

Netherhall School

An Ambitious, Caring Community



9th February 2024

Dear parent / carer

I wrote to all parents and carers last week to thank everyone who had completed the Ofsted ParentView. The feedback in this document is excellent and we are delighted that 97% of parents and carers would recommend our school to another parent or carer. I then asked for your further support as the Ofsted survey document does not give the opportunity to give written feedback on what the school is doing well and what we can do to further improve.

I would again like to thank all those parents and carers who have provided us with some invaluable feedback over the last week. As I regularly tell the students at our school council meetings, Netherhall School is a partnership between the students, parents / carers, community of Maryport and the school. I am delighted, therefore, to be able to give feedback to you all on the responses, which provide some fantastic information on what parents and carers believe the school is doing well and also where there are further improvements that could be made. Our aim is to secure a 100% recommendation rating from parents and carers, and the feedback we have received will help us to work towards this figure.

Firstly, I would like to provide you with the feedback we have received in relation to what you currently believe that Netherhall School does well. There have been some fantastic comments provided in relation to the strengths of our provision as detailed below:

- Creating a happy environment for pupils to learn in. My children enjoy going to school each day.
- Communication is excellent and the empathy shown to students is fantastic.
- I feel that if there's a problem you work with the parent to try and solve it.
- Pastoral and learning support. Good communication.
- Very high standards of learning and excellent teaching.
- Everything - most importantly they make my child eager to learn and want to attend school.
- Communicate with parents and pupils. Offer a wide range of subjects and activities. Make all stakeholders feel like they are making a difference. Educate our children with pragmatic and professional teachers.
- Very proactive with a visible presence from senior members of staff.

Netherhall Road, Maryport, Cumbria, CA15 6NT

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- The school has a wonderful family feel where the students are genuinely cared for. It is obvious that students' wellbeing is a priority and that teachers encourage them to be the best version of themselves.
- Encourage children.
- The number one thing about Netherhall is the teachers make the kids feel safe and welcome, and part of the school. This is a cornerstone of the kids being able to learn and develop. I went to Netherhall as a kid, and it was a bit grim, but I'm amazed how much it has improved now.
- *Communication. *Children's behaviour. *Quick to resolve issues. *Approachable and easy to get in touch with if needed. *Healthy school/home balance (homework load). *Teacher presence at the school gate.
- They are good communicators. They always appear to give emails in advance. They certainly support the student and I feel that it's absolutely student focused. We feel they are always approachable to discuss the student.
- Communication is great. The Edulink app is very effective and I enjoy seeing my son's achievements through the day. There are some good resources on there to access as well. I also like the app for reporting absence as it really streamlines the system and helps busy parents! In addition to the communication above, we feel very fortunate that Mr Lister is our son's head of year. His response rate to questions or queries is second-to-none. The children also find him very approachable, which is very important. Academic reports are frequent and allow us to see our child's progress. Lots of sporting opportunities available. Pupil voice is valued through both the school council and also subject specific forums for children to discuss what they like and what could be improved. Homework is regular but not overwhelming. My son absolutely loves Netherhall School and we are thrilled with the experience he has had so far!
- Pastoral care - the school has been amazing in supporting my daughter's transition from primary school. The teachers ensure everyone gets an individual service and my experience so far has been that what you say you are going to do, you do. Thank you.
- Cares for all of the pupils and genuinely takes an interest in what they are doing and supports them to help them achieve their goals.

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- Communication with parents is excellent, compared to another local secondary that my other child attends. The management are very approachable and staff seem to know the children well. Achievements celebrated and shared on social media. My child loves coming to this school, I believe that the values and relationships are excellent.
- I'm 100% happy with how things are at the minute. I would like to add that I personally think the way the children are greeted each morning in all weathers by Mr Bailey and all other staff is a credit to your school. Lovely to see as a parent, please keep up all your hard work, well done.
- There are some lovely committed staff at the school and Mr Tromans is a fantastic headmaster. Some excellent facilities at the school. Great after school club opportunities. Pupils have excellent opportunities to do well and staff are very supportive.
- After school study lessons are very beneficial to all pupils.
- Netherhall shows great support for those children that struggle, especially those on the SEND register. Communication is excellent and the parent app is informative and easy to use, enabling a good understanding of the child's progress. There are good opportunities for extra-curricular activities. When there have been issues in school with behaviour between pupils, the school is proactive to reach a conclusion to keep everyone safe.
- Netherhall is an inclusive school where everyone is valued and treated the same. The teachers have demonstrated integrity which filters down to the students. The school has changed its image in the best possible way ever.
- Netherhall does really well to support all students in subjects that they need more support in or extra lessons to help them improve and better themselves to get ready for exams / A levels. As a parent, I can honestly say this has helped my children and you are doing a great job in providing extra lessons after school and in your own time. Thanks again Netherhall - keep up the great work. I've been in to school to have meetings with the head of sixth form and he tells me how things are going and what my child needs to be aiming for and the extra study lessons she should be revising in – he has gone above and beyond to help my child in all aspects of her study and I am grateful for this, so thanks again.
- Keep doing what you are doing. Proud we've got a great school in our town.

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- I can't recommend this school enough; my daughter is only in year 7 but so far as first impressions go we just can't fault the school as any issues have been dealt with immediately. Mr Fulton has been amazing and very approachable. The way in which the school has communicated with us over any situation we have come across - we couldn't ask for any better - the children really are the main focus at this school. Keep up the good work as it is definitely paying off.

Once again, we would like to thank you all for the brilliant feedback we have received in relation to the provision offered and we would also like to thank you for the improvements you have suggested to help us develop the school even further for our students. I have included a summary of the responses we have received from your suggestions to further improve the provision offered at Netherhall School and include the plans we have in place to address each of these suggestions for our students:

- English homework - Bedrock learning is repetitive. **Evidence based research has proven that Bedrock learning is highly effective in consolidating students' knowledge and understanding. We fully appreciate it has limitations and have been undergoing free trials with other platform providers to look at alternative resources to support English homework that will give greater depth and variety, these are resources such as Sparx Reader and Vocabulus. We will keep you informed.**
- Availability / options on school trips should be listed at the beginning of year so one can make a decision ahead of time. **All school trips are listed in advance on the school's academic calendar. In addition to posting it on the school's website, we will make sure that this document is sent out to all students and parents / carers at the start of the next academic year, so students and parents / carers are equipped with this information at the start of the academic year.**
- The sending of emails in relation to detentions are not always accurate. **We fully appreciate that this is a time sensitive issue. The school looks to avoid putting students in detention if it can be avoided. Sometimes students are put in detention (usually for incomplete homework) and they manage to get their homework completed inbetween the issuing of the detention and the detention itself. This results in students (correctly the school believes, as the detention is the opportunity for the student to complete their homework) being removed from the detention at a late date.**
- Bullying needs to have zero tolerance. **Netherhall School has a zero tolerance to bullying and takes the issue very seriously. All students should come to school feeling that school is a safe place, where they can have an enjoyable learning experience. If you do ever have any concerns in relation to this, please contact your child's head of year and this will be dealt with immediately.**

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- More direct bus transfers from nearby villages. **We are currently running a minibus service that serves pick-ups along two routes to school, as the number of students will increase substantially again with our record new intake of year 7 students in September, we will be able to offer more direct services to students in the new academic year to reduce travel time for our students.**
- I do feel that the cost of the school meals is high and could be lowered. **Our school canteen is operated in house and not by a catering company. As a result of this we operate our school meals service on a non-profit basis and meals are therefore served at cost price. Unfortunately, it is not possible to reduce the cost of the school meals.**
- *Put prices on your food so children know how much things are. *Better variety in food so children do not get bored with the options. *Removal of drama as a subject and the drama club. *Make going on stage for an award optional (for during the year, not end of year awards). My child would do/share more with the school if there was not the threat of having to go on stage. **The school canteen now has the price of all meals on display in the serving area. There is a wide variety of food choices available in the school canteen and if students have any further requests for meals to go on the rota of choices, they are most welcome to let me know of these via our school council meetings. Due to healthy eating directives, the school is only allowed to serve chips on one day of the week, which is Friday. The removal of drama from the curriculum is due to constraints in terms of budget and personnel at this time; however, as the school continues to grow and flourish, it is certainly a subject that the school hopes to re-visit and to provide in the school's curriculum offer. Heads of year do give students the option not to take the stage during awards assemblies if that is their choice. If your child doesn't want to go on to the stage during assemblies to receive their award, please ask them to make their head of year aware of their request.**
- I was worried about my child's attainment in a subject area (and this worry was discussed and resolved effectively), however, parents probably need some clarification / explanation about the reports that children get each term. I thought my child was underachieving due to the colour system, however, once I knew he was being judged against GCSE criteria (and he's only in year 8), I could see why he had been levelled where he has been. The teacher was lovely, phoned me and explained it all, but I imagine there will be other parents in the same situation. Not a criticism, just an observation. **Mr Bell, our data manager will write to all parents and carers to provide an explanation of the attainment ratings system used at Netherhall School to clarify and support the interpretation of this information.**

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- Storage for students when they bring a large amount of equipment with them to school and the opportunity to wear PE kit to school when they have PE that day. **The school is planning to introduce storage shelving in each tutor room for students to be able to leave PE kit, etc. on days when they have to bring a large amount of equipment with them. This will be introduced in the new financial year, in April. In relation to PE kit, we would continue to operate a policy between the separation of wearing school uniform in formal lessons and then changing into PE kit for PE lessons. This is important on days of inclement weather when students require a change into clean and dry clothing to resume their academic studies.**
- More detailed reports would be helpful. **Academic progress reports are provided three times during each year alongside annual parents' evenings. Staff are always available to speak to any parents and carers who would like to discuss their child's progress at any point, either through a telephone call or by arranging a meeting in school and we would encourage you to contact any member of staff who you would like to discuss your child's progress with at any time.**

I would like to close by thanking you all for taking the time to read this feedback and to again let you know that we are always keen to hear of any suggestions that you may have to help us further improve the experience that all students of Netherhall School have on a daily basis. To this end, should you have any ideas in this respect at any time, then please do contact me at m.bailey@netherhall.cumbria.sch.uk and I will ensure that all suggestions we are able to put in place will be done so as quickly as possible. Finally, I would like to thank you all once again for your continued support in making our school the very best it can be.

Yours faithfully

Mr M D Bailey
Deputy Headteacher

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