will be trying to get information sheet/handouts from Parent Information Meeting posted on the school website over the coming weeks/months. |

# School Self Evaluation Survey 2013 – Parent's Comments & School Response

| Question/Parent Comments | School Response Statement |
|---|---|
| **Q37. All children are encouraged to reach their full potential regardless of gender, social, ethnic, linguistic and educational background.** | |
| • Forge is a very diverse school in all the above respects: this is one of its major strengths!<br>• I do not know about all children, my daughter is.<br>• School very good attitude to this.<br>• Again , slight feeling that we could set aims for learning on a childs individual ability, rather than on age, background. Could further promote a culture where ambition for profession could be explored and nurtured, as it can set a good foundation for a future that will entail learning and working and harnessing your potential. Eg if some children are academically gifted that can be explored, or if a child is particularly arty musical , how that can be used as a life style/ career can be discussed etc.<br>• Yes my son is always encouraged.<br>• Yes very much so - no distinctions made. However I do feel that sports day should be competitive, as this is the one day in the year when those less academic pupils can truly shine. Think the day is a bit wishy-washy & pointless! Even if the 'blue team' won for example?? | We review Sports Days every year – we'll bear this view in mind. We do get a lot of feedback from parents who appreciate the inclusive nature of our Sports Day at primary level. |

| Question/Parent Comments | School Response Statement |
|---|---|
| **Q38. The school has a caring ethos and shows a strong commitment to the welfare of the pupils and the staff.** | |
| • The Ethos of the school is clear however small class size is a key factor in ensuring the welfare of pupils.<br>• Very sincere teachers<br>• I always feel Forge is a very happy school; it always amazes me that the children almost fight to get through the school doors each<br>• morning, its a very encouraging sight to see.<br>• In my experience, the welfare of individual children is secondary to the effective running of the school.<br>• Excellent as previously stated | We would all love to keep class sizes as low as possible. However our funding formula makes this very challenging.<br><br>The welfare of all of our children is paramount to us. If you have a concern please bring it to us. |

# School Self Evaluation Survey 2013 – Parent's Comments & School Response

| Question/Parent Comments | School Response Statement |
|---|---|
| **Q39. Access is given to an appropriate range of personal and social services.** | |
| • I am not sure but I am sure this does happen if needed.<br>• Don't know<br>• Not sure what this means<br>• Various external agencies have led shows or talks.<br>• Yes all services seem to be in place. | We work closely and very regularly with a variety of statutory and voluntary agencies to try to ensure that we provide a comprehensive level of education, child protection and pastoral care. |

| Question/Parent Comments | School Response Statement |
|---|---|
| **Q40. The pupils feel secure and free from emotional and physical harm; they understand that their concerns will be listened to sympathetically and appropriate action taken.** | |
| • I do not know!<br>• See previous comments<br>• My children are extremely happy and consider school a positive experience and I believe this is due to the staff that have taught them.<br>• My child's experience over the past year is that her concerns were not listened to sympathetically and no appropriate action was taken, which caused distress for the child and family members.<br>• Yes very much so. From my experience all issues are dealt with swiftly & feedback given as appropriate. | Again, we would urge you to contact us about any such concerns. We can't respond adequately to an anonymous comment. Nor can we exemplify any action we might have taken for an individual child or family because of confidentiality issues. |