



The Wee Friday Note

Friday 12th April 2024



"Children are like wet cement. Whatever falls on them makes an impression."
Haim Ginott (child psychologist and psychotherapist & parent educator)

1. Update on Cregagh Preschool

Further to my text message to parents over the Easter holidays, I can now confirm (with considerable regret) that as it currently stands, Cregagh Preschool will close at the end of June 2024. As explained previously, it was never going to be possible for Cregagh Primary School to "take over" the running of the preschool next door, as it is totally independent from any school and has to remain so. What the preschool and primary school had hoped for was that some people connected with our primary school would join the preschool's Management Committee and assist to keep it open in that way. However, for several reasons this is now not possible. This is not the outcome Cregagh Primary School was hoping for.

Unfortunately, as is the case across NI schools and preschools, lack of funding is the core reason the preschool finds it impossible to continue beyond June 2024. They are not alone in this; several other preschools around Belfast and around the province are also having to close their doors. Preschools are inadequately funded by government and it's quite amazing that Mrs J Duncan and her team have been able to keep Cregagh Preschool going for so long and maintain such excellent high standards at the same time.

So, this news comes as a disappointment to our school. It also comes as a huge personal disappointment to me, who can remember the Preschool being set up and getting established. Back then, filling 24 places was easy (just like filling our own P1 class with 26, 28 or 30 P1s was easy back then too!) Looking at old school enrolment records from the time I attended Cregagh Primary School in the late 1970s and early 1980s, there were around 350 children attending back then. We are living in changed times, parents.

So, what now ?

I have always argued that Cregagh Primary School and our local area needs a Nursery Class as part of the primary school. Children need the very best start to their educational journeys as possible. I have pursued this with the Department of Education, ELBs/Education Authority and locally elected politicians for more than 10 years but with no success. Now that our local preschool is having to close its doors, our local preschool providers are going to be significantly further away. So right away, I am raising my concerns with the authorities and wanting to see *local* 'preschool' provision (preferably a fully funded Nursery Class as part of Cregagh Primary School) reestablished as soon as possible. Our local area needs this.

2. Farewell to Lois Corbett (Family Support Worker)

We said "goodbye" to our family support worker, Lois Corbett, at the end of March due to her getting a new job as coordinator of the South-East Family Support Hub (of which Cregagh Primary School is a founding member). We wish Lois every success in her new role as Hub Coordinator. If any parent would like to access SEFSH support, which they can still do, they can speak to me, Mr Higginson or Mrs Pearson in confidence about reaching out for some support (or even just some friendly advice) from the South East Family Support Hub and we can help make a referral.

3. Parent-Teacher Meetings (Easter)

Thank you to all parents/carers who attended our recent parent-teacher interviews. It was so encouraging to see so many come along to find out about their children's progress. Fewer parents responded to our online survey than usual, possibly because this round of parent-teacher interviews coincided with the end of term. Twenty-one families responded and the results are shared with parents at the end of this note. Thank you for the encouragements. We listen to all feedback, from during and after the interviews and take all comments onboard.

4. Further improvements to our school outdoor space

Work on the two projects began over the Easter holidays but the very wet weather has slowed progress and made things even muckier than we were expecting. Some new trees will be getting planted down “Cregagh Lane” (school’s side path) to replace some of those that had to be removed as their roots were breaking up the path.

5. After School Clubs

After school clubs for P4 – P7 pupils will restart next Monday 15th April. Teachers will send home more details about which clubs are available, including a new club for the summer term: Hockey Club.

6. After School Childcare – September 2024

Only 3 parents expressed interest in using Wrap Around care as provided by Sleepy Hollow and their associated costs.

We are now looking at other ways of providing some level of affordable, quality after-school-childcare to parents and children.

*** IMPORTANT FUTURE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY / CALENDAR ***

Tuesday 9th April	School reopens – summer term begins Breakfast Club & 2-3 Waiting Club as
Wednesday 22nd to Friday 24th May	P7 3-day residential trip to Castlewellan Castle & Outdoor Pursuits Centre
Thursday 30th May	PSA Summer Fiesta BBQ & Fun, 5-7pm
Friday 31st May	Sports Day (7th June is our reserve date should the 31 st be wet)
Wednesday 5th & Thursday 6th June	School Musical: <i>Robin & the Sherwood Hoodies</i>
Thursday 20th June	Final Assembly & Prize Distribution
Friday 21st June	Foundation Stage (P1 & P2) Prize Morning
Tuesday 25th June	P7 final day of school (normal 3pm finish)
Wednesday 26th June	P7 Awards Evening at Mount Merrion Parish Church
Friday 28th June	Final day of school. Uniform-free day. 12 noon finish



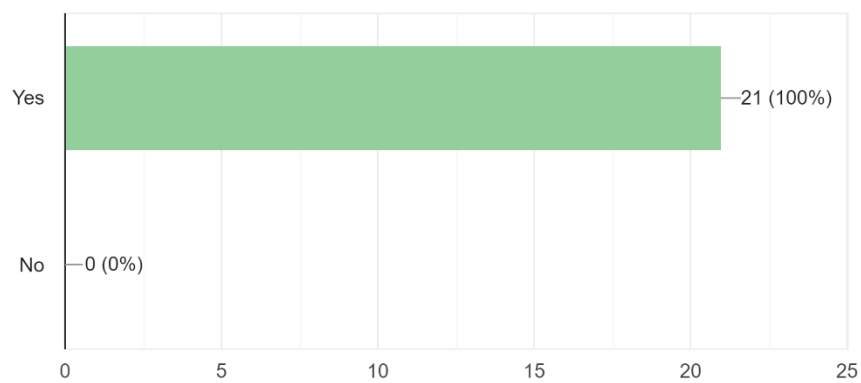
Parents' Views Parent-Teacher Consultations



(March 2024)

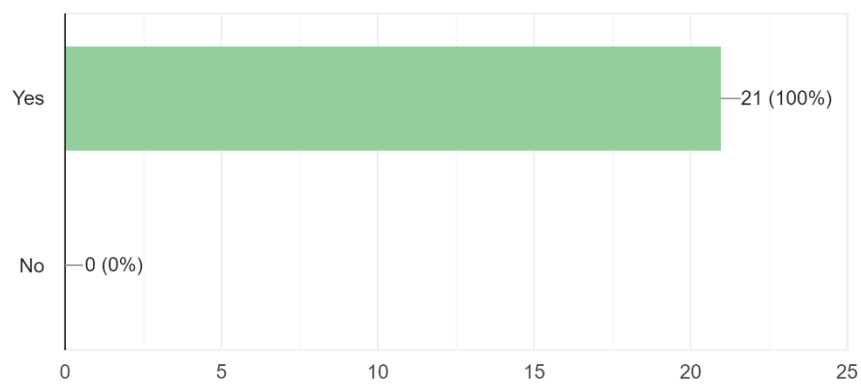
Were you able to arrange a suitable day & time for your Parent-Teacher Interview, okay?

21 responses



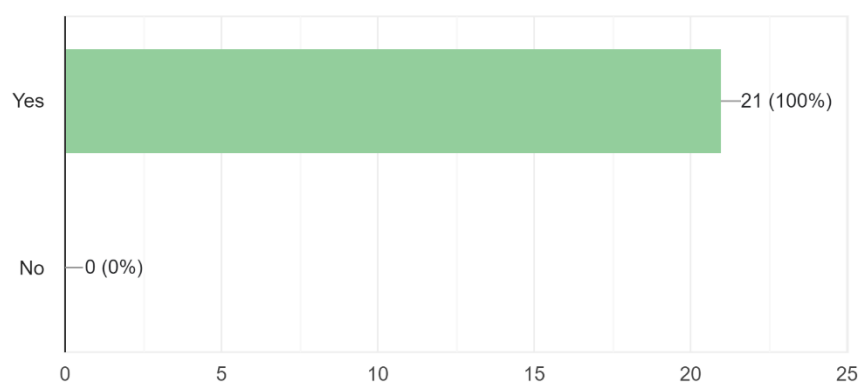
Did you find the discussion with the teacher(s) useful?

21 responses



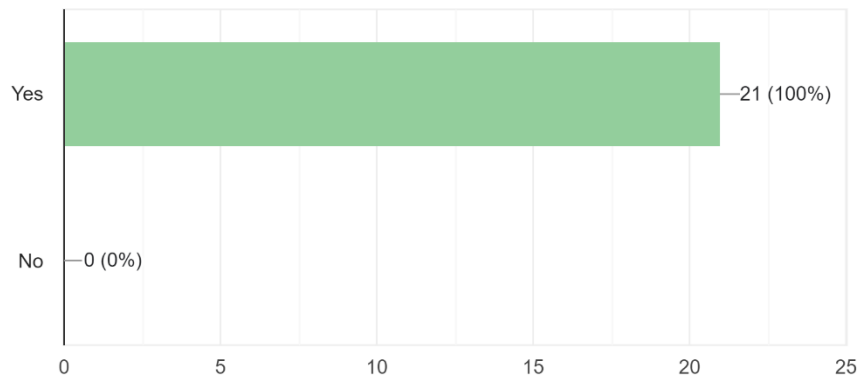
Do you feel you learned an adequate amount about how your child is doing in school at present?

21 responses



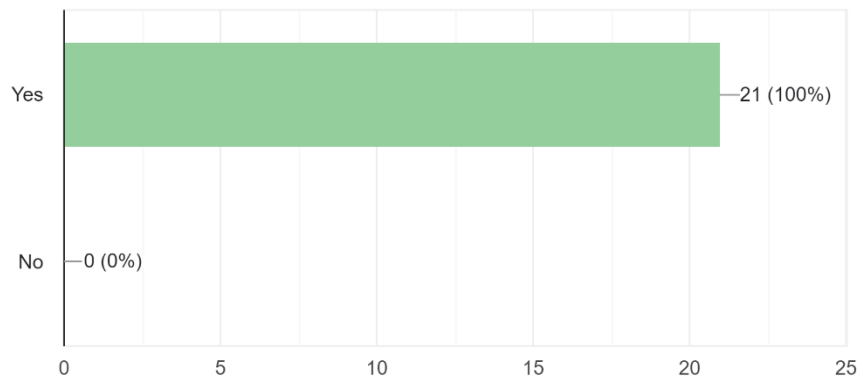
Were you given opportunity to ask the teacher(s) questions about your child's learning?

21 responses



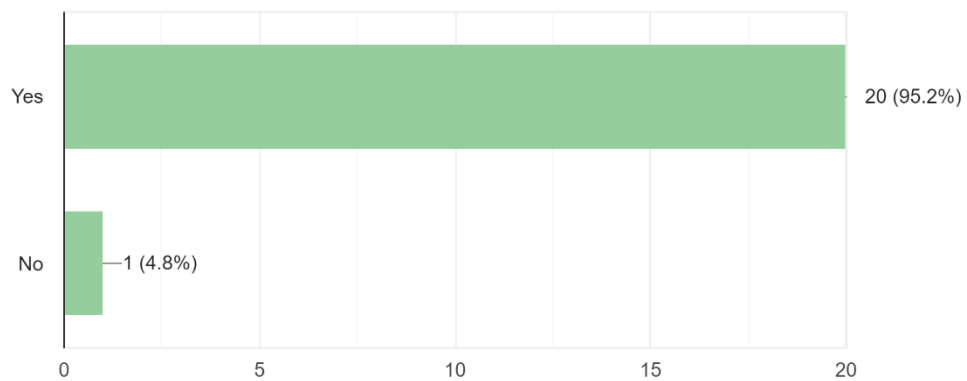
This was the 3rd opportunity this academic year to meet with your child's teacher (Meet the Teacher in September was the first opportunity & the second ...tings, spaced throughout the year, are sufficient ?

21 responses



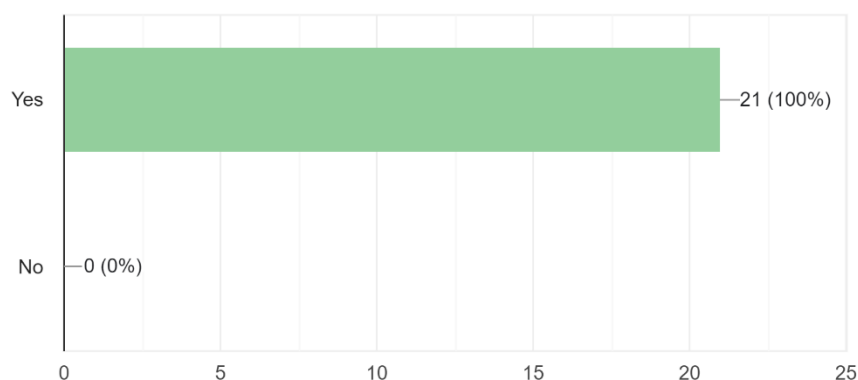
We're you given any ideas by the teacher(s) on how you can help support your child's learning at home? (with homework, reading, learning tables & spellings, etc)

21 responses



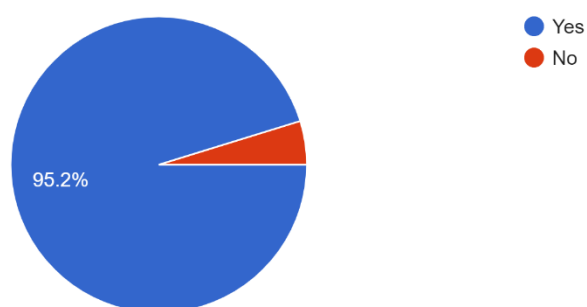
In general, do you as a parent feel the staff at Cregagh Primary School are easy to talk to when you need to?

21 responses



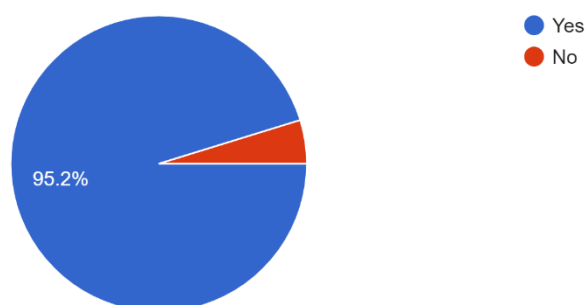
Do you know that Cregagh PS has a dedicated Parent-Worker (Lois Corbett) who can help parents with anything from advice on parenting to applying for Free School Meals ?

21 responses



Overall, would you say you are happy with the levels of contact and support provided to your child and family by Cregagh Primary School?

21 responses



Do you have any further general comments about our school that you would like to share with us? (10 responses)

- The staff are very nice and helpful.
- Always go above and beyond for the children. It's very much appreciated!
- We are delighted to have both our children at Cregagh Primary School, from our very first visit it has always felt warm and welcoming with a clear emphasis on helping each child develop according to their own strengths and abilities. We very much appreciate all the input that the teachers and all school staff have had in making the school such a great learning environment for our children.
- No
- Nil
- All teachers lovely and very friendly and approachable.
- The school dinner menu has got worse.
- I find Cregagh to be a lovely school with excellent caring staff
- [REDACTED] * (*feedback noted but redacted to kept confidential)
- Amazing school, amazing teachers, supportive and understanding in every way

Lastly, would you recommend Cregagh Primary School to a friend or neighbour who had children of primary school age?

21 responses

