

ATKINS



Parent Survey Results 2009 Atkins Transport Management



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Introduction

The team at Atkins Transport Management (ATM) have been operating the Special education needs (SEN) Home to School transport in partnership with The Royal Borough of Kingston for some five years.

Atkins will always strive to improve upon the service that they deliver within this partnership. However we know there is always room for improvement.

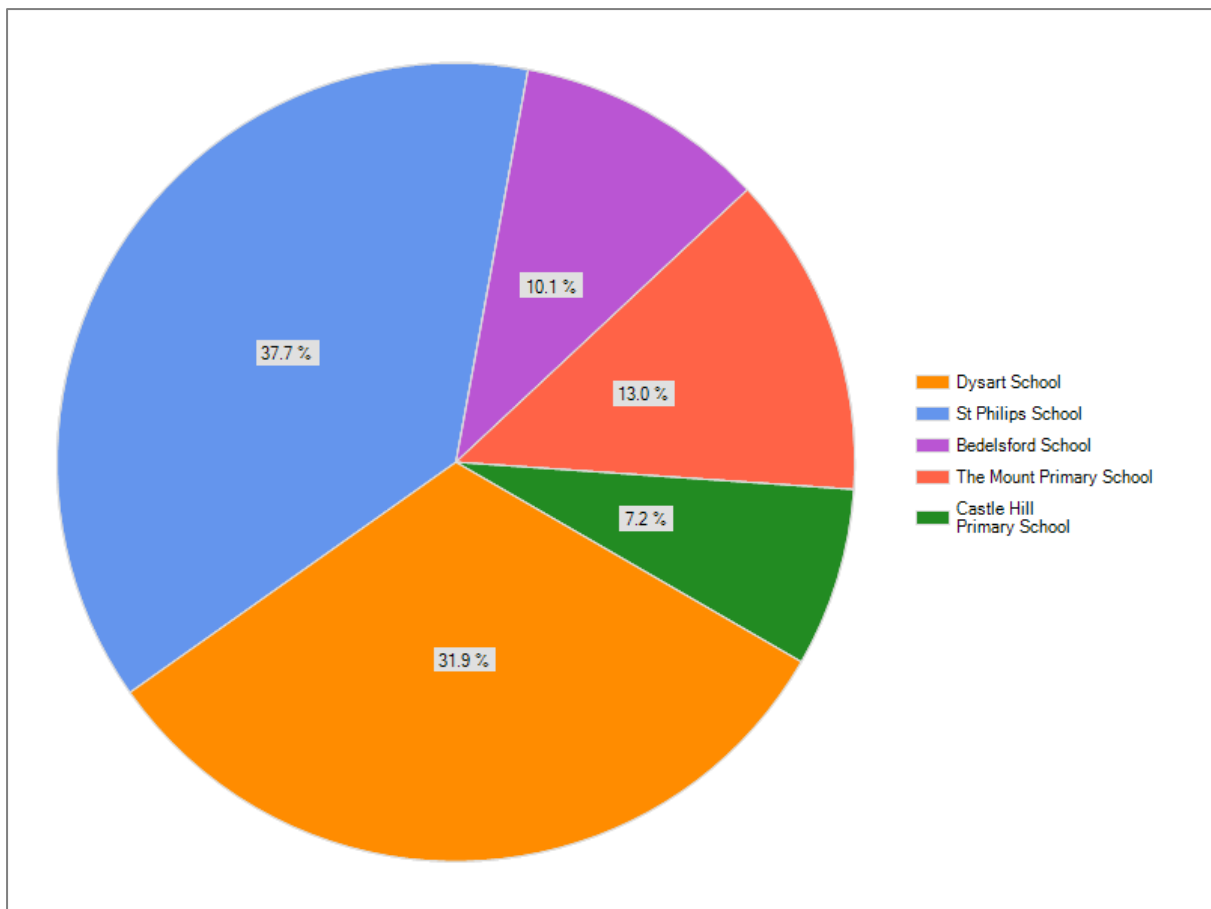
In order for us to find out how well we believe we are doing and what areas we need to improve upon a survey was sent out to all parents whose children currently use the service (157 parents) on Friday 23rd October 2009.

The closing date for the survey was Monday 02nd November 2009, however due to the postal strike Atkins extended the closing date to Friday 06th November 2009. The response to the survey was excellent with Atkins receiving a (44%) response rate.



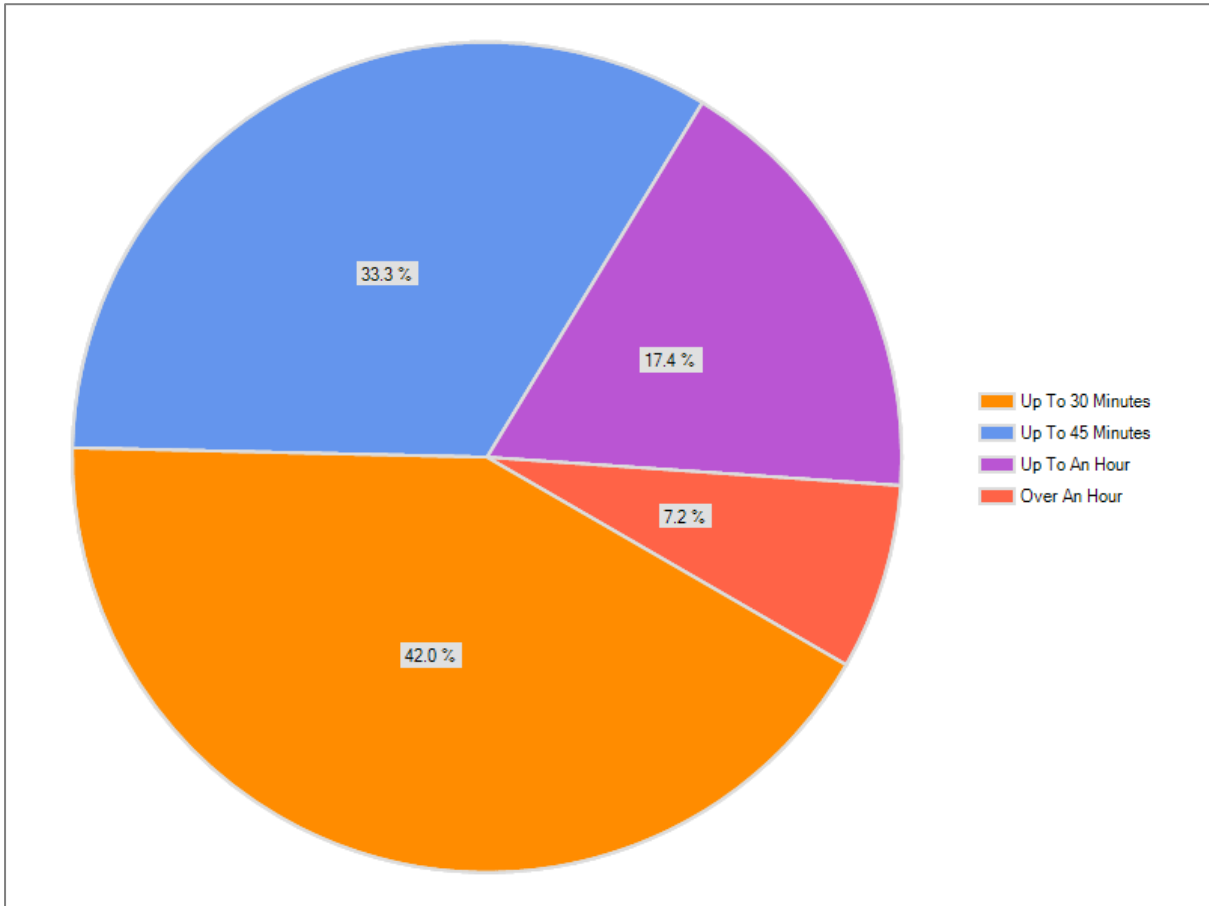
Results

Question 1 : Which School Does Your Child Attend?



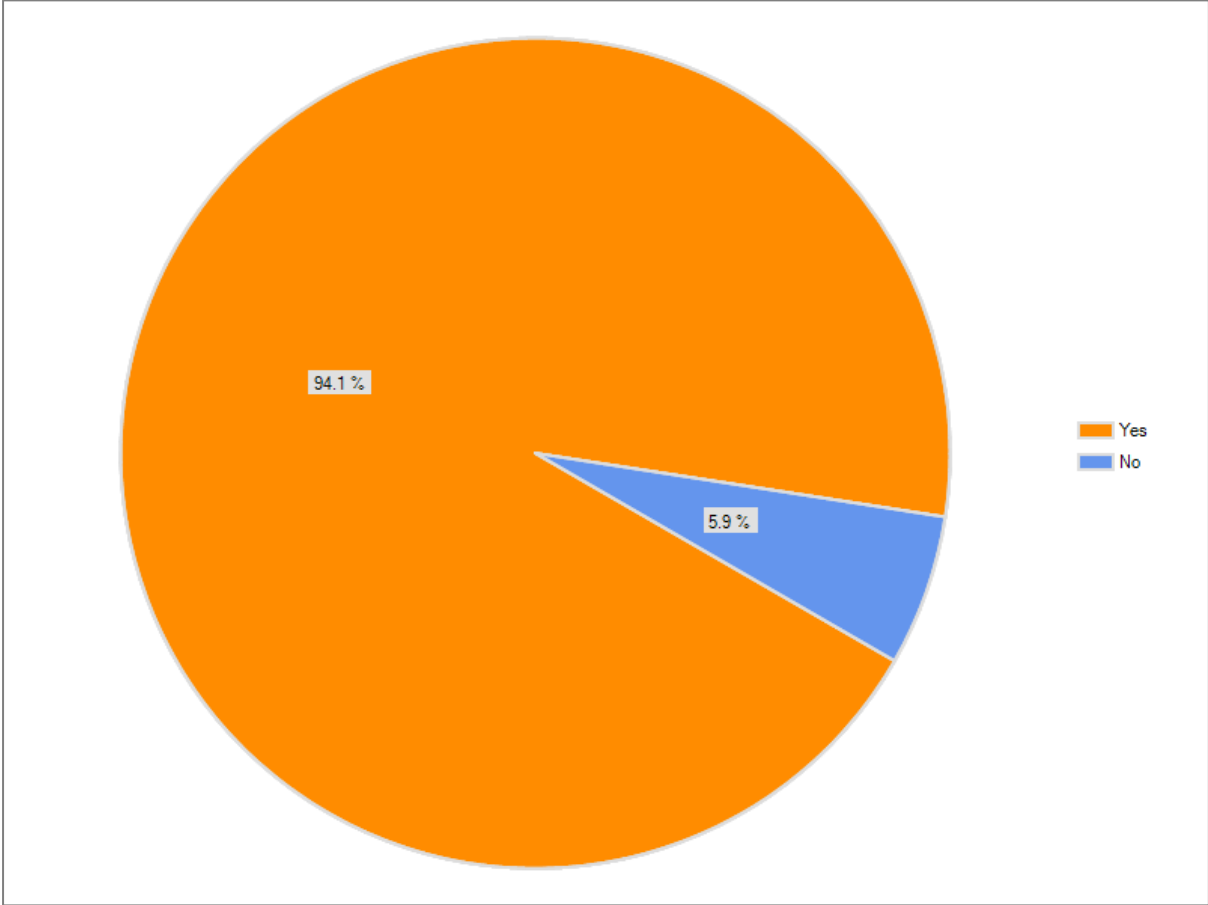


Question 2: How long Is Your Child On The Vehicle For Each Journey?



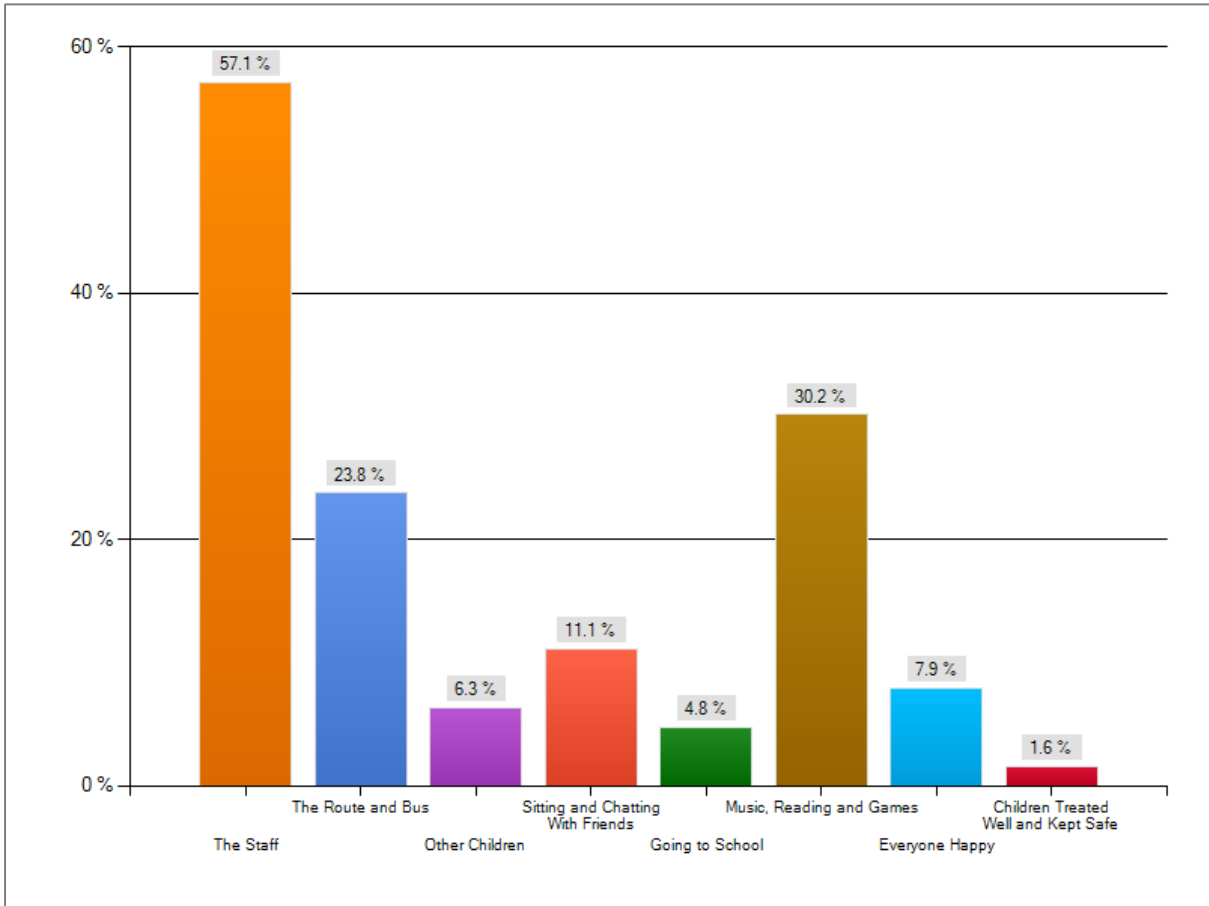


Question 3: Does Your Child Enjoy The Journey?



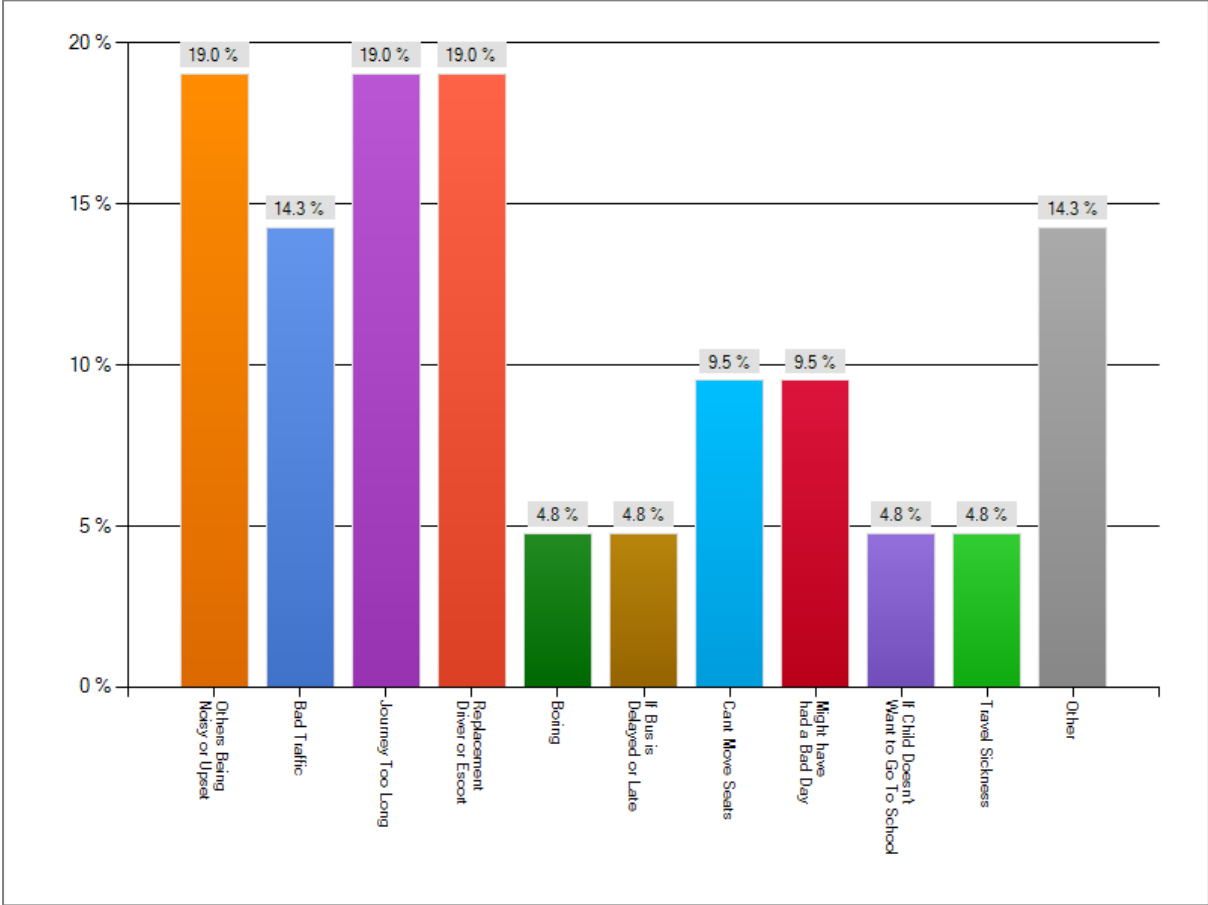


Question 4: What Makes The Journey Happy?



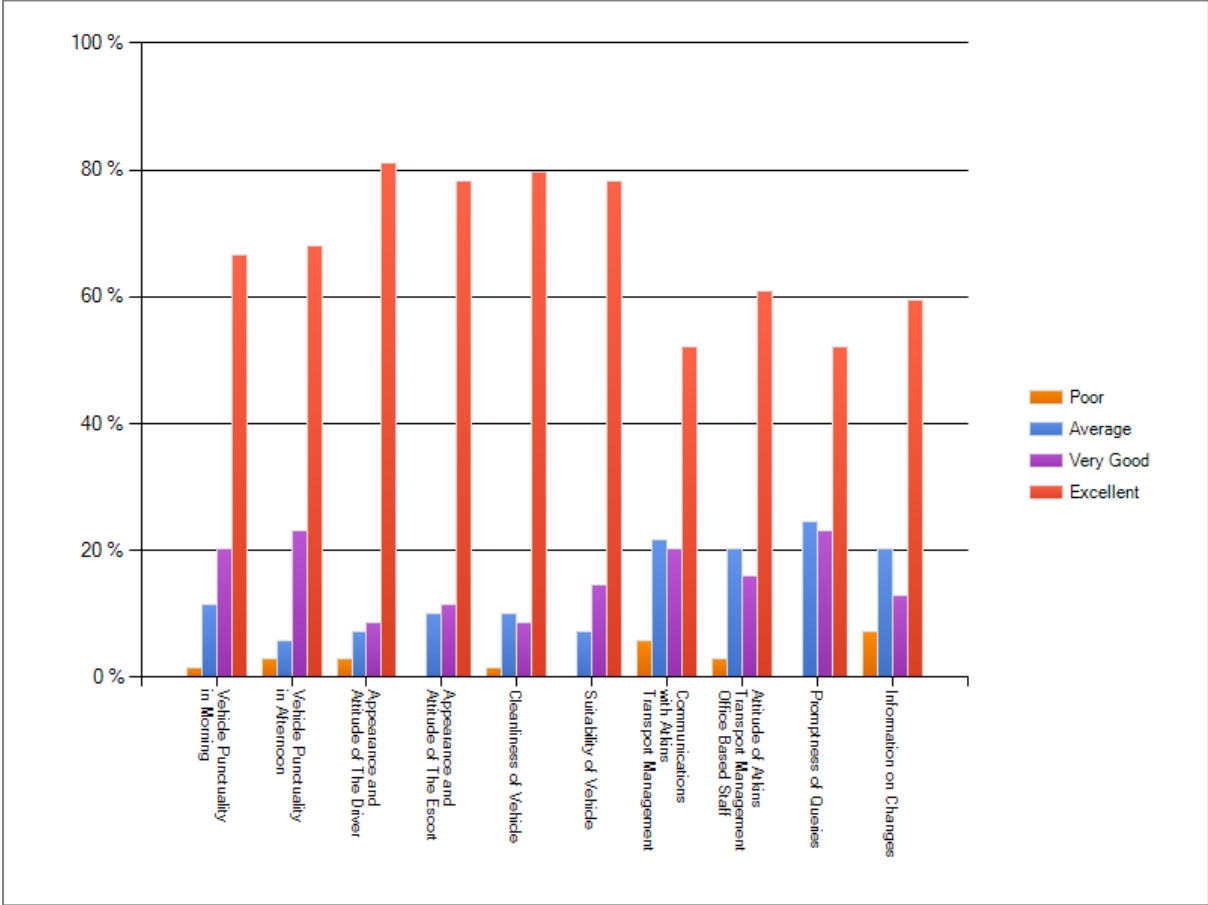


Question 5: If The Journey Is Unhappy, Why?



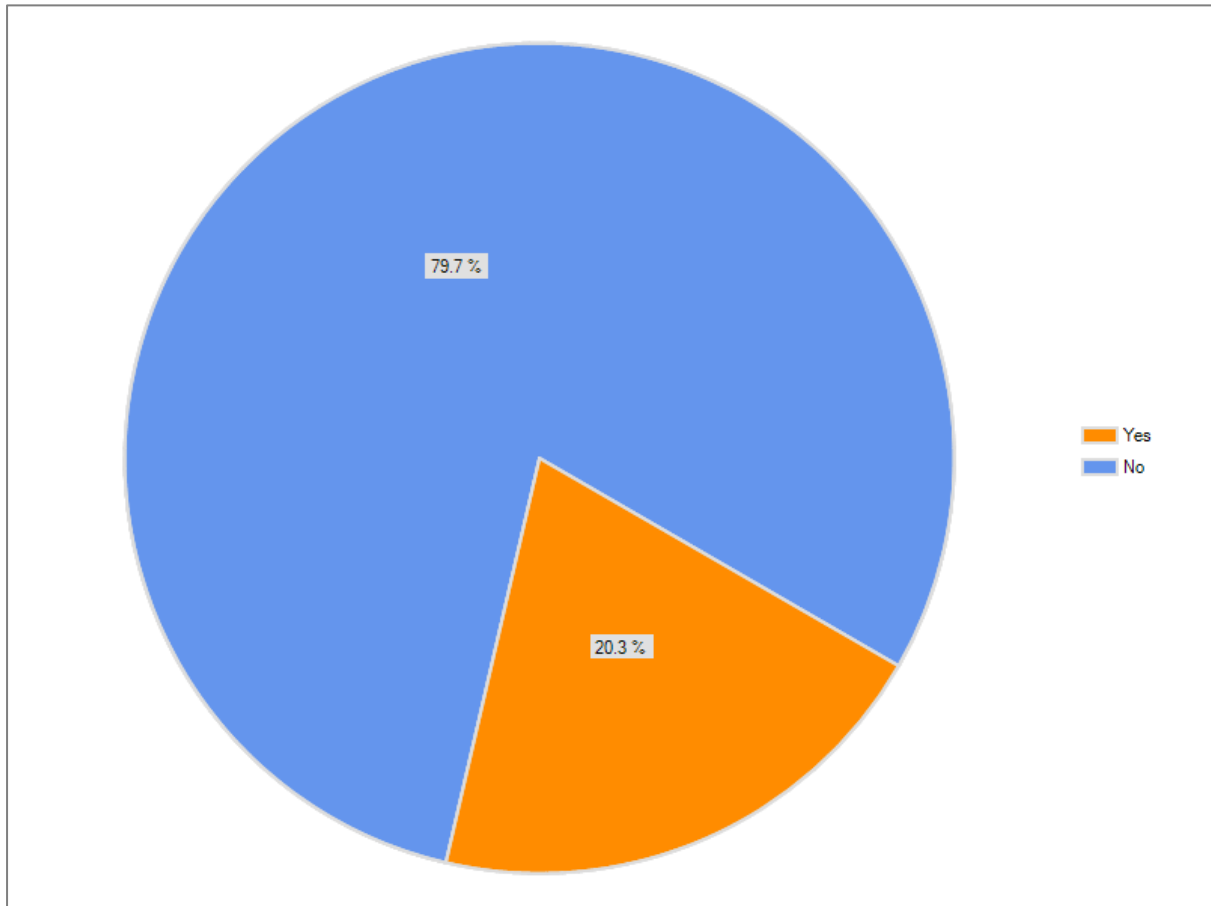


Question 6: How Would You Rate The Following?



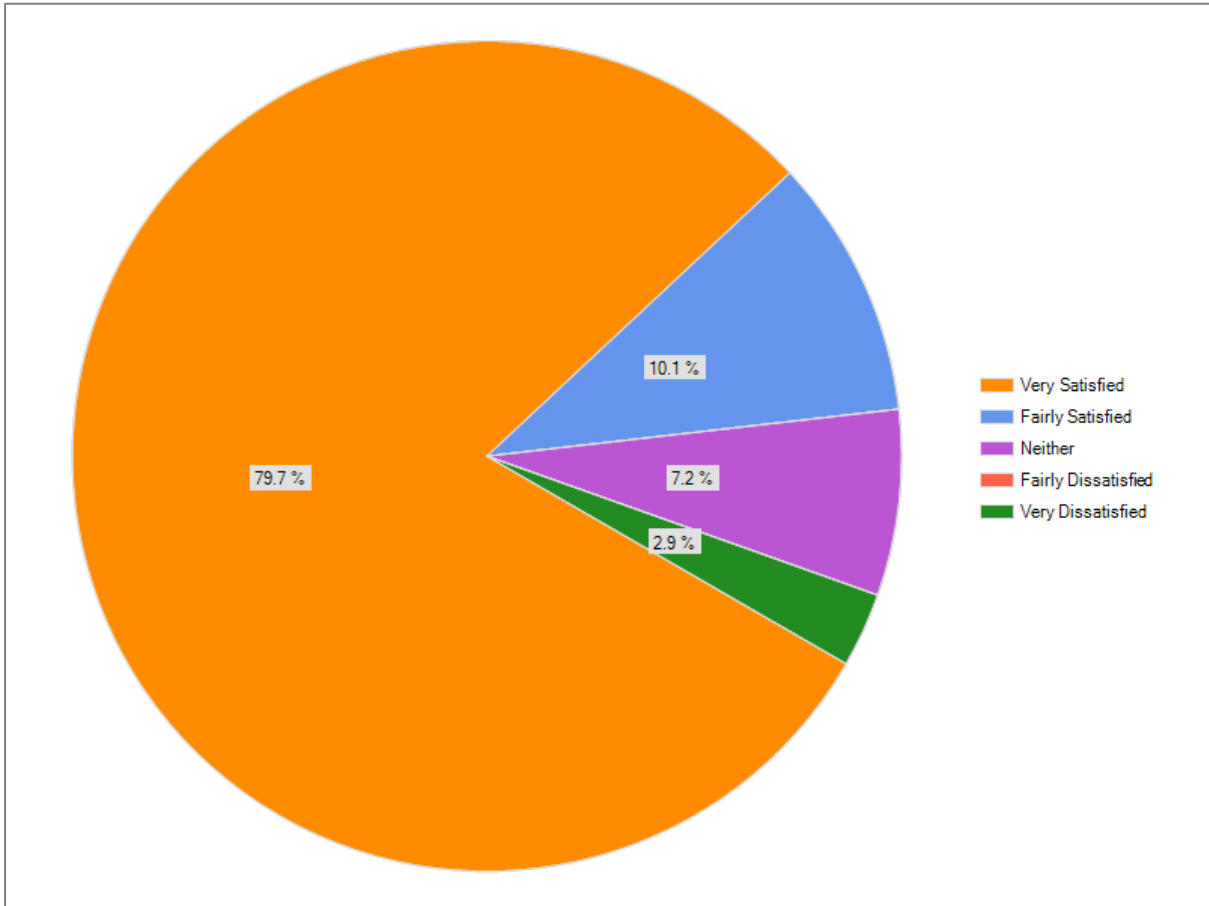


Question 7: Have You Had Cause To Complain?





Question 8: If Yes, Was Your Complaint Dealt With In A Satisfactory Manner?





Feedback

All comments which have been received by the survey have been listed below under the headings, positive comments and things we can do better.

Things We Do Well:

- This route runs well and there have not been many changes which is important for my child.
- Happy with the driver on the bus, he is always cheerful.
- Our son was previously transported by a private taxi company who were unreliable and inconsistent. Atkins is a breath of fresh air by comparison. Thank you! Excellent service overall.
- I'd like to say again how wonderful S and C are every single morning.
- I think that the service is good, the driver and escort are always willing to help where they can. They are also very good at letting me know if there is a problem.
- Generally we are satisfied with the service Atkins provides and my son is happy to use the school transport.
- Overall an excellent service and we have been very lucky to have really nice drivers and escorts. I'd like to say Thank You.
- Our daughter is very happy on their journey to and from school and we are happy that we feel she is safe. If there have been any problems the driver and escort have always been excellent and very helpful.
- We are very happy with the service.
- There has been a great improvement this year particularly regarding information, which is appreciated.
- On the whole very happy with service so is M which is vital. Especially happy with driver J and escort S.
- A couple of times the bus has arrived earlier than expected. Excellent work with arranging transport for our son once it was recognised he needed to attend a different preschool for his speech difficulties very quickly and smoothly arranged and comprehensive guidance notes. Thank You.
- I would like to say thank you very much to my son's driver B.
- Very friendly staff on the bus.



- The driver and escort are fantastic.
- I think everything is fine.
- The bus driver and escort are fantastic.
- The whole set up is as good it allows time for the children and the traffic.
- The Service is good and reliable.

Things We Could Do Better:

- It would be extremely helpful if the escort on the bus could knock at the door as it is not always possible to wait by the window indefinitely for 10-20 minutes in case the bus is early, mornings are busy enough! The last service provider's escort always knocked.

Although we would like to be able to knock on individual doors, the reasons we are unable to help here is because the escort is responsible for the safety of the children on the vehicle and cannot leave the vehicle to knock on doors. As long as you are out at your allotted time on the schedule that is fine, however the vehicle will wait up to 3 minutes after this time before moving on.

- My son is not wheelchair bound but does use a wheelchair and this could not be transported on the bus unless my son sat in it which he won't do on the bus.

The new vehicles that have been brought onto the fleet this year have the capacity to secure a wheelchair in the transit position for those children who require them to be used at school. The remaining vehicles on the fleet will be changed in April 2010. Could the parent who left this comment please get in touch with us, as this new facility may already be available on your child's route.

- I wonder if possible to have the drivers and escorts mobile number of call in emergency about unexpected events or do we have to call the main office.

Since the arrival of the new vehicles this year all drivers have been issued with a company mobile phone to improve upon communications. The office will send out a letter to all parents giving them the driver's duty mobile number.

- There does not appear to be a backup plan if a driver is sick, I have received a text message at 7.15am to say the bus is running 1 hour late.

Please be assured we have a very stringent sickness plan in place should a driver or escort call in sick. However depending on the time we receive the call, and get the replacement driver or escort to the vehicle, the route will unavoidably run up to an hour late. We are very selective about the replacement crew members who can be used on these routes and they have to be trained to the same standard as your regular crew to ensure that the same level of service is



being delivered whilst they are off sick. We will always use the text alert system or contact the parents by landline to inform them of the situation as soon as possible.

- Atkins are not always very flexible in their thinking when they are trying to help families with very individual difficulties.

We understand that this may seem frustrating, however please be assured that Atkins always try to remain flexible and helpful wherever we can. The most common request received by Atkins is for specific pick up or drop off times, to fit around existing family commitments (e.g. work commitments, taking other children to school). Sometimes we can change timings without this affecting the efficiency of the route. But, in most cases buses already travel along the most efficient route, so if we were to change timings and specific pickups, it could lead to buses only being able to collect a handful of children.

- My son is on the bus for an hour in the morning which I feel is a bit too long.

We can understand your concerns, however as with all transport services we are working to the current guidelines, these guidelines state that the maximum time a child should be on transport is no longer than 1 hour 15 minutes.

- The steps up to the vehicle are awkward and difficult for R and the turn at the top of the steps is difficult.

The remaining new vehicles are due to be changed in April 2010. They have been designed with a much improved entrance and the steps into the vehicle are lower than the existing vehicles which should help those children who find the steps difficult.

- A telephone call rather than a text would make more sense. If I'm at work my phone is in my locker – so how would my parents who were getting M on the bus know? We usually ring. I have raised the above point before – message can be texted to land phone so I don't know why it isn't.

You have raised a very valid point – thank you. Atkins have now confirmed with its communications provider that from this month November 2009 those parents who are unable to receive the text alert message to a mobile phone will have it sent to their landline phones informing them of any delays in the service. If you would prefer your text message to be sent to your home telephone number rather than to your mobile (for work reasons etc), please let us know, and we can make the necessary arrangements.

- Sometimes the bus is late for an hour and we are not sure of the reason and the text message warning has failed to reach me.

If there are any changes to your contact details, please be sure to inform the driver and escort as soon as possible so that the office staff can update the system with your new contact details.



- We have had a few issues when the driver has told off our child for being late out after school but this has been due to the teacher and not our child. Have spoken to the driver about this.

Our drivers and escorts will be given further training, if you have any further problems of this nature please contact the office on 01483 213155.

- We hope to have more selection of drop/pick up points so that we feel safe and the child is safe when going/coming back home after school.

While we understand why a greater selection of pick up and drops off points would appear useful to parents and children, the idea behind the drop/pick up points is to develop a level of independent travel and also to enable as many children as possible to benefit from this service. If we put more drop/pick up points on the route then we would be transporting fewer children on this service.

- Changes in pick up times haven't always been communicated well.

The current policy that we are running to states that if the collection time changes are 15 minutes or over then we must write to parents to inform of the changes, if however these changes are less than 15 minutes, we ask the crews to inform the parents straight away..

- Communication could improve between escort and school to ensure there is better communication with parents e.g. might avoid book bags not coming home etc. "I think this is more an issue for the school".

We continue to develop our staff through training to meet the needs of the parents and children, this year we endeavour to improve upon our drivers and escort's communication with the schools.

- Notification of changes of staff or bus would help manage my child's anxiety.

We will always try to ensure that we notify parents when we are going to change either the driver, escort or the vehicle on a route, however vehicle mechanical failure and staff sickness is unavoidable. Please be assured vehicle and crew changes will only ever take place when there is no other alternative. The safety and well being of your child is paramount to us.

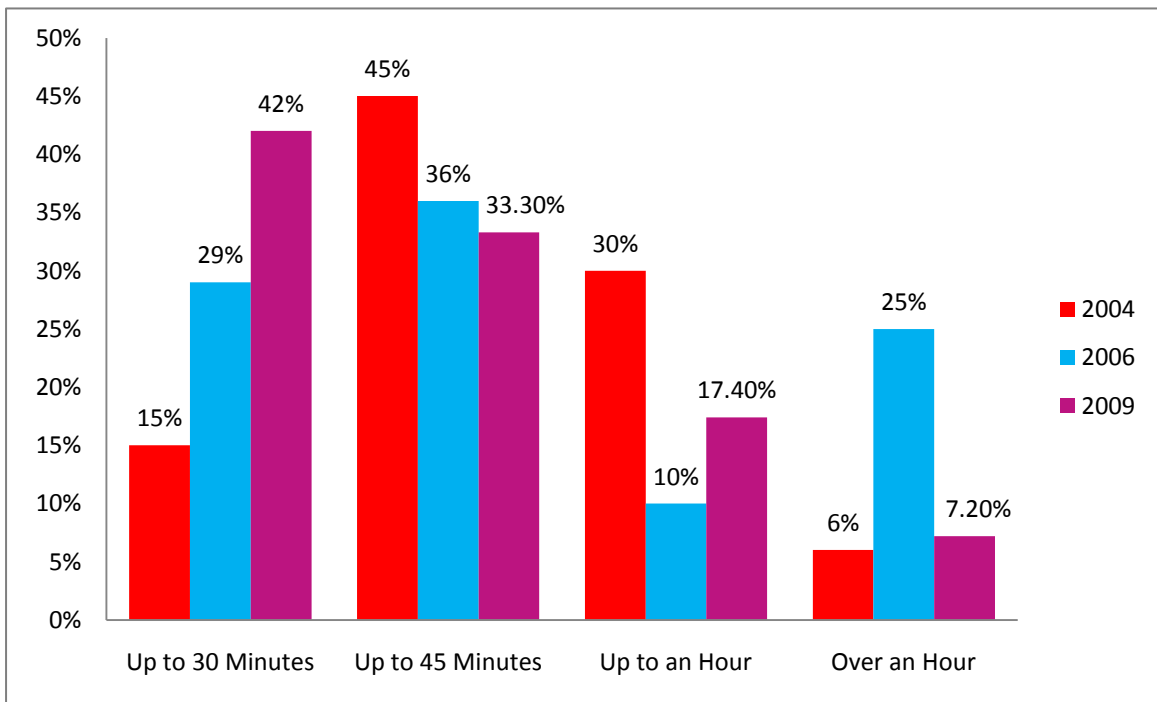
- I phoned regarding K not being happy to sit with this particular girl who doesn't speak to her and the person said she would contact the escort but nothing has changed. I am very embarrassed – have just provided K with an iPod instead.

We are sorry that you feel embarrassed. The crew have in this instance been contacted by the office to discuss seating arrangements. However due to the volume of children transported on this route it is very difficult to move children around on the vehicle, as the crew will always try and keep those who are in the same year group together to ensure that all children have someone they can talk with during the journey. The escort continually monitors the situation. Should you wish to discuss this further please contact the office on 01483 213155.



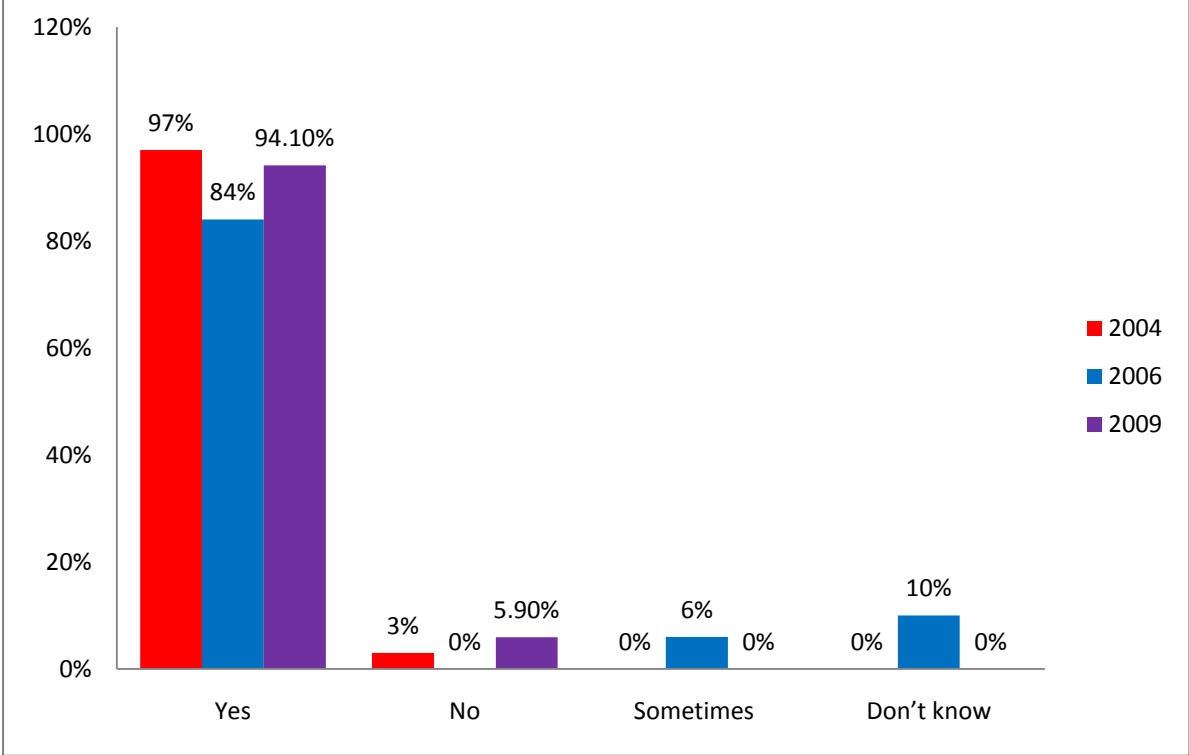
Comparison of Results

How Long Is Your Child's Journey?



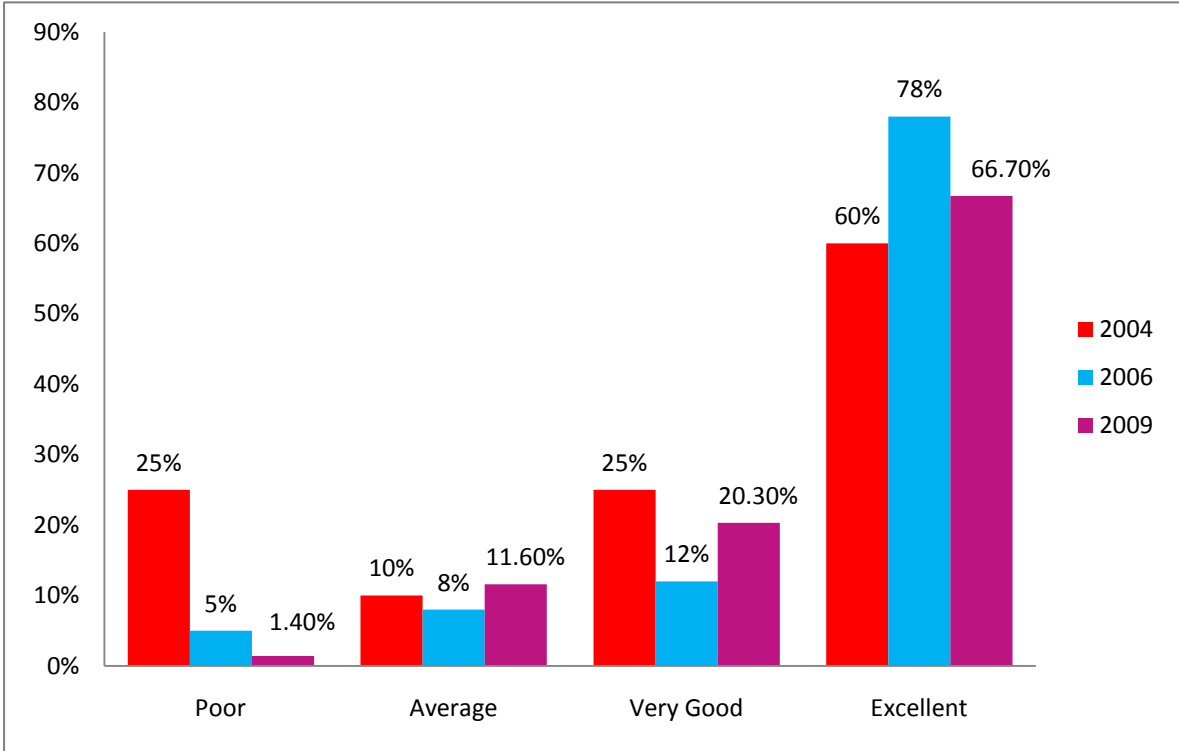


Does Your Child Enjoy The Journey?



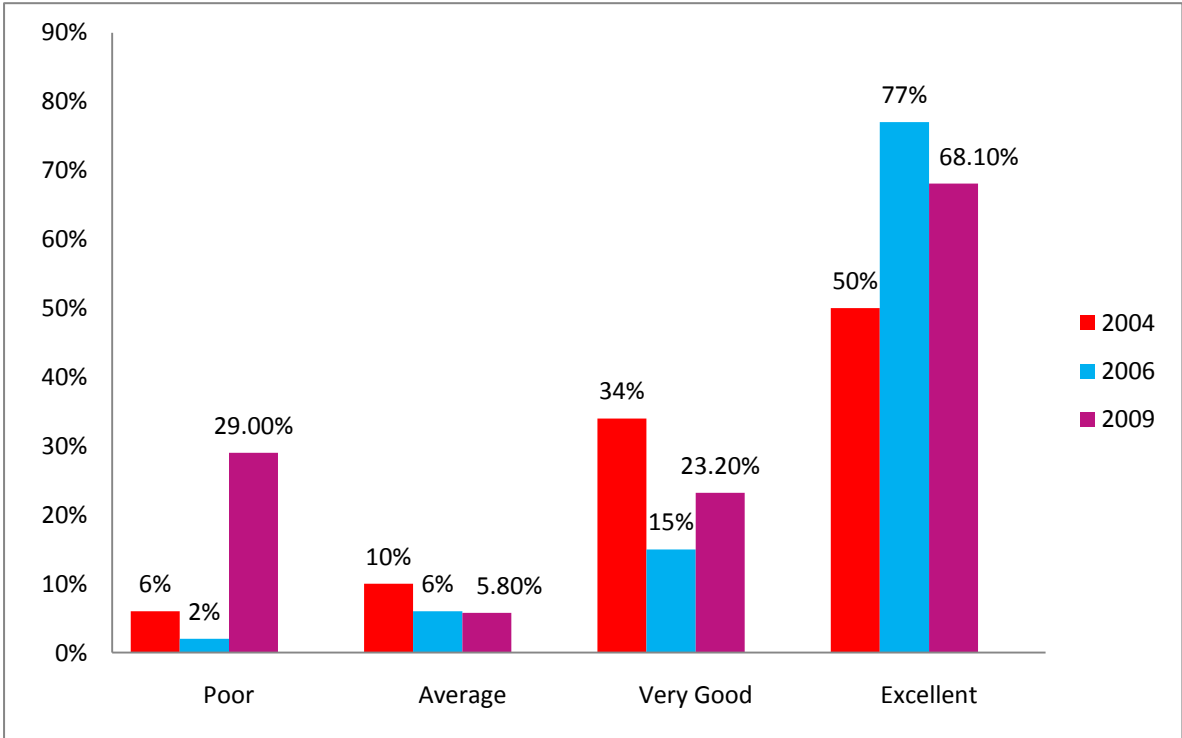


Vehicle Punctuality in the Morning



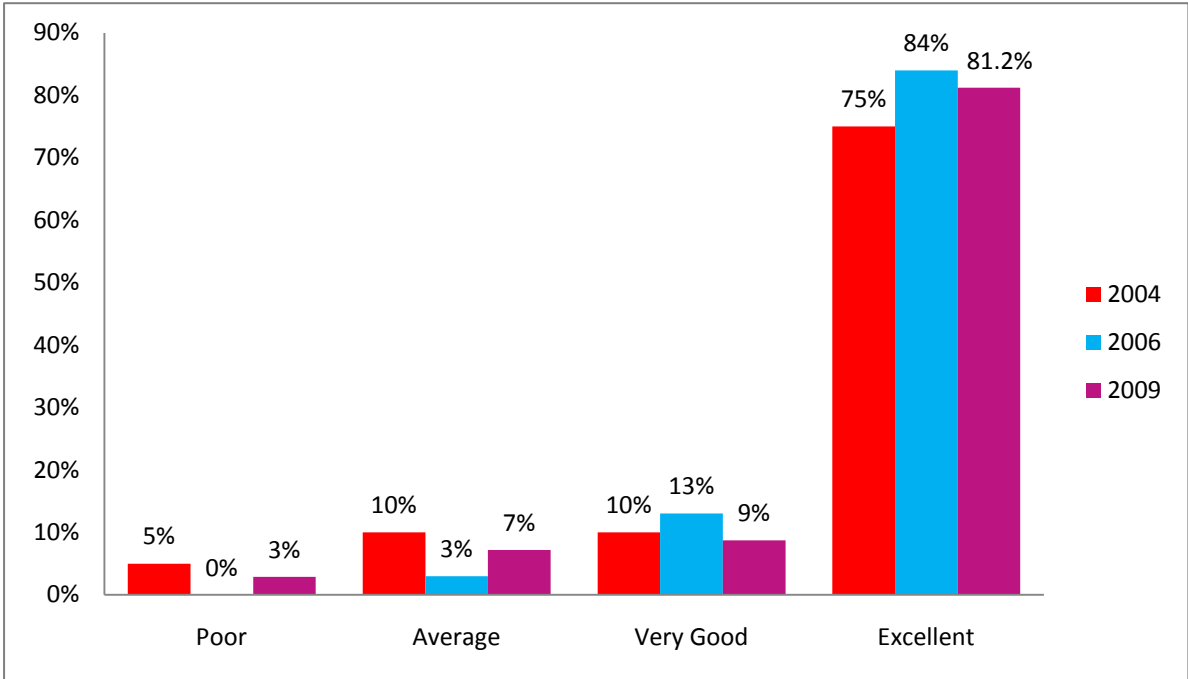


Vehicle Punctuality in the Evening



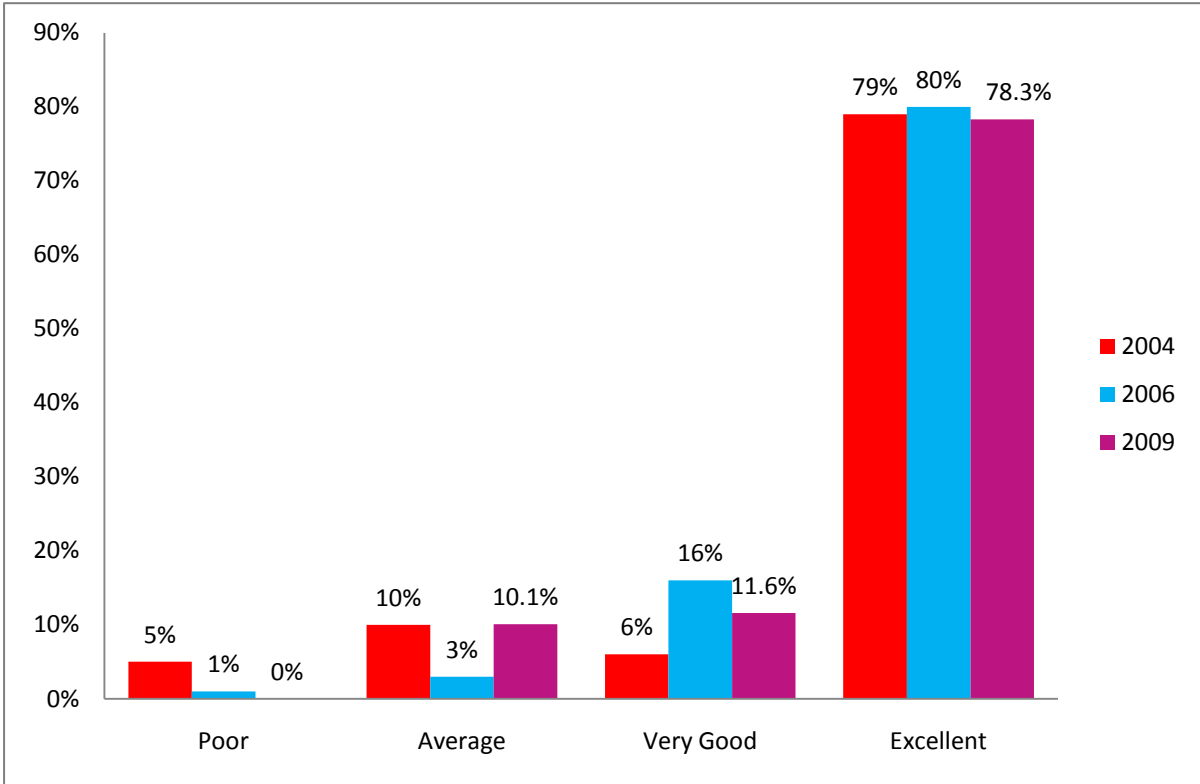


Appearance and Attitude of Driver



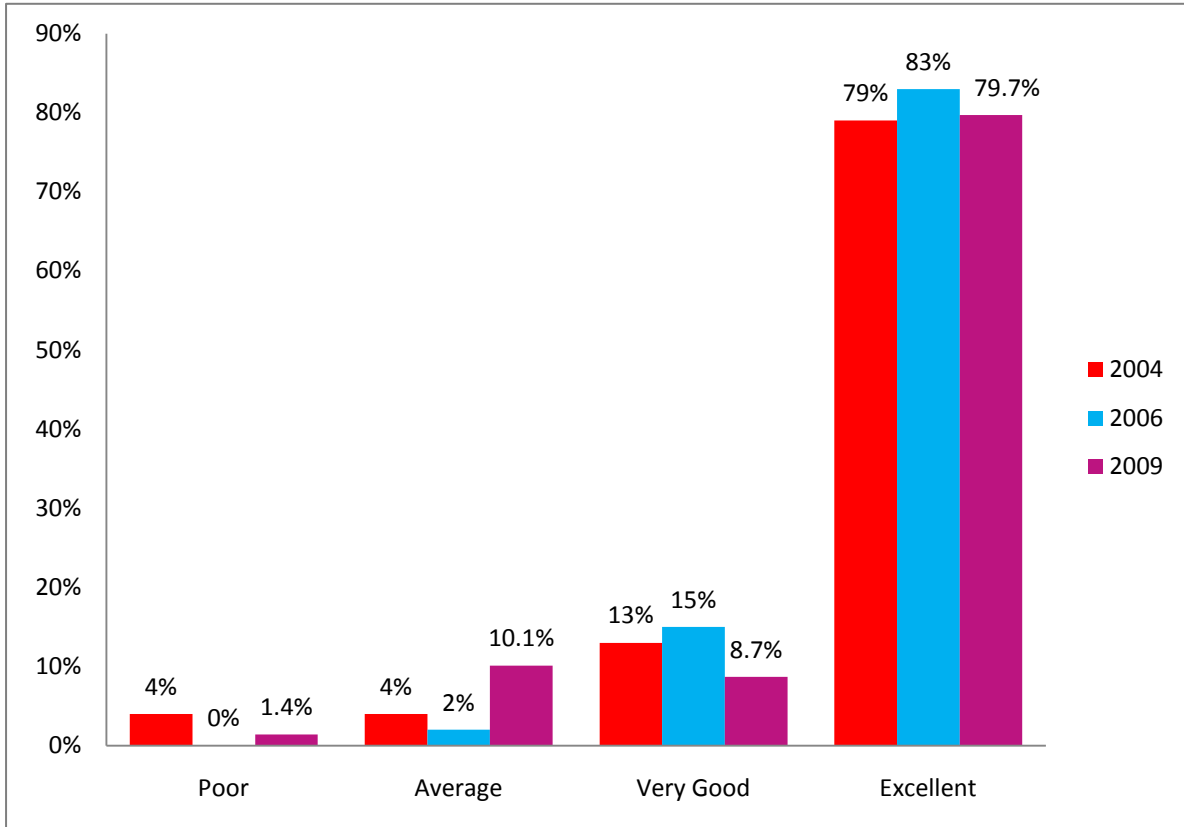


Appearance and Attitude of Escort



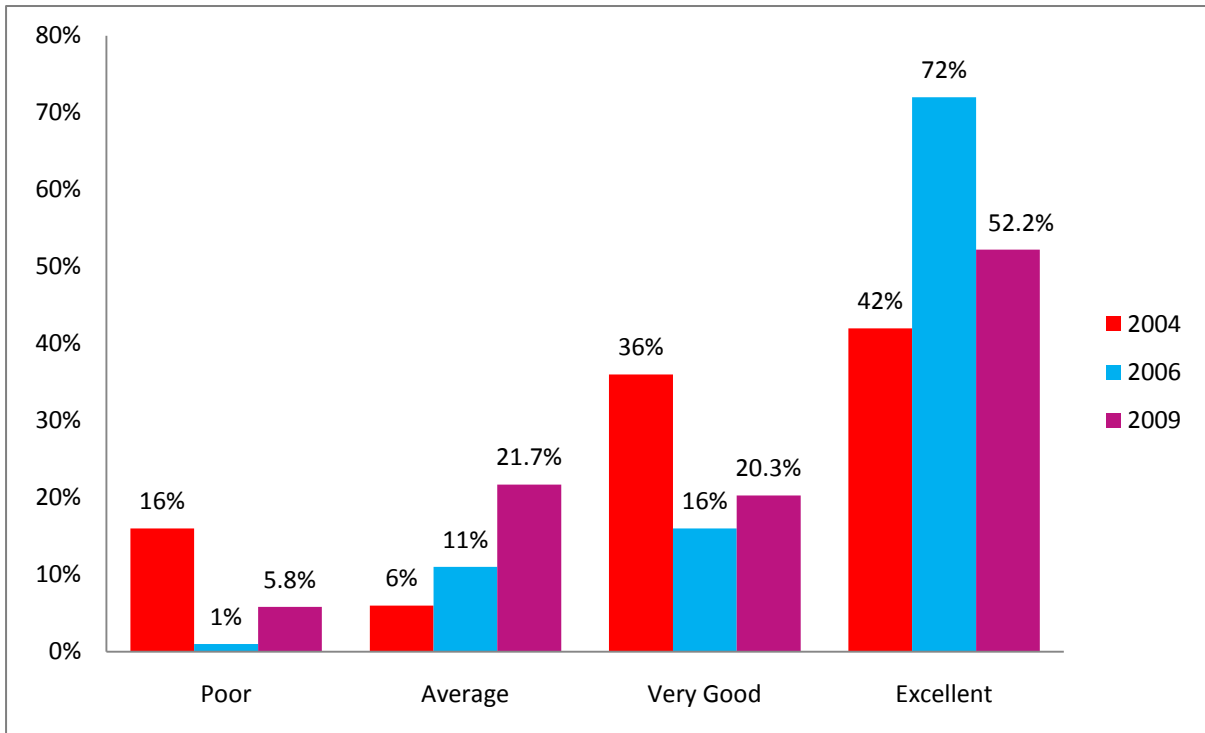


Cleanliness of the Vehicle



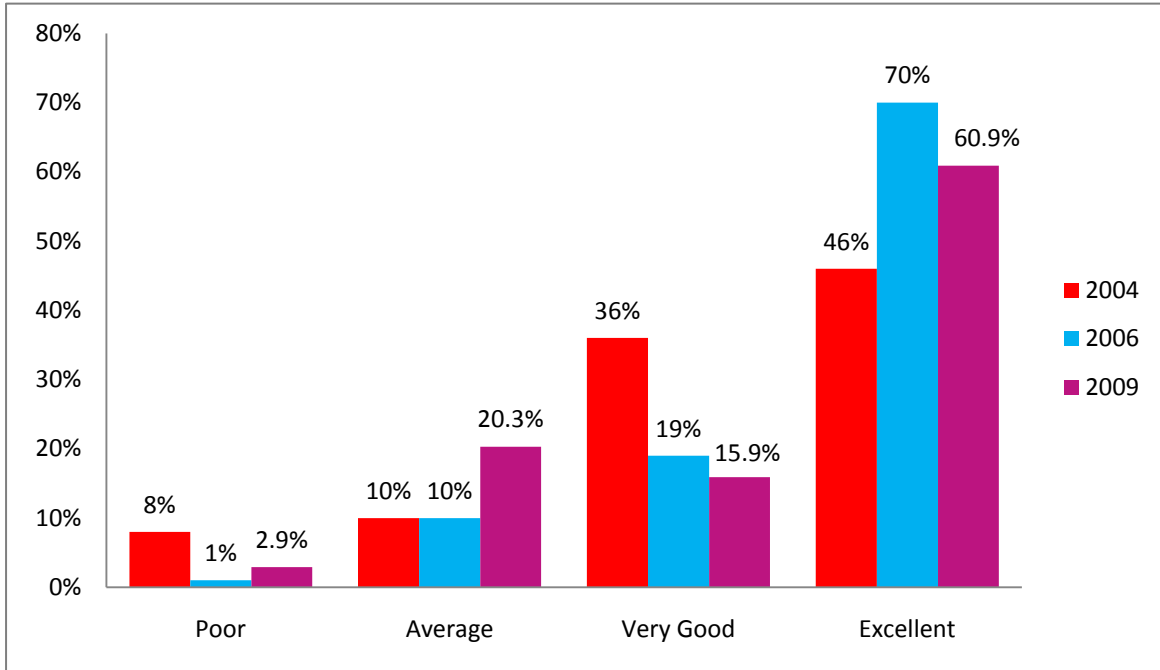


Communcations With Atkins Transport Management



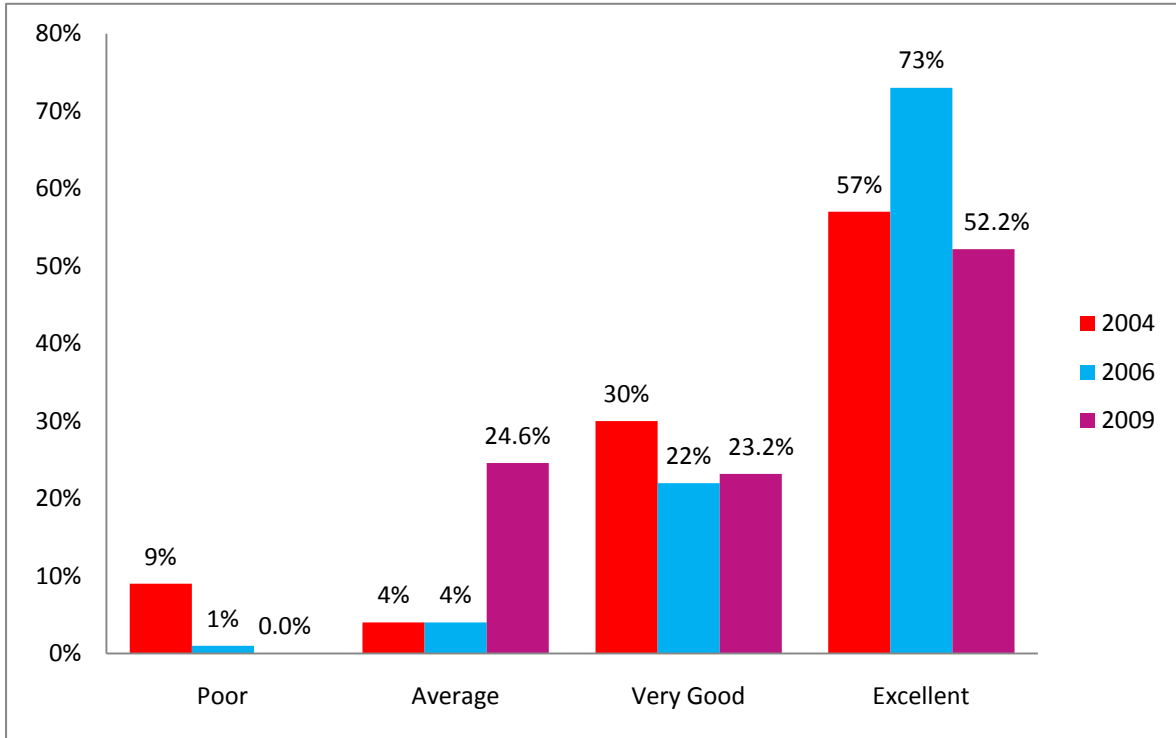


Attitude of Atkins Office Based Staff



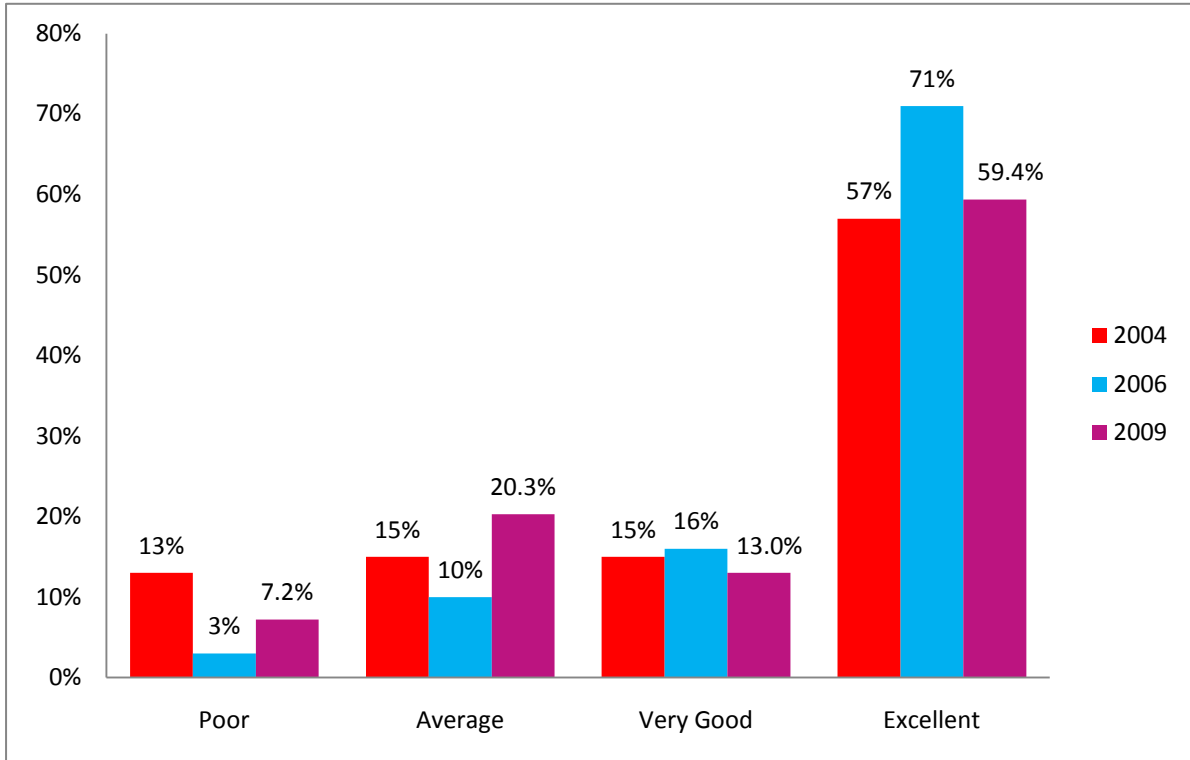


Promptness of Queries





Information of Changes





Conclusion

The parent survey for 2009 has shown us that the majority of parents who responded are pleased with the home to school transport service Atkins provides for their children. The survey has also shown that the majority of parents believe that Atkins is providing an excellent service overall.

We have ascertained from the results that during the period 2004 – 2009 Atkins Transport Management (ATM) have completed in total 76% more pickups in fewer than 30 minutes or less. This year's survey has also shown that there has been a significant decrease in the length of time children are on the transport.

As with everything we deliver with this service, we want to do it better. We have taken on board the comments that communication has improved however we know that there is always room for improvement. Over the coming months we will continue to develop and improve upon our communications with schools and parents.

During this year we have standardised the fleet with the introduction of the new vehicles which all have climate control and easier access to ensure that the journey is more comfortable for the children. The remaining five vehicles will come into service during April 2010. We have also introduced the text alert system and provided all our drivers with mobile phones allowing us to provide an immediate response when our drivers and escorts either call in sick or there is a mechanical failure with a vehicle, ensuring that we get the transport moving as quickly as possible again with minimal disruption.

These initiatives are only some of the things that we have been doing in partnership with The Royal Borough of Kingston (RBK) to ensure that we are providing not only a quality and reliable service, but the safest service possible for your child.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you on behalf of the partnership for taking the time to respond to this year's survey and assure you that your comments and suggestions are always valued by us.

The next parent survey will take place in 2011.



**Atkins Transport Management
ATM House Unit A
Burnt Common Centre
London Road
Woking
GU23 7LN**

Tel: 01483 213121
Fax: 01483 213131

george.mcchord@atkinsglobal.com

www.atkinsglobal.com

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