Pupil Experience Report

2026

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2026

Authors



Ben Haslewood

Insights Lead



Imanta Nigals

Listening Framework co-author

Contributors



Mary Myatt

Education adviser, writer and speaker



Jonny Uttley

Strategic Consultant and founder of Jonny Uttley Education



Pamela McIlroy

Trust Chief Operating Officer - The Pinnacle Learning Trust

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Introduction

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Introduction

This year's Pupil Experience Report arrives as pupil belonging becomes a priority, following the Department for Education's 2026 white paper. Yet only 11% of pupils say their opinion is "very valued" at their school, and almost as many (9%) say it isn't valued at all. The report asks how much schools and trusts know about how included, safe and well their pupils feel, and how much of that reaches the people making decisions. Wellbeing, belonging, safety and engagement are also established predictors of attendance, motivation and attainment.

This is our largest Pupil Experience dataset yet: feedback from 251,847 pupils across 759 schools and 142 trusts in England, collected during the 2025/26 academic year. It comes alongside our other 2026 findings. Our sector data shows financial pressure easing for CEOs, and our staff data shows resignation risk holding steady even as day-to-day pressure rises. The system looks to be under less acute strain than in recent years. Our Leading through Listening chapter suggests that easing hasn't reached pupils: just over a third feel their opinion is valued.

The chapters that follow look at how pupils' experience varies by age and gender across six core areas of school life. The final chapter hands over to pupils, in their own words, on what's working and what they'd change. For trust leaders planning the year ahead, the report shows where to focus first.

What You'll Find in This Report

This report brings together insights from our annual Pupil Experience dataset. We begin with a look across the wider experience, highlighting the biggest changes for each phase – positive and negative – since last year. We follow this with a focus on key topic areas:

- Pupil happiness at school
- Pupil wellbeing
- Inclusion
- Engagement in learning
- Support from teachers
- Safety

These topics are explored to give a high-level overview of some of the most important factors contributing to a thriving childhood and education. The precise questions differ slightly between primary and secondary-aged pupils, as we have a modified primary survey taking into account reading age and comprehension of pupils in different year groups. As such, we can follow a theme from Years 3 to 13, and provide clear comparisons of these measures within-phase.

Leading through Listening

Strengthening Schools Through Stakeholder Voice

Schools and trusts are continuously seeking input from their pupils, evident in the range of survey platforms, school councils, and forums now used across the sector. But capturing pupil voice isn't enough on its own for pupils to feel its impact. Without the systems and culture to back it up, the act of listening falls flat. Done properly, listening isn't just about making pupils feel good – it gives schools a genuine strategic advantage, closing the gap between how leaders believe pupils experience school and how pupils actually experience it, and helping them direct effort where it matters most.

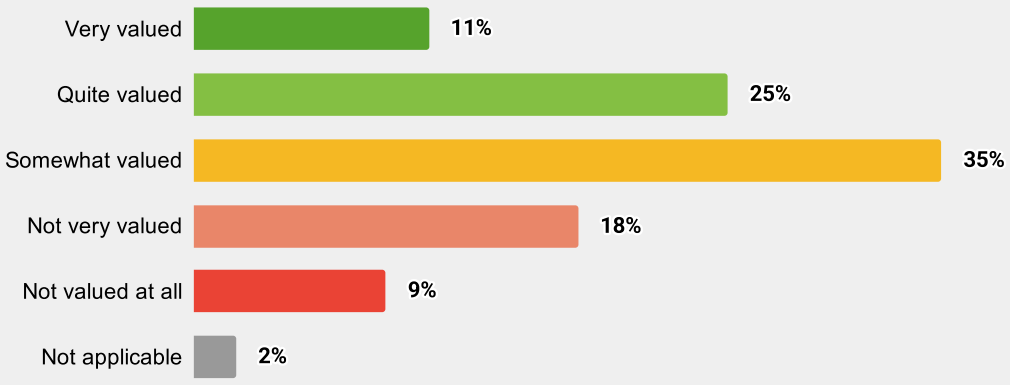
As this report will show, how valued pupils feel their opinion is in school follows a clear and troubling shape across the school years. The transition from primary to secondary is hard on pupils in many ways, and this is one of them; one of the clearest ways schools can counter it is to increase pupil voice and hear their experiences through that transition. Pupil belonging is also strongly linked to academic achievement, and one of the most effective ways to build it is through strong listening that reaches pupils' everyday experiences, not just their answers to a termly survey. That depends heavily on how leaders support their staff to notice and respond to those everyday moments day to day.

Listening is one of the most practical tools leaders have for building those ties and supporting their pupils. Treating listening as a driver of organisational improvement means deliberately planning around its four practices – voice, understanding, action, communication – and building the mindsets that make them work: openness, empathy, responsiveness, inclusiveness and psychological safety. Together, these build belonging for individuals and resilience for the organisation.

The Edurio Listening Framework, published with the Confederation of School Trusts earlier in 2026, gives leaders a foundation for a more relational approach to leadership – one that balances the transactional demands of running a school or trust with the human connection needed to lead it well. For pupils, listening does not mean giving them everything they ask for; it means improving the dialogue, understanding the why behind their views and explaining the reasoning behind decisions. It also serves a wider purpose: teaching the next generation is partly about giving pupils practice at civic engagement – voicing an opinion and hearing perspectives different from their own – and school is the ideal place to build that skill before pupils need it in their wider community.

The clearest way to check whether this listening is working is to ask pupils directly: how valued do you think pupil opinion is in your school? This question matters because it measures how pupils actually feel, not just how many listening activities took place. In the 2025/26 academic year, 36% of pupils say they think pupil opinion is very or quite valued in their school.

How valued do you think pupil opinion is in your school?

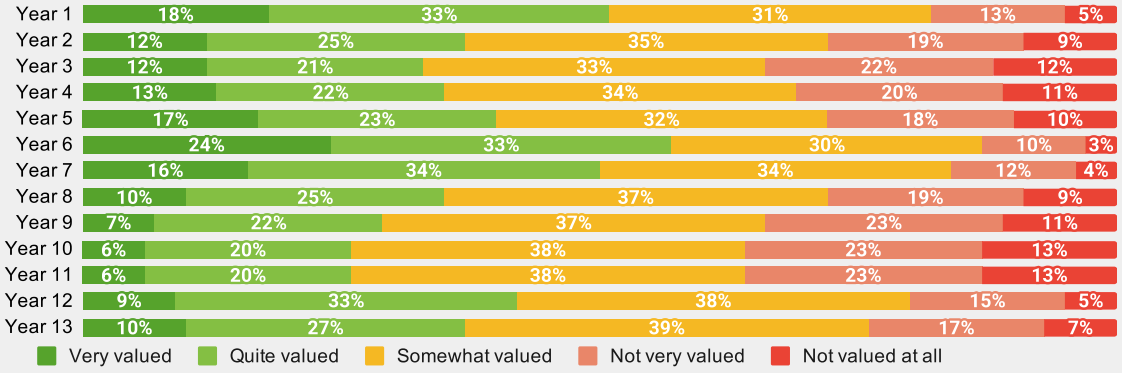


% of pupil respondents (2025/2026)

Edurio data shows that around half of Year 6 and Year 7 pupils feel their opinion is valued, but this drops steadily through secondary school to just 26% by Year 11. As other data in this report will show, there is a similar trend in pupil happiness and in engagement in learning. Listening to pupil opinion, therefore, can be a strategic tool to build belonging and engagement across the whole of a child's education.

How valued do you think pupil opinion is in your school?

By year group (2025/2026)



Staff, pupils and parents rarely feel listened to in the same way or to the same degree, so as you read the data that follows, the useful question to hold onto is "how am I listening to each of these groups, and where could I listen better?"

We hope you find the insights in the coming pages valuable, and we would love to discuss them in more detail. Contact hello@edurio.com for more information.

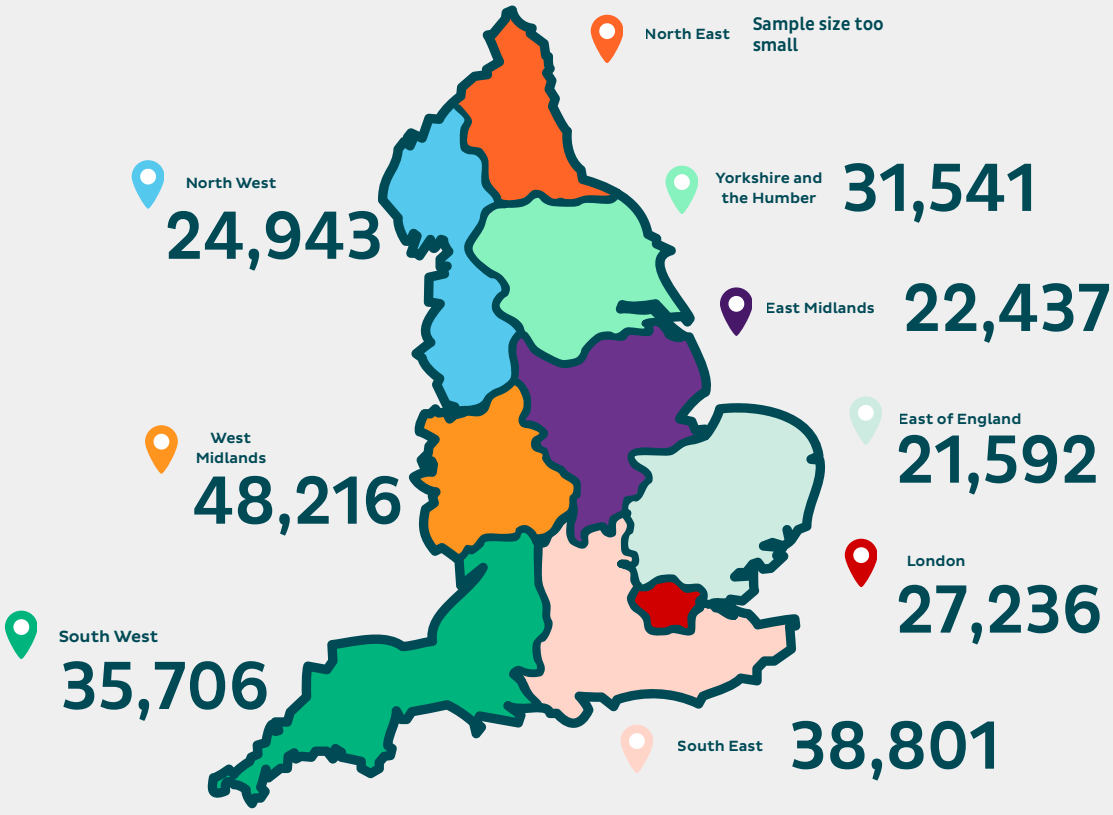
2025/26 Survey Sample

Trusts: 142

Schools: 759

Pupils: 251,847

Primary	73,041
Secondary	165,743
All-through	6,593
16 Plus	2,232



We are committed to representing the voice of pupils across all of England. To help us boost our regional data, please get in touch: hello@edurio.com

For more detailed breakdowns about our data sample please see the appendix.

Executive Summary



A much more positive pupil experience, but representation lags behind

Pupil experience has improved across most of the areas we measure this year: secondary pupils feel safer (68%, up from 61%) and happier (51%, up from 42%) than they did three years ago, and wellbeing continues to rise too, up from 37% to 46%. Representation is the exception. Only 16% of secondary pupils say they often learn about people like themselves in class, a figure that dropped from 19% three years ago and has stalled there for the last two years. The timing is pointed: inclusion is also the fastest-rising priority among CEOs this year, up ten points in twelve months. Leaders are paying more attention to it than ever; pupils still aren't feeling the difference.



Secondary experience follows one shape, with two exceptions

Happiness, wellbeing, engagement, teaching and safety all follow a strikingly similar path through secondary school: a dip after Year 7, a plateau through the exam years, then a sharp recovery in Year 12 as pupils move into post-16 education by choice rather than obligation. Two measures break the pattern. Teaching keeps rising through Year 13 rather than easing back (73%, its highest point of secondary school), and safety holds its Year 12 peak at 89% rather than dipping like everything else.



The happiest pupils don't always have the highest self-reported wellbeing

Sixth form pupils are by far the most positive about their school, with 74% of Year 12 and 65% of Year 13 happy to be studying there. Their wellbeing tells a different story. Year 13 reports the lowest of any year group (38%), and Year 12 (45%) sits below Years 7 to 9. Up to Year 11, the two measures stay within ten points of each other; in sixth form the gap opens to almost 30.



Primary decline isn't inevitable, but gender gaps run deep

In primary school, happiness and engagement fall steadily from Year 3 to Year 6, and teaching quality eases slightly, but safety is the exception, dipping in the middle years and recovering fully by Year 6, evidence that decline with age is common but not automatic. Gender adds a further layer across the whole report: male secondary pupils report the highest scores on every measure, but secondary pupils with another gender identity report the lowest, sometimes by 30 points or more on wellbeing and safety. That gap nearly disappears on representation (just 3 points), suggesting the barriers pupils with another gender identity face are less about representation and more about how safe and well they feel day to day.



In their own words: friendship first, adjustment not overhaul

Asked what's best about school, pupils overwhelmingly say their friends (21.2% of 99,481 responses), ahead of teachers and staff (15.6%), who they praise for kindness and fairness far more often than for how well they teach. Asked what they'd change, they ask for adjustment, not overhaul: fairer and more consistent rules, more comfortable uniform policies, longer breaks, better food. Fewer than one in ten want anything banned or stopped outright.

The National Picture

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360° View of School Experience

Edurio has tracked sector sentiment across multiple years. Most of this report focuses on the views of pupils, but it is important to consider the wider view. Parents, school staff, and system leaders all play a vital role in creating an environment where all pupils can thrive, and thinking at a whole-school level helps us better understand the dependencies between groups. As such, we are releasing this report alongside similar summaries for staff and parents, and alongside the National School Trust report in collaboration with the Confederation of School Trusts (CST), to provide a complete overview of the sector as we embark on the next academic year. This introductory section of the Pupil Experience Report 2026 is intended to paint the broader picture.

You can access the CST report at: https://home.edurio.com/resources/insights/cst-school-trust-report/

Sector Priorities

The standout mover in this year's CEO survey is inclusion. Added as a priority category in 2025 at 51%, it has jumped to 61% within twelve months, the sharpest rise of any priority we track, and now sits just behind quality of education as trusts' second-highest priority for the year ahead.

That shift comes alongside a bigger reversal at the top. Quality of education has reclaimed first place (63%), overtaking financial sustainability for the first time since 2023. Financial sustainability itself has fallen from 64% last year to 47%, this year the sharpest fall of any priority this year and the clearest sign yet that the cost pressures dominating CEO thinking over the past two years are starting to ease.

Pupil outcomes remain a top-five fixture for a second year running (48%, up from 44%), with trust growth closing the gap fast, up from 38% to 45%. Digital strategy moved the other way, cooling to 30% from a 2025 peak of 35%, after two years of steady increase from a 2023 low of 21%.



The CEO report offers more detail on the sector priorities, including a closer look at factors relating to quality of education next year: attendance, SEND and inclusion are the most widely-felt priorities for the sector in this area, and the proportion of CEOs prioritising technology to support learning is increasing rapidly compared to the previous year.

The Staff Experience

This year's **staff report** shows staff resignation risk holding flat for a second year, with no role's risk of resigning moving in the wrong direction. That stability matters for pupils, since it means fewer changes to the teachers and leaders they see day to day. Day-to-day experience is more mixed, though: staff report feeling more overworked and more stressed than last year, even as their overall physical and mental wellbeing improved. Feeling undervalued remains the top reason staff give for considering resignation, particularly among administrative staff and other support roles, a reminder that every role in a school shapes the experience pupils have.

Key findings:

- Resignation risk held flat at 41% for the second year running, after falling from 43% two years ago, and no role's risk moved in the wrong direction this year.
- Staff report feeling more overworked (down two percentage points to 53% saying they sometimes, rarely or never feel this way) and more stressed (down one percentage point to 54%) than last year, even as overall physical and mental wellbeing improved by three percentage points, the largest single movement of any driver this year.
- Support from colleagues is by far the biggest reason staff give for staying, cited by 68%, and 73% of staff feel fully or largely part of a team with their colleagues, relevant as the Department for Education's 2026 white paper makes pupil belonging a priority too.
- Feeling undervalued remains the single biggest reason staff give for considering resignation, cited by 44%, particularly among administrative staff and other support roles.

The Parent Experience

This year's parent report shows a more balanced picture than last year, rather than one improving across the board. Three of the six measures tracked rose (engagement, respect, and confidence that teachers can keep children safe), two held flat (communication and behaviour), and one continued to decline (clarity of the trust's role), with the year's biggest gain and biggest drop both just two percentage points, a much tighter spread than last year's.

Key findings:

- Parents' satisfaction with how schools engage them has risen to 63%, up from 61% last year, and feelings of respect have grown to 73%, up from 71%. Confidence that teachers can keep children safe also improved slightly, to 77%.
- Communication has held flat at 59% for a third consecutive year. Clarity about the trust's role has fallen for a second year running, down to 41%, the only measure moving in the wrong direction.
- Primary parents remain more positive than secondary parents on almost every measure, with gaps as wide as 22 percentage points on ease of contacting the school. The one exception is ease of attending school events, where secondary parents are slightly more positive (57%) than primary parents (54%).

In their own words, parents praise the school's general communication, the weekly email or newsletter, but ask for more news about their own child specifically. Parents' evenings come up on both sides too: parents are grateful for them but want a second one each year, longer slots, and a return to meeting in person.

Thriving Pupils

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Thriving Pupils

School is one of the most significant parts of a child's life, shaping not only what they learn but how they grow, connect, and see themselves. While academic achievement often dominates the conversation, it's equally important to understand how pupils feel at school – because feeling safe, included, and supported is essential for learning. In this chapter, we explore six core areas that shape the pupil experience: happiness at school, wellbeing, engagement in learning, safety, teaching and inclusion. Together, these areas give us a fuller, more human view of what life in school looks and feels like for pupils.

- **Happiness at school** reflects how much pupils enjoy being at school, influencing both attendance and motivation.
- **Wellbeing** encompasses pupils' mental, emotional, and physical health – foundations for focus, relationships, and resilience.
- **Engagement in learning** highlights how involved and interested pupils are in their lessons, which directly impacts outcomes and enthusiasm.
- **Safety** goes beyond physical protection – it includes emotional safety and feeling secure in relationships with peers and staff.
- **Teaching** looks at the quality of instruction through the eyes of pupils, recognising that their perspectives are vital to improving classroom practice.
- **Inclusion** ensures all pupils, regardless of background or need, feel they belong and can participate fully in school life.

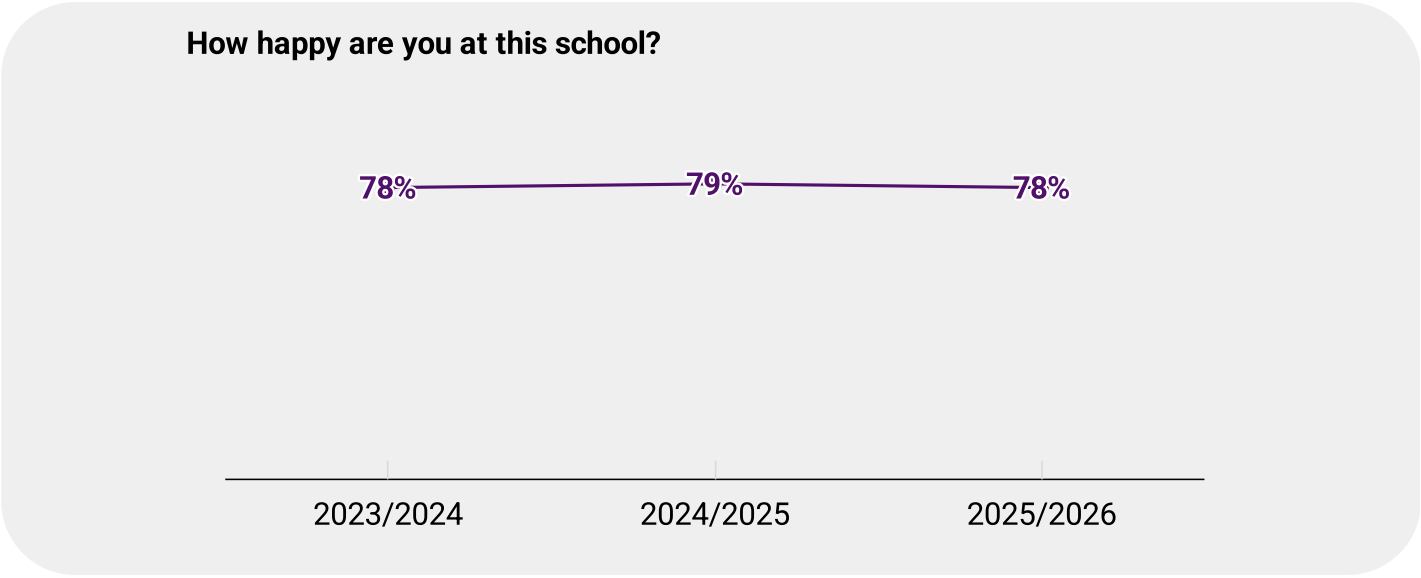
Listening to pupils in these areas isn't just a tick-box exercise, but a way to drive meaningful improvement. When schools and trusts prioritise the lived experiences of pupils, they lay the groundwork for more inclusive, responsive, and effective education.

Area of School Experience	Primary Question	Secondary Question
Happiness at School	How happy are you at this school?	How happy are you to be studying at this school?
Wellbeing	How happy do you feel today?	Overall, how well do you feel lately physically and mentally?
Engagement in Learning	How interesting do you find your lessons?	How often do you find what you learn at school interesting?
Safety	Do you feel safe in school?	How safe do you feel during class?
Teaching	How well do your teachers explain what you need to work on in class?	How clearly do your teachers explain the work they set?
Inclusion	N/A	How often do you learn about people like you in class? (e.g. with a similar background or identity to yours)

Happiness at School: Primary

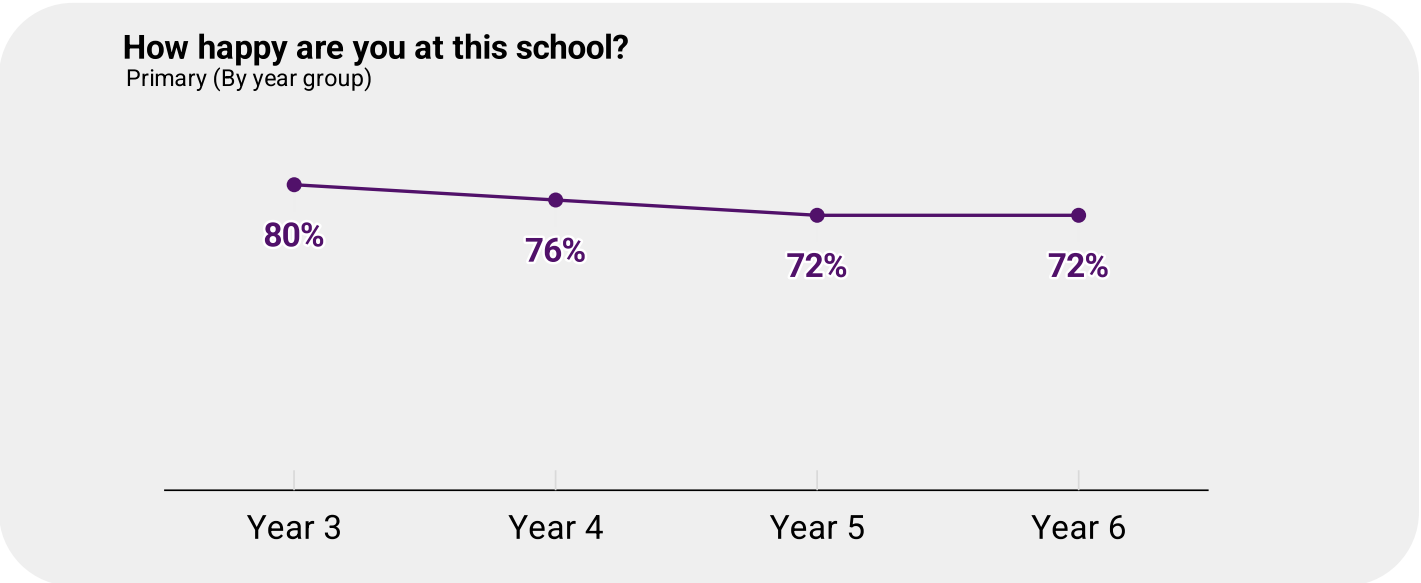
Trends Over Time

For primary pupils, overall happiness at school has stayed broadly stable across the past three academic years. 78% said they were happy at their school in 2023/2024, rising slightly to 79% in 2024/2025 before settling back to 78% this year, a consistent picture rather than a meaningful shift in either direction.



By School Year

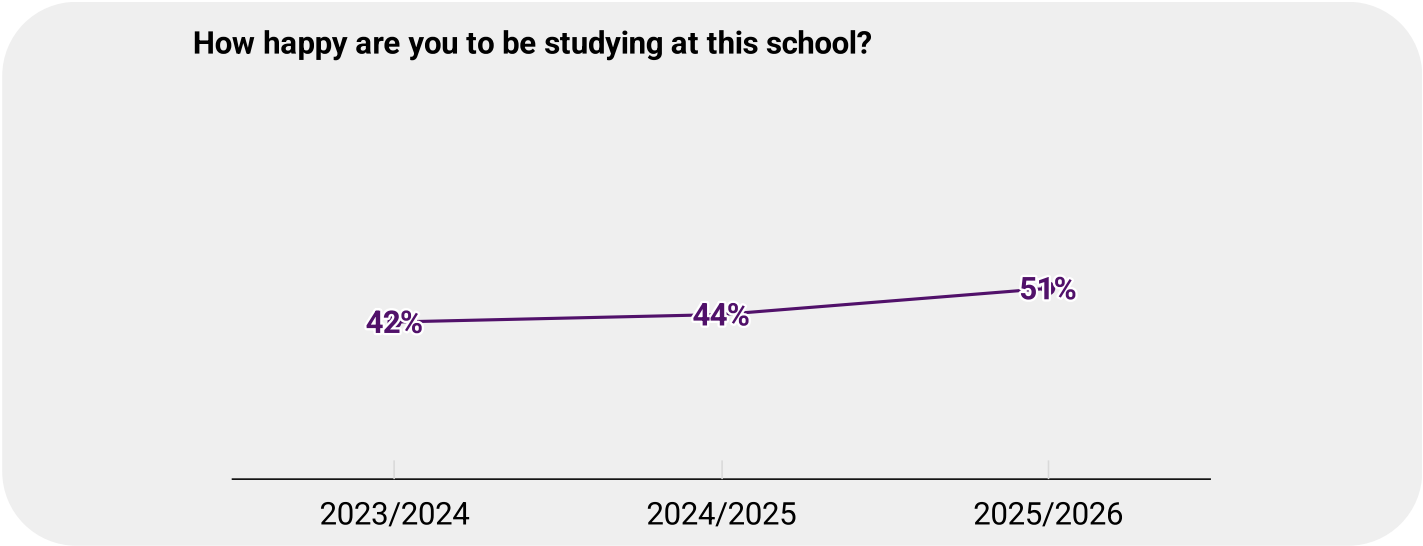
The picture changes when we look by year group. Happiness falls through primary school, from 80% in Year 3 to 72% by Year 5, dropping four percentage points in each of those years, before holding at 72% in Year 6.



Happiness at School: Secondary

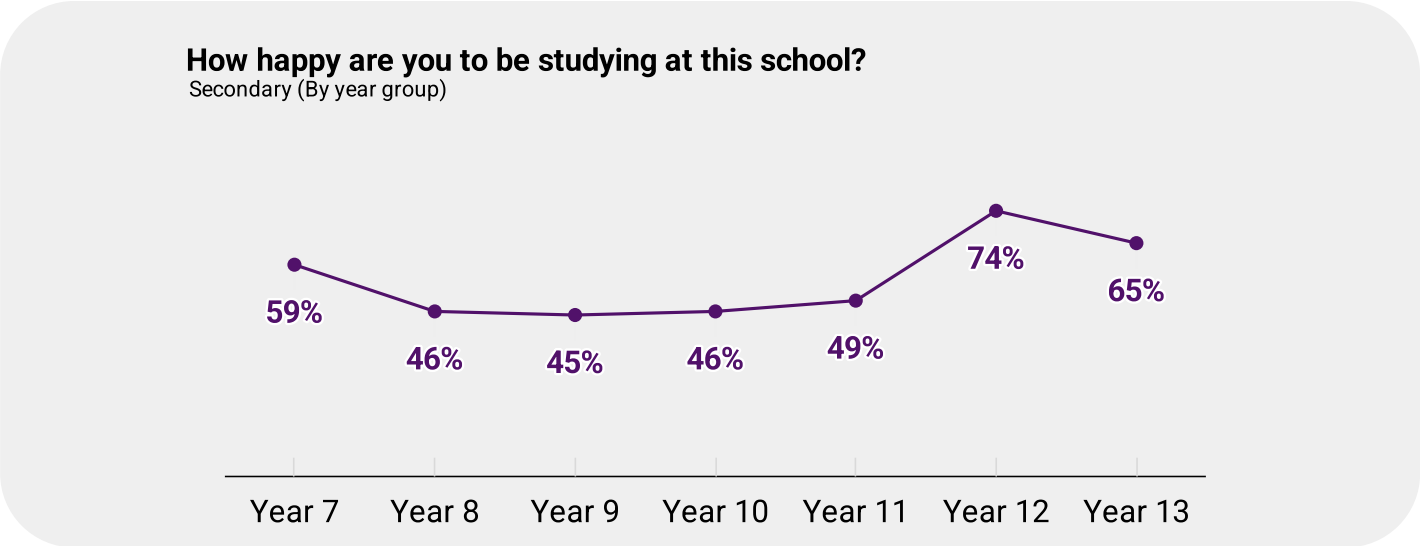
Trends Over Time

In 2025/2026, 51% of secondary pupils said they were happy to be studying at their school, up from 42% in 2023/2024. The rise has accelerated over the past year, with happiness climbing 7 percentage points since 2024/2025, more than three times the increase seen in the year before that.



By School Year

Happiness follows a very different pattern by year group. It falls sharply after Year 7 (59%) to 46% in Year 8, and stays flat through Year 9 and Year 10 (45% and 46%) before rising slightly to 49% in Year 11. It then jumps to 74% in Year 12, easing to 65% in Year 13, still well above the Year 8 to Year 11 range.



By Gender

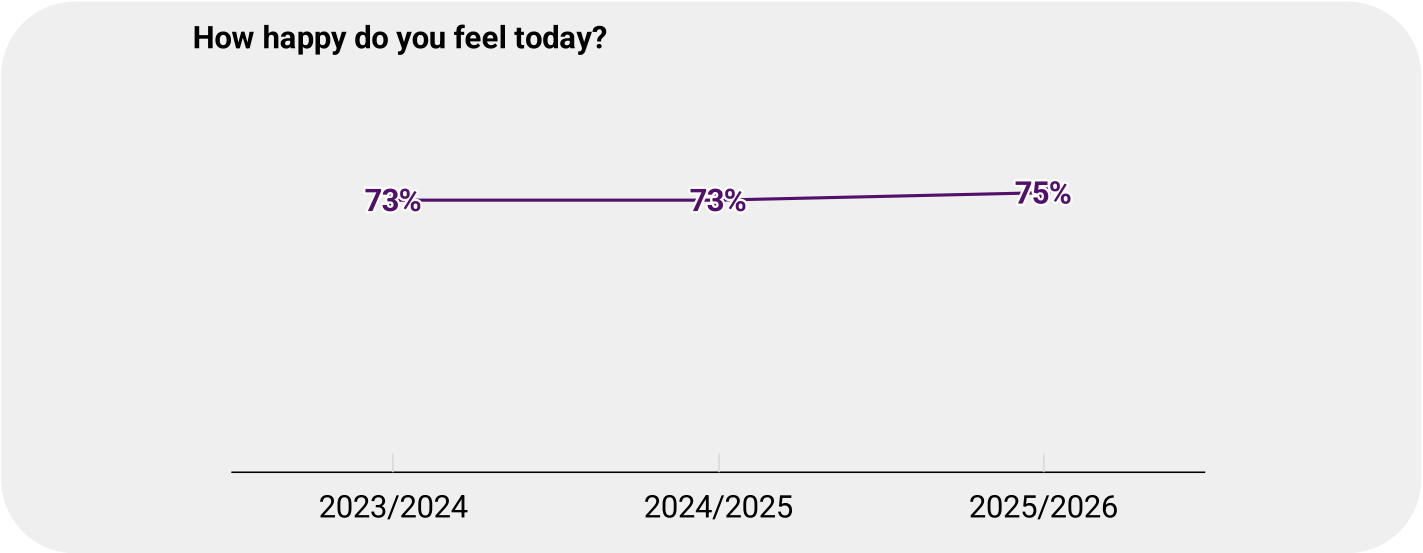
Boys are more likely to report being happy at their school (54%) than girls (50%). Both groups are notably happier than pupils with another gender identity (35%).

50%	54%	35%
Female (girl)	**Male (boy)**	**Another gender identity**

Wellbeing: Primary

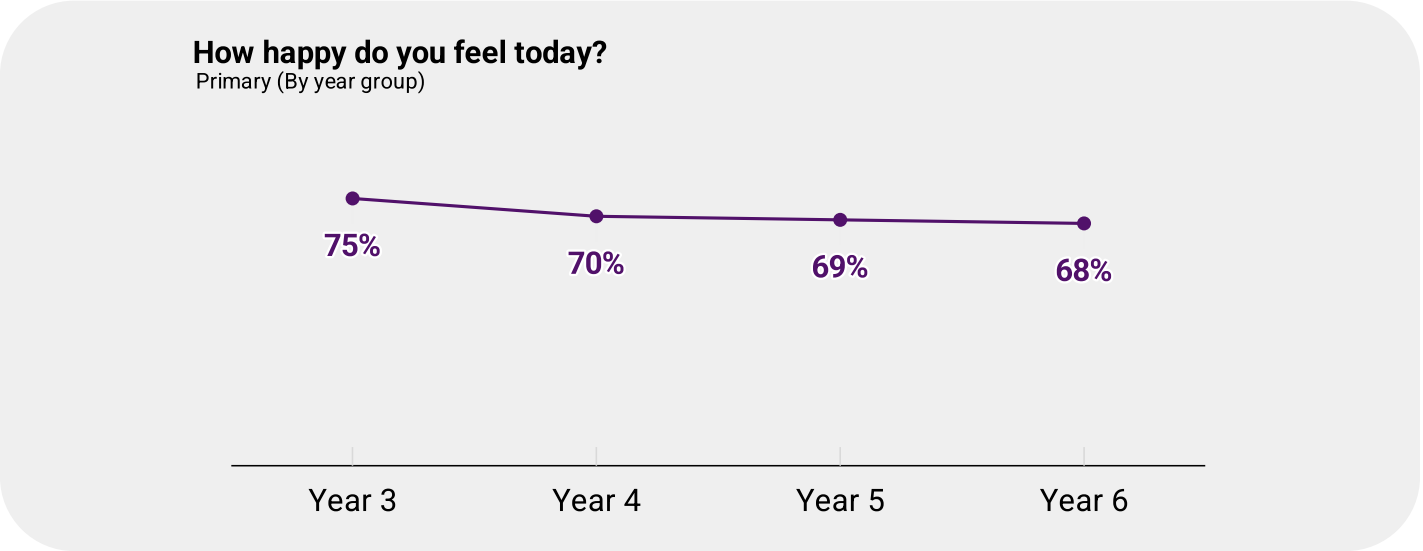
Trends Over Time

75% of primary pupils report feeling very or quite happy on the day they took the survey, the highest figure in three years. This follows two years at a steady 73%, meaning wellbeing has ticked up slightly rather than declined.



By School Year

There's a clear decline in happiness the further through primary school pupils are. Year 3 pupils are most likely to feel happy (75%), falling to 70% in Year 4 and levelling off at 69% and 68% in Years 5 and 6.

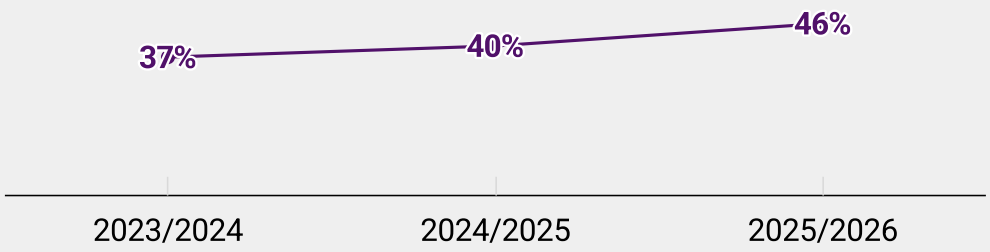


Wellbeing: Secondary

Trends Over Time

The proportion of secondary pupils reporting feeling very or quite well has risen each year, from 37% in 2023/2024 to 46% in 2025/2026. The increase has accelerated too, up 6 percentage points this year compared with a three point rise the year before, twice the pace of improvement.

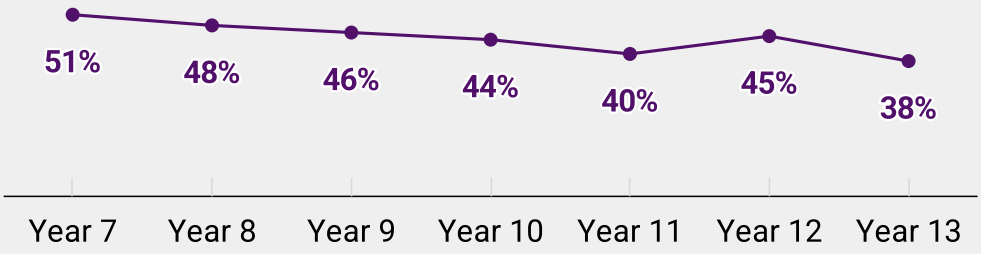
Overall, how well do you feel lately physically and mentally?



By School Year

Wellbeing declines steadily from Year 7 (51%) to Year 11 (40%), before a partial recovery to 45% in Year 12. It then falls again to 38% in Year 13, the lowest point across the whole of secondary school. Year 12 and 13 pupils report the highest happiness of secondary school (74% and 65%) alongside its lowest wellbeing (45% and 38%), a reminder that happy and well are not the same thing.

Overall, how well do you feel lately physically and mentally?
Secondary (By year group)



By Gender

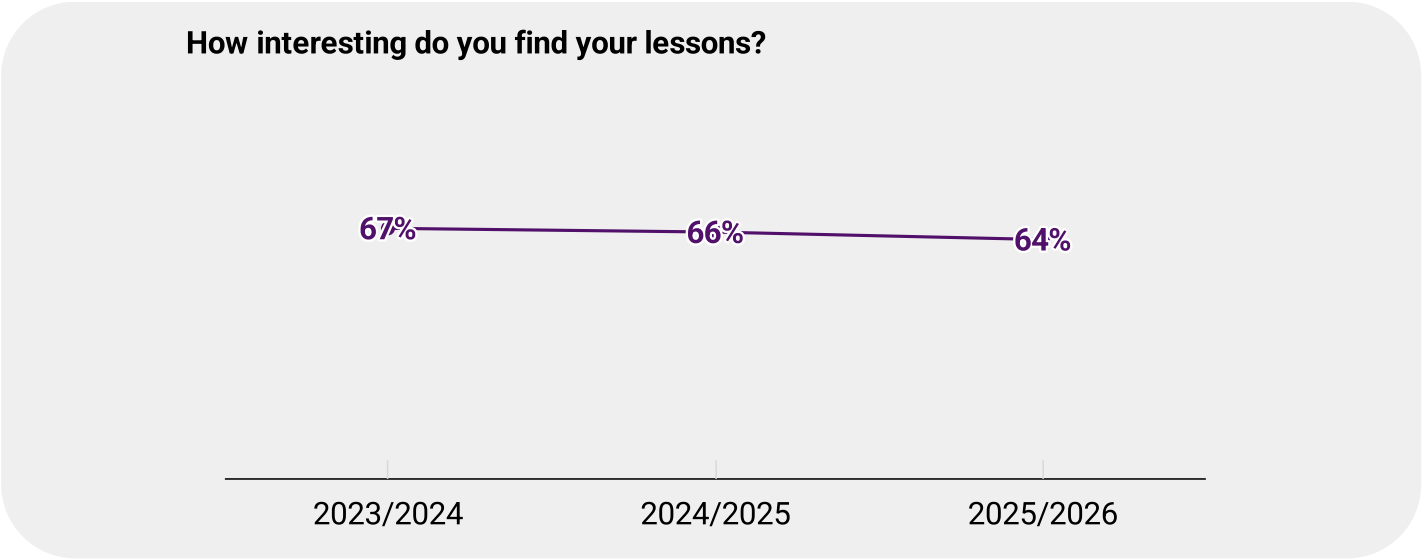
Male pupils in secondary schools were considerably more likely to report feeling very or quite well (58%) than female pupils (39%) or pupils with another gender identity (24%).

39%	58%	24%
Female (girl)	**Male (boy)**	**Another gender identity**

Engagement in Learning: Primary

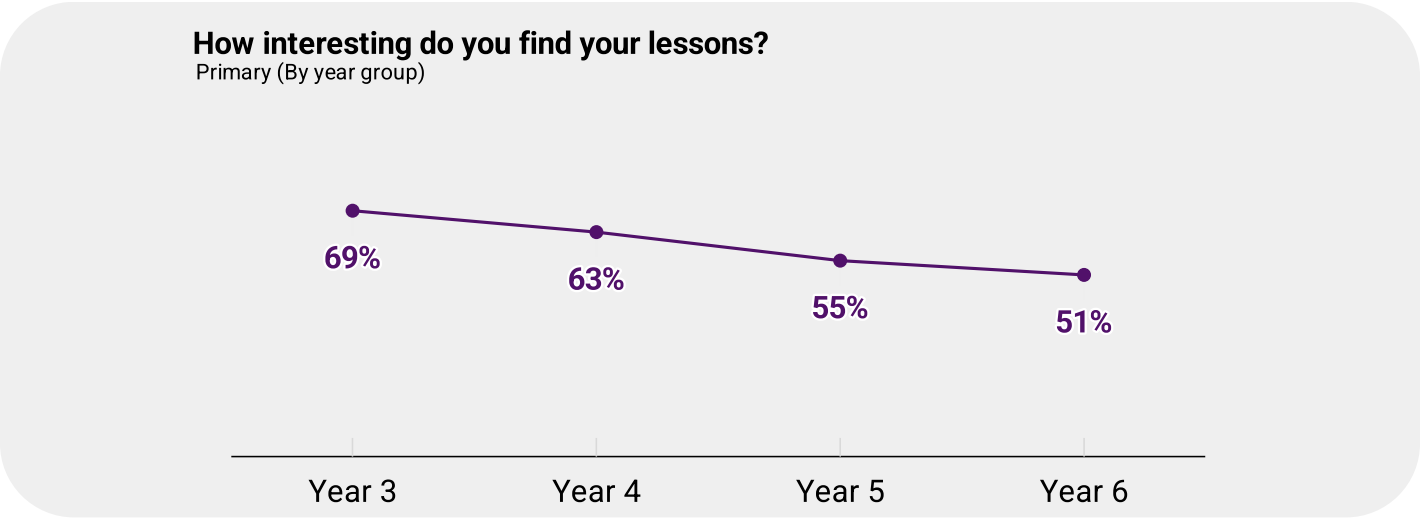
Trends Over Time

64% of primary pupils say they find their lessons interesting, down from 67% in 2023/2024. The decline has been steady rather than sharp, losing 3 percentage points over three years.



By School Year

The decline is far steeper by year group than the headline trend suggests. Interest in lessons falls from 69% in Year 3 to 51% in Year 6, an 18-percentage-point drop within a single cohort's time at primary school. Across happiness, wellbeing and engagement alike, the year-on-year headline looks stable while the by-year-group view shows the real decline happening as pupils age through primary school.

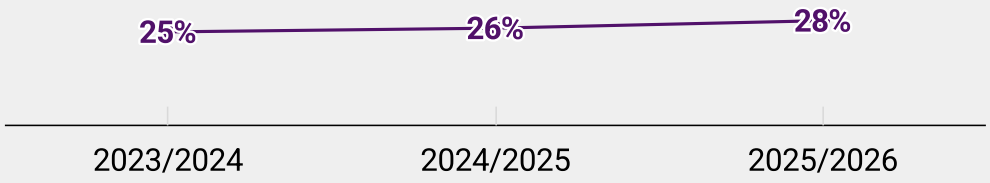


Engagement in Learning: Secondary

Trends over time

28% of secondary pupils say they often find what they learn interesting, up from 25% in 2023/2024. The improvement has been small but consistent, rising for the second year running.

How often do you find what you learn at school interesting?

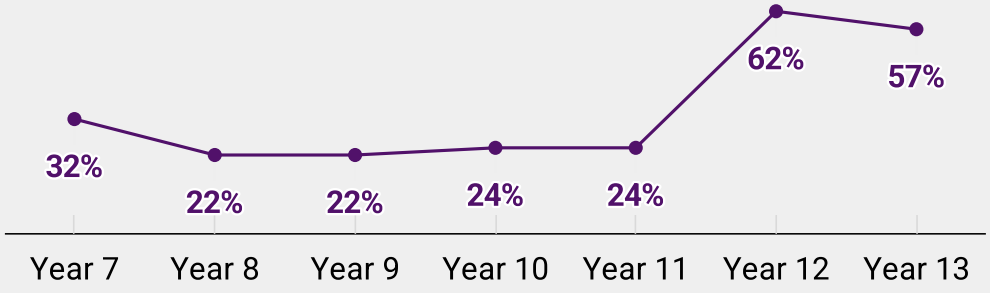


By School Year

Interest drops sharply after Year 7 (32%) to around 22-24% through Years 8 to 11, before jumping to 62% in Year 12 and easing slightly to 57% in Year 13, still far above the Years 8 to 11 low point.

How often do you find what you learn at school interesting?

Secondary (By year group)



By Gender

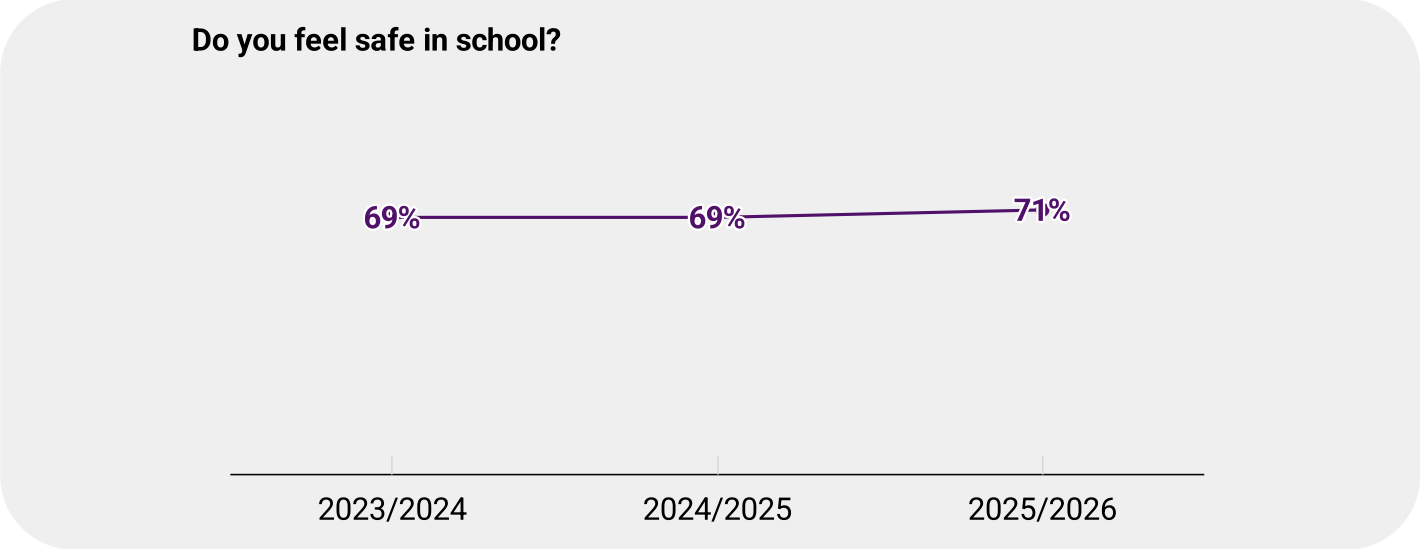
Male pupils are marginally more likely to find their lessons interesting (30%) than female pupils (28%), while pupils with another gender identity report the lowest engagement (23%).

28%	30%	23%
Female (girl)	**Male (boy)**	**Another gender identity**

Safety: Primary

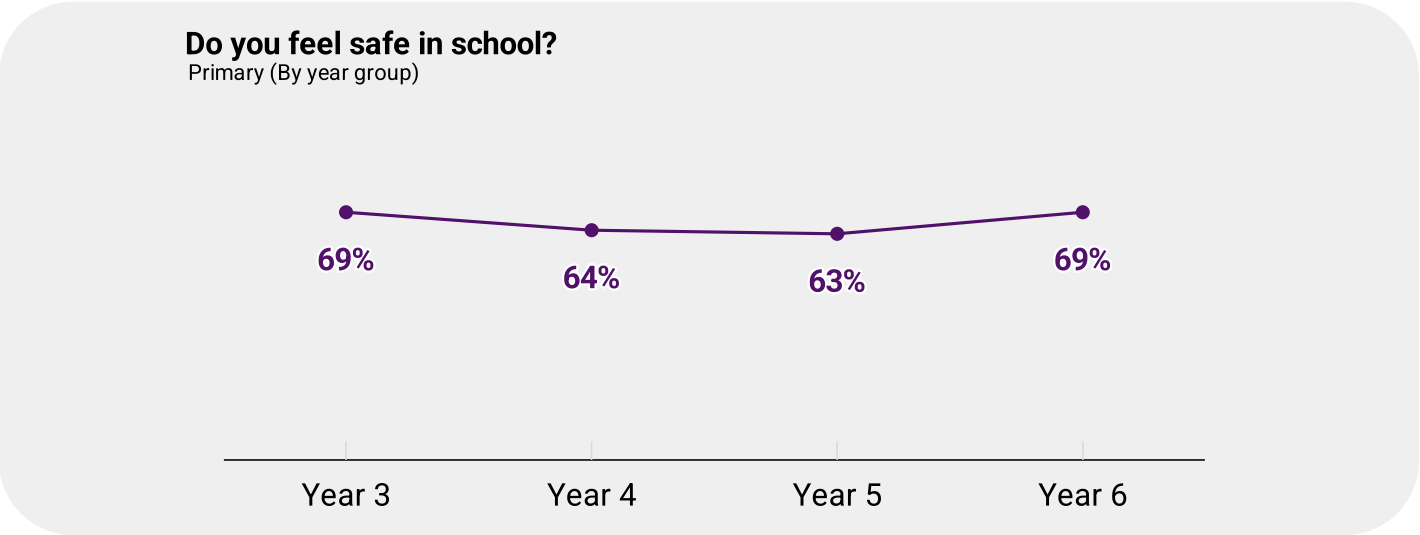
Trends Over Time

The percentage of primary pupils who report feeling very or quite safe has stayed broadly flat over the past three years, at 69% in 2023/2024 and 2024/2025, before rising slightly to 71% in 2025/2026.



By School Year

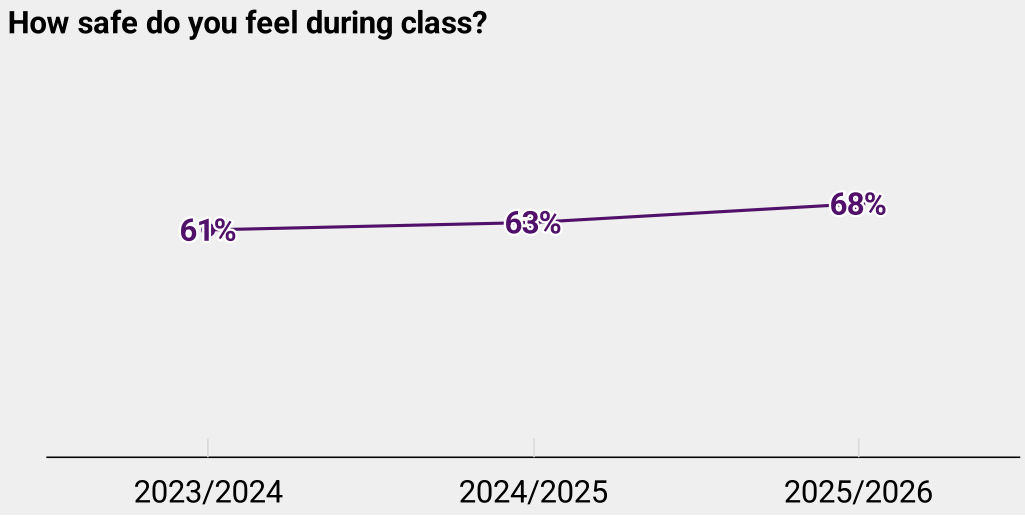
By year group, the pattern differs from most other measures in this report. Safety dips in Year 4 and Year 5 (64% and 63%) before recovering to match Year 3 by Year 6, both at 69%, rather than declining steadily throughout primary school. Unlike happiness, wellbeing and engagement, which all decline steadily as primary pupils get older, safety recovers by Year 6 rather than continuing to fall.



Safety: Secondary

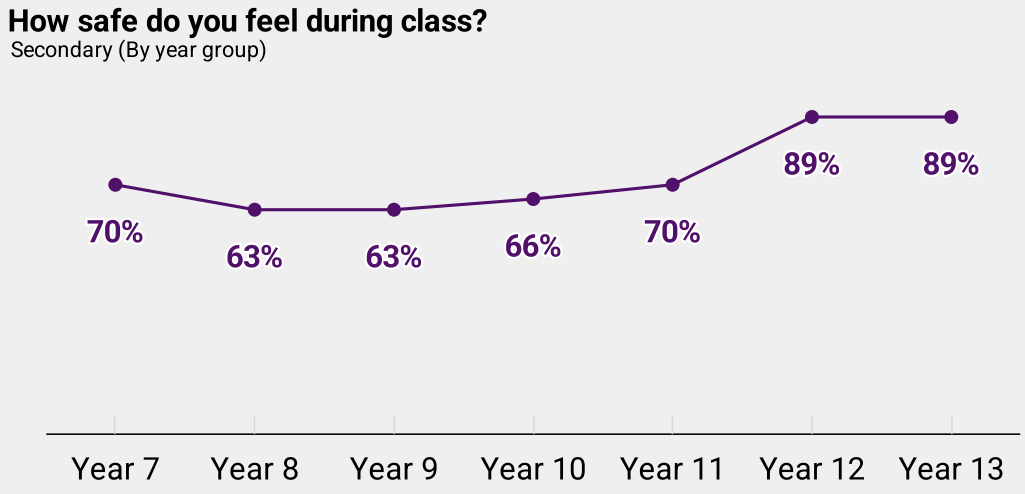
Trends Over Time

68% of secondary pupils say they feel safe during class, up from 61% in 2023/2024. The increase has accelerated, gaining five percentage points this year compared with two the year before.



By School Year

Safety dips slightly from Year 7 (70%) to a low of 63% in Years 8 and 9, before recovering to 70% by Year 11. It then jumps sharply to 89% in Year 12 and holds there in Year 13, the same shape seen in happiness, wellbeing and engagement, though safety is the only one of the four that doesn't ease back in Year 13.



By Gender

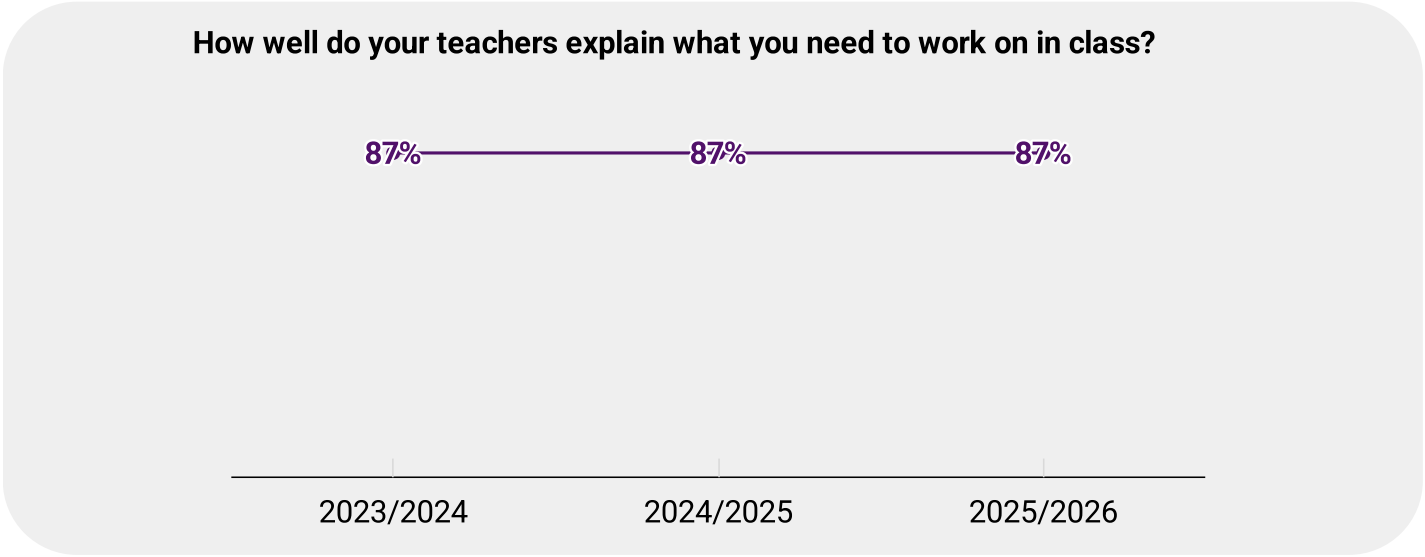
Pupils with another gender identity report feeling far less safe during class (40%) than female pupils (67%) or male pupils (72%), a gap that closely mirrors the one on the wellbeing page, where the same group scored 24% against 58% for male pupils.

67%	72%	40%
Female (girl)	**Male (boy)**	**Another gender identity**

Teaching: Primary

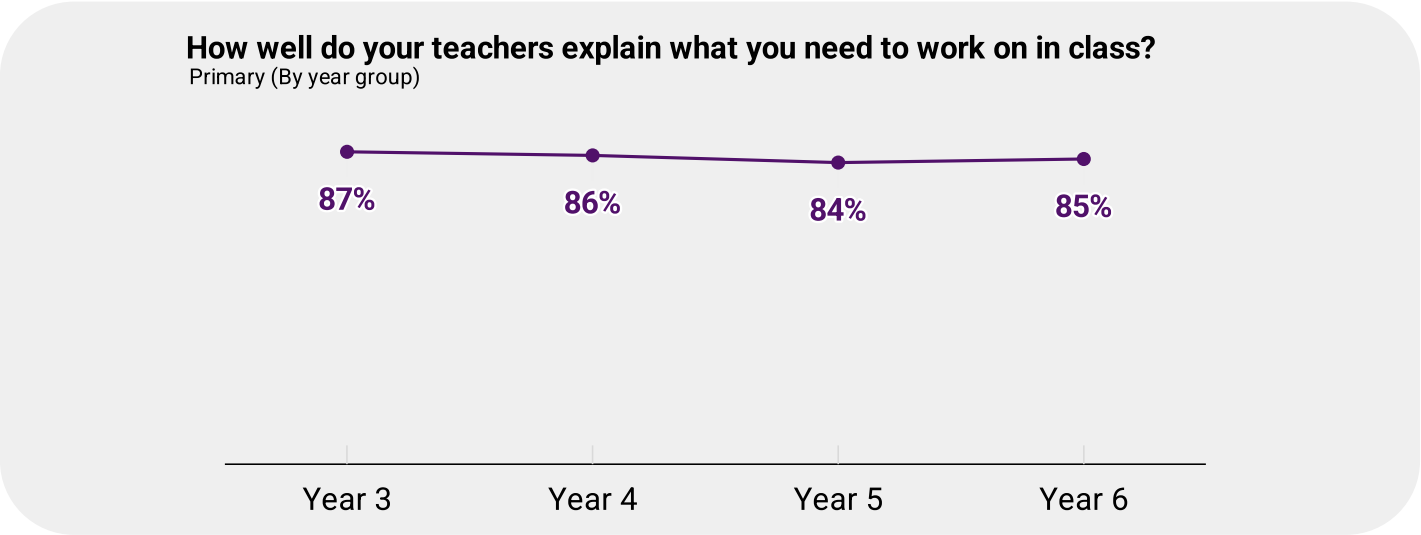
Trends Over Time

The percentage of primary pupils who report that their teachers explain things well in class has remained stable over the last three years, at 87%.



By School Year

By year group, teaching quality ratings stay high throughout primary school. 87% of Year 3 pupils say their teachers explain things well, easing slightly to 84% in Year 5 and 85% in Year 6.

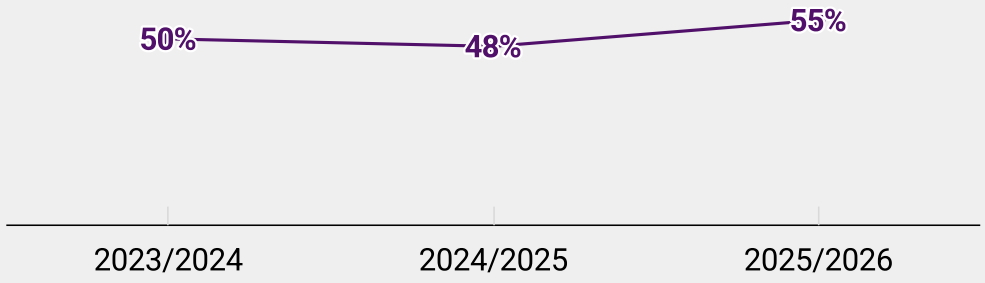


Teaching: Secondary

Trends Over Time

55% of secondary pupils say their teachers explain the work they set clearly, up from 50% in 2023/2024, despite a dip to 48% in 2024/2025. The past year saw the sharpest improvement of the three, a seven percentage point rise.

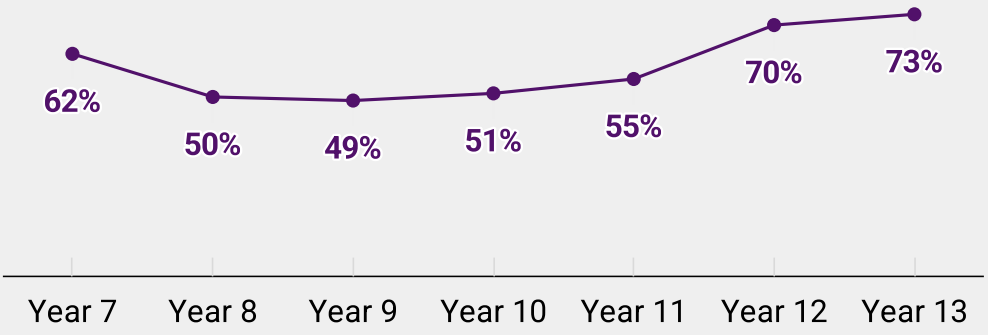
How clearly do your teachers explain the work they set?



By School Year

Clarity of explanation drops sharply after Year 7 (62%) to a low of 49% in Year 9, then recovers steadily through Year 10 to Year 13, reaching 73%, the highest point of secondary school. Unlike every other secondary measure in this report, teaching clarity keeps rising into Year 13 rather than easing back after Year 12.

How clearly do your teachers explain the work they set?
Secondary (By year group)



By Gender

There's a clear gender gap in how clearly pupils feel teachers explain work: 60% of male pupils agree, compared with 52% of female pupils and 41% of pupils with another gender identity.

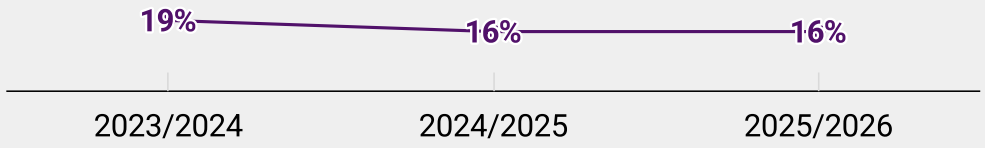
52%	60%	41%
Female (girl)	**Male (boy)**	**Another gender identity**

Inclusion: Secondary

Trends Over Time

Fewer than one in five secondary pupils say they often learn about people like themselves in class, a figure that has been stuck at 16% for two years running, after an initial fall from 19% in 2023/2024.

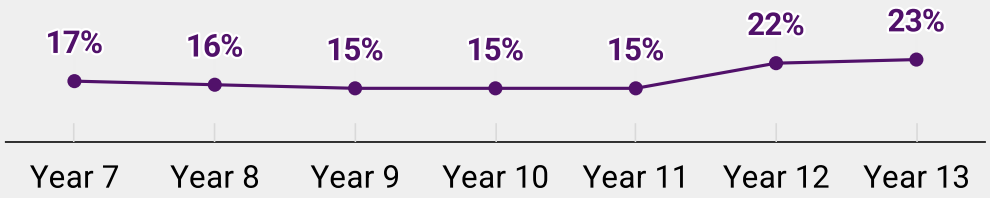
How often do you learn about people like you in class? (e.g. with a similar background or identity to yours)



By Year Group

There's a modest rise by Year 12 and Year 13 (22% and 23%), up from a low of around 15% through Years 9 to 11, though even at its highest point, fewer than a quarter of pupils (23% in Year 13) say this happens often, meaning this remains far below every other measure in the report.

How often do you learn about people like you in class? (e.g. with a similar background or identity to yours)
Secondary (By year group)



By Gender

The gap by gender is much narrower here than for other measures in this report: 18% of male pupils, 17% of female pupils and 15% of pupils with another gender identity say they often learn about people like themselves in class.

17%
Female (girl)

18%
Male (boy)

15%
Another gender identity

What Pupils Think About Their Schools

Analysis of open answer question responses

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What Pupils Think About Their Schools

What is the best thing about your school?

The survey ends by asking pupils to reflect on their school experience in their own words.

Here are the top five themes from 99,481 open responses to “What is the best thing about your school?” in the Edurio Pupil Experience Survey 2025/26. Responses average 1.6 themes, so percentages do not sum to 100. All quotes are verbatim and anonymised. 90.1% name something they like, but 3.4% name only the end of the school day, 2.7% say nothing is the best thing, and 5.8% qualify their praise.

Theme	Examples
Friends **21.2%** **21,062 responses**	Friends were the most common answer by a wide margin. For 8,033 pupils, "friends" or "my friends" was the whole response. Of the pupils who wrote more, 4.5% mentioned seeing friends, which suggests school matters to them mainly as the place their friendships happen. A smaller group (1.0%) mentioned making friends at school. For those pupils, the way their school groups and settles new pupils is working. • "i have friends" • "getting to see my mates" • "My friends. That is genuinely it."
Teachers and staff **15.6%** **15,558 responses**	The strongest institutional finding, and what pupils praise is character before competence. 4.0% describe teachers as kind, funny or fair against 0.8% who praise how well teachers explain things. 2,496 pupils name an individual member of staff. Note the qualifier: "some teachers" and "most teachers" recur throughout, so this theme is more conditional than the headline suggests. • "How nice the teachers are and how fairly they treat you." • "Most teachers are nice" • "they care even if u think they dont"
Lessons and subjects **13.5%** **13,396 responses**	Pupils name a specific subject far more often than they praise lessons in general, and the subjects they name are heavily practical: art, drama, music, design and technology, food technology and computing. A separate 5.1% name learning or education itself, and 1.4% name the freedom to choose their own options. • "The amount of clubs they have." • "being able to play the sports i like."

Theme	Examples
Food and the canteen **10.9%** **10,817 responses**	One in nine pupils (10.9%) names catering, and many name a specific item rather than food in general: chicken and chips, cookies, paninis, pizza and sausage rolls. Some tie their answer to a particular day's menu. A further 2.8% just say "lunch" or "dinner", which could mean the food or the break itself, so the real figure is somewhere between 10.9% and 13.7%. • "Chicken and chips and my freinds" • "The food, but only sometimes. Cause some of the food is disgusting. But some is really good."
PE, sport and games **10.1%** **10,066 responses**	PE is the most-named subject in the survey, ahead of art, music and drama, and football is the most-named activity. Pupils also talk about sports facilities. The astroturf, the field and the sports hall come up again and again, sometimes with a complaint that pupils cannot get on them. • "FOOD AND FOOTBALL" • "being able to play the sports i like."

What would you like to be different in your school?

When analysing the responses of pupils who answered the question “What would you like to be different in your school?” here were the most frequently mentioned themes.

Top five themes from 89,499 open responses to “What would you like to be different in your school?”, Edurio pupil survey 2025/26. Responses carry more than one theme, so percentages do not sum to 100. All quotes are verbatim and anonymised.

Almost every pupil names something. 84.8% name a change they want, 4.9% say nothing needs to be different, 1.8% say everything should change, and 8.5% give no answer. Of those naming a change, 29% ask for more of something the school already does, and only 6% ask for something to stop or be banned. Pupils are asking for adjustment, not an overhaul.

Theme	Examples
Teachers and how they treat pupils **11.6%** **10,380 responses**	Teachers are also the largest theme in what pupils want changed, and most requests are about how teachers treat pupils rather than how well they teach. Teaching quality, staff absence and cover come up in 1.0% of responses. In contrast, 471 pupils use the word "respect", 428 ask to be listened to, 278 raise favouritism or bias and 187 mention shouting. In total, 251 pupils name an individual member of staff. One request comes up again and again: to be heard before being sanctioned. • "Teachers to listen to students when the teacher thinks they have done something wrong" • "All teachers having the same expectations and thinking about our feelings before shouting at us"
Rules, sanctions and how they are applied **10.0%** **8,921 responses**	Pupils who raise rules and behaviour mostly want sanctions to fit the offence. The theme covers pupils who say the rules are too strict, those who name rules or expectations as the thing to change, and those who raise detentions and sanctions. In total, 2,588 pupils use the word "strict" and 868 mention detentions. Pupils asking for stricter rules are counted separately. • "less detentions for silly reasons like no hair ties" • "sometimes people get detentions for minor things when they shouldn't have and I think they need to be a little more lenient and take time to listen to their story"
Food and the canteen **9.8%** **8,769 responses**	When pupils talk about changing the food, most want better quality and more choice. Price comes second: 2,322 pupils raise cost, a quarter of everyone who mentions food. A further 2.5% raise queue length, which is coded separately. Long queues eat into break time, which helps explain why food and break length so often appear in the same answer. Some pupils also raise free school meal allowances without being asked. • "The canteen needs to be cheaper and better" • "Free school meal people need more money; we don't get much food"

Theme	Examples
Uniform and dress code **9.8%** **8,740 responses**	Pupils who raise uniform name a specific item far more often than they question uniform as a whole. Blazers are mentioned by 1,058 pupils, skirts by 809, jewellery by 515 and ties by 297. A further 528 raise hair rules and 189 raise having to tuck their shirts in. Comfort in hot weather is the most common reason pupils give. • "Girls should be able to wear skirts or shorts in hot weather like boys" • "Rules on jewellery: it doesn't affect anyone's learning except the teachers"
Longer break and lunchtime **6.8%** **6,046 responses**	Pupils who ask for a longer break or lunch often explain why: break is when they queue for food, eat and use the toilet, and all three compete for the same minutes. The canteen queues raised by 2.5% of pupils in the food section are part of the same problem, so shortening them would give back some of the time pupils are asking for. This theme counts only pupils who explicitly ask for a longer break or lunch, not everyone who mentions break. • "more time to eat because after ive waited in line for food i dont have enough time to eat then burn off all my energy" • "longer lunchtime because we dont have long enough to eat or go to the toilet because of people pushing in the line"

Conclusion

Reflections by Mary Myatt

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Conclusion



Mary Myatt
Education adviser, writer and speaker

What stands out in these findings is how pupils' experience changes as they move through school. The pattern begins before secondary: in primary, pupils become steadily less likely to find lessons interesting as they move from Year 3 to Year 6, alongside declines in happiness and perceptions of teaching.

The drop after Year 7 is particularly striking, with pupils less likely to find what they are learning interesting, less happy to be at school and less positive about how clearly work is explained.

We should be careful not to treat this as an inevitable feature of adolescence. It raises an important question for schools: what are Years 7, 8 and 9 actually for?

Key Stage 3 should not be a holding pattern before GCSE. These are important years in their own right: years in which pupils should encounter rich subject knowledge, increasingly demanding ideas, powerful texts, worthwhile questions and experiences that help them see why their learning matters.

This is where high challenge, high support comes in. Ambition should not be lowered because pupils need more help. The challenge should remain high; what changes is the support, scaffolding, explanation and time that enable pupils to get there.

The pupil comments provide useful insights. Young people are not asking for schools to be completely reinvented. They value friendships, teachers, subjects and opportunities, while asking for greater fairness, consistency and the chance to be heard. That last point is important. Around half of pupils in Years 6 and 7 feel that their opinions are valued, but this falls steadily through secondary school to just 26% by Year 11.

Listening to pupils matters, but the purpose is not simply to make school more comfortable. It is to help us understand the conditions in which pupils are most likely to engage with ambitious learning, feel that they belong, and recognise that what they are being asked to learn is worth their attention.

Mary Myatt
Education adviser, writer and speaker

Thoughts from the Sector



Jonny Uttley

Strategic Consultant and founder of Jonny Uttley Education

Listening is only useful if something changes.

The most important thing about pupil voice is not that we listen. It is what we do differently because we have listened.

For trust leaders, data like this gives us something incredibly powerful: a window into what school actually feels like for the children who experience it every day. And that matters, because the culture we think we have is not always the culture our pupils experience.

The temptation with any large dataset is to look first at the averages. Are we above or below national? Are things improving? But the really interesting questions sit beneath those headline numbers. Which children are having a different experience? Where are the gaps between schools, year groups or groups of pupils? Where does experience deteriorate as children move through our schools? And what are the children we most need to notice telling us?

Then get curious.

The findings in this report are a brilliant reminder that pupils rarely ask us to tear everything up. Often, they are asking for seemingly small things: greater consistency, fairer treatment, adults who listen before reaching a judgement. Those things may look small from the boardroom. They don't feel small when you experience them every day. So don't respond to twenty things. Choose two or three that matter – the ones that best match your school's or trust's absolute priority. Find out what sits behind them. Act deliberately. Then go back and ask pupils whether anything actually feels different.

Because pupil voice may start as an event or an annual survey, but it should be at the heart of how we improve every single day.

The real test of whether we listen is whether pupils can point to something that is better because we did.



Pamela McIlroy

Trust Chief Operating Officer - The Pinnacle Learning Trust

One of the key benefits of using the Edurio survey is the ability to benchmark each category and question against a national picture. When analysing our results, we compare our positive response rates against our previous year's performance, together with the national benchmarks.

This extensive national dataset (broken down into trust, primary, secondary and trust central teams) provides an evidence base for our analysis, enabling us to identify priority areas for the coming year and to celebrate key successes.

Appendix

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Overall

By Year

Question	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025	2025/ 2026
How valued do you think pupil opinion is in your school?	-	-	115,589

Primary

By Year

Question	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025	2025/ 2026
How happy are you at this school?	19,243	45,627	59,280
How happy do you feel today?	17,805	35,669	52,529
How interesting do you find your lessons?	18,771	42,392	59,252
Do you feel safe in school?	18,605	44,325	65,121
How well do your teachers explain what you need to work on in class?	18,758	42,394	57,506

Primary

By Year Group

Question	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
How happy are you at this school?	10,660	10,805	10,608	10,419
How happy do you feel today?	8,689	8,705	8,362	8,272
How interesting do you find your lessons?	10,445	10,547	10,259	10,078
Do you feel safe in school?	11,140	11,322	11,055	10,837
How well do your teachers explain what you need to work on in class?	10,133	10,251	9,959	9,716
How valued do you think pupil opinion is in your school?	3,853	3,548	3,069	2,449

Secondary

By Year

Question	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025	2025/ 2026
How happy are you to be studying at this school?	81,465	125,194	130,147
Overall, how well do you feel lately physically and mentally?	72,537	90,062	102,545
How often do you find what you learn at school interesting?	69,895	110,445	116,527
How safe do you feel during class?	72,425	102,913	115,123
How clearly do your teachers explain the work they set?	78,532	116,405	127,353
How often do you learn about people like you in class? (e.g. with a similar background or identity to yours)?	66,241	89,716	78,662

Secondary

By Year Group

Question	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
How happy are you to be studying at this school?	23,818	22,622	21,186	17,680	12,971	4,048	2,665
Overall, how well do you feel lately physically and mentally?	17,978	17,370	16,010	13,361	9,972	3,008	2,043
How often do you find what you learn at school interesting?	21,195	20,065	19,590	17,134	12,842	3,869	2,641
How safe do you feel during class?	20,661	19,310	18,261	15,587	12,162	3,807	2,546
How clearly do your teachers explain the work they set?	23,151	21,737	20,551	17,647	13,309	3,924	2,732
How often do you learn about people like you in class? (e.g. with a similar background or identity to yours)?	13,166	11,888	10,563	8,741	6,498	2,450	1,504
How valued do you think pupil opinion is in your school?	19,442	18,094	17,738	15,671	11,807	4,133	2,716

Secondary

By Gender

Question	Male	Female	Another gender identity
How happy are you to be studying at this school?	60,111	63,272	1,929
Overall, how well do you feel lately physically and mentally?	46,839	49,710	1,421
How often do you find what you learn at school interesting?	51,981	54,569	1,804
How safe do you feel during class?	52,705	55,944	1,756
How clearly do your teachers explain the work they set?	57,811	60,590	1,851
How often do you learn about people like you in class? (e.g. with a similar background or identity to yours)?	37,906	41,273	1,282

Open Answer Questions

Question	2025/2026
What is the best thing about your school?	99,481
What would you like to be different in your school?	89,499

About Edurio

200+ trusts, 2,500+ schools,
one of the largest school feedback datasets in England

Edurio helps trust and school leaders see what's really going on: through staff, pupil and parent feedback, benchmarked nationally so you know where you stand, not just what you've measured.



Michael Cowland, CEO
The Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust

“In terms of the financial value of Edurio, I think it's a no-brainer.

If one survey's data gives you enough information to change something, which enables even just one staff member to stay, Edurio's service pays for itself.”

Alongside our Surveys platform, Edurio Evaluate supports trusts with self-evaluation, giving leaders a clearer, evidence-backed view to support governance and assurance conversations.

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