

Coatesville School Survey 2014

Informing the School Charter Process



Background to Research

Coatesville School is in the process of revising its school charter, a key planning document that sets out the school's mission, aims, objectives, directions and targets for the next three to five years. (This is an important document as it guides where the Board of Trustees and teaching staff will allocate any available funds).

As part of the consultation process parents were invited to participate in an on-line survey. The purpose of the survey being to ascertain perspective from the school community on

- how Coatesville School is perceived to be performing now
- what the priorities are perceived to be for improving and investing in the future of our school

During the course of the online survey parents were asked to consider a number of key areas, namely :

- The school's physical environment
- the learning environment or culture of the school
- learning opportunities
- IT and its role in learning
- Health & Safety
- community involvement

Parents were presented with a series of structured questions but were also given the opportunity to express their own thoughts and opinions through more open-ended questioning

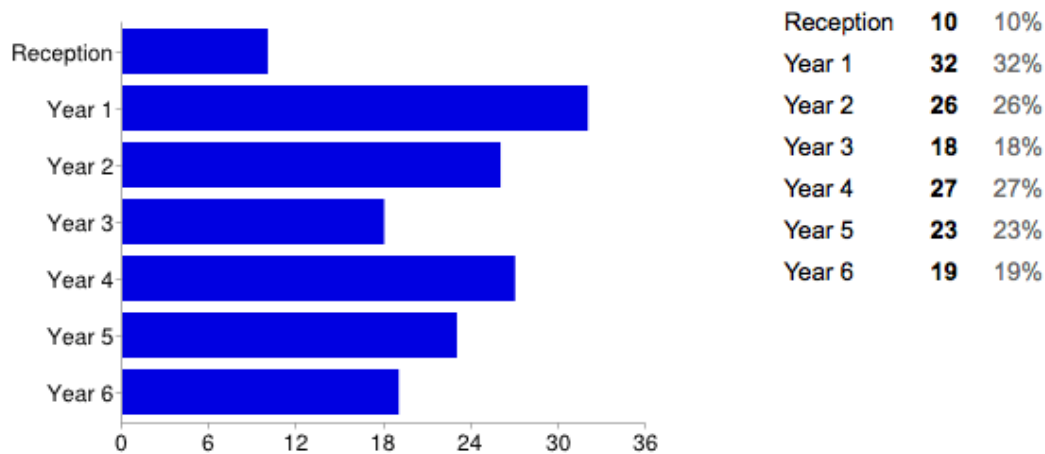
Participation

At the time of the survey the school had a roll of 265 children (approximately 180 families)

- A total of 100 responses were collected – a participation level of 56%!

Parents of students across all year groups participated but parents with children in the junior school were particularly engaged with the survey

I'd like you to start by indicating which year (s) your child/ren are currently in...



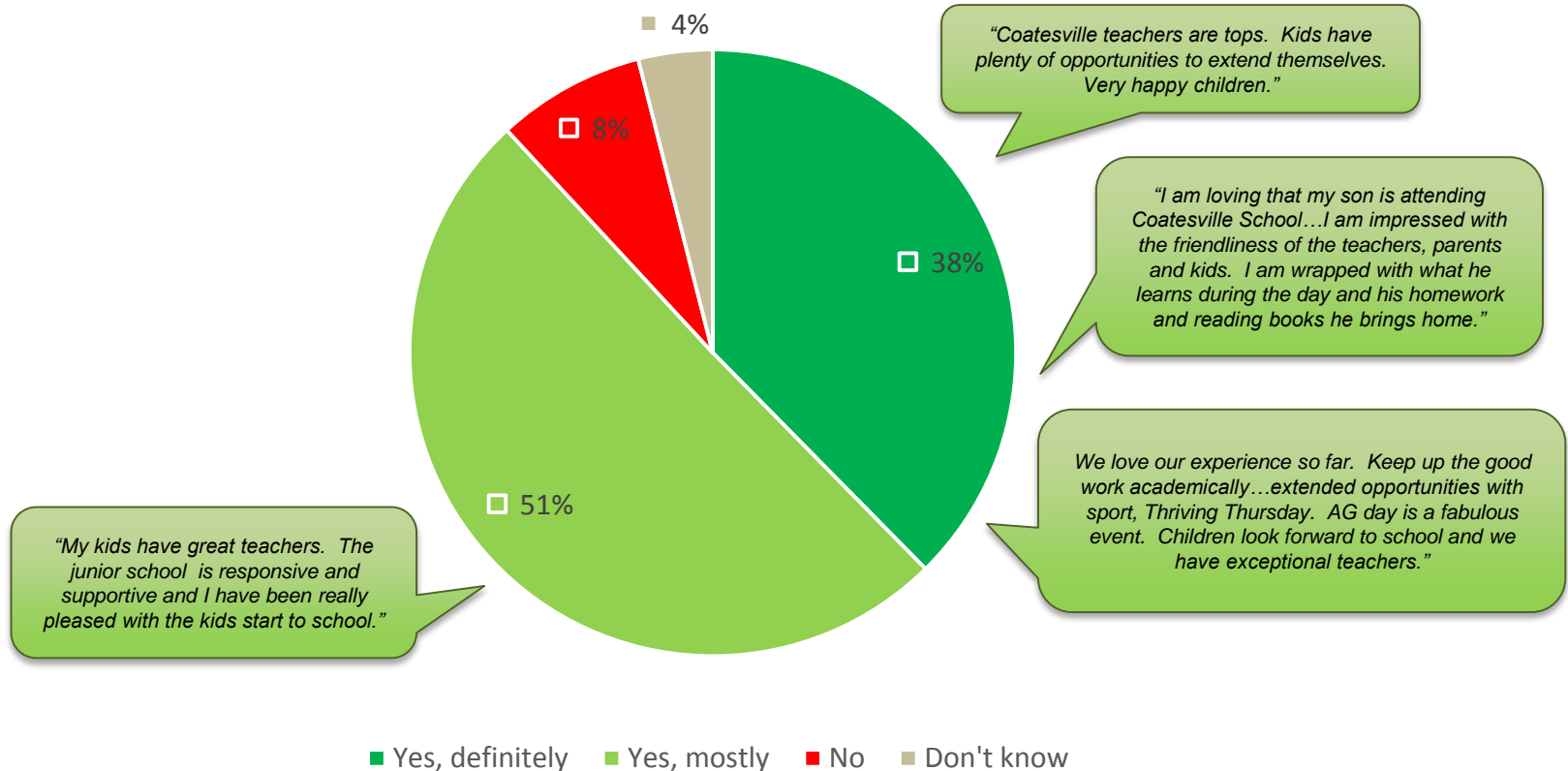
THE BIG PICTURE

Is the school meeting parent's expectations?

What do parents like MOST and what do they like least...

Is the school meeting parents expectations?

Just over a third say the school is *definitely* meeting expectations, a further 51% say their expectations are *mostly* being met.



Q. Overall is the school meeting your expectations? Why / why not?

THE DETAIL

The school's physical environment, the learning environment or culture of the school, learning opportunities, IT and its role in learning, Health & Safety and community involvement all play a role in making our school what it is.

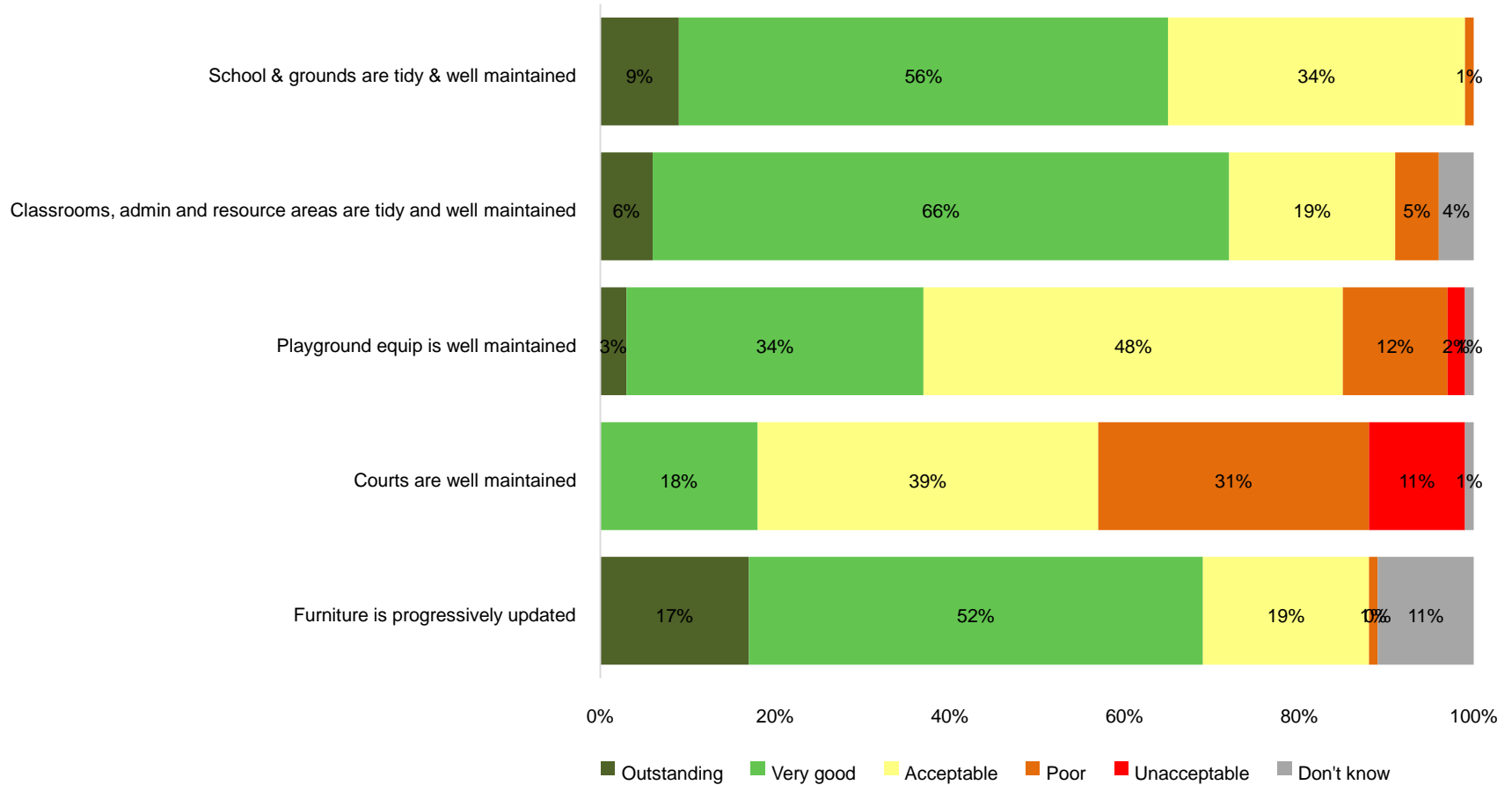
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The school physical environment encompasses the school buildings and all its contents including physical structures, infrastructure, furniture, the site on which the school is located and the surrounding environment.



Physical Environment – Current PERFORMANCE

Furniture upgrades acknowledged and significant recognition of poor condition of the courts



Physical Environment – where should the school invest?



84% would like to see an all weather recreation facility

"...the number one priority is the school hall, even if that is the only project that is completed it will be of most benefit to the students, school and wider community."

"I think having the hall will make a huge difference and open up lots of opportunities for our children. ."



80% would like to see drainage improved to make school field accessible all year

"Really important in this digital age to ensure Coatesville School children achieve a good balance of class room and outdoor activities and I see fixing the current drainage / sewage treatment issues on the school fields as a key part of this.."

"Fields need draining so they can be used all year."



56% would like to see new playgrounds

"Playground needs huge improvement, other schools have multiple amazing playgrounds with bike trails and adventure areas!"



49% would like to see the courts upgraded

"The netball courts are a disgrace and it is great that they are getting resealed...the netball hoops are not to the competition height therefore this makes practicing hard."



9% prioritise enhancement of the school entrance

"I have chosen the 3 areas above that need immediate work, but the entry could be more welcoming..."

"The entrance to the school looks tired and it does not look inviting and smart. .."

Physical Environment – Key Learnings & Action Points

Our rural location is one of the things parents like most about the school and its important that we maximise the use of our facilities – resolving drainage issues on the school field will mean we can enjoy the space we have, more often!

An all weather facility will open up new opportunities and extend existing opportunities – music, art, drama / productions etc as well as providing a dry venue for rainy day assemblies!

The playground plays a significant role in providing social interaction for parents at the end of the school day (important for creating the all important sense of community!) – relocation of facility needs to be considered carefully to ensure this opportunity is not lost

- Some concerns over height of monkey bars and incidence of broken limbs in last few years ...

The courts are widely recognised to be in a poor state of repair and whilst some parents are aware of the proposed upgrades it would be great to acknowledge this investment

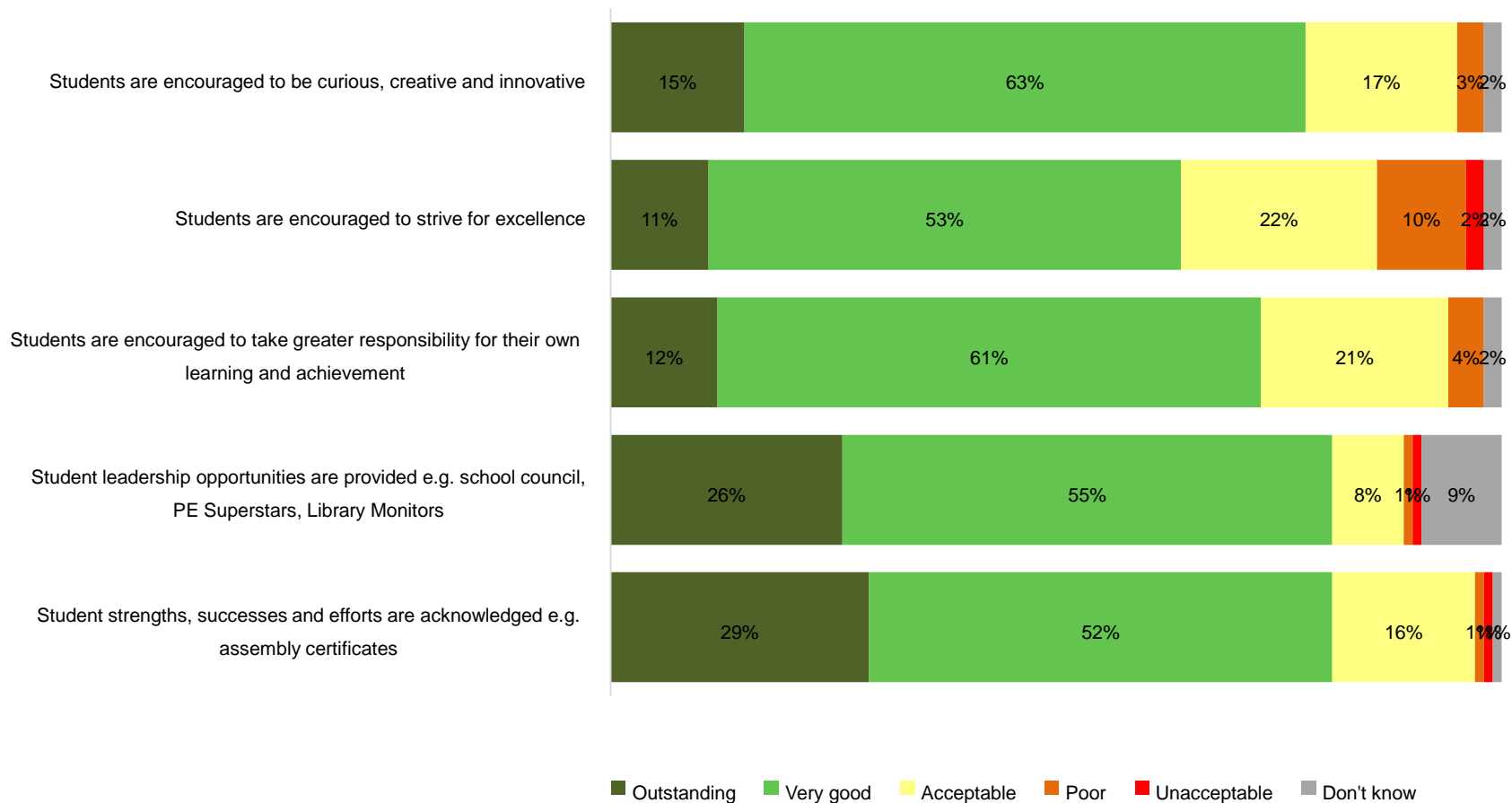
Upgrading the school entrance is perceived to be more of a ‘nice to have’ with other investments taking priority

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

At Coatesville School we are committed to providing a learning environment that promotes passion and enthusiasm for learning and a strong foundation in numeracy and literacy.

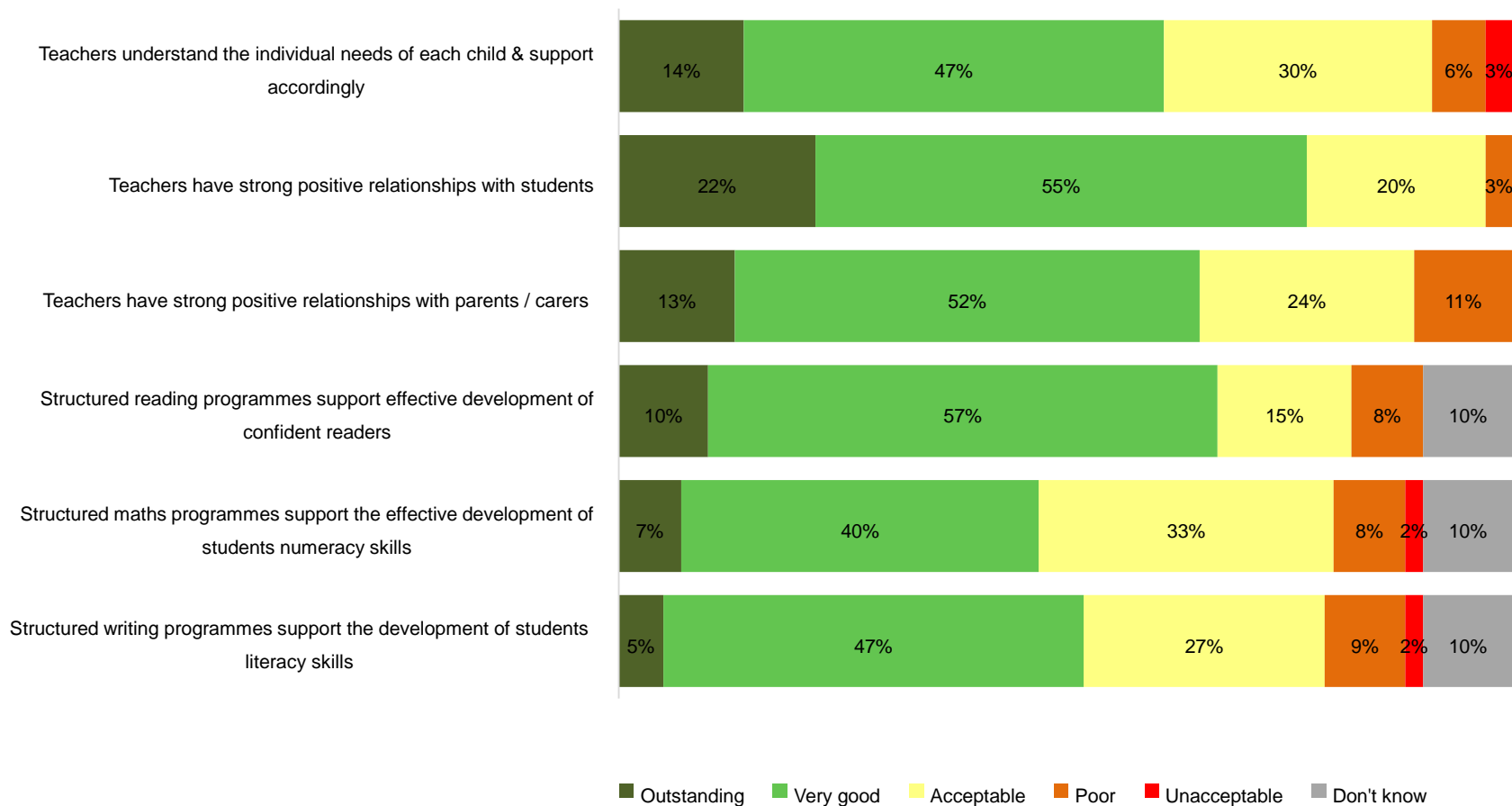
Learning Environment – Current PERFORMANCE

Leadership opportunities and the acknowledgement of achievement are strengths but concerns evident regarding extent to which children are encouraged to excell...



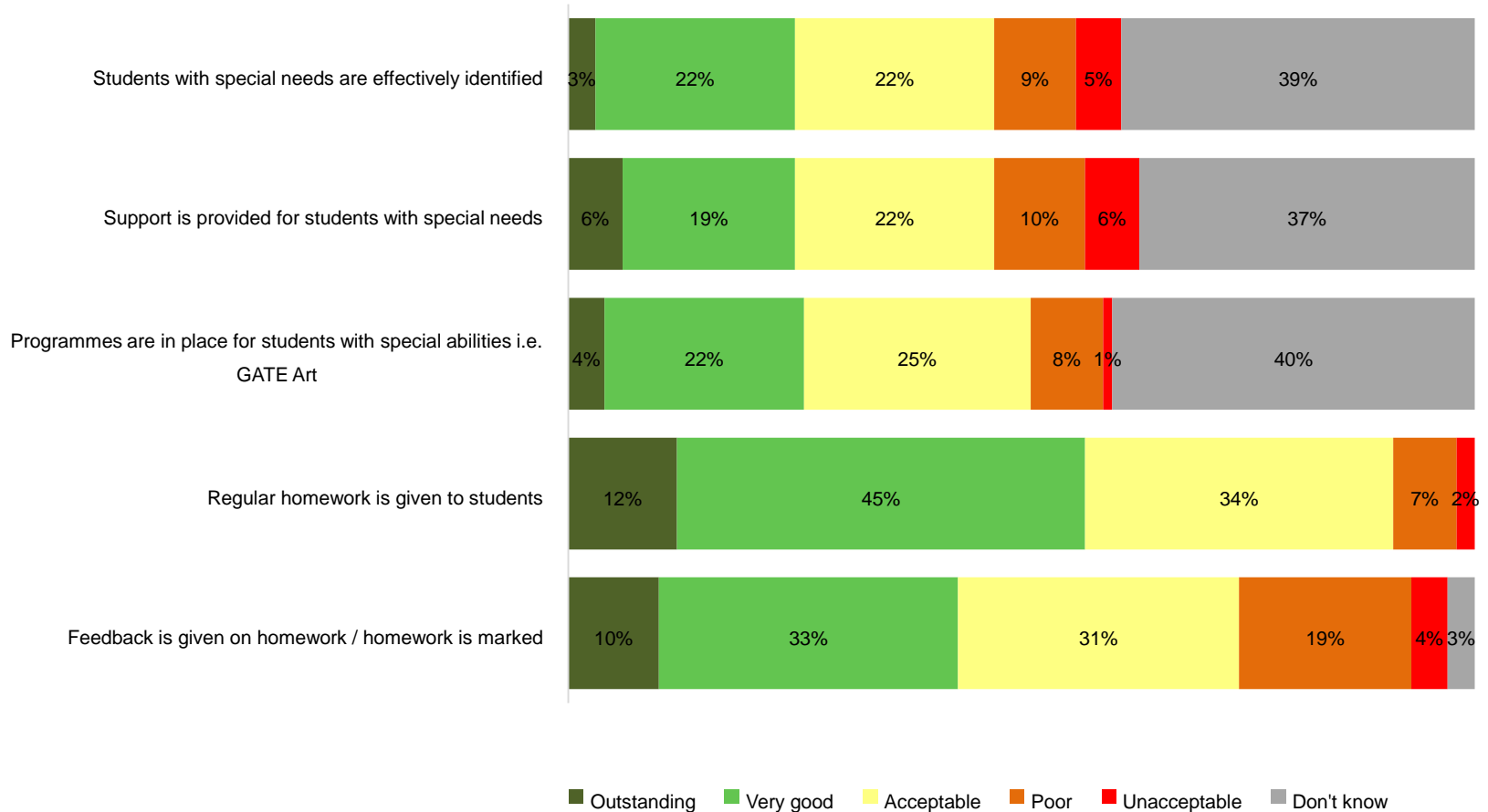
Learning Environment – Current PERFORMANCE

Raise profile of numeracy and writing programmes, Rainbow Reading is more 'visible to parents...focus on strengthening teacher / parent relationships where weak



Learning Environment – Current PERFORMANCE

Some disappointment evident around marking of homework...broad spectrum of opinion surrounding special needs support and GATE opportunities



Learning Environment - what are we doing well?

One of the school's key advantages is perceived to be its size, every pupil is recognised, friendships span across year groups - there is (on the whole) a great community feel and a warm inviting culture.

"Teachers seem to genuinely care about the kids and their wellbeing."

"Coatesville has a wonderful feel to it."

Great teachers are key and play a significant role in creating a positive learning environment and a positive culture within the school.

"...outstanding teachers who drive the children and have the x-factor when it comes to teaching."

"...brilliant young teachers who get the best out of their children and build learning enthusiasm."

"Reception class is amazing! My quiet and shy daughter is thriving."

"Some of the teachers are very skilled at building fantastic relationships with their students and parents"

Music and Arts resources, Thriving Thursdays are all perceived to help contribute to an exciting learning environment.

"...we do Art amazingly well...Mathletics is a positive step forward but it needs to be encouraged more."

"Our two children are constantly challenged socially and academically and are offered many opportunities to extend themselves."

"The music department is excellent – the range of opportunities open to children encourages artistic exploration and self expression."

"I loved the Kauri show – giving kids access to music and shows at an early age."

Learning Environment – and not so well?

Class sizes are perceived to be getting to big...

"Teacher aids would be a big help."

"Class sizes are getting to big and there are not enough resources to support teachers."

"Large class sizes combined with children who need additional support means teachers are under pressure."

Parents would like to see greater transparency – including what is being taught, how well children are doing and consistent provision of feedback on homework

"We don't receive enough regular feedback as to how our child is doing regarding the basics."

"There is little feedback on homework, what is required of our children, what they are learning in the class and how we can bring this into their homework."

"I have no visibility on structured reading or maths programmes."

There is a simmering feeling that children are not encouraged to do their best / extended or overlooked (if they are not gifted or special needs)...

"Our child sits in the middle to lower end of the classroom's ability and we think they are invisible as they are not gifted or special needs so don't receive enough attention."

"Transparency around where each child is at i.e. reading age, maths level, writing age, ...more regular testing of levels so they can be moved and extended."

Learning Environment – where should the school invest?

Key areas parents would like to see investment include...

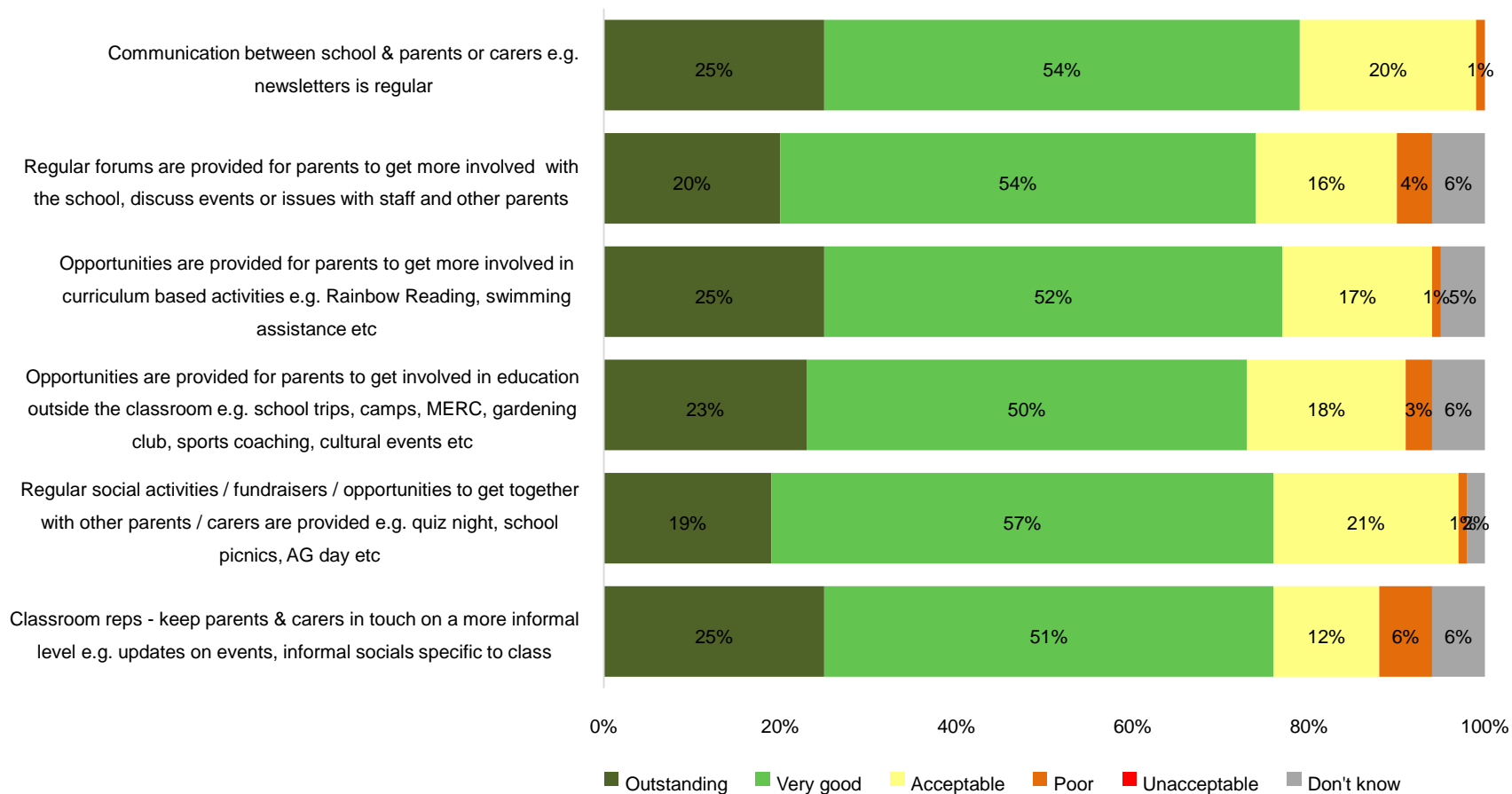
- School hall (opens up opportunities for different style of learning / school productions / music / arts etc)
- Smaller class size / teacher aids (allowing greater focus on individual students and their needs)
- More investment in IT (creates enthusiasm when integrated into learning)
- More special needs support to reduce pressure on teachers and stop other children being disadvantaged
- Greater transparency in learning – more detail on report cards and during teacher interviews (how well are my kids doing on their basic literacy and numeracy skills and what do they need to do to get to the next level.)
- Greater communication regarding what is being learnt
- More feedback on homework (consistently!)
- More male role models to guide boys in school (create passion and enthusiasm – IT and project based work)

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

At Coatesville School we are committed to providing our students with a broad range of learning opportunities.

Learning Opportunities – Current PERFORMANCE

Thriving Thursdays and arts opportunities are particularly well respected



Learning Opportunities – where should the school invest?

Suggestions for extending learning opportunities include :

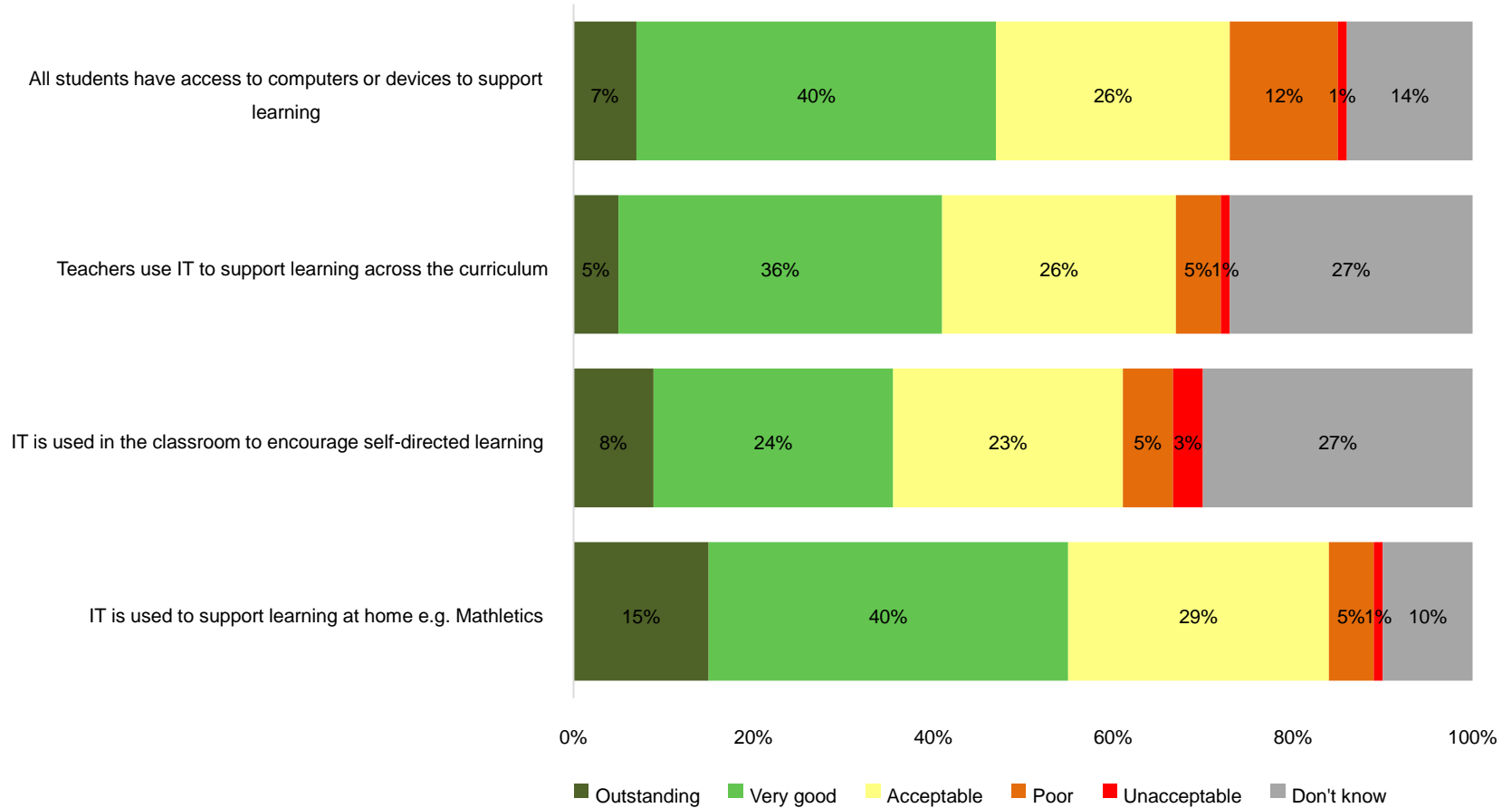
- More sports / more school teams (particularly soccer)
- Introduction of languages
- Greater celebration of Maori language and culture
- Performing arts / school production
- Extend Thriving Thursday options – woodwork / crafting etc (maybe incorporate Rural Traditions with Thriving Thursdays)
- Return of 'Boys in School' programme
- Formal swimming lessons
- Touch typing (to support computer literacy)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

IT is an integral part of all our lives and is playing an increasing role in the school and home learning environment. Investing in IT is about preparing our children for future life and learning.

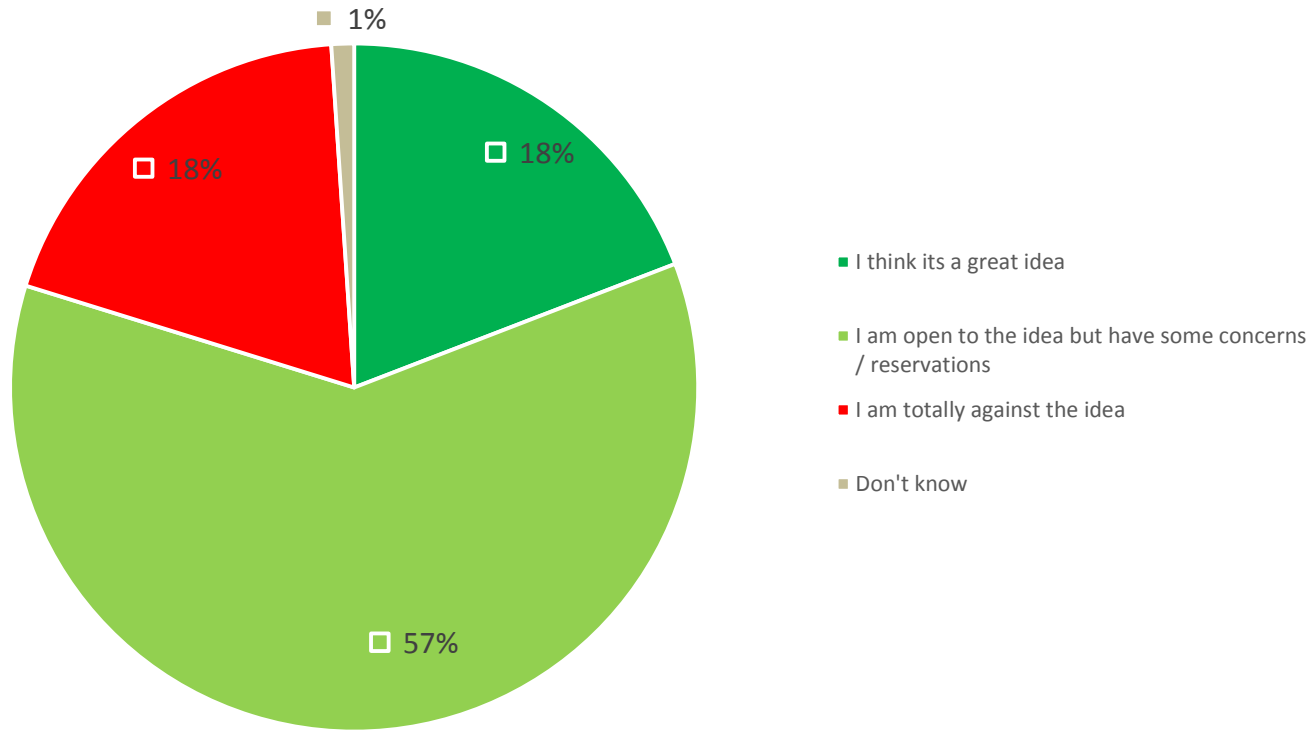
Information Technology – Current PERFORMANCE

Significant level of uncertainty surrounding current role of IT in learning



Information Technology – BYOD

Mixed sentiments about bringing devices from home



Q. It is rapidly becoming the norm for students to be asked to bring their own devices (e.g. laptops and iPads) to support learning at school. Would you say you....

BYOD- Benefits vs Concerns

Likely to be more readily accepted by parents of senior students....

Parental comments suggest a BYOD strategy would possibly gain more support from parents of senior children (years 5/6), **perceived benefits** being...

- Greater access to IT resources
- Continuity of learning between school and home
- Greater transparency re: learning
- Learning to take responsibility for device in a smaller, safer environment (before high school)
- Facilitate transition between primary and high school

Key concerns school will need to address with parents should a BYOD strategy be progressed include...

- Increased financial pressure, burden on parents to provide devices
- Protocol / responsibility re: theft, loss or damage to individual devices
- Cyber safety (accessing inappropriate materials)
- Maintaining a balance – basic literacy and numeracy skills vs computer literacy
- Compatibility - management / integration of differing devices into learning process

IT – Where should the school invest?

Best practice, keep up-to-date, better access (WiFi & more devices)...

Despite not always fully understanding the extent to which IT is currently used in the curriculum there is a great deal of positivity among parents regarding IT investment going forwards.

Ideas for future investment include...

- Keeping up to date with IT & software development (**don't let our kids get left behind!**)
- Researching / adopting best practice in IT learning techniques
- Providing more tablets and devices (**better access**)
- Specialised IT learning suite (specialised teacher or upskill existing teachers?)
- Opportunities for more creative / integrated use within the curriculum (**extend learning opportunities – drama, filming / editing, research, website design**)
- Broadband /WiFi throughout school
- Teaching keyboard skills
- Roll out mathematics to a wider group

HEALTH & SAFETY

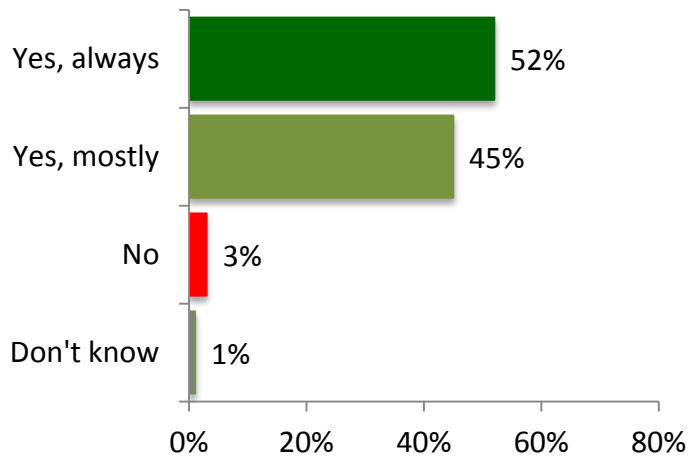
The safety and well-being of students, teachers, parents and contractors is paramount. The board reviews all incidents that happen on school grounds and over the last year have put in place policies and procedures to support a safe environment for all.

Health & Safety

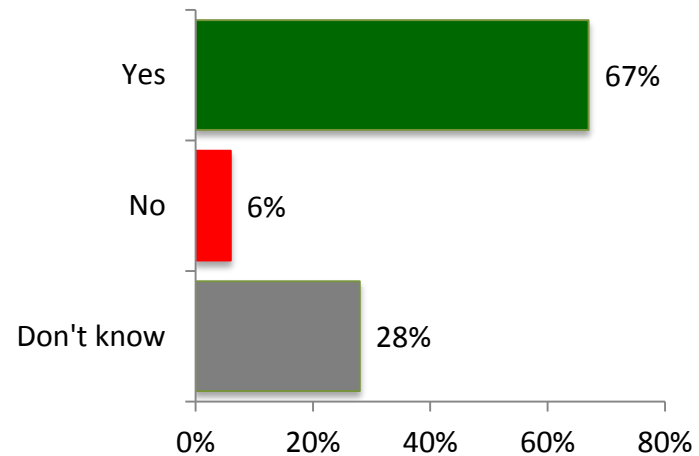
Most parents believe their children feel safe at school...

...and the majority believe their children know who to talk to should this situation ever change

Q. Do your children feel safe at Coatesville School?



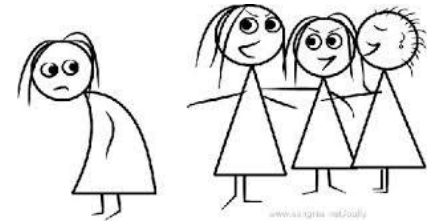
Q. Do your children know who to talk to if they ever don't feel safe?



How do these results measure up against results from the recent safety survey?

Health & Safety

Managing inappropriate **student behaviour** is a key priority



The Student Behaviour management guidelines published on the school website have been acknowledged by some parents...

"It has been a positive step to see the anti-bullying policy on the school website...it might be a minority issue but the effects can be far reaching."

BUT other comments suggest perceived inconsistencies or poor experiences in dealing with behaviour related situations have left some parents disillusioned...

"...I don't think bullying is always dealt with in the best manner, I don't think all teachers have the energy."

"There doesn't appear to be any clarity or consistency in the way policies are applied around poor behaviour and no consequences other than 'monitoring'."

"More disclosure to parents re: kids with special needs...hard to explain to our kids why the other student was behaving like this when they know its not acceptable."

An emotive issue for parents, the ongoing management of inappropriate behaviour or 'bullying' of children needs to be a key part of the health, safety and wellbeing strategy moving forwards.

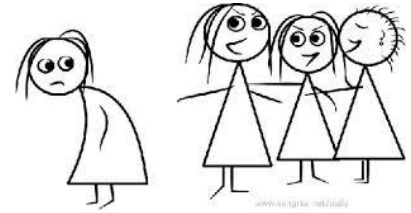
- raise awareness of school guidelines & procedures published on website
- focus on positive role play in classrooms to facilitate healthy, co-operative interactions
- Equip children with the knowledge on how to deal with inappropriate behaviour
- Investigate an increase in adult supervision at break times
- **Ensure behavioural management procedures outlined on school website are consistently adopted for all children**

"It is our job to teach them to be empathetic, kind, caring members of society."

"Primary has a duty of care to establish a strong platform for managing these issues current and future."

Health & Safety

Break time supervision is a significant concern....



Whilst parents recognise that teachers need a break, there is a general feeling that more visible adult supervision during morning tea and lunch breaks might help resolve behavioural issues

"We think the lunch time playground needs more supervising as this is where most of the problems seem to occur."

"It feels to me that more rostered on adult supervision is required at break times."

"I am uncomfortable with peer mediators being the main playground supervision in a school of nearly 300 children. Having a greater adult presence might address some of the issues surrounding inappropriate language and behaviour."

"Bullying in the playground – my child still finds it hard to find a teacher is a situation happens at lunchtime."

"Adult supervision is inadequate at break times resulting in poor behaviours."

"...very seldom have I seen teachers on duty near Playcentre or on the field."

Peer Mediators can play a significant role in enhancing cooperative play and friendship but have their limitations

"Peer mediators whilst a good idea and they do a good job have limitations. In some circumstances they have neither the maturity or authority to manage some situations and shouldn't be expected to."

Actions : Investigate options to increase *adult* supervision at break times, define roles of peer mediators (for parents), raise awareness of 'Ella's chair' among parents and pupils, reinforce buddy system

Health & Safety

Other issues....

"Stop people picking up their children from inside school grounds...very dangerous, some drive fast."

Road safety & car parking

- **Issue** : There are some concerns surrounding road safety and car parking issues in and around the school grounds – some of which have been addressed in the school newsletter
- **Action** : ongoing education for children (and parents!!)

"I have witnessed several near misses...maybe some education sessions for kids on car park safety?"

Emergency Procedures

- **Issue** : some uncertainty regarding emergency procedure
- **Action** : summary sheet for children to discuss with parents at home – part of safety week?

"I don't know when, where the situation would be handled...can a document come home to inform us?"

Police vetting of school volunteers

- **Issue** : Parental comments suggest this is not being undertaken with any consistency
- **Action** : Clarification required for potential *and* existing helpers as to what level of 'volunteering' requires a police check. Follow up to ensure police checks are undertaken where required.

"I have assisted with Rainbow reading amongst other things and have not been security checked."

"Would like to understand what a 'school volunteer' is with regard to police vetting."

"I help at the school quite a lot and I don't think I have ever been police vetted."

Other issues

- Children lingering at school after 3.30pm
- Children getting on the wrong bus
- Uneven pathway / trip hazard leading up to school
- High monkey bars and incidence of broken limbs

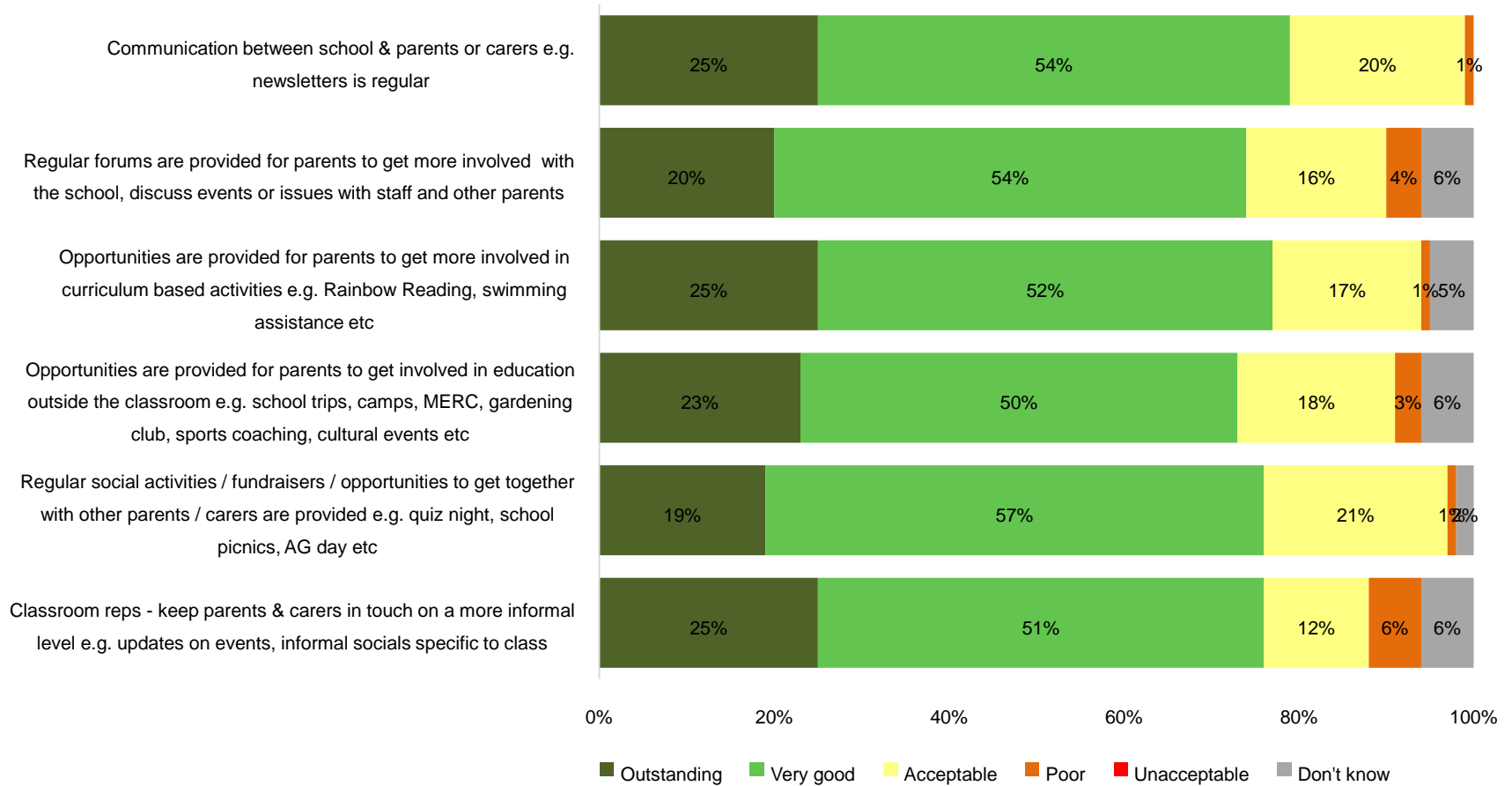
"More clarity around where kids should go if they are not picked up?"

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

School is often the focal point of a community and our relationships with parents and the wider community influence the 'feel' of the school.

Community– Current PERFORMANCE

Our sense of community is a key strength but it must be nurtured...



Community Involvement

Strong relationships and a sense of belonging drive community spirit...

For many the relationships formed with other parents and teachers are often the driving force behind our sense of community, created by simple things like...

- Chatting with other parents at the playground at the end of the school day (need to consider location of new playground in revamp!)
- Informal social events such as the back to school BBQ (ones that don't involve fundraising!)
- Visibility of teachers around the school and at events (sporting, social and fundraising)
- A welcoming teacher in the classroom
- Open forum initiatives such as SLT coffee morning, suggestion box, school survey, group discussions

"The biggest sense of community I experience comes from chatting to other parents at school pick up while the kids play on the playground."

The class rep system is popular – parents engaging with information specific to their child as opposed to the whole school

Community Involvement – Key Learnings & Action Points

Internal ‘politics’ can be highly damaging to our sense of community and have the potential to discourage parents from getting involved

“...there are pockets of politics within certain parent/friends of the school groups which take away from the sense of community and co-operation.”

One parent suggested creating a ‘community code of conduct’ which could be used to underpin all collaborative activities between the school, parents and the wider community

- clarifying the roles of the BOT and the PFA in the ongoing support of the school may also aid understanding of how each bring something different to the party

Comments also suggest that sometimes parents need a little more help creating that sense of belonging...social events at a class (or syndicate) level are perceived to be a great way to meet and get to know other parents with children in the same year group

“Encouraging classes to have social outing or events similar to the picnic.”

“Meeting other parents from my child’s year group early on in the year would be good.”

“It is important to connect with other families in our kid’s classrooms...class picnic or BBQ once a term would be good.”

“Have informal catch ups with syndicates for no reason other than to foster a better community.”

“I like meeting the families of other children in my child’s class.”

Creating a sense of belonging (friendships / great relationships with teachers) and a better understanding of the school (through email / newsletters) reinforces our sense of community which ultimately drives a greater desire to help (time permitting!)

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

What next?

Summary & Recommendations

Coatesville is a small school with a relaxed feel, lovely teachers and a sense of community – and it is this ‘family’ feel that makes our school appealing

Suggestions to build on this going forward include...

- Utilise class rep system to foster sense of belonging and community (particularly among new families)
- Clarify roles of BOT and PFA to manage expectations, reduce unnecessary politics and encourage greater community support
- Continue to encourage two way communication through open forums, support groups etc
- Mentoring system among teachers to share ideas re: managing parental expectations, maintaining positive relationships
- Ongoing professional development for teachers (visible to parents?)
- Consider carefully the placement of the playground when the hall is built – this is a key area for *parents* to socialise as well as children

Summary & Recommendations

A more emotive issue is behaviour management and suggestions for supporting strategies both in and out of the classroom focus on greater supervision at break time and greater support for teachers with challenging children in the classroom

Other health, safety and wellbeing topics that need to be addressed include

- Clarity and consistency with regard to police vetting of volunteers
- Car park / parking safety (ongoing)
- Emergency procedures (raise awareness among parents – ongoing)

IT is a hot topic and the school need to

- raise awareness of how IT is *currently* used in the classroom and the benefits it has brought to the learning environment
- communicate the vision for future IT strategy and expectations
- Use IT to achieve greater transparency for parents with respect to the school curriculum and individual learning achievements, policies and procedures etc.

Summary & Recommendations

A school hall is a top priority for parents but so is a resolution to our soggy field and the 'tired' netball courts

- Investment in all three areas will work towards community desire for integrating more sports opportunities into the curriculum as well as extending the school's learning environment to provide facilities to host performing arts / school productions
- Keep parents informed on actions, achievements and next steps to maintain momentum

Coatesville School has a sound platform to build on and a largely supportive community to work with...

- Keep the lines of communication open
- Work with available resources to target those areas that parents believe will make a difference