



# PARENT VOICE

## THE FIRST PARENTAL REFLECTION ON THEIR CHILD'S EXPERIENCE OF THE SCHOOLS IN THE FEDERATION

*(Commissioned by the Executive Head Teacher to create the initial benchmarking)*

### ATTITUDINAL DISPOSITION SURVEY

A COMPARISON OF SCHOOLS LEADING TO  
IMPROVEMENT INSIGHTS AND CHALLENGES

**March 2017**

## Introduction

- These surveys were undertaken amongst the entire parent body during February 2017.
- The parents and carers of **492** pupils were surveyed with a questionnaire based upon the 2012 Ofsted model. In total 434 families were contacted.
- In addition there were three special questions asked related to the school's vision and values.

## Responses

- Responses were received from **155** families which is **36%** of the parent bodies covering **169** children which is **34%** of the school population. Eleven families with children with special needs replied.
- There were distinct differences in both response rates and the nature of responses between the two schools.

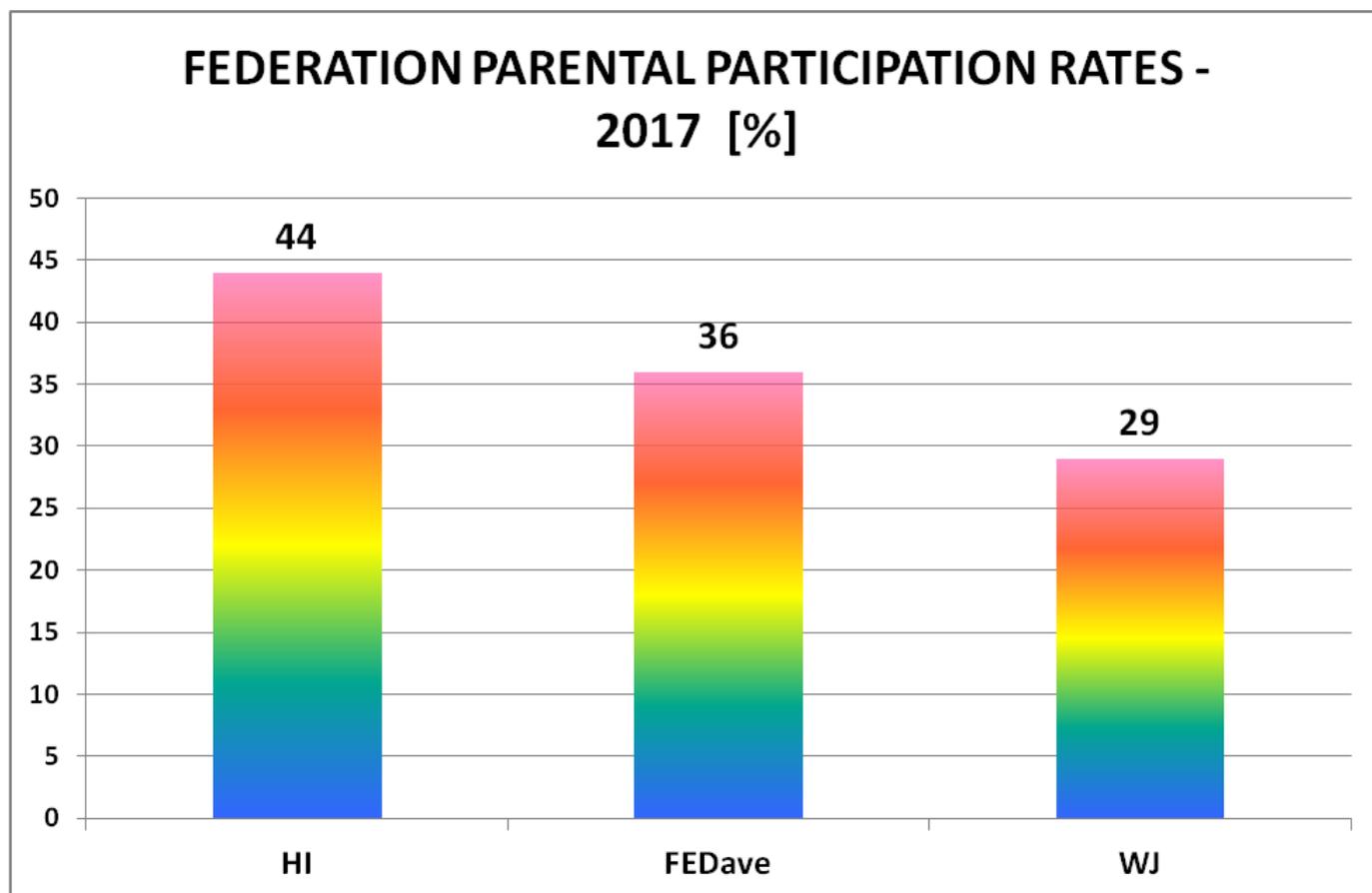
## This Report

- Will examine differences in order to gain both insight and opportunity for improvement or intervention.
- Will allow comparison to be made between institutions that make up the federation.
- Will provide the benchmarks for testing future attitudinal disposition data.
- Will summarise the findings and suggest recommendations for the federation to consider or pursue.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This survey suggests that the two schools are performing differently. One (Wilnecote Junior) , clearly has a good deal to improve in terms of both parental attitudinal disposition and the professional practice that leads to a parental perspective. The other (Heathfields Infant) enjoys a consistent, strong positive attitudinal disposition amongst its parents that, if it were the only criteria, would suggest a good school at very least.
- The return rates of the two schools are different. Again the infant school has a good return rate to create the bench mark but the junior school rate hints that things may be weaker than the survey suggests.
- Both school's have parents perceiving behaviour as a worrying element but the proportions are much greater in the Junior school.
- Attitudinal disposition is rooted in both trust and understanding and consequently both aspects are becoming visible for the federation. It is likely that the parent bodies have only vague ideas of what the federation is and what it does; nor do many parents relate to the added value that federated work is supposed to bring.
- The leadership has to not only embed improvement into professional practice but also has to promote the value and purpose of being a federation.
- A key document to read alongside this report is the Executive Head Teacher's position papers and action plans.

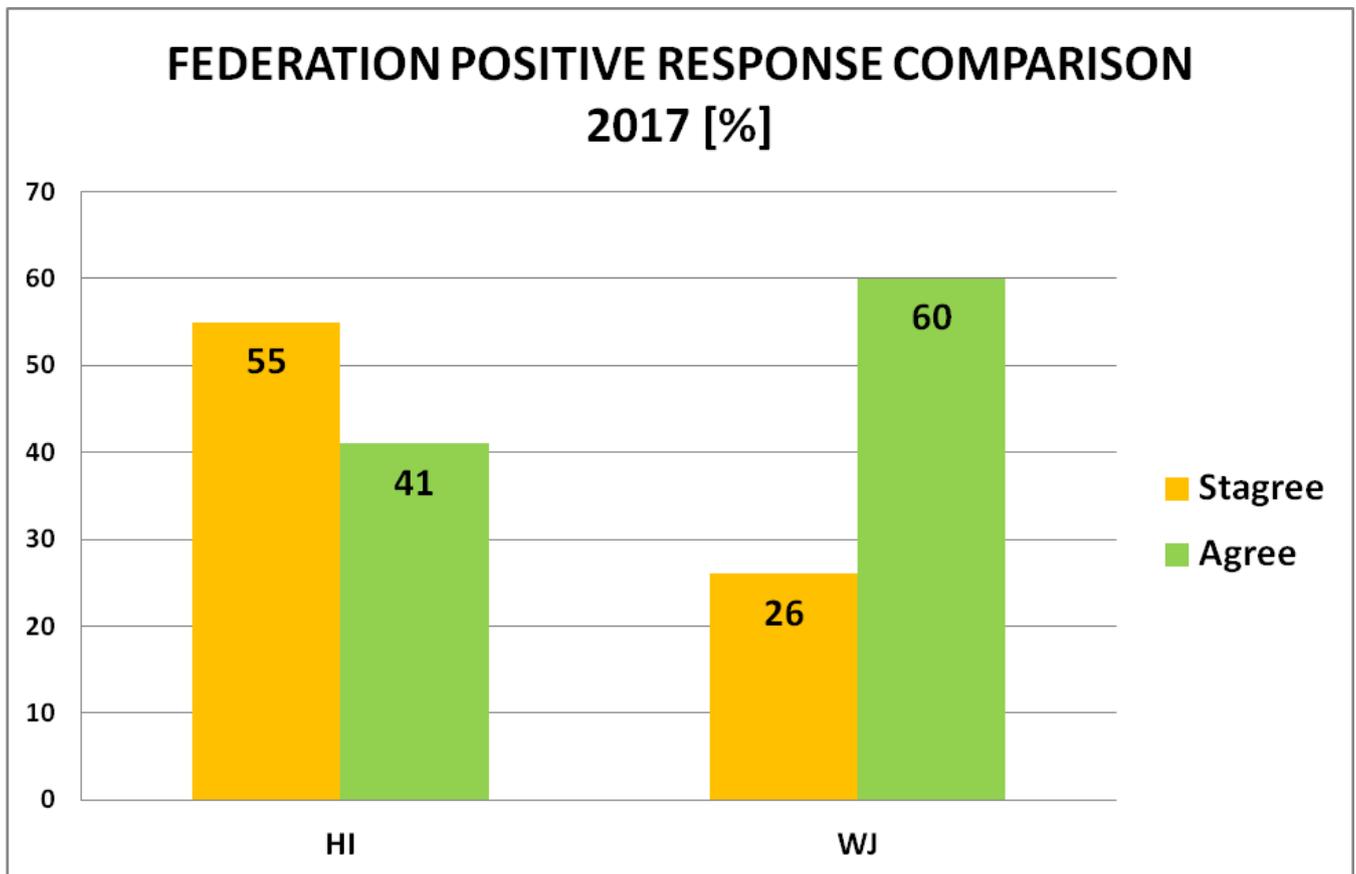
## PARTICIPATION RATE COMPARISON 2017



### Comment:

- The difference is self evident.
- The consequence of the difference is explain in the individual school commentaries
- For the federation, it is the response rate of the junior school that stops the response rate exceeding the national average for a primary school but does places it within the bounds of the national average (*Ofsted 2008*)
- A school that engages well with its parent body can easily achieve in excess of 50% once parents understand the integrity placed in the surveys by the managers of the organisation. The infant school is already close to that possibility
- Federation leaders should:-
  - set themselves participation targets for the future bearing in mind that the more responses increases the reliability of what is said.
  - Establish ways of feeding back the outcomes of the survey to the parent body so the integrity is established. This can be done through a “You said” / “We did” format for example.

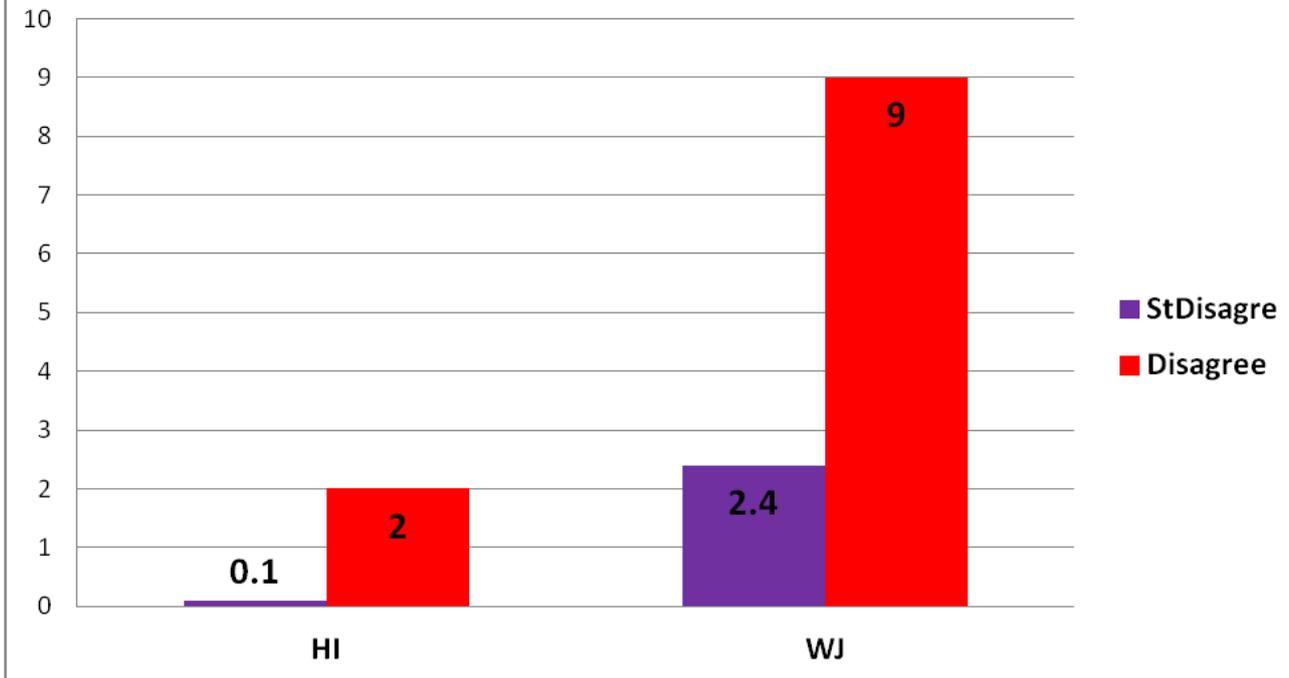
## COMPARISON OF LEVELS OF RESPONSE 2017



### Comment:

- The difference is once again self evident. 96% of the infant school is positive whereas only 86% of the junior school is.
- Strong positivity in the infant school is more than twice that of the junior school. Standard positivity is 60% in the junior school and 41% of the infant school.
- These scores are the result of already differentiate response rates thus indicating that the junior school is in a weakened position.

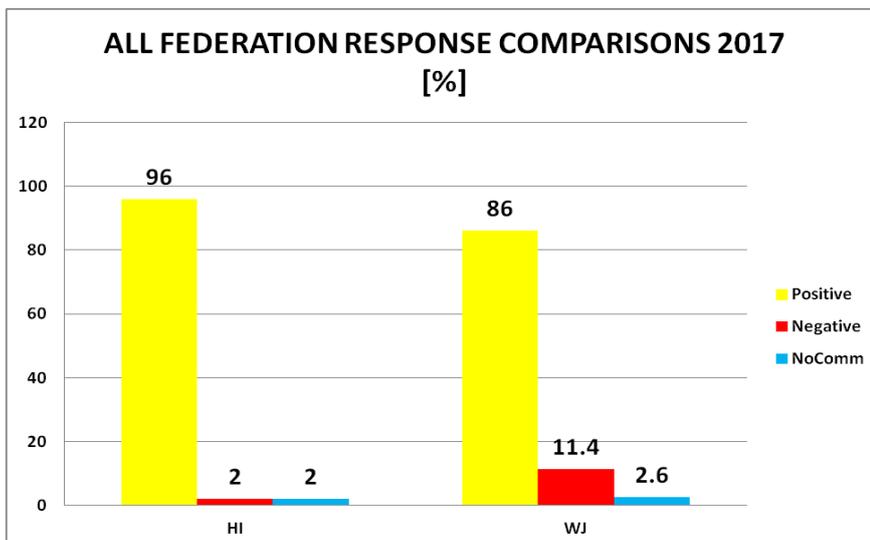
## FEDERATION NEGATIVE RESPONSE COMPARISON 2017 [%]



### Comment:

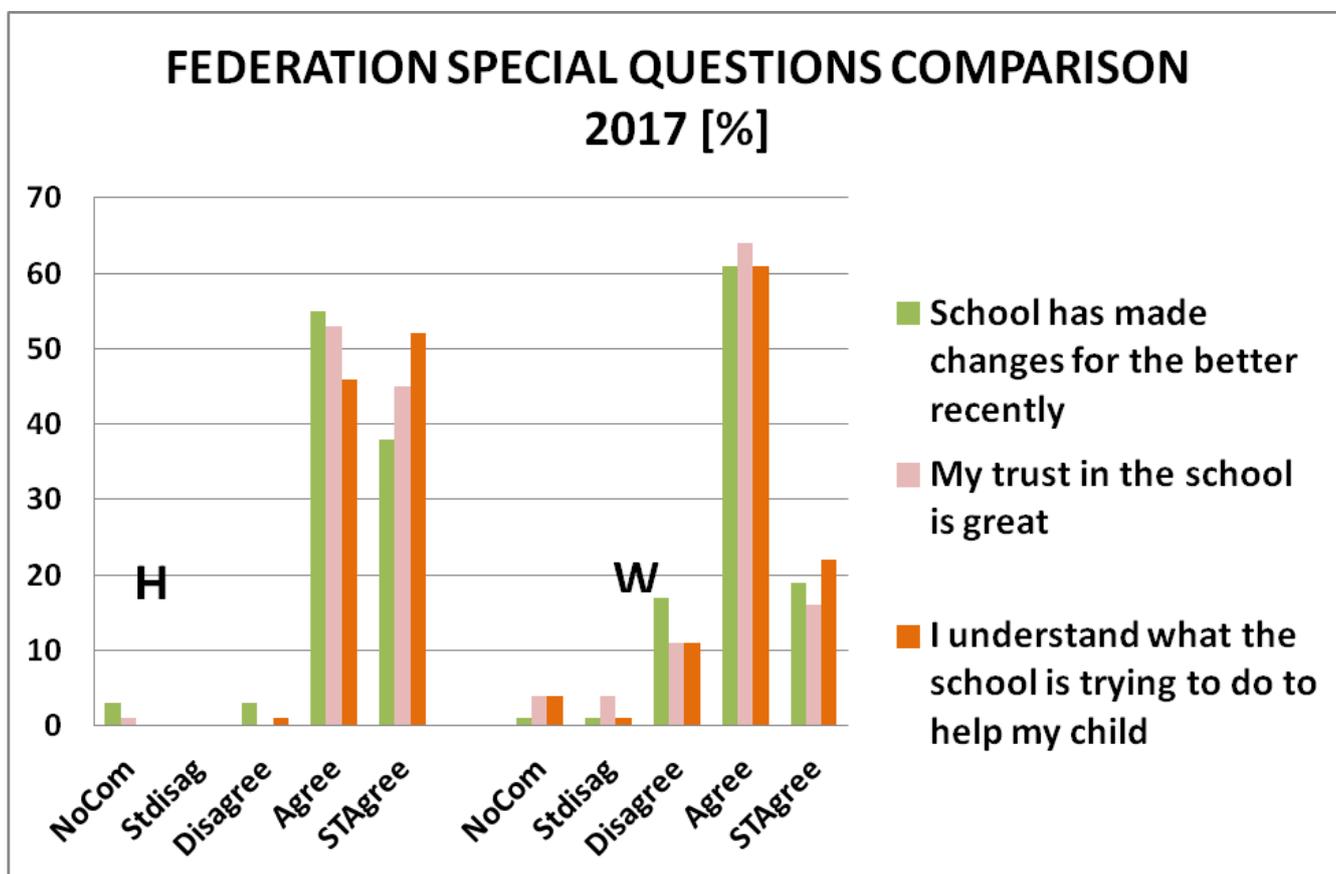
- The junior school's lower response rate produces five times more negativity than do the greater number of participants in the infant school.
- There is deeper negativity in the junior school by a considerable margin.
- Such levels of negativity do suggest that disquiet is an established part of the collective psyche of the junior parent body.

## ALL FEDERATION RESPONSE COMPARISONS 2017 [%]



- This graph gives us the overall position described earlier.

## COMPARISON OF RESPONSES TO SPECIAL QUESTIONS



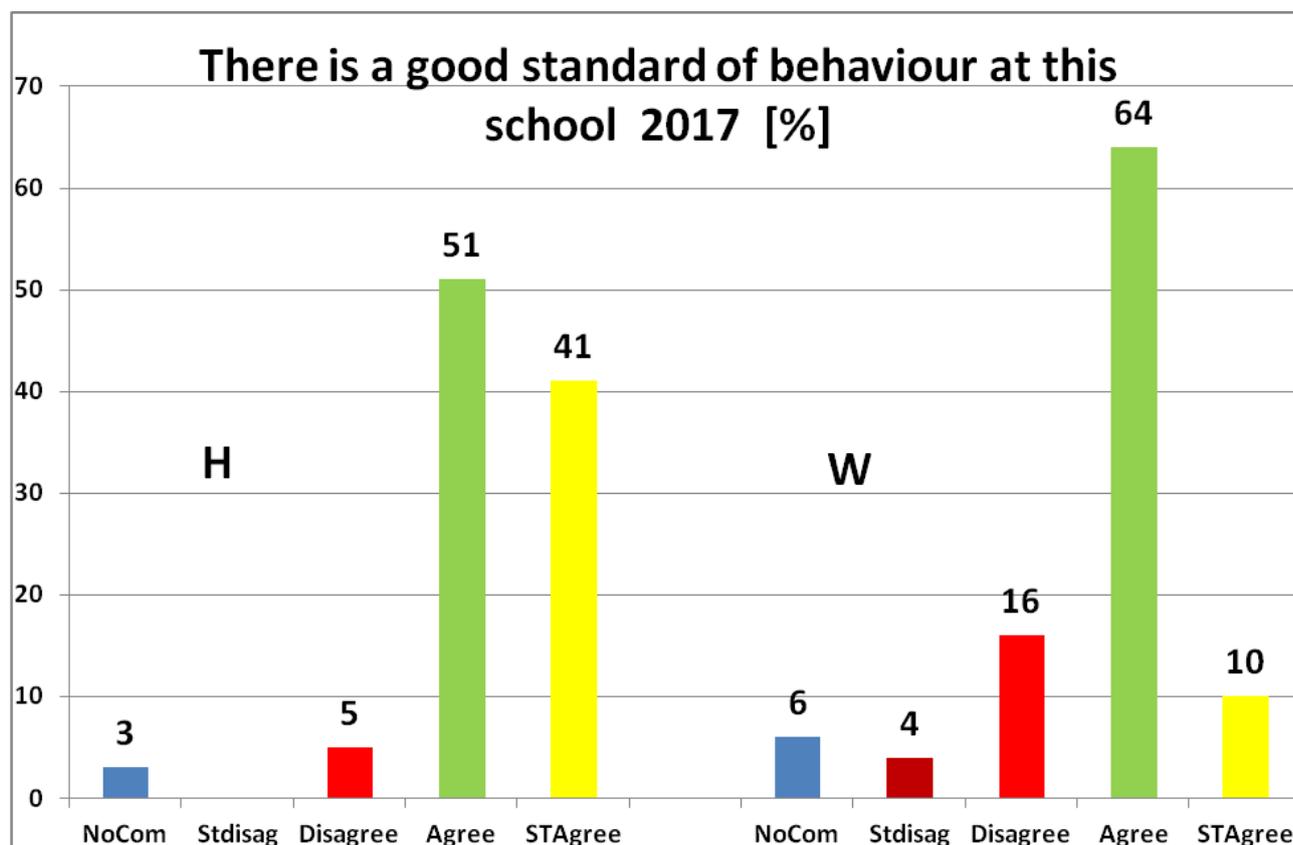
### Comment:

- Once again the infant school has a much stronger positive response than does the junior school.
- The infant school has very little negativity compared to the junior school.
- These responses are reminiscent of the responses in the remainder of the the survey – parents are less committed and are holding back and more are hostile or disappointed in the junior school.
- For federation leaders these responses confirm the EHT’s assessment in her position paper regarding issues and needs in the junior school.

## OFSTED MODEL RESULTS

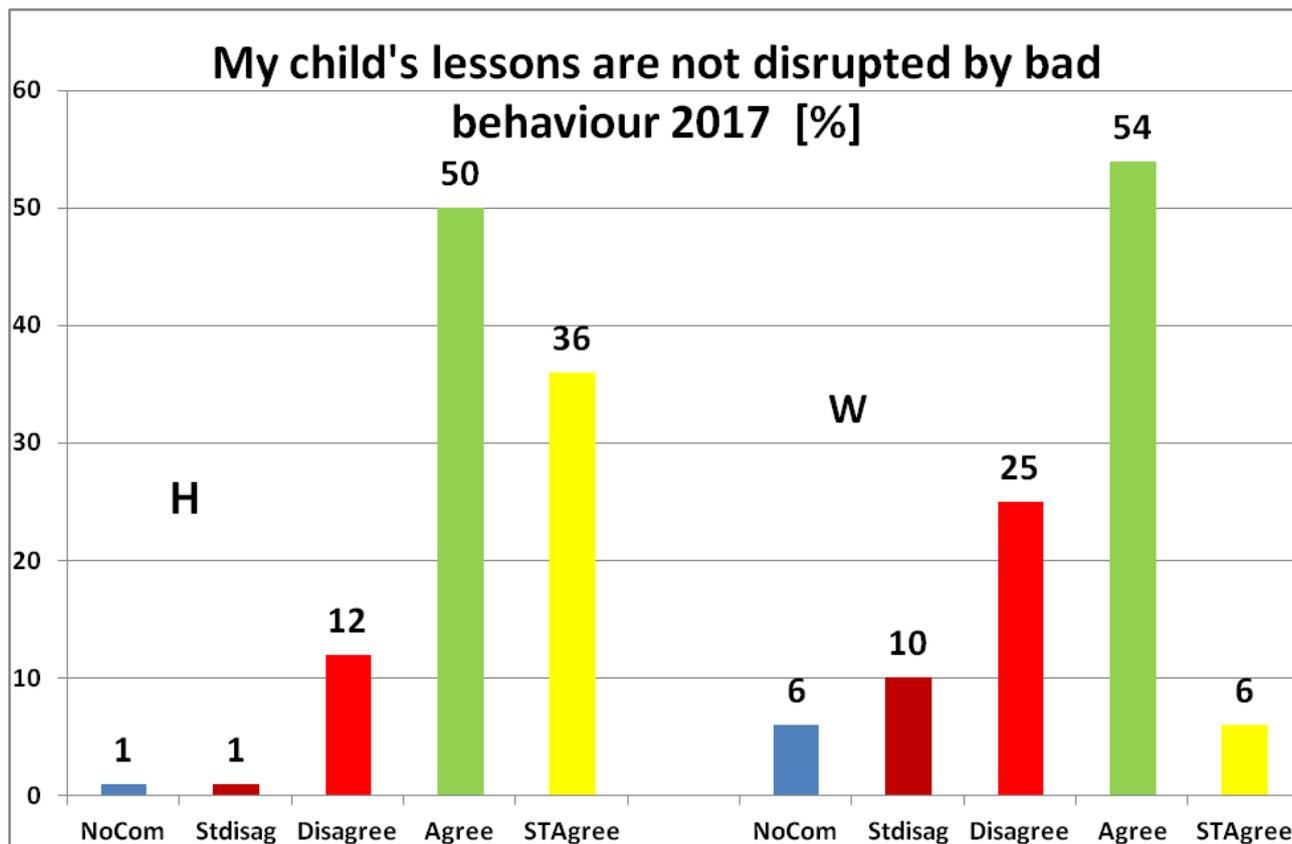
- The separate school reports should be read and commentaries compared. They clearly indicate the differences and pose the question, why? After all, the community served is the same and the pupils have in the main, experienced the infant school prior to arriving at the junior school.
- Questions and debate should focus on:-
  - Transition
  - Professional practice
  - Quality of teaching
  - Teacher expectation
  - Modelling outstanding quality
  - Parental engagement and understanding
  - Leadership diversity
  - Institutional visions and values
  - Federation vision and values
  - Federation collaborative opportunities
  - Cultural hinderances and opportunities
  
- Both schools had issues raised around behaviour. The junior school issues were more severe but this topic often finds a level that either creates excuses for underperformance based on societal stereotyping or concentrates improvement on the immediate topic and its management rather than developing an improvement strategy that recognises complex influences and their management.
- There is value in further examining the data on behaviour raised by this survey and comparing the two institutions.

## COMPARING BEHAVIOUR RESPONSES 2017



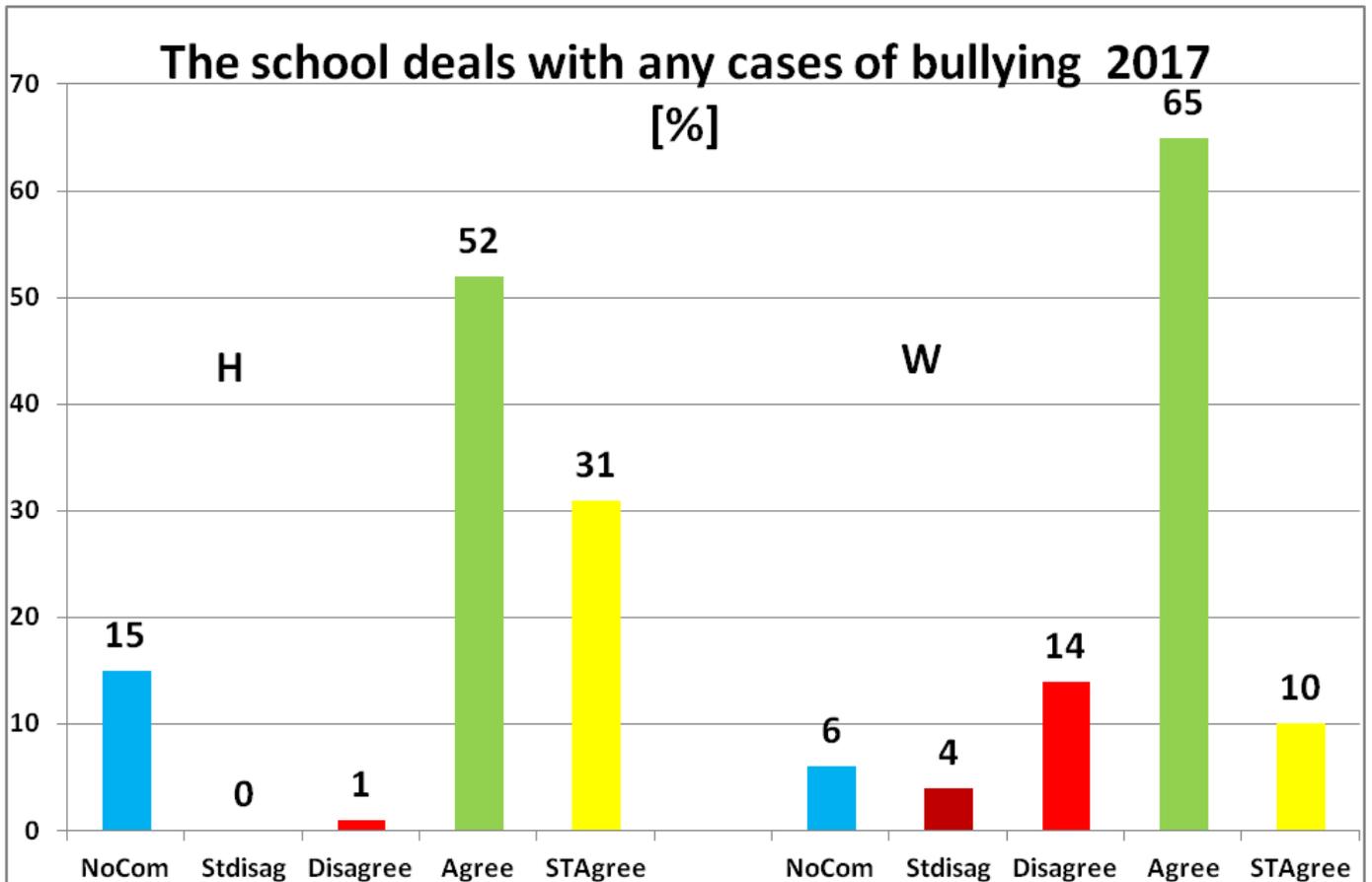
### COMMENT:

- 92% of infant parents believe there is a good standard of behaviour in the school. This can only be matched by 74% in the junior school
- There is 20% of respondents who have a negative view of behaviour in the junior school but there are only 5% who feel the same way in the infant school and none who strongly disapprove. 6% of respondents in the junior school make no comment and this reduces to 3% in the infant.
- Bearing in mind that response rates were greater in the infant school, it is not unreasonable to interpret the quality of infant responses as reliable.
- These differences indicate that something happens in the junior school and the leadership challenge is to judge what it is and apply appropriate strategies.
- I remind leaders that the management survey suggested that not all staff apply school policy diligently and the proportion of behavioural special needs should be a factor in your thinking in the light of some parental comments.



#### COMMENT:

- 86% of infant parents believe that lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour in the school but this falls to just 60% at the junior school.
- There is 35% of respondents who have a negative view of behaviour in the junior school but there is less than half that in the infant school at 13%. 6% of respondents in the junior school make no comment and this reduces to just 1% in the infant.
- A number of parents report that their child is their source of information on this matter. This raises the matter of how the school creates an ethos whereby positive rather than negative messages are sent home on a daily basis.
- Similarly, understanding what good and bad behaviour is has importance let alone matters of policy application and management.
- The federation leadership would be foolish to take a position that says this kind of disruptive behaviour is minimal. They need reliable data to measure the scale, location and nature of problems and the impact of interventions.



**COMMENT:**

- 83% of infant parents believe that the school manages this well – this, inspite of 15% making no comment, because they say they have no experience to base a response on. This indicates a high level of trust which arises from their whole school experience.75% of junior school parents have this positive point of view and a smaller number make no comment.
- There is 18% of respondents who have a negative view of the management of bullying in the junior school with a mere 1% in the infant school. This once again emphasises the matter of well grounded trust.
- The comparison of responses here indicate the essential difference between the two schools – the trust felt for the infant school is based on broad experiences over time that make parents feel comfortable with the institution knowing that they can both praise and complain because their children are getting the best they can have. The debate for the infant school is “could it offer more?”
- For a significant number of parents in the junior school their trust is weak as a result of experience, procedures, personalities, processes and actions. Messages are confussed and for some irritating and their is no basic understanding of vision or values. Much of this must originate from issues around leadership in the past. For the junior school they also must ask what more can they offer but in addition develop the ethos of the school amongst its parent body.

## CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FEDERATION

- The federation is made up of two schools with very distinctive characteristics. The parental attitudinal dispositions reflect this. They could both improve but they are at very different places in their journey.
  - The infant school reveals a relatively strong positive attitudinal disposition by parents. This suggests that good relationships exist and many shared vision and values drive the school forward to offer, on the whole, well constructed and delivered learning in a context where children feel safe and cared for. The ethos embraces challenge as a necessary element in learning and tries to take an holistic view of the process, embracing parents as partners. From this aspect alone, and without reference to learning data, the school is good. Implicit in this is an underlying ambition to be regarded as outstanding.
  - The junior school reveals a much weaker parental attitudinal disposition even though many of the responses are positive. This position is characterised by clear pockets and elements of conflict and some alienation which manifests itself in attitudes to behaviour and some concerning relationship issues between parents, teachers and the processes of the school. In this context learning can appear to be secondary and sometimes attitudes are even hostile. Improvement is seen as vital by many but consensus and shared vision and values seems limited. The school requires improvement.
- The consequence of these assessments and judgements for the federation are important.
- The needs of the two schools are different and they should be dealt with differently.
  - The two schools have a close intertwining in the learning continuum of the children they serve so the vision and values of the two institutions need to have a commonality as does the approach to professional practice.
  - Although on two sites they must see themselves as one, separated only by the differing learning needs of the pupils that is determined by age and previous learning.
  - The shared concerns around behaviour need a common and united approach that is based both on policy and day to day understanding as does the approach to meeting special needs.
  - The management of the federation must reflect what has been said, and what is being aimed for. The EHT takes an oversight role aimed at drawing the schools together.
- The EHT is not being told anything that she has not already identified in her position paper. What she must do is be very aware of the need to develop a shared relationship with parents in both schools so that when change is introduced the usual resistance is minimised if not avoided. Governors should be alongside her in this.
- The leadership should be ruthless in its intent to improve the quality of teaching and teaching support because successful teaching and learning is a prelude to all improvements.
- The federation is in the early days of improvement but must remember that speed is of the essence and key is having the best people in the most effective position.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### That:

1. The position papers and subsequent action planning created by the EHT, continues to be used as the map for improvement
2. This report and any other material, is read alongside the position papers and see what it confirms, contradicts or reveals and decide on what necessary changes are needed if any. This is for all leaders to be involved in.
3. The improvement planners recognise the differences between the schools and use their tactics, and resource allocation, accordingly
4. Mechanisms are developed urgently to maximise the involvement of stakeholders in sharing in the vision, values and progress of the schools . This might involve creating groups, publishing regular and systematic newsletters.
5. A careful analysis of proportions, performance and requirements of special needs children in the school and examine and review policy and practice as a result taking whatever action that might be revealed as appropriate action, if necessary
6. Re-examine and review matters related to behaviour, recognising the complexity of issues, as well as the requirements necessary for good, well managed learning. From this, clear expectations for all can be created.
7. Termly or half yearly or annual non-negotiable expectations for all staff are published and all are held to account by the leadership
8. Finally, all this thinking and resulting action, recognises that the future of both schools exist within a very fluid national context of academisation and other approaches.

### END

*Supporting Change Ltd. 4/17*

### NOTES: