



## Council of International Schools Survey 2016

The Friends' School participated again in 2016 in the Council of International Schools survey, and invited students, parents, staff, alumni and the Board to respond. The survey results provided an opportunity to compare with the School's inaugural participation in 2014 and to also compare results against an aggregate of international schools comprising 114, 584 responses.

Within the Friends' community, 2093 people responded to the survey, an increase of 44 people to the number of responses received in 2014.

It is intended that this survey will be completed biennially to benchmark The Friends' School against the international aggregate and also to track responses over time.

Data were collected against seven sections:

1. School Guiding Statements
2. Teaching and Learning
3. Governance and Leadership
4. Faculty and Support Staff
5. Access to Teaching and Learning
6. School Culture and Partnerships for Learning
7. Operational Systems.

### How Friends' Fared

Overall, data from the survey indicate The Friends' School has improved in many areas measured by the survey since it was last completed in 2014. Some areas for improvement identified in 2014 still require attention, but the School has taken steps to move forward. For example, the provision of improved venues and facilities is a process that will take many years. The School looks forward to sharing the recommendations of the new Master Plan and related building plans in 2017.

#### Section 1: School Guiding Statements

- It was gratifying that 97% of Friends' parents agreed with *I know and understand the Purpose and Concerns statement of my child's school*, compared to 95% of parents in the aggregate schools.
- However, there is opportunity to improve this awareness within the student population, with only 76% of students agreeing with *I am familiar with my School's Purpose and Concerns statement*, compared to 84% of students within the aggregate population.
- The data also indicate that Friends' has for some time done quite well with *preparing students well for interacting with people from different cultures and nations*, as 90% of Friends' alumni agreed with this statement.



## Section 2: Teaching and Learning

As in 2014, the results in this section revealed the School is doing a lot of things well.

- Students mostly (86%) agreed that *My classes challenge me*, compared to 82% of the aggregate; and 84% agreed that *My classes are generally interesting for a person of my age and ability* (compared to 80% within the aggregate).
- Parents also provided positive responses, with 97% agreeing that *I believe my child is developing critical thinking and problem solving skills*, compared to 92% of the aggregate.
- In 2014, we reported that results for *The school takes account of my learning style* could improve across the aggregate and this is still the case. At Friends', 74% of students agreed with this statement (the same as in 2014), while the aggregate result dropped from 72% in 2014 to 70% in 2016.
- It was pleasing that the student response to *I feel my work is assessed fairly* has increased from 86% in 2014 to 89% in 2016. The comparative aggregate score in 2016 was 81%.

## Section 3: Governance and Leadership

The Friends' School scored well in this section when compared to the aggregate.

- Regarding *The governing body provides the School with sound direction, continuity and effective support*, the School continued to compare well against the aggregate with 82% of staff agreeing, compared to the aggregate result of 79%.
- The School's parent community also expressed support for the School's leadership, with 92% agreeing *I am satisfied with the school leadership*, compared to 87% of the aggregate.
- While only 73% of staff feel *The School's financial resources are appropriately allocated*, this is commensurate to the aggregate result of 75%.
- It was pleasing to note that the parent response to *I receive updates about the discussions and decisions of the School's governing body that directly impact me and my child* has improved to 85% after receiving only 79% agreement in 2014. The aggregate result has remained steady at 78%.



#### **Section 4: Faculty and Support Staff**

As in 2014, the School scored very well in this section.

- 99% of staff agreed with *I enjoy working with my colleagues* (the aggregate response was 98%).
- 89% of students agreed that *Most of my teachers have good teaching skills* (compared to 86% for the aggregate).
- 95% of students agreed that *My teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects* (the aggregate response was 91%).
- 100% of Friends' staff agreed with *I regularly reflect upon and evaluate my own teaching / work* (the aggregate response was 98%).

#### **Section 5: Access to Teaching and Learning**

Once again, the School scored well against the aggregate in this section, but there is room for improvement.

- 85% of staff agreed that *I know where to refer exceptional students to accommodate their talents and interest*, compared to 68% for the aggregate.
- Staff agreement of 74% that *The School has adequate resources to support EAL students* is a substantial improvement on only 51% in 2014, but still below the aggregate score of 81%.
- Also positive is that 98% of staff agree that *Guidance counselling is available to students for a variety of student needs*, compared to the aggregate score of 89%.
- With 84% of students agreeing that *I know where to go for support for my learning when I need it*, the School is just scoring below the aggregate at 85%.

#### **Section 6: School Culture and Partnerships for Learning**

Friends' scored better than the aggregate in most of these measures, marking this area as a key strength of the School.

- While 95% of the aggregate staff agreed *I am encouraged by the school to view each student as a whole person*, the response from Friends' staff was 96%.
- Friends' scored particularly well in the measure that *School programs provide opportunities for students to learn leadership skills and to participate in community service*, with 98% of parents agreeing, compared to 90% of the aggregate.



- Also very positive for Friends' was that 81% agreed *the student activities programs are broad enough to meet my interests*, compared to 75% of aggregate students.

## Section 7: Operational Systems

In 2014, we reported that improving the School's facilities was a pressing area, and while the Master Planning process has been undertaken in the interim, its implementation is yet to commence, which is reflected in some measures in this section.

- The staff response to *I am satisfied with the physical condition of the school and its appropriateness for teaching and learning* has declined from 52% agreement in 2014 to 50% in 2016, compared to 85% of aggregate staff.
- Similarly, only 57% of staff agreed with *I have adequate equipment and storage space for my teaching needs* down from 61% in 2014, and compared to 78% of the aggregate.
- However, as in 2014, 97% of parents agree *The school is financially secure and operates in a financially responsible manner*.

## Other Comments

In 2014, we reported that Friends' had notably high levels of both stability and experience within its teacher population. The 2016 data reflected the number of long-serving teachers who have recently retired, as the percentage of staff at Friends' with more than 20 years' experience in teaching has diminished from 45% to 35% (the score within the aggregate was 23%); and staff who have spent longer than 10 years at Friends' is now 30%, down from 43% in 2014 (the aggregate score was 18%).

## School Improvement Plan

The Australian Government has directed that each school in Australia is to develop a School Improvement Plan, commencing in 2017. While The Friends' School is committed to ongoing improvement, this activity will now be consolidated into one document for this specific purpose. The data provided by the School's participation in the Council of International Schools Survey is being considered as a piece of evidence to inform the School Improvement Plan.