



Case study

Attitude surveys for pupils, parents and staff

Hammond Community Junior School

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About NFER attitude surveys: pupils, parents and staff (PPS)

NFER attitude surveys for pupils, parents and staff offer schools an efficient way to consult effectively. The service gathers information to help evaluate the views of pupils, parents and staff and provides data for your school's self-evaluation process based on objective evidence.

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For more information visit www.nfer.ac.uk/pps2 or contact pps@nfer.ac.uk.

The relationship between Hammond Community Junior School and the parents of pupils was relatively weak when David Storrie took over as headteacher in September 2010.

“It was not bad but it could definitely be improved,” he said. “This is a good school in an affluent area, with a predominantly white British population, but in the past parents had not really been brought on board. I wanted to change that and make myself more visible to them and build up some warmth between us.

“I particularly wanted to know what areas of the school parents were unhappy with, where we could make improvements, and what we needed to build on. We wanted to make changes by evolution rather than revolution.”

Hammond, which is based near Guildford, in Surrey, already had its own parental questionnaire in place, but it was not relevant to David's needs. In November 2010, he asked parents to complete NFER's parent attitude survey online.

“We achieved only a 20 per cent return and as the school was not, at that point, geared up to communicate with parents via email or text message, we had to send a letter containing the web link and ask them to sign up,” David said. “At the same time pupils from years 3 to 6 completed the pupil survey online in school, after first having a discussion in class about the importance of being honest and how we needed to know certain things to make the school better.”

A follow-up NFER parental survey, in paper form, was carried out in June

last year and achieved a 52 per cent return. Ironically, one of the issues highlighted by parents was better online communication between school and home.

“What the survey has done is to enable us to build better relationships with parents and informed us about their perceptions of the school. But also, the analysis allows us to compare ourselves against other schools so we get some idea of how we are doing in this respect,” David added.

Staff learned, for example, that parents wanted their pupils to do more sport and that they had concerns over homework. “We were able to assure them about how much time we were devoting to PE, and reviewed our homework policy amid concerns that parents did not feel confident about supporting their children with some of the requirements,” said David. The findings from the survey have also helped to shape school policy generally in discussion with the school council.

“We found the paper version easier to implement than the online one in the first instance, but we expect that to change as we develop our online links with parents,” David said. “Crucially, the survey has removed the need for us to analyse the findings, which was very time-consuming and I simply didn't have the staff time to devote to this.

“When we now have an Ofsted inspection we will be able to prove that we consult with parents and it gives us something tangible to show them.

“Overall, this is a wonderful service that NFER are offering to schools and I can't recommend it highly enough.”