



PARENT VOICE

PARENTAL REFLECTIONS ON THEIR CHILD'S EXPERIENCE OF THE SCHOOLS IN THE FEDERATION

ATTITUDINAL DISPOSITION SURVEY

A COMPARISON OF SCHOOLS LEADING TO
IMPROVEMENT INSIGHTS AND
CHALLENGES

APRIL 2019

Supporting Change Ltd

Providing evaluation and strategic services that help you to make a difference

Introduction

- These surveys were undertaken amongst the entire parent body during April 2019.
- The parents and carers of **543** pupils were surveyed with a questionnaire based upon the 2012 Ofsted model. In total **477** families were contacted.
- In addition there were three special questions asked related to federation curriculum innovation that has been undertaken.

Responses

- Responses were received from 78 (**96**) families which is **15%** of the parent bodies One family with a child with special needs replied.
- Both response rates were significantly lower than previous years and well below the rates nationally as reported in 2008 by Ofsted. As such evaluators cannot state that full reliability is in tact but they believe that there are enough responses to advise trends and impressions.

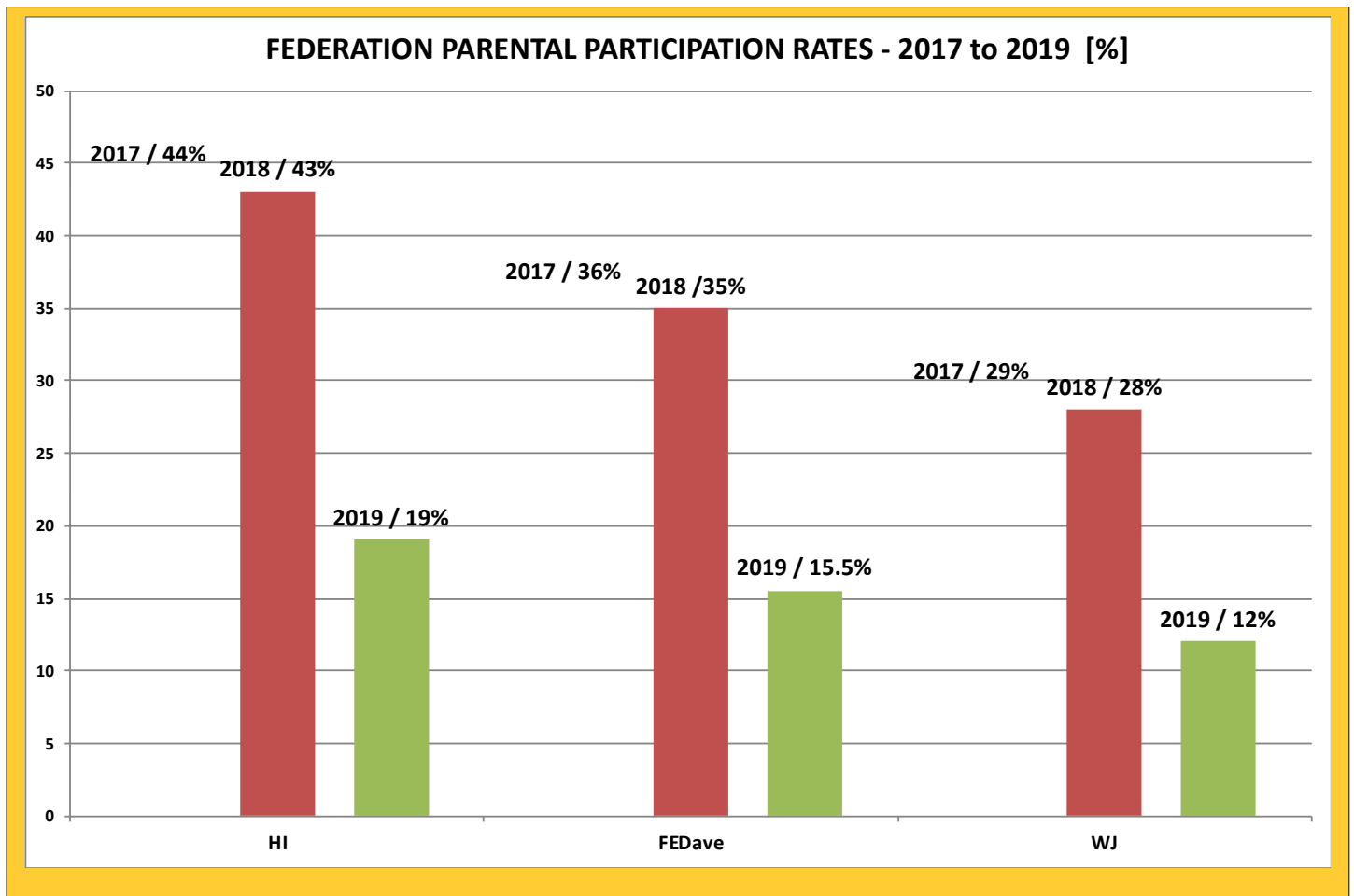
This Report

- Will examine differences in order to gain both insight and opportunity for improvement or intervention.
- Will allow comparison to be made between institutions that make up the federation.
- Will provide the benchmarks for testing future attitudinal disposition data.
- Will summarise the findings and suggest recommendations for the federation to consider or pursue.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This survey suggests that there are real signs of improvement at the Junior school as perceived by parents and infant parents remain content and very supportive of the work it does.
- The attitudinal disposition gap between the two schools is narrowing to less than ten points at the highest level of satisfaction but there remains a notable higher level of negativity at the Junior school.
- Parental responses rates in both schools are significantly less than last year. The federation leadership should consider the timing and conduct of this current survey.
- Both school's have parents perceiving behaviour as a worrying element but the proportions are greater in the Junior school. Leaders should examine this element holistically in the light of the emerging revised Ofsted framework.
- Attitudinal disposition is rooted in both trust and understanding and consequently both aspects are clearly visible in the the federation. The parent bodies are developing their understanding of what the federation is and what it does and their confidence in the leadership is growing. This process needs nurturing in a range of ways but is clearly creating perceived as well as realistic improvement.
- The leadership should continue to embed improved professional practice and leadership. It also has to continue to promote the value and purpose of being a federation by communicating well with parents and all stakeholders.

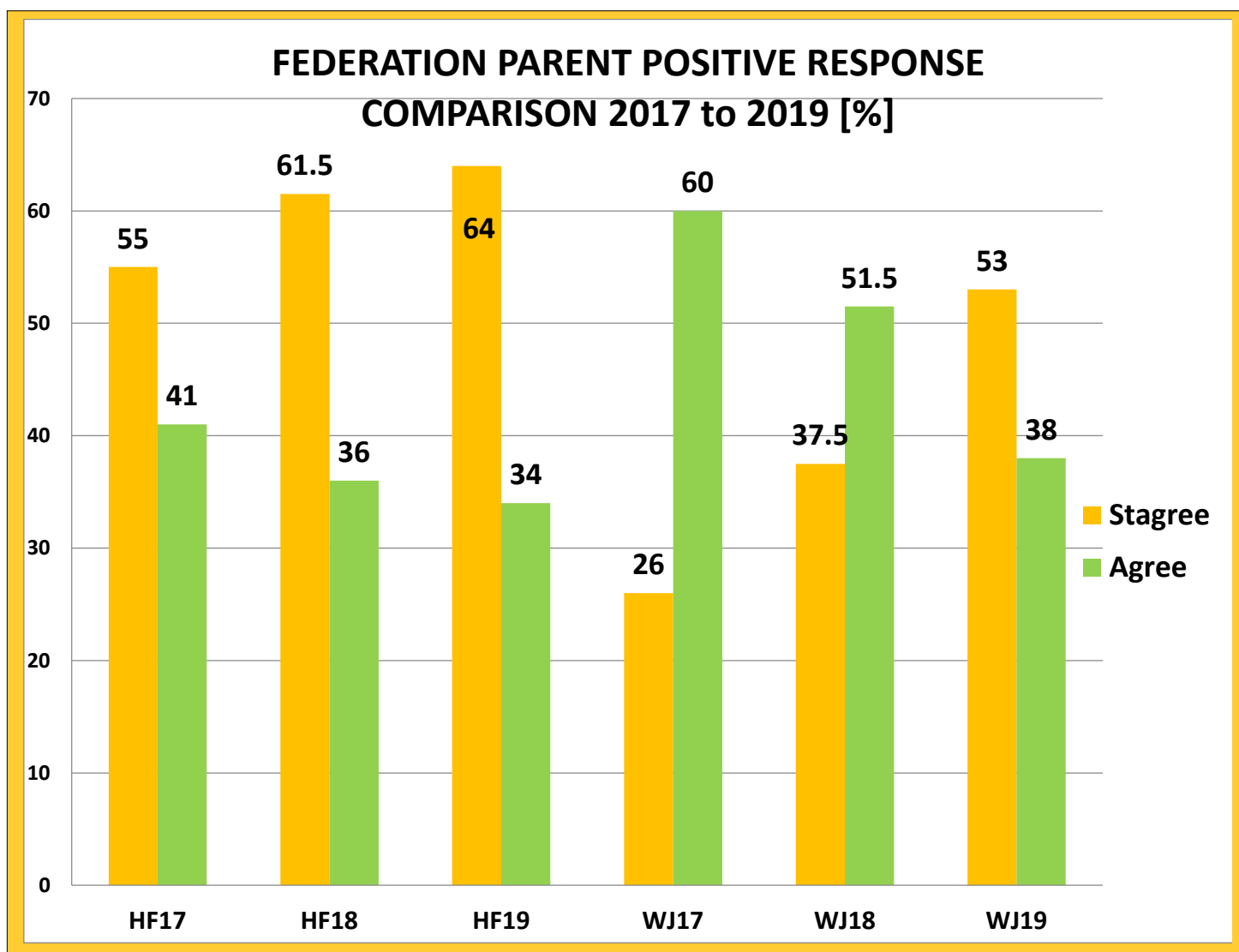
PARTICIPATION RATE COMPARISON 2019



Comment:

- The difference between schools is still apparent but by a reduced range of around 7% which is better than last year.
- Response rates are massively reduced this year particularly in the infant school.
- Federation leaders should:-
 - Examine their timing and conduct of, this survey
 - Perhaps set themselves participation targets for the future bearing in mind that the more responses increase the reliability of what is said.
 - Establish ways of feeding back the outcomes of the survey to the parent body so the integrity is established. This can be done through a “You said” / “We did” format for example.

COMPARISON OF LEVELS OF RESPONSE 2019

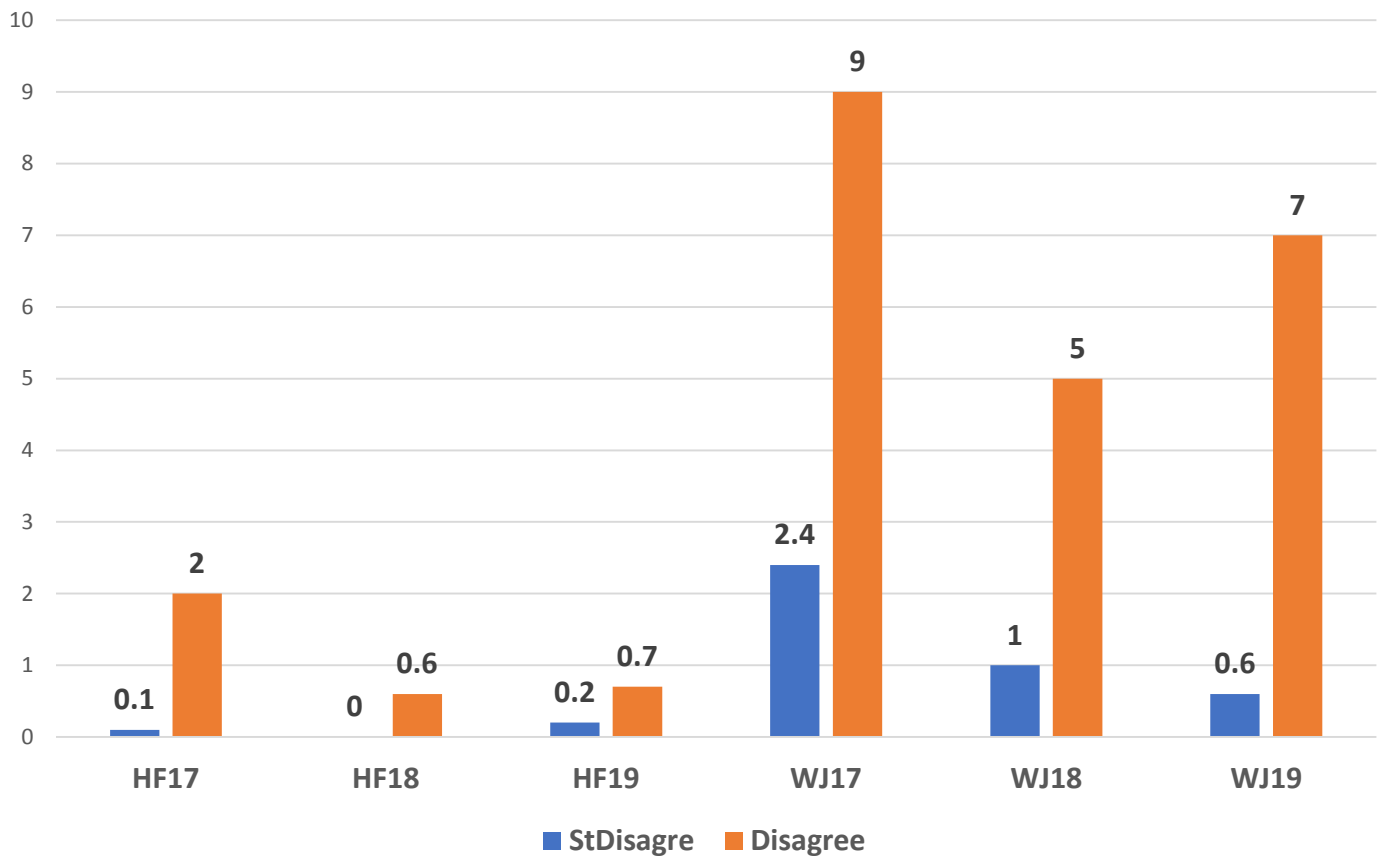


Comment:

- Stronger agreement has always dominated the infant school positivity profile and remains so with a growth over time of just under 10 points.
- In the junior school we have seen stronger agreement double its profile over time from 26% to 53%. This is a clear indication of the progress and success of the new leadership of the federation and its impact in the school that needed it most.
- The Junior school is now at the position enjoyed by the infant school in 2017.
- Federation leaders should:
 - Consider challenging themselves with growth targets for future years.
 - Consider if more tailored solutions and interventions should be directed towards specific issues in the junior school.

FEDERATION PARENT NEGATIVITY COMPARISONS 2017 to 2019

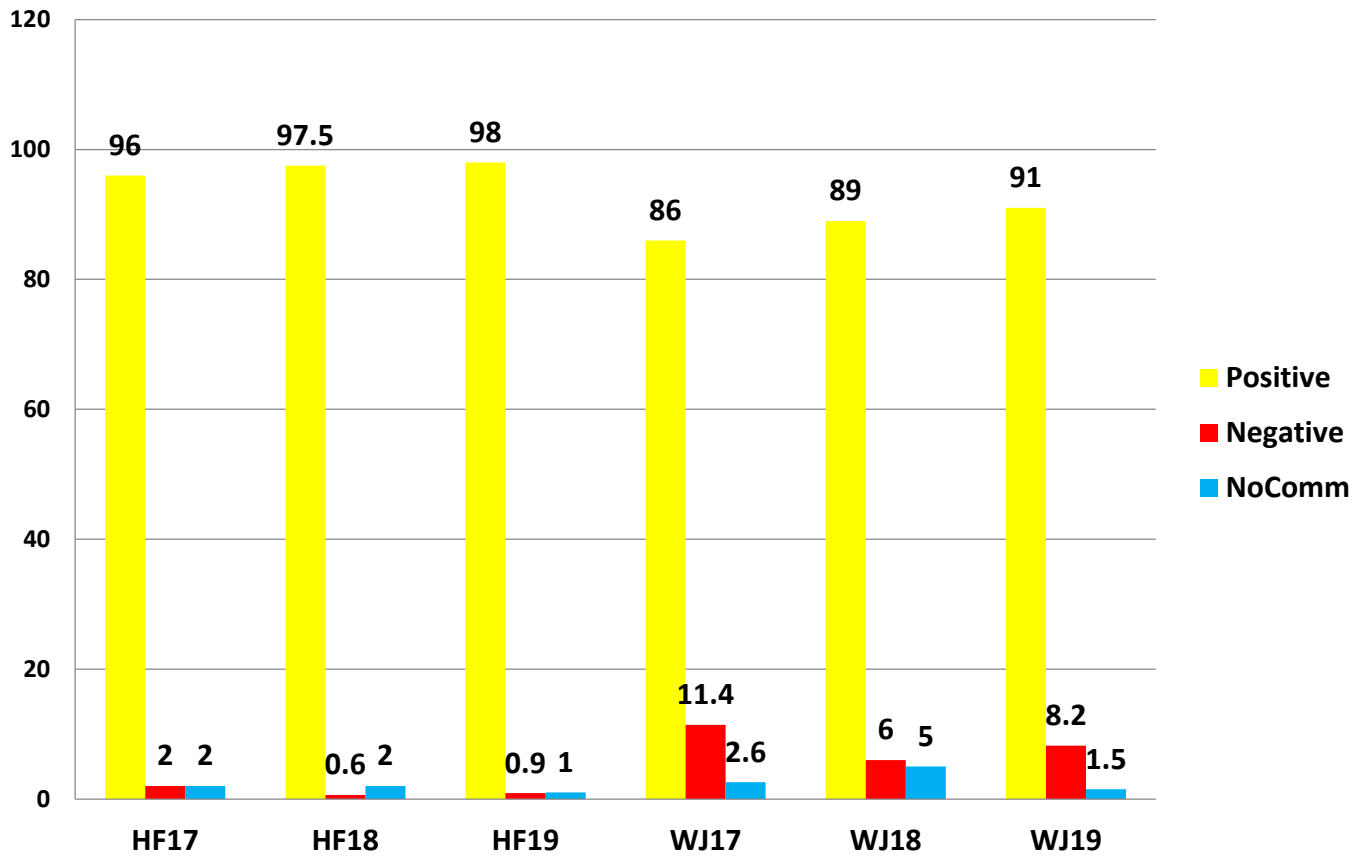
[%]



Comment:

- The junior school still produces greater levels of disagreement than the infant school albeit reducing over time.
- Strong disagreement has shrunk considerably in the junior school and hardly exists in the infant school.
- Both schools have demonstrated less negativity.
- The challenge of the junior school may require more targeted and bespoke interventions to help parents recognise realities rather than accepting perceptions based on myth or rumour.
- It might be necessary to think harder about how change is introduced, sold and revealed to the parent body.
- Elements of the coaching approach can be applied here.

OVERALL FEDERATION PARENT RESPONSE COMPARISONS 2017 to 2019 [%]

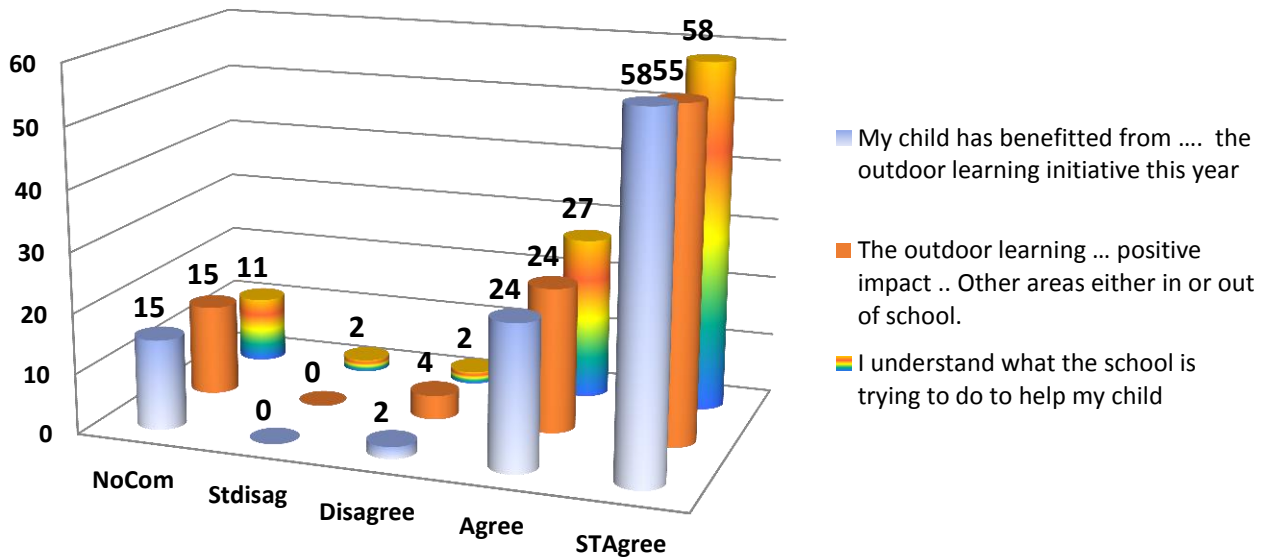


Comment:

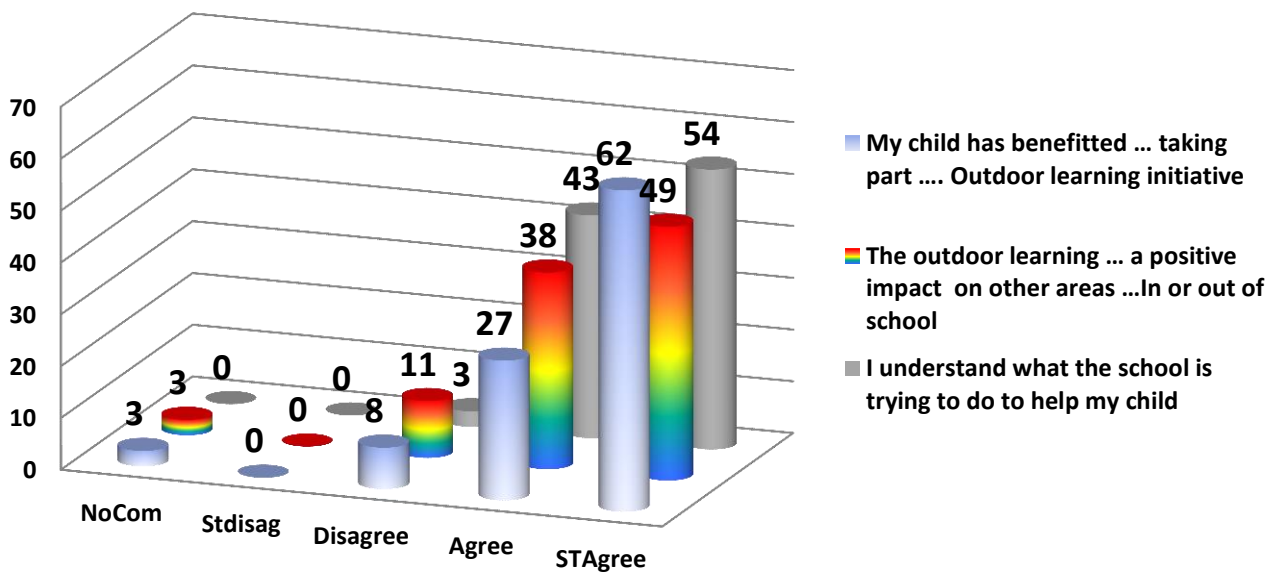
- This graph demonstrates clearly how general positivity has grown over time in both institutions and how negativity has shrunk.
- From a high start, positivity is two points higher in the infant school and a target of between 96%+ should be set for positivity each year.
- Positivity in the junior school is five points higher and, as evidence stands, a target of positivity never being less than 90% could be applied initially.

COMPARISON OF RESPONSES TO SPECIAL QUESTIONS

Heathfields Infants - Special Questions 2019 [%]

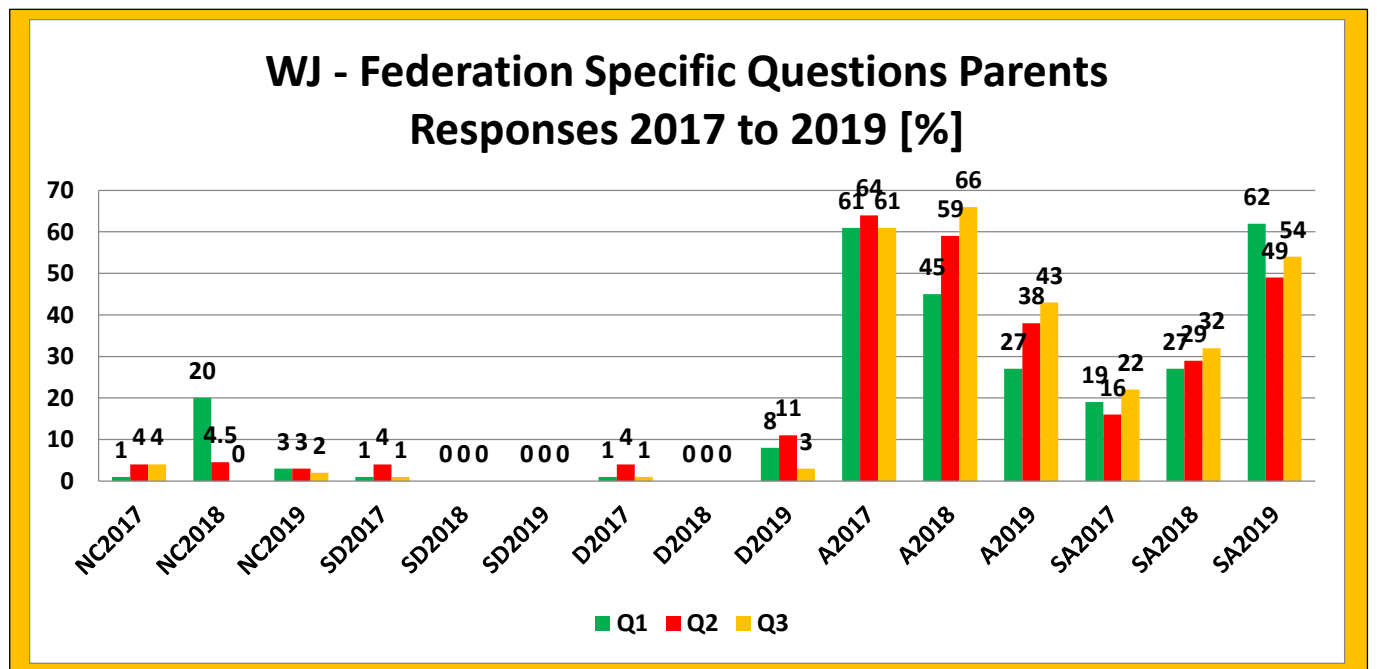
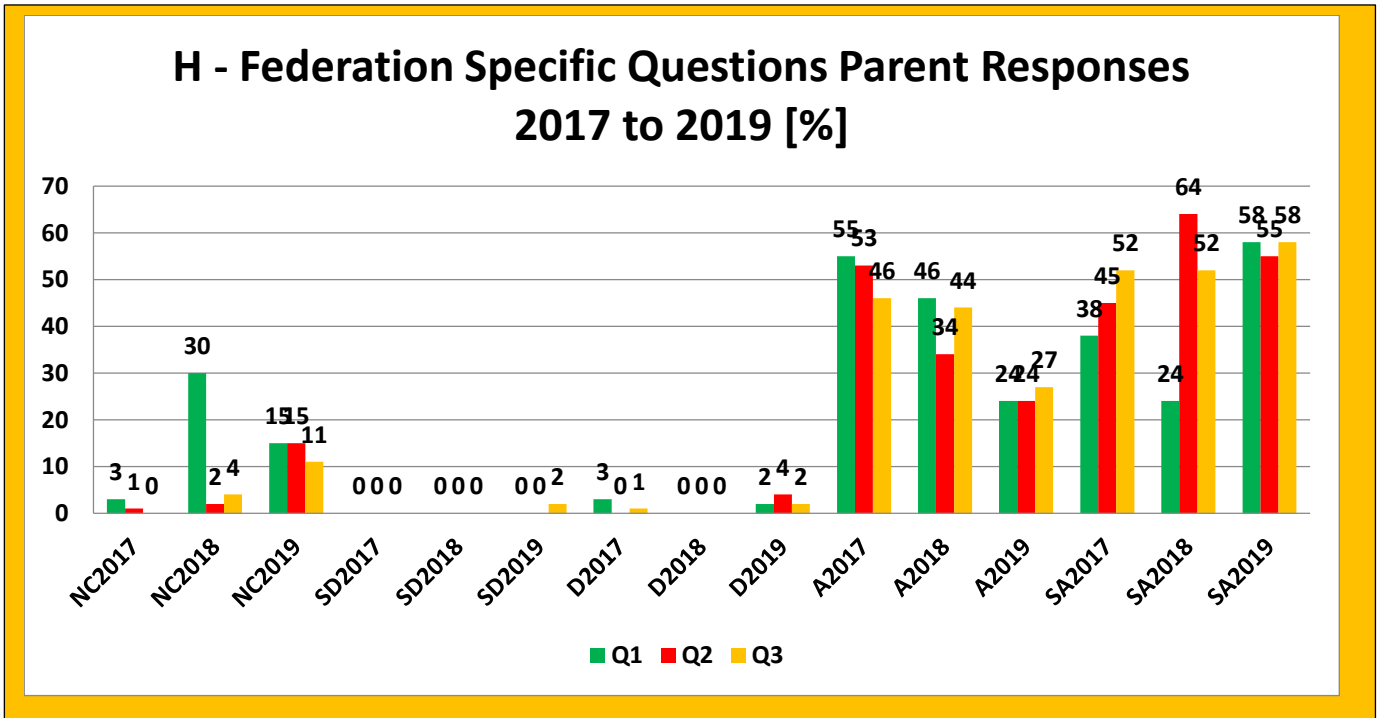


WILNECOTE JUNIOR - SPECIAL QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS 2019 (%)



Comment:

- There is very little difference between schools on the matter of outdoor learning.
- It could be argued that there is stronger agreement in the infant school but it is marginal and not significant especially in the light of return rates.
- The lessons to be learned around these issues suggest that:
 - Trust is developing
 - How change is introduced is vital as is how communication with all stakeholders is important and failure to recognise this element is central.

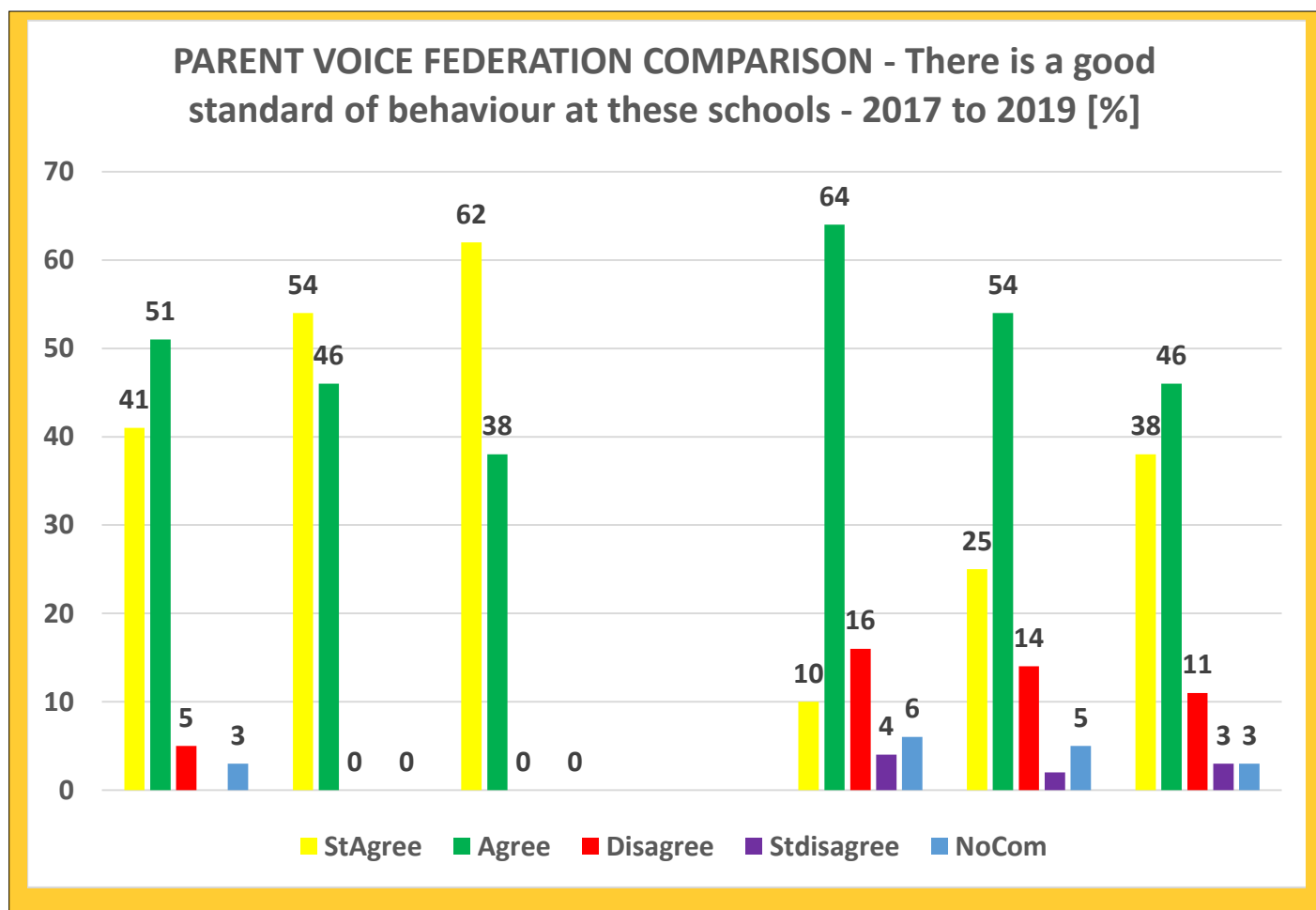


Comment:

- Over time, the growth of trust through the changes and interventions employed can be observed in the “strongly agree” responses.
- This is particularly important at the junior school.
- Equally, it appears to have slowed down in the infant school. This is more likely to be explained as a school that has less scope for improvement.

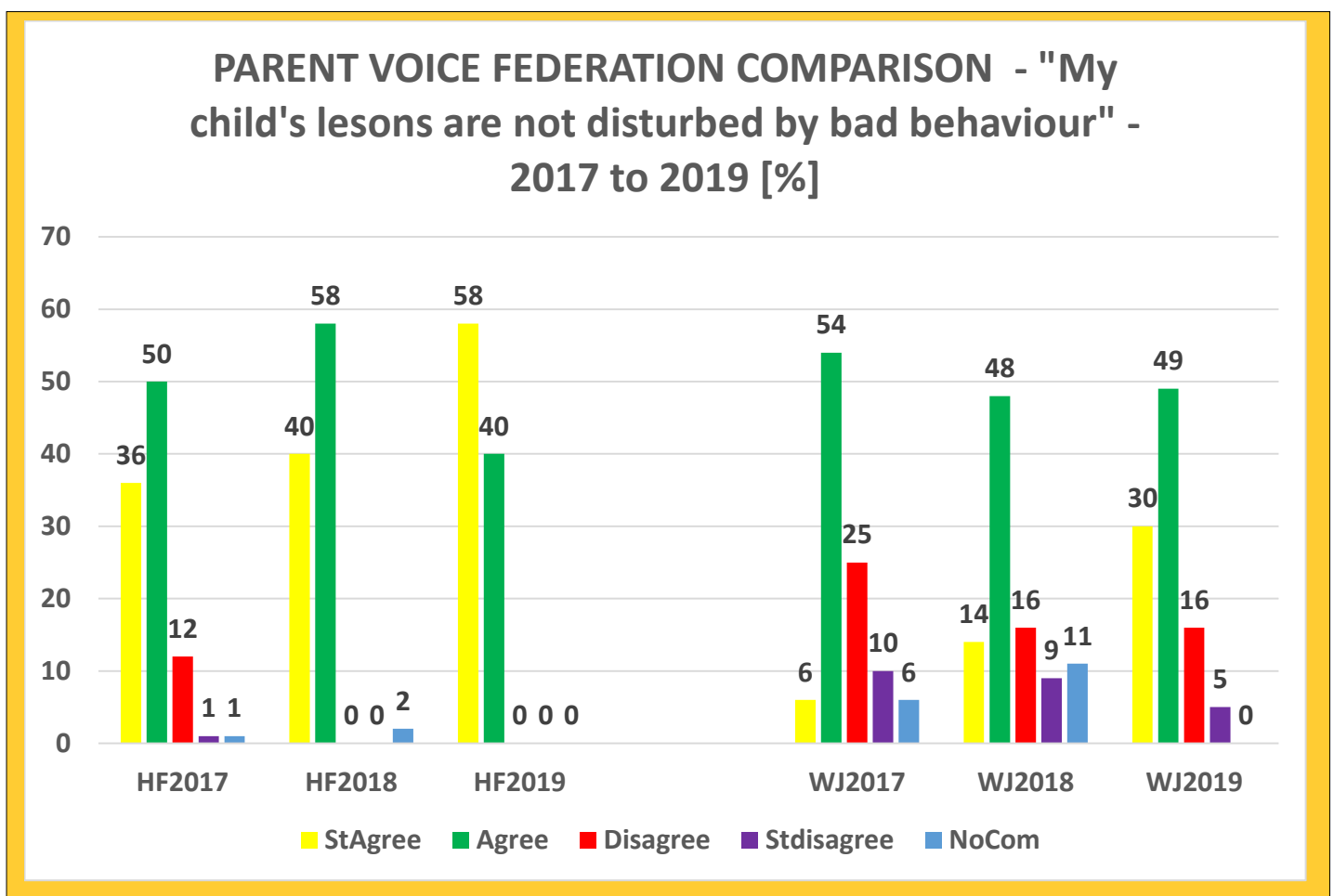
COMPARING BEHAVIOUR RESPONSES 2017 to 2019

- Behaviour remains controversial in the minds of many parents although it is not raising itself within the day to day operation of the school and gave no concern to Ofsted inspectors.
- Behaviour is easily spoken about but not always understood. There is value in further examining the data on behaviour raised by this survey and comparing the two institutions.
- A three year trend is now available.



Comment:

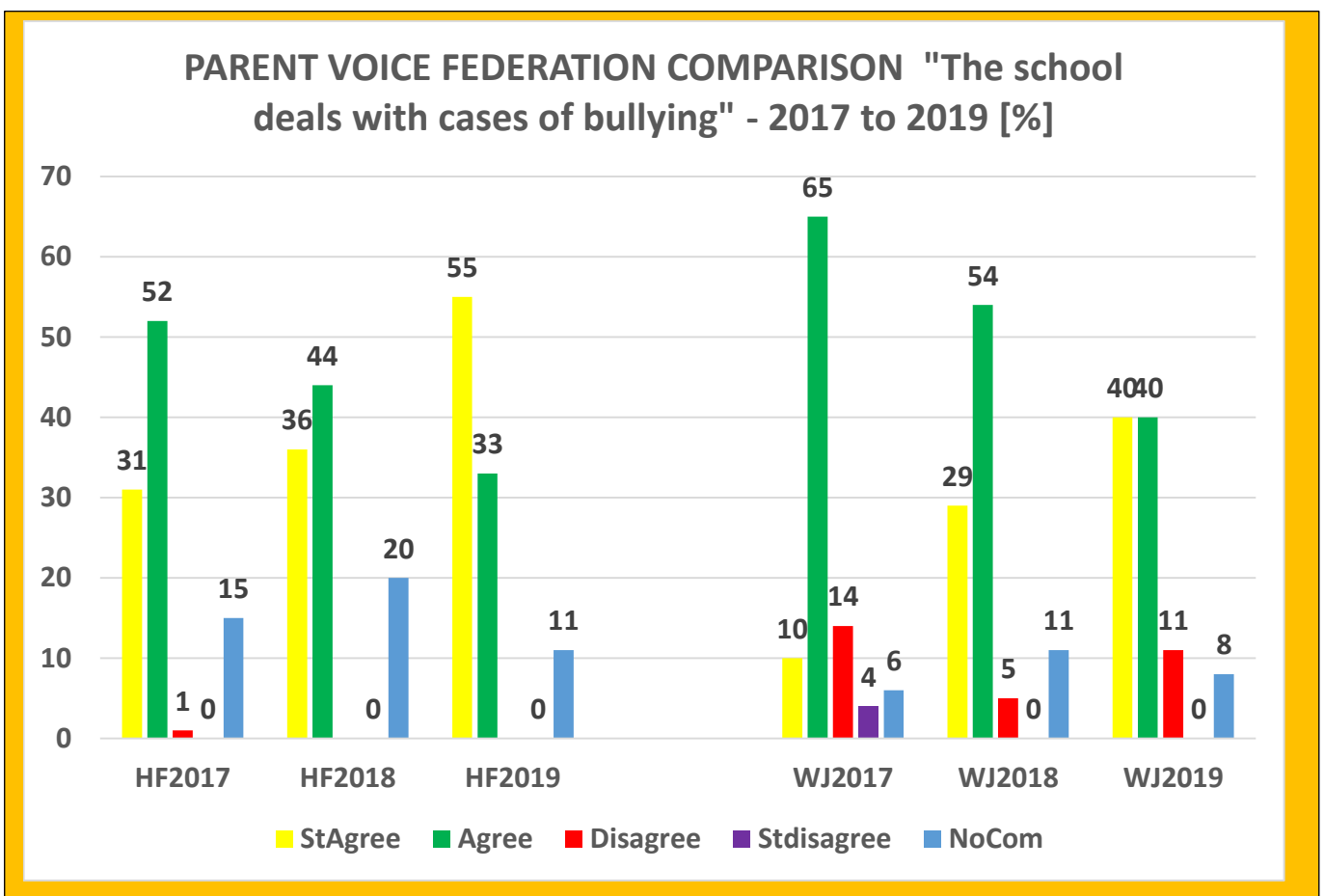
- The infant school has strengthened its strong agreement over time by 21 points and there has been no disagreement in the last two years.
- There has been even stronger improvement in the junior school. 28 points extra is the growth of the strong agreement lobby. The improvement has been similar (in the region of 13 points) in each year. Disagreement has been in steady decline over the same period.
- This demonstrates two things:-
 - A growing confidence in the leadership of the school
 - a likely improvement of the perception of behaviour as witnessed by pupils and shared with parents.



Comment:

- In all but 2017, the parents of children in the infant school had no declared position on this matter.
- The infant school has grown by 22 points in its strong agreement that there is no real bad behaviour that disturbs in lessons and thus, spoils learning.

- Quite clearly, for the junior school, there were major issues in this area in 2017. 60% of respondents could be positive but only 6% of them had strong positive view in this aspect
- Two years later in the junior school, 79% can be positive and strong agreement has grown by a massive 24 points.
- Similarly negativity has dropped by around 14 points.
- The evidence of improvement is clear but clearly many parents will maintain perceptions based on erroneous information
- The schools have two tasks:-
 - To spread good news and positive messages
 - To help parents to understand and be aware of what is meant by good behaviour.



Comment:

- Unsurprisingly, this has never been an issue for the infant school and it remains interesting that, over time, the school has improved the strength of its positive perception by 24 points.

- In the junior school, there has been a strengthening of the strongly agreed perception by 30 points and negativity has been reduced although remaining more fickle.
- Bullying is not regarded as an issue but, like in most schools and society generally, is irritant and potential issue.
- Once again the federation is challenged to find the ways to both challenge and reassure its parent body around these issues.

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

The questions in the survey this year were -

1. **My child feels safe at this school**
2. **My child is making good progress at this school**
3. **The school meets my particular needs**
4. **The school ensures my child is well looked after**
5. **My child is taught well at this school**
6. **The school helps my child develop skills in**
7. **There is a good standard of behaviour at this school**
8. **My child's lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour**
9. **The school deals with any cases of bullying**
10. **The school helps me support my child's learning**
11. **The school responds well to my concerns**
12. **The school keeps me well informed**

Special questions -

- I. **My child has benefitted ... taking part Outdoor learning initiative**
- II. **The outdoor learning ... a positive impact on other areas ...In or out of school**
- III. **I understand what the school is trying to do to help my child**

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FEDERATION

- The federation is made up of two schools of distinctive history and characteristic. The parental attitudinal dispositions continue to reflect this. Both institutions have continued to improve during the course of this year. This particularly noticeable in the Junior school and to a lesser extent in the infant school where the need has been less.
 - The junior school reveals a strengthening parental attitudinal disposition. Confidence is growing but there continues to be an urgent need to both maintain and consolidate the improvement and develop them further.
 - The infant school position is much more in terms of consolidation. The danger of this is that complacency could easily creep in.

- The needs of the two schools are different and they should be dealt with differently.
 - The two schools have a close intertwining in the learning continuum of the children they serve so the vision and values of the two institutions need to have a commonality as does the approach to professional practice. This was pointed out last year and continues to be the case.
 - Although on two sites they must continue to see themselves as one, separated only by the differing learning needs of the pupils that is determined by age and previous learning. This is best achieved through appropriate transition work and the integration and training of staff of all types.
 - The particular needs of each institution should be clearly and precisely identified. Priorities should be set and appropriate action taken. This is of particular importance for youngsters and families who present challenge and aspects of disaffection.
 - The leadership of the federation has made huge strides in their approach and practice and this is clearly paying off and is gaining the respect and support of parents.
 - The poor participation and return rate this year needs to be used to reflect on how and when the parent voice is invited to be heard.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That:

1. The improvement planners continue to recognise the differences between the schools and use their tactics, and resource allocation, accordingly
2. Mechanisms continue to maximise the involvement of stakeholders in sharing in the vision, values and progress of the schools. This might involve creating groups, publishing regular and systematic newsletters. This will include boosting response rates.
3. Ofsted expectations run in close parallel with more local considerations and the change agenda along with the requirements of change and adaptation take into consideration appropriate preparation to involve parents and communicate with them clearly.

END

Supporting Change Ltd. 4/19