

# **HOW NEW PARENTS CHOOSE PRIMARY SCHOOL SURVEY**

## **FINDINGS**

**CHILDREN, FAMILY & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE**

**5.1.2023**



# SURVEY DETAILS

## Objectives:

To understand how parents and carers of Reception, Y1 and Y2 children became aware of St Agatha's and the aspects of the school that stood out for them to choose it as the primary school for their children.

To identify opportunities for the school to improve its effort to attract new parents.

A short survey was sent to parents and carers of children in Reception, Y1 and Y2.

Responses were collected from Dec 12<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> 2022.



- **39 people responded**
- 92% of respondents have only one child in Reception, Y1 or Y2
- 8% have more than one child in those years
- 41% have older children – in KS2 or secondary school



Due to a small base, responses are shown in absolute numbers and not percentages



# Key Take Outs

- Slightly over 50% of parents/ carers that responded to the survey have lived in Kingston for less than 5 years.
- Most of them became aware of the school by an online search followed by recommendation.
  - There were no mentions of the role of flyers, banners, estate agents or nurseries in making people aware of the school.
- The majority of parents and carers (37 out of 39) visited the school's website when researching primary schools.
- On St Agatha's website what caught their attention the most was the way the school presents itself and the gallery of pictures.
- 7 out of 10 parents/carers visited the school, in person or virtually
  - ¼ of parents booked a private visit. 4 in 10 joined an open morning or a virtual session.
- The top 3 aspects of the school that made the most difference to prospective parents were the friendly & welcoming feeling, the size of the school and the Christian values together with the proximity to home.



# Conclusions & recommendations

The survey confirmed the critical role that the website and the open days (in person but also virtual) have to attract new parents. The friendly & welcoming feeling, the size of the school and the Christian values together with the proximity to home are the strongest aspects and points of difference to prospective parents & carers at the moment of deciding the primary school for their children. The school should highlight those aspects in communications and direct interactions, and use current pupils in open mornings and videos, as they are the best promoters of the education children receive at St Agatha's.

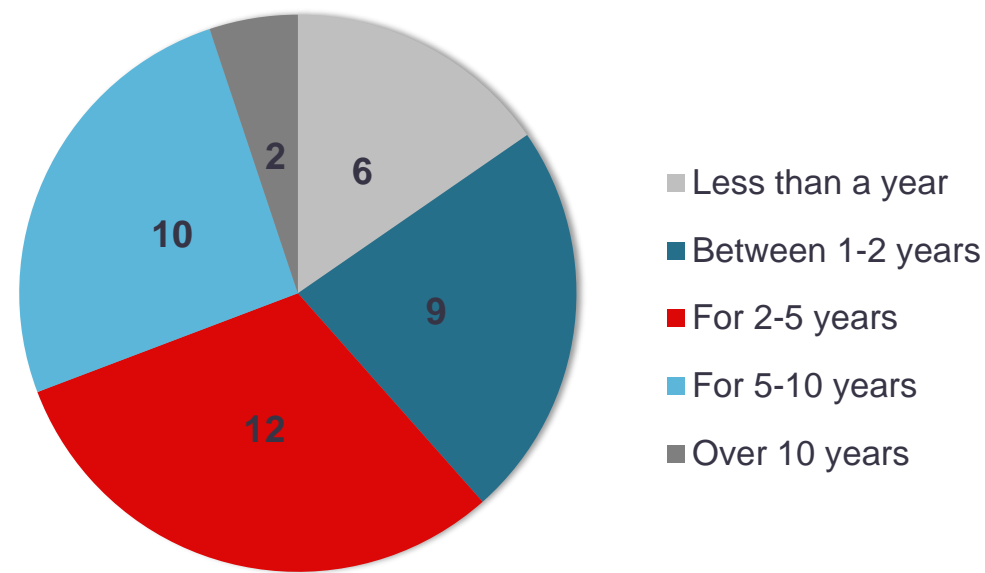
There are also clear opportunities to enhance what the school is currently doing:

- **Enhancements to the website**
  - more photos that show the diversity of activities children do (in class but also sport opportunities, excursions, residential)
  - video that shows the school facilities and some activities
  - more parents' testimonials
  - under a clear section for prospective parents/carers include information on: 1) wellbeing and the importance it has for the school; 2) support to families with English not their first language; 3) where children go to secondary school; 4) performance results; 5) benefits of being a mid-size school
- **More effort to promote the holistic education children receive at St Agatha's** → Via pictures of the varied activities children do, how the school connects with the local community, opportunities for families to connect with the school and between them (via PSA activities), opportunities to do sports at school or to represent the school in sport competitions
- **In all touch points be explicit on non-Catholics being welcome** → Include on website the number of non-Catholic children admitted per year, use welcoming and friendly language and lead with the values and not the need to be a baptized Catholic to get a place, communicate the openness to non-Catholic to local estate agents, nurseries and to current families that can recommend the school to non-Catholic friends and neighbours

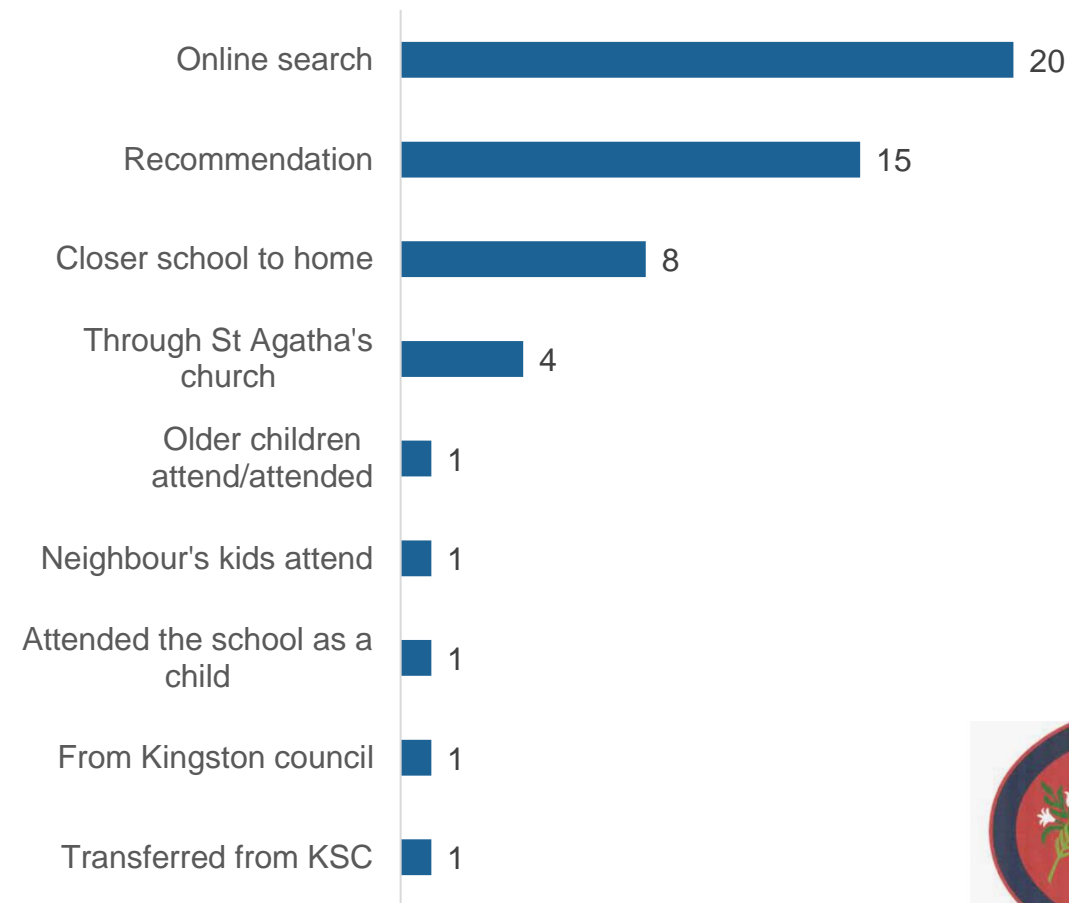


Slightly over 50% of parents/ carers that responded to the survey have lived **in Kingston for less than 5 years**. Most of them became aware of the school by an **online search** followed by **recommendation**.

For how long have you lived in Kingston?

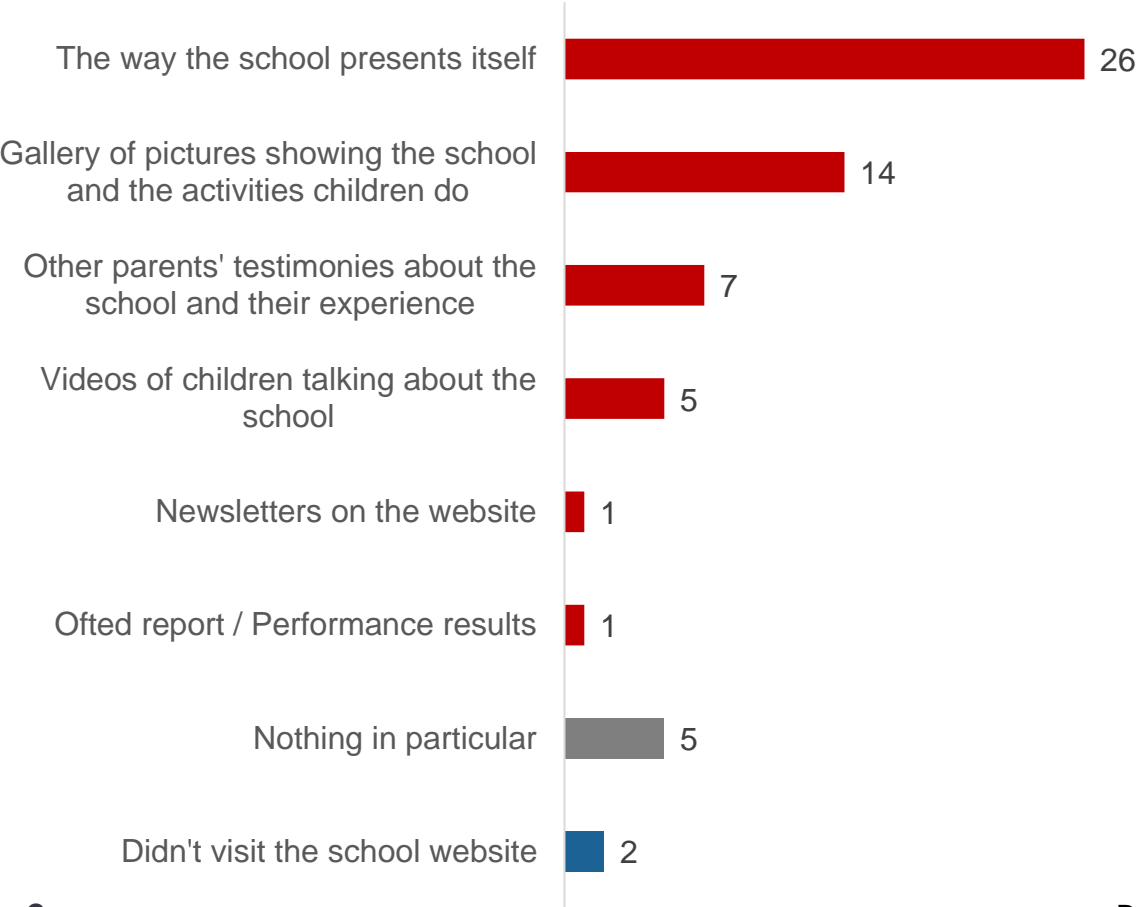


How did you become aware of St Agatha's school? Multiple choice

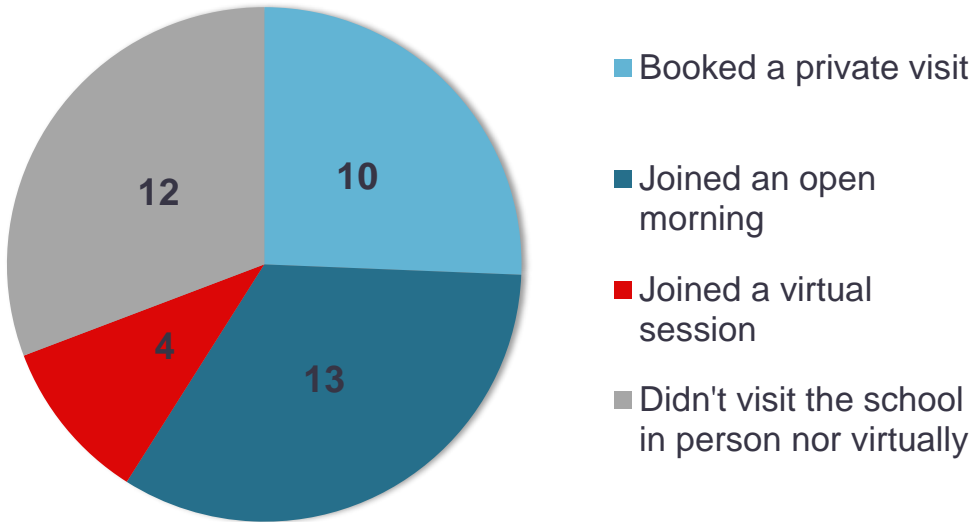


The majority of parents and carers **visited the school website** when researching primary schools. What caught their attention on St Agatha's website was **the way the school presents itself** and the **gallery of pictures**. **¼ of parents booked a private visit**. **4 in 10 joined an open morning or a virtual session**.

Did you visit the school website as you were considering the school? If yes, what caught your attention or helped you the most? Multiple choice



Did you visit the school before making your choice?

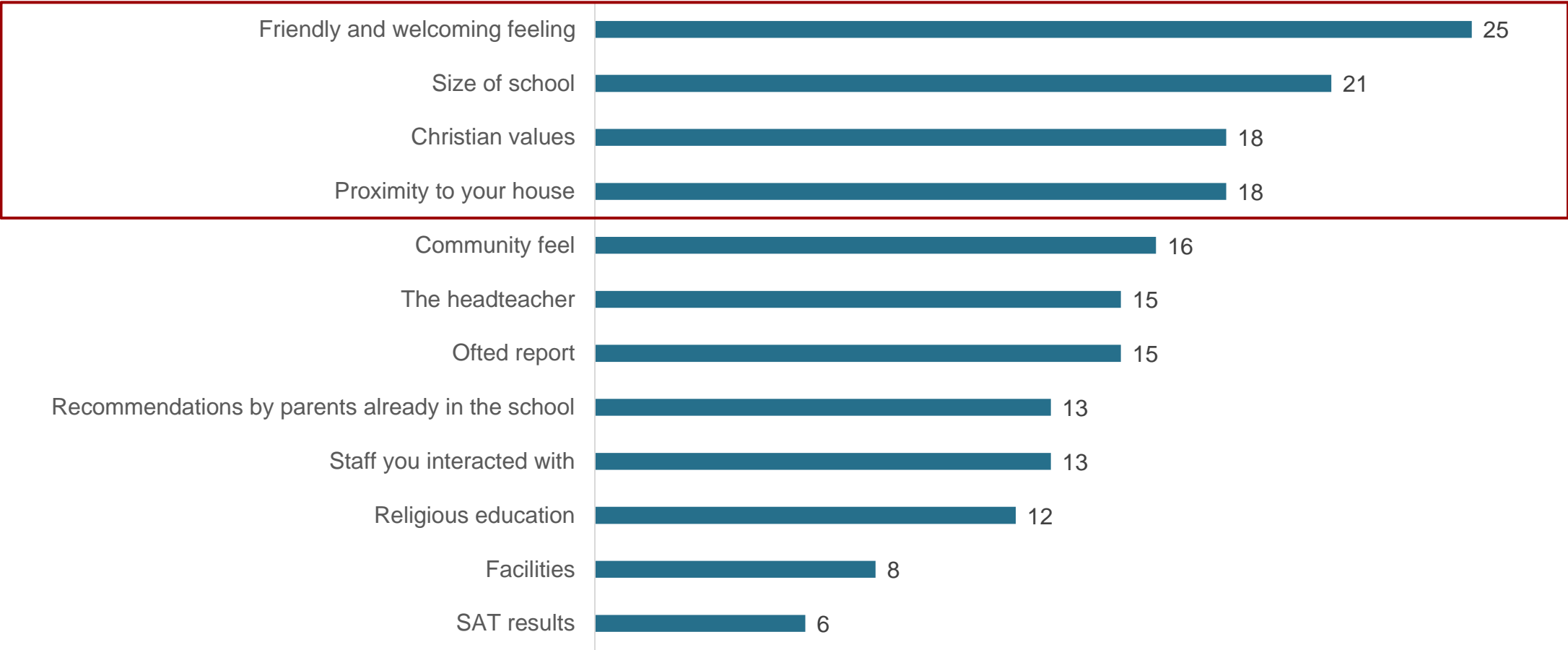


3 in 10 parents/carers didn't visit the school.



The top 3 aspects of the school that made the most difference to prospective parents were **friendly & welcoming feeling**, the **size of the school** and the **Christian values** together with the **proximity to home**.

What aspects of the school made a difference to you to choose St Agatha's over other primary schools? Top 3



Top 3



## **Suggestions - Information that would help parents/carers to make their choice or points to promote more**

- Advantage of the school size – not too big, not too small
- Children's performance results vs other local schools
- Diversity of school activities
- Outdoor space & adventure playground
- Outings that children do during the year
- PSA activities (welcome BBQ, fireworks night, school fair)
- Sport opportunities
- More photos
- Where children go for secondary school
- Online video with a tour around the school
- Opportunity to meet older children in open days to hear their opinions about the school
- More information on school curriculum and class sizes
- Support available for children & families for whom English is not their 1<sup>st</sup> language
- Make clear that the school welcomes non-Catholic families





## **Suggestions - What the school could do better to get the attention of new parents looking for a primary school**

- More information on:
  - sport opportunities
  - wellbeing activities, initiatives and support
  - what the school does to raise funds and connect with the local community
- More testimonials from parents
- More videos to show the school
- More photos on the school gallery showing activities that children do
- Involve Y6 children in school tours for parents
- Make clear how welcome and inclusive the school is to non-Catholic families
- Emphasis on the wrap-around care for working parents
- Show on the website awards and achievements of some students



## Some quotes from parents

- *Our decision outside of the factors ticked (community feel, staff we interacted with, friendly and welcoming feeling, size of the school and Christian values) was the morning walk around was done by two fantastic pupils who were energetic, had their own personalities and also happened to be into sport.*
- *An impressive speech from the Headteacher during the open morning made a huge difference (Mrs Cahill did a very good speech)*
- *I think involving children e.g. from year 6 in the tours would be great - the children are really impressive and polite and are clearly very proud of their school.*
- *Make it clear that you can join St Agatha's if you are NOT a Catholic or baptised & that you will be welcomed and not alienated if you are a non-Catholic. We only applied as a non-Catholic parent at the school advised that they had got their child in, otherwise we wouldn't have applied as we are Non-Catholic.*
- *Based on our own experience, when we were first looking at primary schools to apply for in the area we at first didn't even consider St Agatha's as we weren't practicing Catholics and presumed we wouldn't be eligible to apply for places. I think it is still widely presumed that you need to be Catholic/have a recommendation from your Priest to apply to the school.*
- *I think the school need to promote more clearly that is open and welcome to non-Catholics, promote its strong values, talk about its nurturing approach, close knit community and way the school encourages children to pursue their interests. Educating estate agents on the non-Catholic population would help people considering moving to the area, also educating local nurseries would help.*

