

Is Positive Feedback Distributed Fairly?



Are there any children who are 'invisible' and what impact does this have for our school?

Seymour Park Community Primary School



What is our definition of an invisible child?

A child that is quiet or possibly shy. They are of average ability. This child doesn't need constant reminders about their work, attitude or behaviour. They are easily overlooked when other children are demanding in the classroom environment.

"Invisible: adjective

1. not visible; not perceptible by the eye
2. Withdrawn from or out of sight; hidden: an invisible seam.
3. not perceptible or discernible by the mind: invisible differences."

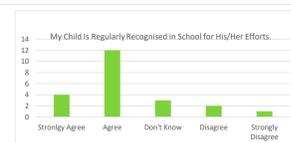
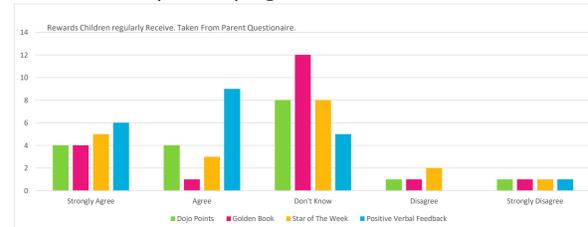
What did the children say?



- In the Focus Groups children were really perceptive and understanding of the way positive feedback is distributed. They recognised why some children needed more positive feedback to support their individual needs. They also understood there was an element of luck involved! Children felt okay about this and all felt valued and knew they received positive feedback and that the reward system was largely fair.
- There was a shift from the children valuing stickers and other physical rewards in KS1 to KS2 children being motivated by the recognition by peers and staff.
- Children said staff allocation of team points is fair and understand it's limitations e.g. not many team points were given out during SATS week. Children in the focus groups stated that they were aware of some cheating that goes on amongst their peers.
- The KS2 Focus group valued instant verbal feedback in front of peers and The Golden Assembly for similar reasons.
- The KS1 Focus Group valued The Golden Assembly and Dojo points because they enjoyed getting a prize. They liked it when their parents could see their Dojo Points on their phone.

Do the perceptions of parents, teachers and children marry up when it comes to the distribution of feedback?

Parents didn't always know about all our reward systems nor did they always know when their child had been rewarded (even if they had got a prize). However, they trusted the school and felt confident that their child was rewarded and that the systems were fair. A small number of parents felt that house points were unfair as their children do not understand why they are not being rewarded despite trying their best.



All stakeholders appeared to be of the general opinion that teacher distribution of positive feedback is fair but were also aware of the limitations and restrictions. We can say that positive feedback is distributed fairly most of the time for most of the children. But what about the few for whom it isn't fair? Are these our invisible children?

From the focus groups, children don't seem to see themselves as invisible - We would like to expand this a little and try to speak to more children about this. This may be possible when speaking to the school council or other groups.

What did the teachers say?

The majority of teachers felt that positive feedback was fair. They were aware of the limitations such as time and the differing needs of children and tried to address these. Verbal and written feedback were consistent and daily.

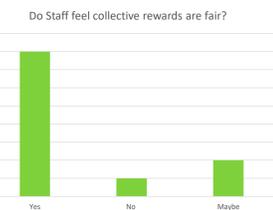
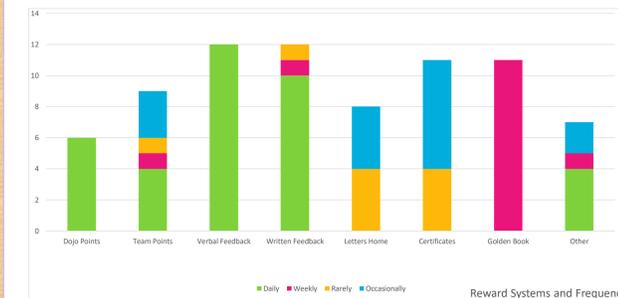
The majority of staff do feel that collective reward systems such as team points are fair as they encourage children to work together. Some staff feel that children may interpret house points as unfair because some children will be penalised or rewarded as a result of others.



What is the impact on teaching - What strategies do staff use to engage all children?

During lesson observations positive feedback was constantly given and was specific. Teachers were aware of all children in the class and created opportunities for all to get positive feedback.

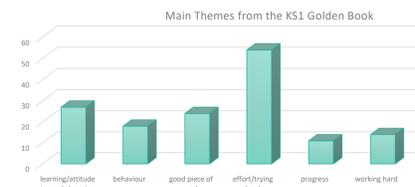
The Golden Assembly is used consistently throughout KS1 and KS2. In terms of subjects, English and Maths are the most frequently rewarded and other subjects on occasion.



What do the policies say?

Teachers have their own systems all of which fall within those suggested in the Behaviour Management and Anti-Bullying Policy.

Almost all staff use house points but there is some inconsistency regarding the frequency. There is a paragraph in the Behaviour Management and Anti-Bullying Policy which details what house points are awarded for and how the system works.



Impact for SPCPS

Our research has shown that our school does lots of things right. We have good policies and systems in place. Children, staff and parents generally feel that positive feedback is fairly distributed and all are aware of the difficulties and limitations to this.

However, our research has also shown a couple of children and parents do not feel recognised. We need to keep asking - What about them?

How can we raise the visibility of the invisible children?

As a result of the research we want to:

- Inform the parents about the consistent reward systems in place. Parents to be informed when their child has been in Golden Assembly and the reason.
- Find out who the invisible children are they are not an existing 'target group' in school. Can we identify them in our school? Are they who we think they are?
- In a staff meeting we want teachers to discuss who the invisible children are. We want to create a list of 'invisible children' at the staff meeting. Did their previous teacher feel they were the same children? We will focus on these children and track them through school.
- At transition meetings highlight the invisible children and monitor their progress.
- Staff to discuss how often they award house points and what they award them for so there is consistency through the school
- Suggest to teachers and TA's they may wish to compile a tally chart of who was praised/given attention during a lesson. Teachers can then monitor this independently for reflective teaching.

