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ANNUAL SURVEY RESULTS

FEBRUARY 2022



**Artsmark
Platinum Award**
Awarded by Arts
Council England



Registered Office: **VANDYKE UPPER SCHOOL VANDYKE ROAD LEIGHTON BUZZARD BEDFORDSHIRE LU7 3DY**

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ANNUAL SURVEY – FEBRUARY 2022

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This is the 27th year of our annual school survey. Through the survey we seek the views of students across all year groups, parents/carers, support staff and teaching staff. The survey is conducted anonymously, although there is a section where contributors may leave their contact details if they would like a personal response to any issue.

Presented below are summaries and graphs reporting responses by teaching and support staff, parents/carers and students. The survey includes an opportunity for respondents to make additional comments using free text. These comments are always interesting and are all carefully read. This year the comments continue to be largely positive and those by parents and carers especially make extremely encouraging reading. The large number of responses makes the survey more representative and hence more powerful.

Responses reflect the challenging period of the last two years and, staff responses in particular, reflect concerns about workload and working in a school that has grown significantly and rapidly.

In analysing the results we generally conflate “Strongly Agree” and “Agree”, as well as “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree”. “Don’t knows” account for numbers not totalling 100%.

I hope you will take some time to review the outcomes in the tables below, as this feedback is an important part of the school’s self-evaluation process and plays an important part in shaping future decisions.

I wish to thank everyone who took the time to participate.

Teaching and Support Staff

120 staff completed the staff survey (107 in 2021) - 62 teaching staff and 58 support staff. In addition to responding to the set questions, staff are also encouraged to add free comments and these can provide important insights. Broadly, teaching staff and support staff responses in most sections are similar.

Overall satisfaction levels remain high. Headlines include:

- 97% of respondents agreed that “the school provides a high quality of education for students” and 96% agreed that “the standard of teaching and learning is at least good”. 97% agreed, with 0% disagreeing, in wishing to recommend the school to a parent (2021: 96%, 1%).
- 94% felt the school has managed the pandemic effectively, with 4% disagreeing (2021: 96%).
- 80% agreed that communication is good, with 14% disagreeing (2021: 92%, 5%). Here there is a difference in teacher and support staff responses with 77% of teachers but 84% of support staff agreeing that communication is good.
- 89% agree that assigned work is fair and reasonable, but again with differences of views with 86% of teaching staff agreeing but 92% of support staff.
- 64% believe there are adequate opportunities for professional development (63% in 2021), with 25% disagreeing.

- 97% feel Vandyke is a good place to work (100% in 2021) and 95% would recommend a colleague to work here (98% in 2021).
- 78% believe the school is mindful of staff well-being, with 7% disagreeing.

While it is of course heartening to read positive feedback, it is as important to hear about concerns and there are a number of points made through the staff survey that will be acted upon.

Comments cover a wide range of matters, including about workload, staff toilets, behaviour, heating, parking, concerns about Covid in the future, frustration at colleagues who do not read the bulletin and a lack of textbooks. There is also an overwhelming amount of praise for fellow colleagues, aspects of school that are supportive and things the school does well. These comments include:

“I understand that some student matters are need to know however sometimes I do not receive information that is helpful in order to carry out my job.”

“There is information overload at times.”

“It seems a lot more difficult to have passing conversations with people since the beginning of this academic year. Many staff are literally running around and have a heavy workload. Therefore it is harder to keep in touch and be aware of each other and particularly with a line manager just to let them know how things are going and vice versa. Hard to know how to change this except to encourage team leaders to try to have individual conversations with their various team members every couple of weeks, to go and find them and check in.”

“I feel the support I get is a strength of the school and that staff look out for each other. I personally feel supported by my line manager who regularly checks in and supports further when required. I know that I can talk to LG when I need assistance about important matters.”

“I appreciate the fact that there is no “Them and Us” at Vandyke. I feel support staff and teaching staff are equally valued and all work well together. That’s my experience. It’s a great place to work.”

“Very little chance of CPD from specialists and all training seems to come from in-house. This is acceptable for some areas but there needs to be the chance for new and long-standing staff to go on external training.”

“Whilst the work responsibilities are fair and reasonable, the volume of work is unreasonable and unsustainable. This is due to a combination of factors including the school expansion with increasing numbers of students and also the effects of the pandemic which have been significant.”

“The school’s membership to the National College has made CPD much easier to access. It allows us to be flexible with our development and tailor training to our specific requirements.”

“In the last couple of years the school has grown significantly, changed its structure through houses and had a lot to contend with due to Covid. I think the combination of these things has led to me feeling less content. However, I do enjoy my role and would recommend a colleague to come to work here.”

“Staff are tired and feel more over-worked due to the current situation of covid. However they still remain supportive of each other and try to keep the work environment positive. I still maintain Vandyke is an excellent place to work.”

“I love this job and working at this school. The general ethos across the whole school always feels progressive, professional, supportive and friendly. I am proud to be part of a great team.”

Parents/Carers

158 responses were received and a fair spread across all year groups, but with 66% of responses from Y9/10 and fewer from Y12/13.

93% of parents/carers completing the survey are satisfied overall with Vandyke (3% disagree).

Further, 93% state that, "My child likes school" (4% disagree), 84% feel welcome in school (4% do not) and 91% would recommend the school to another parent/carer (less than 3% would not). These figures are slightly below 2021 but are nevertheless overwhelmingly positive.

94% stated that the school had managed the Coronavirus pandemic effectively (4% disagree).

Teaching and Learning

85% agreed that, "My child is sufficiently challenged to achieve their potential" (4% disagree). This compares to 88% in 2021.

69% agreed that the right amount of homework was set during the autumn term (15% disagree) which reflects a stronger picture on homework than in recent years as this is typically an area of opposing views with some parents/carers of the opinion that homework should not be set at all. However, there are a number of comments that visibility to parents/carers is reduced through Google Classroom.

Satisfaction with teaching staff was high, with 85% satisfied, 3% not satisfied.

Discipline/ pastoral

88% are satisfied "with the way my child is looked after and supported" (5% disagree). This is as last year.

70% agree that "The school handles discipline fairly" (9% disagree). This above the 65% last year and the large proportion of "don't know" (22%) may be accounted for by not having any direct contact with school about behaviour or discipline, which in itself may be judged positively.

Communications

Feedback on communications is slightly below previous years, e.g. 84% believe they receive sufficient information about their child's progress (14% disagree) and 82% are satisfied with their involvement in their child's schooling (14% disagree). The comments section explains this with around a dozen remarks about on-line communication replacing opportunities to interact face-to-face. Most acknowledge the pandemic and the necessity of measures, but regret its impact on this aspect of home-school interaction.

A set of questions investigating parent/carer views on on-line subject consultations shows 72% liking on-line arrangements. Views are divided over retaining on-line or reverting to in-person meetings for subject consultations: 47% favour reverting, 40% retaining on-line arrangements. This poses a clear dilemma for the school in terms of future arrangements. However, what is clear is the importance of opportunities for parents/carers to come into school and to meet teachers in person, whether for subject consultations or on other occasions.

There are many free comments and these provide a useful insight into aspects of school, or particular concerns. Overall this year, comments inevitably continue to reflect the impact of the pandemic. Many comments are balanced, acknowledging the challenges. There are lots of positive comments where parents/carers have chosen to take time to record lovely, supportive messages.

Below is a sample of the many comments.

"My children are in Y12 now and I remain truly thankful that they were able to attend Vandyke. The staff, without exception, are just wonderful and even that is not enough praise."

"Covid measures have made us feel that we aren't very connected to the school."

"On-line consultations are no substitute for face to face meetings and have led to a detachment from school."

"Again it is hard to comment on some questions because we are not as involved as we normally would be not being in school and everything being on-line."

"I do miss parents' evenings but understand the reasons. Quality of feedback in on-line meetings was very good."

"As a Y9 parent I have never seen the school due to Covid but my child is very happy so I am too. It will be nice to look round when it is allowed."

"I have always found staff responsive and helpful. The level of care and support the staff give students and parents is exemplary."

"Pastoral care has been outstanding."

"My child has excelled and the teachers have been amazing in supporting my child through teaching, encouraging and building my child's confidence to ask questions and learn. I see students treated as young adults and teacher/student respect for each other."

"Without doubt Vandyke can be held up as an exemplar of an excellent school."

"I will continue to recommend the school. It is excellent."

"Couldn't be happier. In these ridiculously difficult times the school has done well to keep the kids engaged and their performance up. All staff that we have spoken to have been professional, knowledgeable and had a good grasp of our son's learning as an individual. He has received positive feedback in the form of personal emails, praise cards home and phone calls home. All of this encouraged him. His tutor has always responded quickly and sorted out any problems. The pastoral support is very good. Keep it up Vandyke!"

"Vandyke is a great school. The school is a place where my child gets up every morning with enthusiasm to attend. Our child loves to discuss with us the work completed. Please keep up the good work and we thank you for the time you have put into helping my child. Don't underestimate how important these interactions are. It makes a difference."

"My child has had some issues over the past 2 years and all the members of staff I have had to be involved with have been amazing and so supportive. They have provided as much support as has been needed and have found ways to help and make her better."

Students

260 students from all year groups completed the annual survey, with very positive responses and interesting free text comments. The highest response rate was from Y10 with Year 13 a little under-represented.

Responses are largely positive and compare favourably with previous years.

The first section focused on the pandemic, with 65% of respondents agreeing that the school managed the pandemic well while 11% disagreed.

92% of student responses agreed with the amount of work set for most lessons (5% disagree), 81% believe they are set challenging work that helps them make good progress (5% disagree) and 75% are satisfied with the way work is marked and assessed (10% not satisfied); a similar response to last year even though we were then on remote learning due to lockdown. 71% feel they are given good feedback to improve learning (8% disagree).

71% are satisfied with the help they get when they don't understand the work (9% disagree).

When asked the direct question, "Do you feel safe in school?" 93% replied "yes".

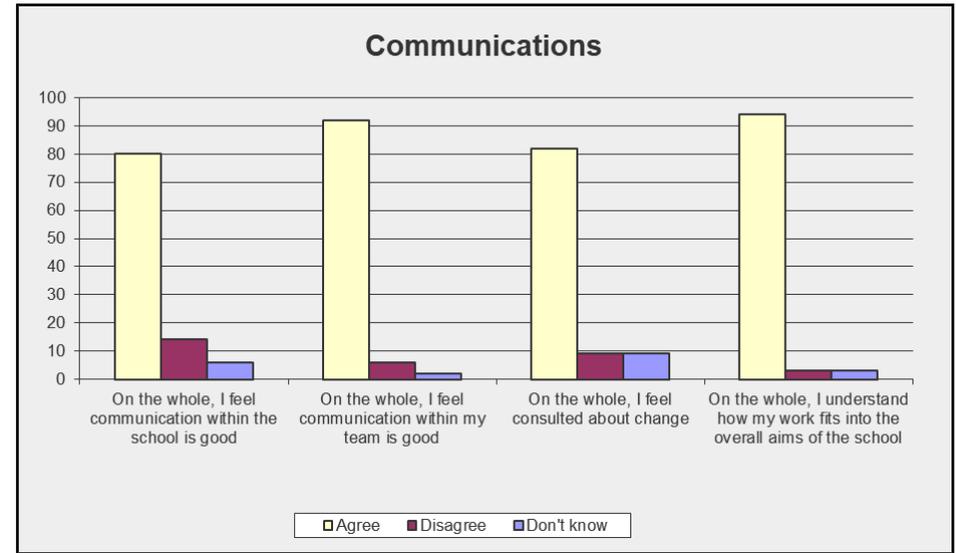
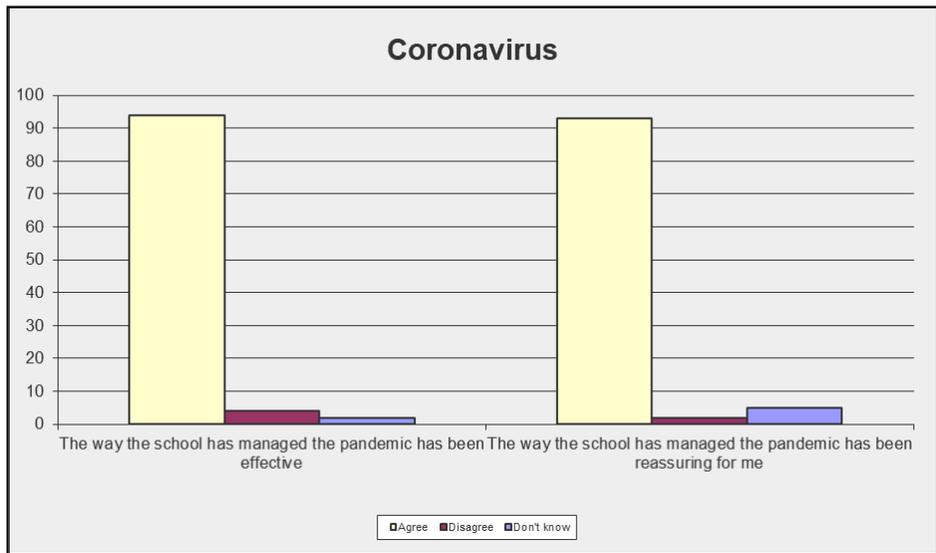
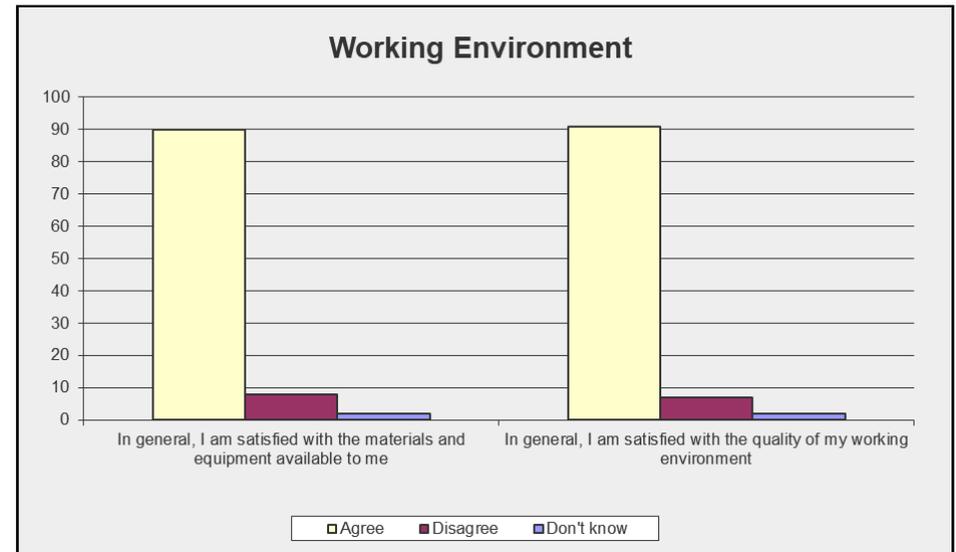
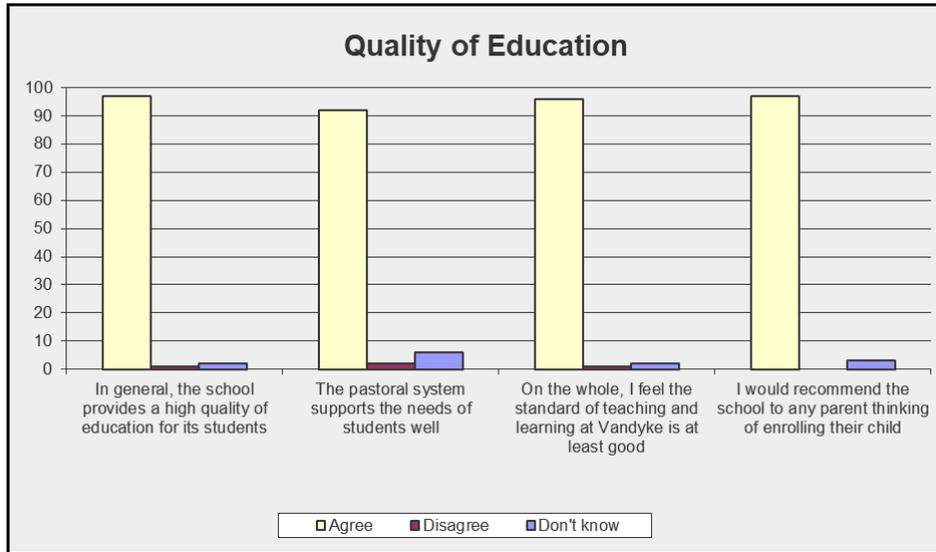
Overall, 86% are satisfied with the school (4% not satisfied), coincidentally exactly as in 2021, and 87% would recommend the school to a friend (4% would not), compared to 86% last year.

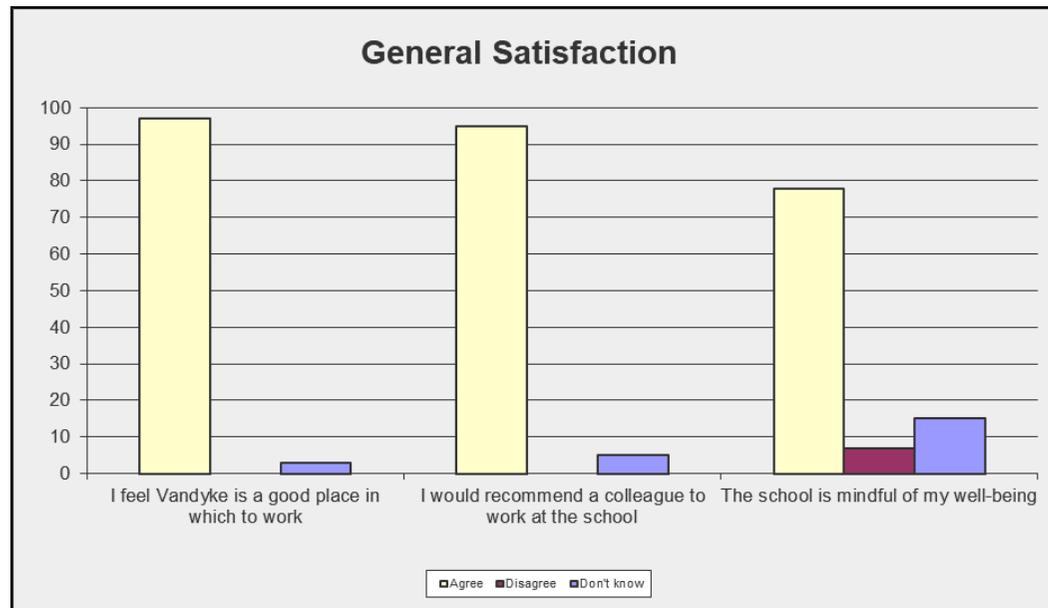
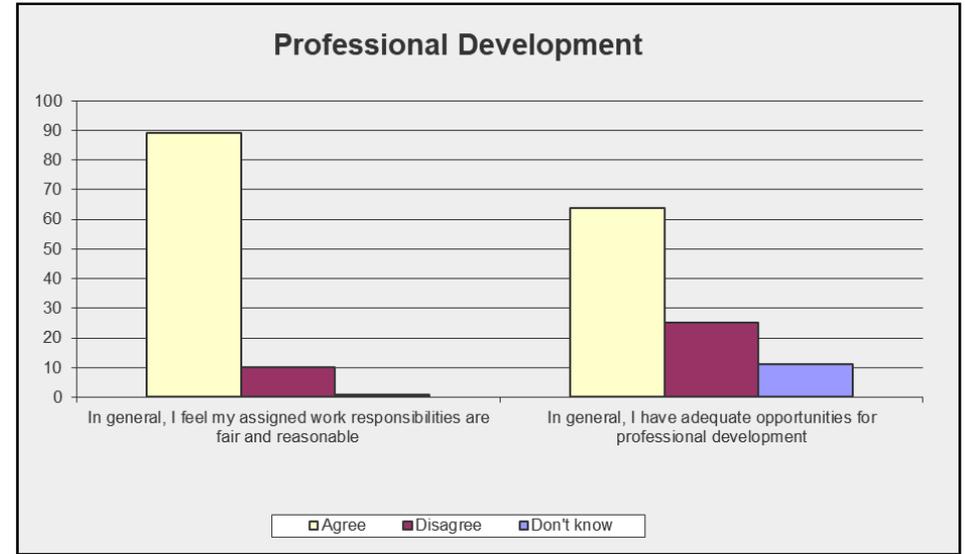
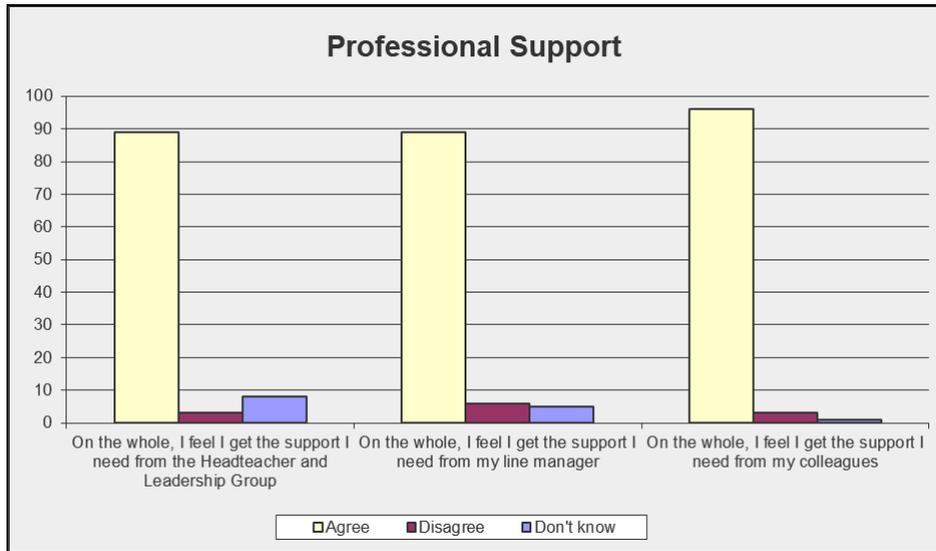
Student comments tend to be focused upon arrangements for break times including places to eat lunch and some requests for more or fewer unisex toilets, Sixth Form only toilets and improved facilities in toilets. However they include lots of single requests for improvements including a later start, a more relaxed uniform code and a longer school day in return for no homework.

Individual requests for follow-up where contact details are given have been made and focus groups will follow up on key issues, including whether students feel safe and if not why, various aspects of behaviour and arrangements for break times.

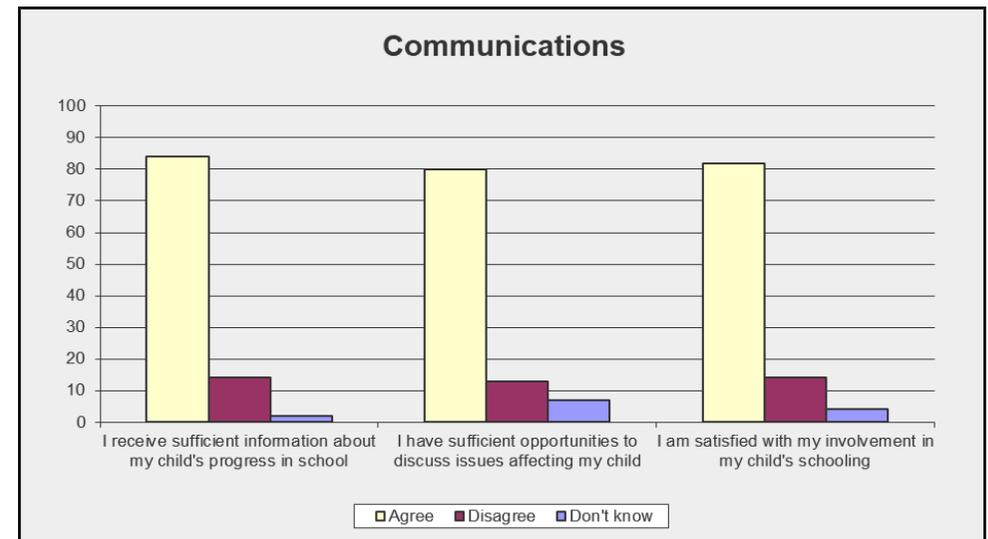
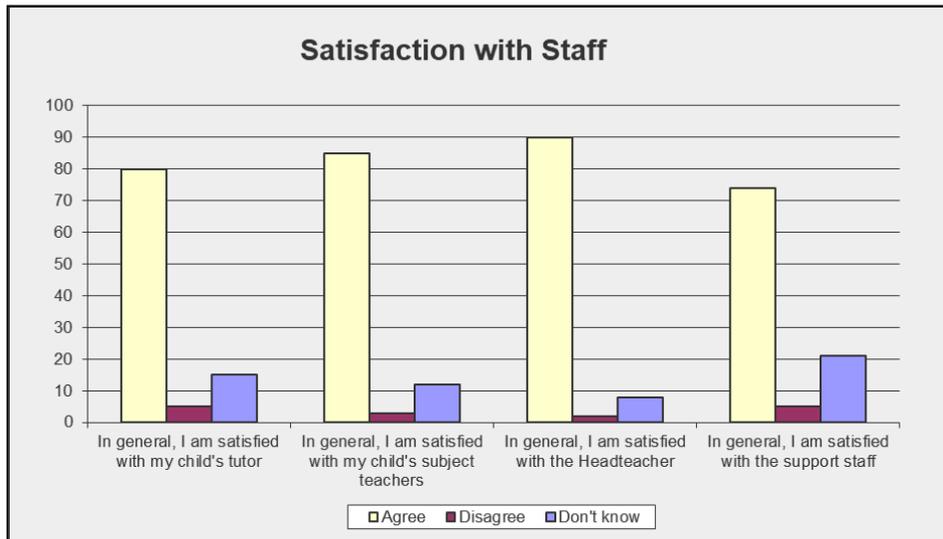
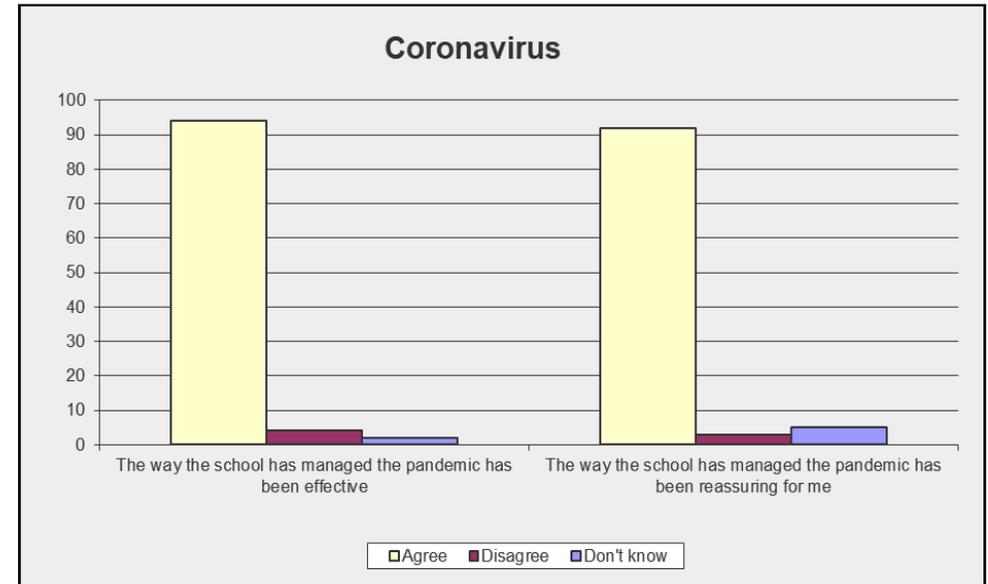
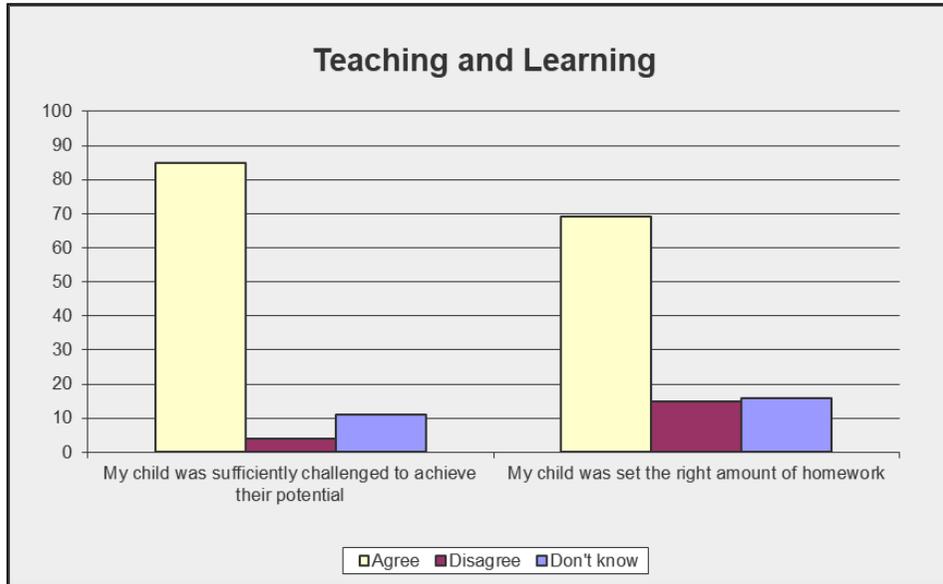
Tim Carroll
24 February 2022

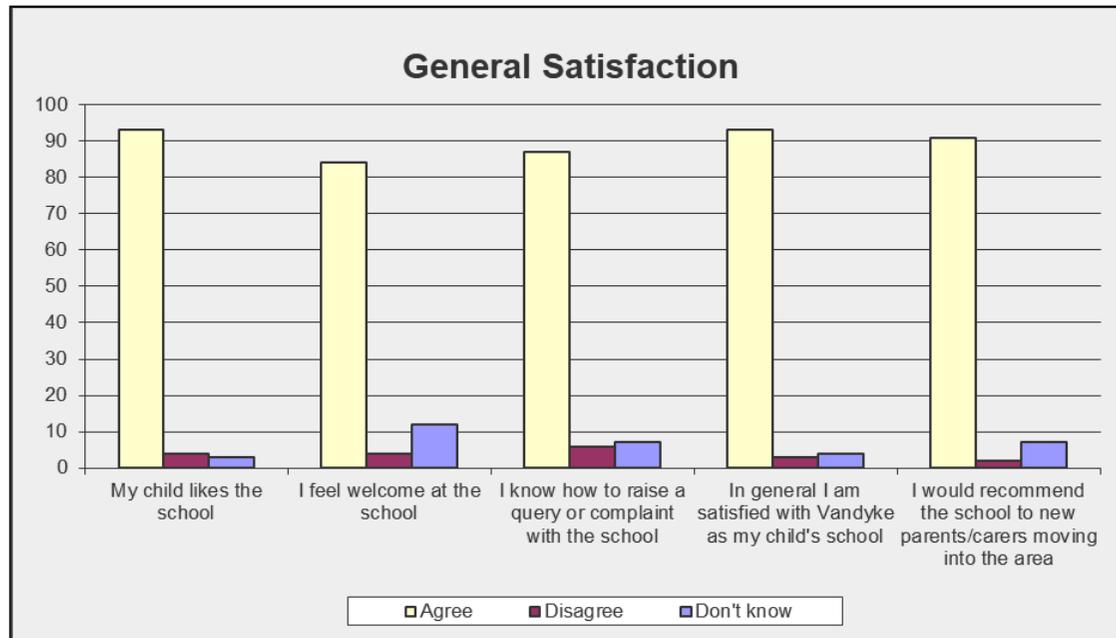
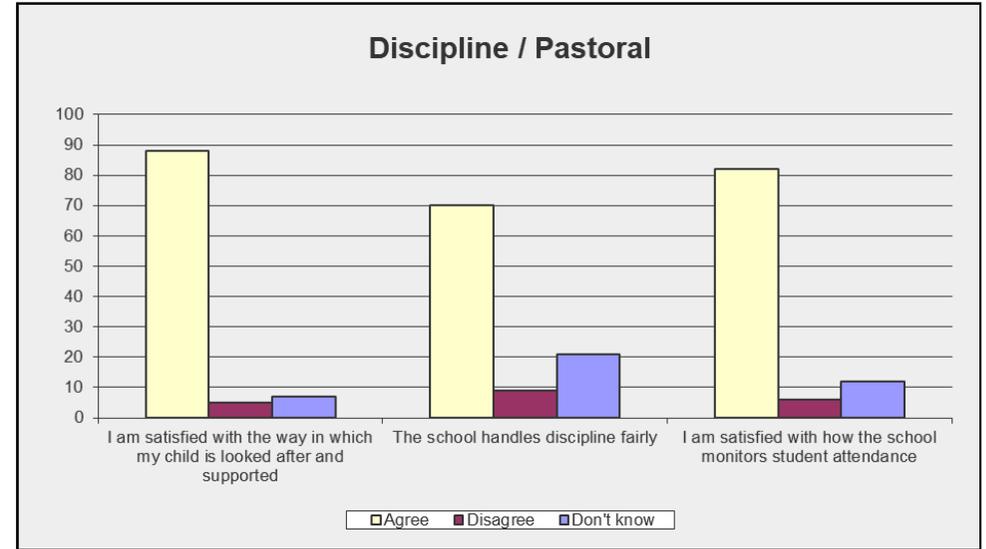
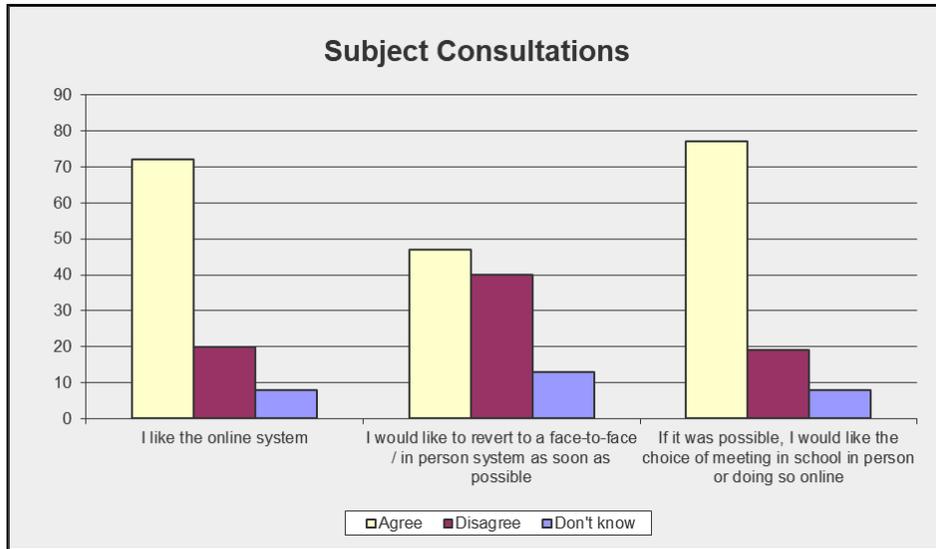
ALL STAFF SURVEY





PARENTS / CARERS





STUDENTS

