

Parent Survey January 2026: An Overview

Thank you for taking the time to complete our annual parent survey. We had a total of 58 responses, 20 of whom were the parents of boarding students. We really do appreciate that so many of you took the time to participate and give detailed comments.

I always find reviewing your feedback rather emotional. On the one hand, I'm delighted that there are so few concerns raised and it's heartwarming to read about how your children are thriving and to be able to pass on your comments that praise individual members of staff or particular staff teams. It is, however, upsetting to know we've not got things right for some students. I'm grateful that you have felt able to share your concerns – it's the first step towards getting things right.

Below is a summary of your responses followed by a table outlining our response to the concerns you raised.

Summary of Results

1. We asked the parents of students in boarding specific questions about their experience.

● Strongly Agree ● Agree ● Neutral ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree



We also asked whether you felt your child's boarding tutor knew them well and met their needs and whether you felt you had sufficient communication from boarding staff. In both cases, 100% of respondents said "yes".

Several comments indicated that your child had no experience of bullying and you therefore gave a neutral response to that question. Most comments were positive, although one person noted that the mattresses are not very comfortable and another that some of the students may need a little more support with their meal preparation. One parent noted that their child had missed having access to boarding early on Monday morning and on Friday afternoons.

"My child has flourished in boarding, the staff are excellent."

"My child hasn't mentioned any bullying issues either personally or for other children so I am not able to comment on the effectiveness of EMS in dealing with this issue."

"[Name] is loving her boarding experience - thank you so much."

"...we have found the organisation and approach of the boarding team excellent, better than we could have hoped or expected."

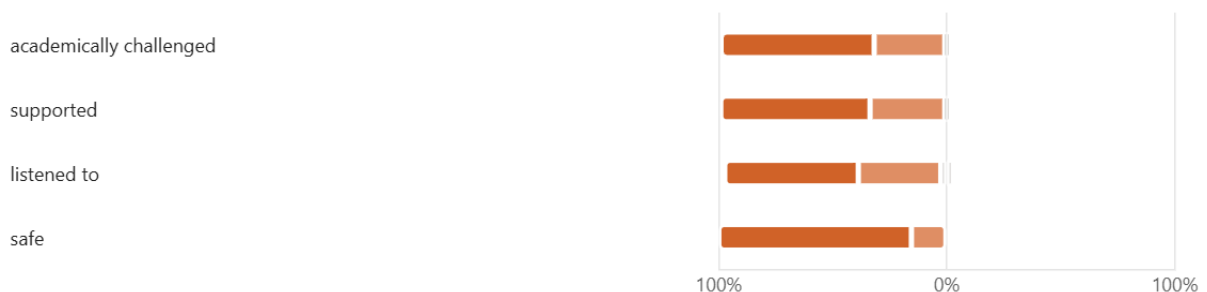
"The bed mattresses are not comfy. It's the only negative thing there is."

*"1 An email contact would be helpful for emergencies - especially when travelling eg if flights are delayed
2 Menu cards and extra supervision would improve some meals - a rating score for meals will identify cooks who need extra help."*

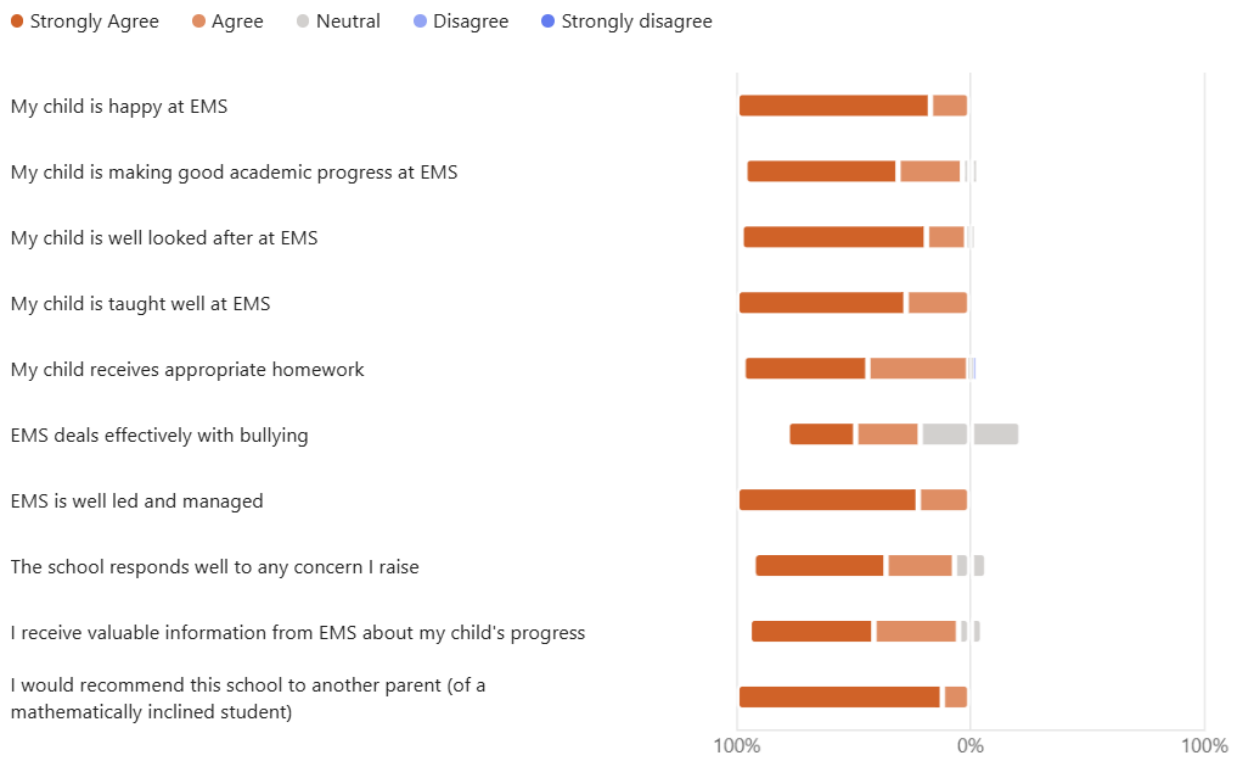
"Maybe teach them some daily stuff during the year such as how to fix leaky pipes? Or at least how to find where they are?"

2. We asked you to indicate whether you agreed with the following comments regarding your child's experience. They are...

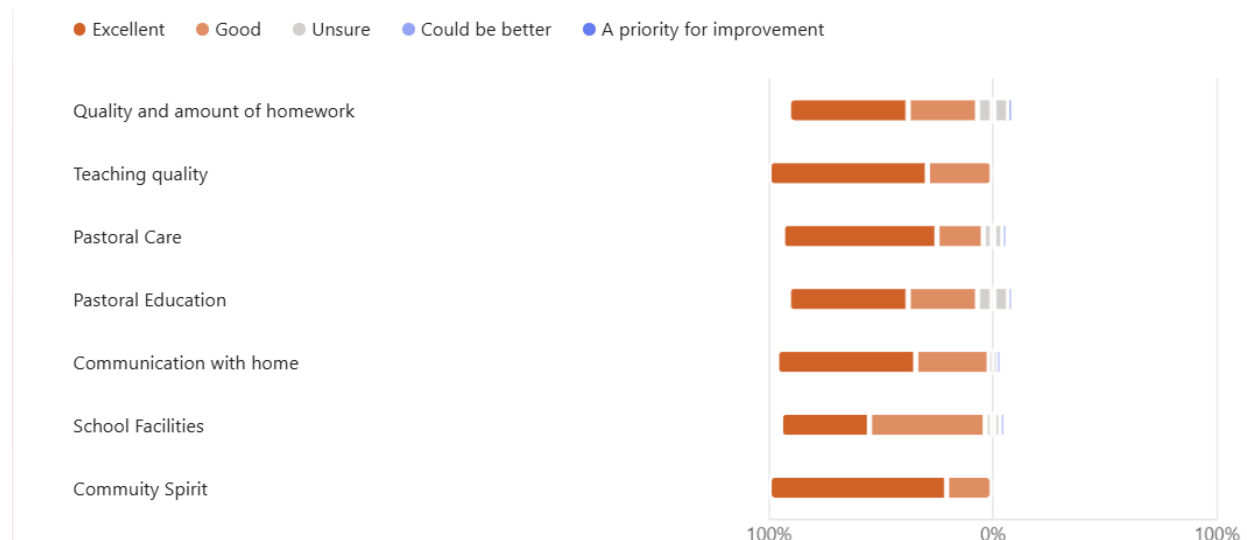
● Strongly Agree ● Agree ● Neutral ● Disagree ● Strongly disagree



3. We asked you to rate some statements.



4. We asked you to rate EMS for the following categories:



We asked you to add a statement to clarify reasons for your ratings – there were lots of positive comments (thank you) and I am delighted that none of you were aware of any bullying instances.

There were, however, also some areas for us to look into. One parent mentioned that the quality of teachers was variable and another that staff could be more pro-active in checking

in with students rather than putting all the onus on them – that parent gave a useful example which we can follow up on. Two parents mentioned that they would like more information about how their child was doing when there are issues. One concern was raised about EMC feedback which was discouraging (thankfully the student had already felt able to raise this concern).

"The school has exceeded my expectations. My child is thriving. I'm particularly impressed with topics covered during pastoral tutorials as they are excellent life preparation."

"Daughter has thrived in her time at EMS. She says that she feels at home with like-minded individuals. We love the way that homework is set. It is not as burdensome as friends' children who attend other schools who seem to only have time for homework and no other activities due to a ridiculous amount being set."

"Both of my children have attended EMS ... have thrived, and been happy and well-supported, academically and pastorally. I am very grateful that they have had this opportunity."

"Fantastic education, engaging, challenging and fun."

"The pastoral work is amazing."

"We are bowled over by the standard of education at EMS. Thank you."

"Some problems were raised at parents evening yr 12, I would like an update re progress before the next set of exams."

"Some teachers are fantastic - some are poor . Ask the students what they really say."

5. We asked whether you thought Equality, Diversity and Inclusion were championed at EMS. 93% thought it was and 7% were unsure. One parent noted that this was a loaded political term and that they hoped the school is a "non-prejudicial meritocracy".

6. We asked if there was any other feedback you would like to give us.

Two parents re-iterated the concerns they had raised earlier. Otherwise, all comments were positive.

"both my [children] have done really well with their university applications and I feel the support from EMS with this was excellent. The EMC was invaluable in giving them plenty to write about in their personal statements."

"They are so happy at EMS and look forward to every day."

"Overall EMS has been a really positive experience for my child and our family, all the staff I have met have been engaged and engaging. It really is only the EMC presentation feedback that has made me question how well my child is doing and how well he is being supported...."

"Thank you for surrounding students with caring professionals who are passionate about their fields. The EMC projects seemed a great idea and were well received."

"I feel the culture of the school is massively accepting of diversity. Just meeting the students and staff at the recent lecture, I felt a special warmth and energy."

“SEND team are excellent. Very supportive.”

“Fantastic opportunities given outside of the A level curriculum.”

“My child is the happiest I’ve ever seen them in school. Thank you!”

“Thank you for being supportive of individual choices and decisions.”

“My child is happy. He enjoys the camaraderie at EMS”

Issue raised	Issues / Suggestions	School’s response / Action
Boarding	Uncomfortable mattress.	Our landlord provides the mattresses and they should be regularly replaced. If your child has a particularly poor mattress, please let the boarding staff know and we can ask for a replacement. If it is simply the quality of the mattress that is the issue, we could look into adding a topper if it is impacting your child’s sleep. (This parent gave their name so we will follow up for their child).
	Access removed on Mon am and Fri pm.	I do understand the frustration of not being able to collect bags as late as desired on a Friday evening. Unfortunately, access to the stairwell on a Friday afternoon has not always been respected by students and we do not have the staffing to manage this. Likewise on a Monday morning, it leads to a difficult split-shift for at least two members of boarding staff which is proving to be too difficult. Students can leave their bags in the main school building but do need to collect them before it closes at the end of Friday.
	Boarding meal prep of varying standard	This parent suggested we provided recipe cards and have students rate each other’s meals. I’m not too sure about the rating system but will share your idea with students and boarding staff who can then decide how to proceed. We do have a boarding recipe book and boarding staff are on hand to support students whilst cooking and to guide them in their meal choice. If this is a significant concern for your child, please make their boarding tutor or Grace aware so that they can ensure there is always something they are able to eat.
	Boarding life skills could be taught (eg how to find and deal with leaky pipes)	I will share this feedback with the team and see what they think is achievable. Our Pastoral Curriculum Lead (Nick) will also be interested since we teach some of these life skills as part of the curriculum to all students, mostly in year 13.
	Email contact would be helpful for emergencies.	If an emergency means a student may miss school or a message needs to be passed onto the boarding team, you can email enquiries@exeterms.ac.uk . Reception staff monitor the inbox from 8.30am until they leave at 6pm (5.30pm on Mon and 4.15pm Fri). If you need to get an urgent message to boarding staff outside of those hours then a text or call to a boarding tutor is the best option. Each boarding tutor does have a school email address but the nature of their work

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		means they are not computer-based for most of their shift and therefore are unlikely to pick up on emails until very late in the evening. I'm not sure if this adequately covers your needs – perhaps you can email gracestrachan@exeterms.ac.uk if need to give more context/detail to help us understand what is missing at the moment.
EMC	<p>Feedback post yr12 talks was discouraging.</p> <p>No one checking students are ok when given new project groups. (A more general point also made that too much responsibility sits with the students for asking for help rather than staff checking in on them).</p>	<p>We are following this up. Every single presentation was worthy of praise and every individual student. For some, overcoming their nerves to be there was an immense achievement and the effort for that should be lauded as highly as the mature presentation skills of others. On the reflection day, our aim was to praise and encourage as well as reflect and draw on lessons for the future. It sounds as though this balance was not successfully struck for at least one student this year. I apologise. We will follow this up (thank you for giving your name).</p> <p>We do make a concerted effort to encourage students to speak-up and seek support when they need it because we are preparing them for independence. That said, we also have structures in place to ensure we are touching-base and checking-in. For example, every student has a 1-2-1 meeting with a member of the pastoral team in their first term. Form tutors have regular 1-2-1 meetings with their tutees and teachers are continually assessing and checking on students' progress. SEND reviews are regularly completed and when we know on a student concern, we arrange to touch base to support them. During EMC there are multiple members of staff timetabled to be checking in with groups.</p> <p>I am not disputing that your child feels staff could be more proactive or that in this case we have made a mistake. I only share the above to give you the full context. Our approach is to encourage independence whilst applying a safety net and looking out for those who need more support. I do not claim that we always get the balance right. We will follow up with your child (thank you for giving your name) and we will reflect together as a staff team about whether we have the right balance and what we might do differently to ensure no student falls between the cracks.</p>
Teaching	Variable quality (ask the students).	I am about to review the student survey results so may have additional thoughts after that time. This is a challenging thing to address given this one person's feedback is markedly different to that from others. The parent suggested that we completed regular lesson observations and reviews. Teachers have half-termly reviews with their line manager, they also reflect in coaching pairs and I have personally completed a lesson observation for every teacher this academic year. I would like to understand what this parent's specific concerns are. You did not give your name but if you felt able to get in

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	<p>Computer science taking more of a back seat compared to Physics (eg no Problem Solving classes for yr12 comp sci and more EMC projects that are Physics based).</p>	<p>touch with me directly, I'd welcome a conversation: kburnham@exeterms.ac.uk</p> <p>Computer science, or at least the coding aspect, permeates most EMC projects whether or not the core focus is Physics, Maths or Computer Science. This is why we make sure all students have the basics of coding in place. That said, our lead teacher for EMC is always looking to engage new companies and to have as great a variety of projects as possible. Computer Science Problem Solving classes will begin for year 12 after Feb half term and run for a year (Physics also have an annual cycle but it starts a little earlier in the year).</p>
<p>Parents being informed of issues</p>	<p>Poor assessment results were a surprise – would be nice for parents to know there are issues sooner so they can support before the assessments happen.</p> <p>Concerns were raised at Yr12 parents meeting. Would be good to have an update prior to the next set of assessments.</p>	<p>The assessments in October of year 12 are very early in the year and are partly there to highlight issues. There is a fine balance between giving enough space and time for students to settle in and flagging concerns early. Some students take a few weeks to find their feet and we find the assessments are a superb opportunity to assess whether this is working or not. I will share your thoughts with the team and have a think about whether contact with home should/could have sensibly happened at an earlier point in time.</p> <p>I understand this point. Having raised issues at the very end of year 12, it feels reasonable to want an update as to how the first term back is going. I will share this with the team and think about what structures we should put in place to ensure a timely update. This year, we are having staff meetings to review student progress at the mid-point between assessments – it feels this would be a prime opportunity to then provide an update home.</p>
<p>EDI</p>	<p>This is a loaded political term and the parent hopes we are a non-prejudicial meritocracy.</p>	<p>I agree that the term EDI has become highly politicalised in recent years. Our intention in asking about this is that we want to ensure EMS is an environment in which all students (and other members of the community) feel equally valued, respected, accepted and able to thrive.</p> <p>We also need to prepare our students to function in a multicultural community and to be able to have open and honest conversations.</p> <p>In the past, some students from minority groups have not felt comfortable or included and we want to do all we can to ensure EMS is welcoming for all students, breaking-down any barriers to developing a cohesive community in which we enjoy collaborating with people about our common interests whilst appreciating and celebrating our differences.</p>