

Parents and Carers Survey, June 2020






Huge thanks to everyone who completed the survey. At the time of writing, we have had over 450 responses, which has given us a really good idea of what you are all thinking.

It is probably worth saying that the written responses underline the fact that there has been a huge variation between families in terms of the impact of lockdown and your experiences of home learning. The figures from the survey below obviously only give an overall view and you will see that it is generally very positive; however, please rest assured that we absolutely understand that many of you are finding things extremely challenging and we encourage you to get in touch if we might be able to help.

Firstly, a summary of the responses to the closed questions:

5. My child has been accessing online learning through:





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	Show My Homework only	11
	Microsoft Teams only	49
	A mixture of both	385
	Attending school as vulnerabl...	2
	None of the above	8



6. Overall since lockdown began, and considering the circumstances, my child has coped with the work set:





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	Very well	195
	Reasonably well	212
	Not very well	40
	Not at all well	8



7. My child seems to be engaging with the online lessons:

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	Very well	188
	Reasonably well	221
	Not very well	31
	Not at all well	15



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8. On average, the amount of work my child has been doing every day over the last 2-3 weeks has been about:

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● 5 or more hours per day	84
● 3-4 hours	288
● 1-2 hours	66
● Less than an hour	17



9. Since we launched the programme of online lessons, have the levels of workrate and motivation your child has shown:

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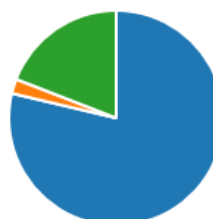
● Improved	231
● Stayed about the same	172
● Reduced	52



10. The number of online lessons per day (i.e. usually 3 for Key Stage 3 students, 4 for KS4 and 4 per week, per subject for KS5) is:

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● About right	358
● Too much	10
● Not enough	87



11. For my child, one hour for each online lesson is:

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● About right	416
● Too long	37
● Not long enough	2



12. Considering the circumstances, the quality of work set for students (including online lessons) during the period of partial closure has generally been very good.

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● Strongly agree	140
● Agree	269
● Disagree	43
● Strongly disagree	3



14. Communication with school has been open and effective since partial closure

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● Strongly agree	218
● Agree	218
● Disagree	19
● Strongly disagree	0



15. My child's emotional health and well-being have been well-supported by school since school partially closed.

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● Strongly agree	127
● Agree	257
● Disagree	68
● Strongly disagree	3



16. Under the circumstances, Lymm High School has adapted well to lockdown over the past three months and done a very good job on behalf of my child

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● Strongly agree	200
● Agree	225
● Disagree	29
● Strongly disagree	1



There were also two questions (13 and 17) that invited open responses and below we have summarised the points that came up more than once or twice, along with a brief response from us. They have been listed in rough order of the frequency with which the points were raised.

Point raised in survey	School response
By far and away the most common written responses were those thanking staff at the school for all they are doing, expressing appreciation for their efforts at this time and acknowledging that nothing was ever going to be ideal.	We are extremely grateful for this, and certainly do not take it for granted. It has not been easy to switch from teaching 1900 students in school to trying to support them remotely and, with the benefit of hindsight, we'd have done plenty of things differently. However, having the support and understanding of parents and carers has made things vastly easier to manage and we really do appreciate it. Having so many positive emails to read out to staff has really helped to keep them going. Thank you!

Comments on the amount of work, number of online lessons and levels of challenge.

These went right across the spectrum, from parents reporting that their child has been overwhelmed with the volume of work or work that is too difficult and/or that online lessons are moving too quickly, right through to those of you saying that there isn't enough work and it's too easy – with every shade of opinion in between.

We anticipated this would come up a lot and were not surprised. Pitching work correctly for every individual child is the single hardest thing to do in teaching when we are actually in school, so trying to do it remotely is nigh on impossible (something that many of you were kind enough to acknowledge).

The comments about different levels of challenge were pretty evenly spread and so we are concluding that we are probably broadly in the right place overall. Nevertheless, teachers are very aware of this issue and we are trying to share good practice in how best to manage this in the current circumstances.

As you can see from the responses to question 10, around 20% of you would like to see more online lessons each day – with most of these responses applying to Key Stage 3 (about 24% of KS3 parents would like more). However, this also needs to be balanced against the fact that quite a few parents said that having back-to-back online lessons for younger students is too intense and also that the great majority still think the number of lessons is about right. For these reasons, we will stick with the current schedule until this end of this year.

Linked to this, we note that some of you feel your children are doing less work now that online lessons are running. We are therefore asking teachers to make sure there is still work on Show My Homework to cover some of the time students are not taking part in lessons – remaining mindful of the fact that strong feedback in the early days of lockdown was that we were setting too much work on SMHW.

Many comments about online lessons having been a big improvement. Lots of thanks for these, as well as a few responses expressing discontent that they were not introduced earlier.

We are obviously glad that most of you appreciate the online lessons and, again, we are most grateful for the support and understanding shown by parents and carers.

As to whether online lessons should or could have started earlier, we can only ask for understanding that it hasn't been as straightforward to do as it may sometimes appear from the outside. Difficult as it is to imagine now, few people thought schools would be closed for long back on the 20th March when we shut with 48 hours' notice – in fact, most people were seriously talking about the most likely scenario being opening soon after the Easter holidays! Once the chaos of the first couple of weeks had subsided and it became clear we could be closed for some time, we did immediately start ordering equipment, encouraging those teachers who were able to do so to trial online lessons, begin training the rest of the staff and planning a timetable that takes

	<p>account of the differing home circumstances teachers found themselves in.</p>
<p>Online lessons contain a lot of teacher talk and it is hard to interact with them or engage in proper discussions. This can lead to children disengaging.</p> <p>Linked to this, many of you asked for lessons where teachers and students can see faces on screens.</p>	<p>This is, of course, very true. Indeed, teachers are saying exactly the same - often feeling they are talking into a kind of darkness with nobody at the other end!</p> <p>On the other hand, as some of you commented, we are starting to see levels of confidence rise amongst students as they get used to the online lessons and we hope this will continue. To encourage more interaction, we will be introducing the facility for teachers to see students faces on screens as soon as we can; please see the recent letter about using Zoom alongside Teams for this. This will also enable teachers to spot more easily those students who have logged on but who are not paying attention!</p> <p>If online learning does need to continue into next year, we also expect to be able to make the online groups sizes smaller, which will make it easier to generate more interaction.</p>
<p>Feedback / marking.</p> <p>Quite a few of you said that having more work marked would help to motivate children and that more feedback on their work is needed.</p>	<p>We completely understand this and would really like to do more. The practicalities make it very difficult – especially because so many students still don't have the relevant technology to complete tasks online, which means work cannot be collected in and responded to easily. Please also bear in mind that most teachers teach hundreds of students and so anything that slows the process down compared to the usual marking of books has a major impact. For these reasons, we've prioritised Year 10 and 12 for any individual feedback so far.</p> <p>Nevertheless, we are actively looking at assessment policies at the moment to try to work out what can reasonably be done. Following the ordering of Chromebooks, many more students will have suitable devices by the end of the year, and this will give us more flexibility for next year if remote learning continues.</p> <p>In the meantime, you should see more and more teachers using the quiz function on Teams to help assess learning as well as running activities designed to address common misconceptions that they have picked up this way. Please also bear in mind that we do encourage students to send good pieces of work to teachers so that, at the very least, they can receive some praise for their efforts.</p>
<p>Several of you asked about plans for September and/or said you would like</p>	<p>I wish I could give you some clarity about this! We are desperate for some ourselves so that we can plan effectively. Unfortunately</p>

<p>to see your child back in school as soon as possible.</p>	<p>(and understandably), nobody can predict what the situation will be by September.</p> <p>All we can say at this stage is that we are planning for a number of different scenarios and will let you know as soon as we know anything. Like you, we really want to see all students back in school, continuing with their education, as soon as possible.</p> <p>For those of you asking about catch-up for lessons missed, we cannot really plan this properly either until we know more about when we will be back and in what form. Again though, we are thinking about what we might do in different scenarios.</p>
<p>3-4 of you said you felt Year 11 have been rather forgotten in all this.</p>	<p>Year 11 certainly haven't been forgotten – though we understand why some of you may say that. Perhaps more than any other year group, we feel sympathy for these students and wish things could be different.</p> <p>Year 11 had finished their GCSE courses when we closed and, even if we had the capacity for it, it would not make sense to start teaching A levels at the moment. We have tried to keep in touch with students as best we can and will keep doing so. We have also spent a huge amount of time doing all we can to ensure the information that is sent to exam boards is robust and fair and have our fingers firmly crossed on the students' behalf. Watch out too for their special virtual assembly this week as well as a virtual induction events that is coming up.</p>

Thank you again to all those who responded.

Kind regards

Gwyn Williams