

Pupil Learning Experience and Wellbeing Review

Pupil Experience in Schools and Multi-Academy Trusts

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edurio^o

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About the Pupil Learning Experience and Wellbeing Review

In the summer term of 2021, Trusts across England were invited to take part in the Edurio Pupil Learning Experience and Wellbeing Survey. Over 45,000 pupils from 165 primary, secondary and all-through schools took part between May-July 2021 in the way that was most suitable for them - either on school devices or at home, and some with the support of an adult to read the questions.

The survey takes a comprehensive look across key elements of pupil experience at school, enabling school and Trust leaders to understand pupils' needs and priorities and design strategies to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. The survey covers topics from the learning environment and learning excellence to wellbeing and safeguarding, and captures demographic data to help understand how the experience differs for pupils of different ages, genders and ethnicities. A full breakdown of the respondent groups is available in our appendix.



Executive Summary

The mental wellbeing of children and young adults has been an area of increasing concern in recent years, compounded by the onset of the global pandemic and subsequent lockdowns and school closures. As the lowest scores in the survey also came from questions relating to wellbeing, this initial report will focus on this area, providing a high-level summary of some of the learnings about health and emotional wellbeing, safeguarding and workload. Within this report, differences are highlighted between children with different characteristics or backgrounds; any differences highlighted represent a statistically significant difference between at least two groups within a particular comparison, at 99% confidence. Information on related topics, including Learning Environment, Learning Excellence and further data on wellbeing, will follow in the coming months.

Less than half of pupils report feeling well overall lately, with stress, overworking and sleep quality an issue for a large number of pupils.

- Older pupils report lower wellbeing than younger pupils.
- In most cases, girls report lower wellbeing scores than boys, and those with a gender identity other than male or female report significantly lower wellbeing than boys or girls.
- There are notable differences between regions and among pupils at schools with different Ofsted ratings, with pupils at Outstanding schools reporting the lowest results for wellbeing measures.

Most pupils feel safe in school, though a significant minority do not, and on average one in 5 pupils report being bullied in the past 3 months.

- Bullying rates are higher among pupils with certain characteristics.
- Loneliness is an issue for a quarter of pupils, and many feel they do not have an adult at school they can talk to.
- When pupils are sad or worried, a higher proportion choose to talk to their classmates than to their teachers.

65% of pupils are happy to be studying at their school, but one in ten are not, and among those with low wellbeing scores the proportion is far higher.

- Pupils' happiness at school is a strong indicator for how likely they are to recommend their school to peers.
- Pupils' overall wellbeing is an indicator of pupils' happiness at school, with one notable exception: pupils in schools with an Outstanding Ofsted rating are happier at school, and more likely to recommend their school to peers, despite also feeling more stressed and overworked.

Foreword

Geoff Barton

ASCL General Secretary

ASCL is delighted to support our Premier Partner, Edurio, with the launch of their report, *Pupil Learning Experience and Wellbeing Review - Pupil Experience in Schools and Multi-Academy Trusts*.

At the heart of ASCL is the following commitment: 'We speak on behalf of members. We act on behalf of children and young people'. This report from Edurio focuses on the experiences of those children and young people and offers insight into the impact that the pandemic has had on them.

The report's focus on wellbeing offers us a useful appraisal of pupils' feelings and an opportunity to increase our understanding of their experiences.

At ASCL we know how concerned teachers and leaders are about the wellbeing of pupils and how much they want to help address this issue. The report highlights specific issues around happiness, quality of sleep and loneliness that children and young people are experiencing and the impact that they are having.

It also looks at the drivers of stress in pupils, including school and non-school related factors and brings into focus the impact that these factors have on overall wellbeing.

It is heartening to see that the majority of pupils feel safe and happy in their school. However, it is clear that some pupils don't. It is important for us to understand the links between these feelings and the general wellbeing of those pupils.

Although it is no surprise that this report from Edurio has found that children and young people are struggling with their wellbeing, the intelligence that it offers will help us to better understand pupils' experiences and their needs. This is vital for school and trust leaders as we create strategies to support our pupils through this year and beyond.

I hope that you find this report both interesting and useful as you continue the truly exceptional job that you have been doing in supporting children and young people through this incredibly difficult period.

Chapter 1

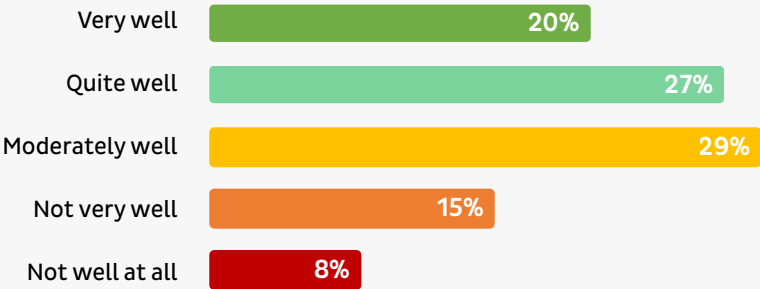
Overall pupil wellbeing

1.1 Pupils are struggling with their overall wellbeing, with stress, overworking and sleep quality an issue for a large number of pupils

Overall wellness

FIGURE 1: **OVERALL, HOW DO YOU FEEL LATELY?**

Across all pupils surveyed, fewer than half (47%) report that they have been feeling well lately, and a quarter (23%) report they have not felt very well or not felt well at all.



Comments suggest that some of the key drivers of pupils not feeling well come from school-related pressures and family-related pressures, with symptoms including tiredness and other physical feelings.

Drivers of lower wellbeing highlighted by respondents

~14%
of comments
School-related reasons

“Mounting pressures with the looming tests are making us stressed, coupled with boring lessons”
 “Under quite a lot of pressure when it comes to school to get up to my standards”
 “I feel fine, but I'm just pressured because I'm scared to do bad in GCSE's because the teachers do not seem to be reassuring me”

~5%
of comments
Family reasons

“There has been stuff going on at home.”
 “I have been through a lot of arguments and a loss recently”
 “I have been struggling recently but not because of the school. I have ASD and so I struggle with change and I have lots of things going on at home that can't be changed and will happen anyway so I have been finding that hard but the school has bent over backwards to make it easier.”

Symptoms highlighted by respondents

~8%
of comments
Feeling physically unwell

“My head hurts most of the time”
 “Mentally: moderately well, Physically: not well at all”
 “I feel dizzy and sick all the time”

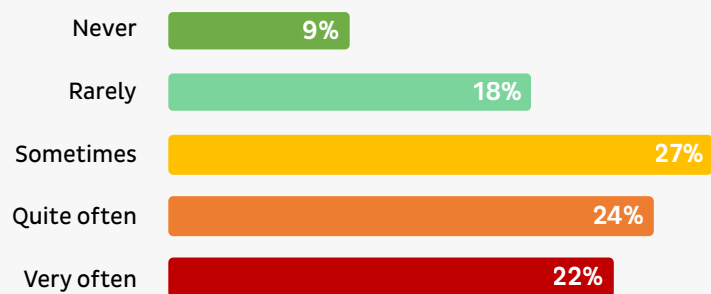
~11%
of comments
Feeling tired

“I am very tired”
 “It also really depends on the day. Usually, I'm pretty tired.”
 “I feel sometimes overwhelmed with the work.”

Stress

FIGURE 2: HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU FELT STRESSED LATELY?

Almost half of pupils (46%) report that they often felt stressed, whilst just a quarter (27%) report feeling stressed rarely or never.



Comments show three main sources of stress: schoolwork, family life, and COVID-19. School-related stressors (e.g. exams, mocks, homework, teachers) make up the largest proportion of comments, with family life a smaller proportion and Covid/lockdown mentioned only 9 times across all 258 comments collected.

~38%
of comments
School-related reasons

“As there is a lot of work and homework that I have to complete with a short space of time.”
 “Do not like change and near the end of the school year meeting new teachers etc makes me anxious.”
 “Grades and where I would be in the future”
 “School has really high expectations for the students. As they should but homework can be very stressful.”

~12%
of comments
Family reasons

“I’m dealing with something at home with my mom and dad and I feel more stressed than usual”
 “Not because of school, there is a lot going on at home”
 “I feel stressed sometimes because I have a mum that is pregnant and I need to take care of her and my cats!”

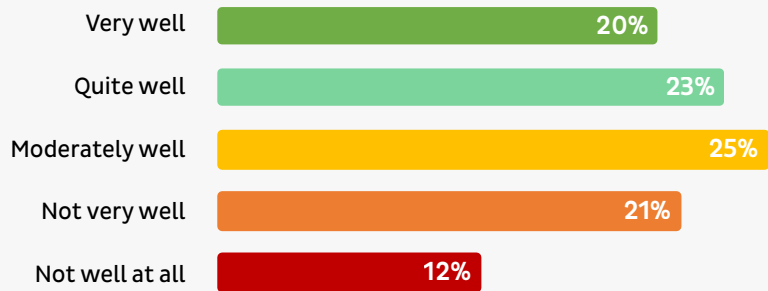
~3%
of comments
COVID-19/Lockdown

“I only feel stressed about the fact that there are cases in school, but no one is telling us. I end up finding out from my parents and even my friends, who had been told on social media. I would like to encourage the school to tell ALL parents every time a case is reported, and stop holding it in and only telling the parents of those affected.”
 “These lockdowns have completely drained my motivation to do work and lately, I have been feeling very stressed out as we are being drilled with exams.”

Sleep

FIGURE 3: HOW WELL DO YOU SLEEP LATELY?

Four in ten pupils report that they have slept well lately, and three in ten pupils report that they have slept badly.



Pupil comments mention a range of factors, from school-related stress and ongoing issues with sleep to short-term disruptions affecting them at the time of the survey. For some pupils, sleeping badly is less of a concern.

~8%
of comments
School-related reasons

"I find it hard to sleep due to stress from school."

"School is so stressful and when you are alone in your room at night, your whole existence goes through your head and you overthink even little things. I have had nights where I have cried myself to sleep"

"At night, the worry about the next day at school keeps me up or something that's happened within the school day that's upset me or irritated me"

~3%
of comments
Ongoing issues

"Sometimes I have nightmares which I feel affect my family"

"I do not really sleep that well because I am mostly awake in bed up to 4 to 6 am and only get sleep for a few hours."

~10%
of comments
Family and home- related issues

"We have building work at home so it is very dusty and messy."

"It is very hot at the moment, even though I have a fan in my room."

"My siblings keep me up at night"

~5%
of comments
Distractions

"I keep reading manga till past sleep time"

"I do all nighters a lot"

"Gaming"

~5%
of comments
Not concerned

"I sleep around 4-5 hours on average and I feel great in the mornings"

"I wake up a lot in the night but other than that it's fine."

Overworking

FIGURE 4: HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU FELT OVERWORKED LATELY?

More pupils feel overworked than not; 43% state that they feel overworked quite or very often, whilst only 3 in 10 (28%) state they feel overworked rarely or never.

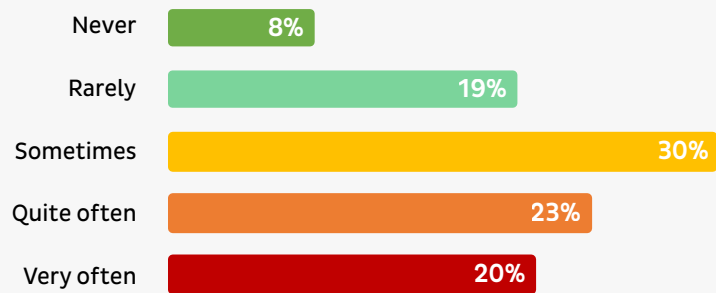
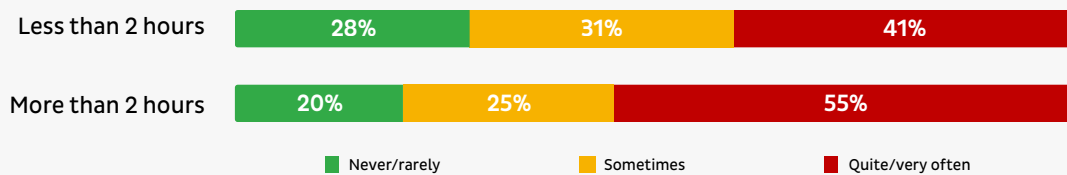
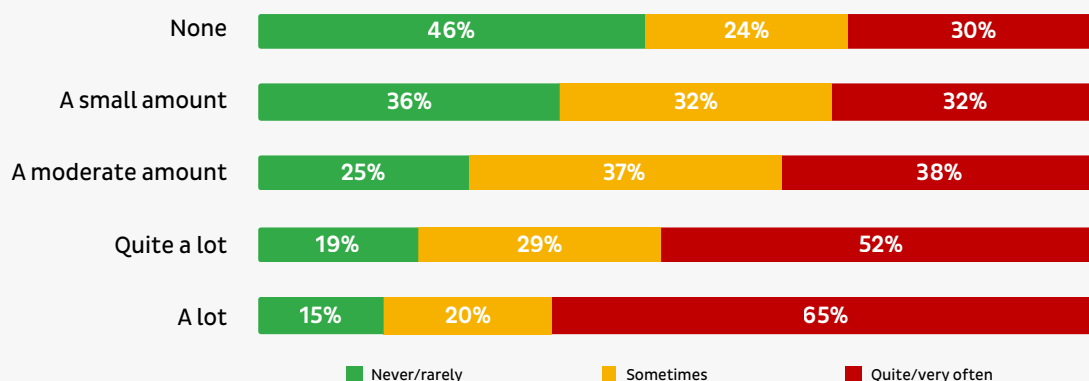


FIGURE 5: HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU FELT OVERWORKED LATELY? BY HOURS OF HOMEWORK



There is a notable difference in the proportion of pupils feeling overworked based on how many hours of homework they do per day. For those doing more than 2 hours, 55% feel overworked; for those doing less than 2 hours, the proportion is 41%.

FIGURE 6: HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU FELT OVERWORKED LATELY? BY AMOUNT OF EXTRA WORK/RESPONSIBILITIES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL



The difference is larger when comparing between pupils with varying levels of extra responsibility. Less than one third (30%) of pupils with no extra responsibilities outside of school feel overworked; this rises to two (65%) among pupils with a lot of extra responsibilities.

Reflections on this section

Daniel Muijs

Former Head of Research at Ofsted

This corresponds quite well with similar surveys of children and adolescents in the UK. In the 'Big Ask' report (Children's Commissioner, 2021), for example, 1 in 5 reported mental health concerns, rising to 2 in 5 among pupils in mid-adolescence. These numbers are concerning, as this means that in a classroom of 25 up to 5 pupils are not feeling well. Reviewing the respondent comments, it was interesting to see the relatively high proportion of pupils mentioning a school-related stressor. However, this may be due to the questionnaire relating primarily to school and being completed within a school context.

The proportion of pupils feeling overworked is concerning: earlier research using focus groups of children by the Office for National Statistics (2020) suggests that feeling overworked is a factor causing stress and a lack of mental wellbeing among children. Interestingly, in that study, one of the factors mentioned was pressure to take part in extracurricular activities.

1.2 Wellbeing by characteristic

Older pupils report lower wellbeing than younger pupils, with stress and loneliness increasing, sleep quality decreasing and pupils feeling worse overall as they grow older.

FIGURE 7: **OVERALL, HOW WELL DO YOU FEEL LATELY? (VERY/QUITE WELL BY YEAR GROUP)**

Overall wellness among pupils decreases steadily throughout primary school and worsens with the start of secondary school. By Key Stage 4, only a third of pupils report feeling well lately.

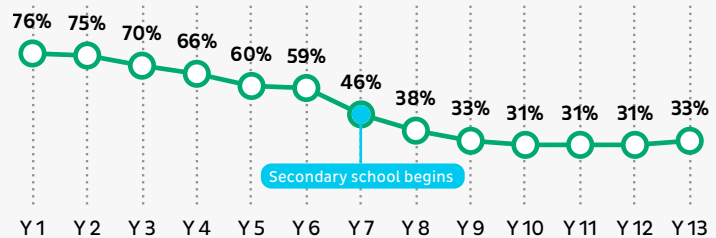


FIGURE 8: **HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU FELT STRESSED LATELY? (VERY/QUITE OFTEN BY YEAR GROUP)**

The proportion of pupils feeling stressed increases as pupils get older; by the end of year 13 more than 2 in 3 pupils report feeling stressed very or quite often.

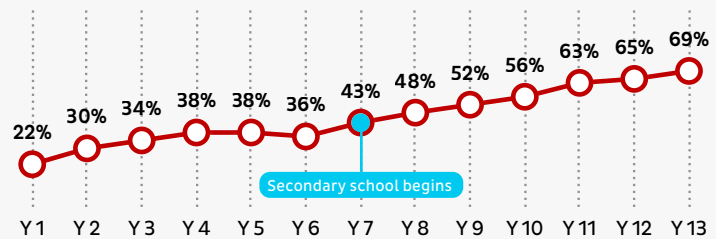


FIGURE 9: **HOW WELL DO YOU SLEEP LATELY? (NOT VERY WELL/NOT WELL AT ALL BY YEAR GROUP)**

Sleep quality decreases as pupils age, peaking at the ends of key education stages - Key Stage 3, GCSEs and A Levels - with 41% of pupils sleeping poorly during the final year of GCSEs.

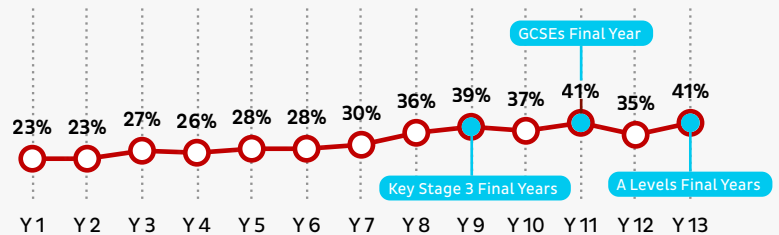
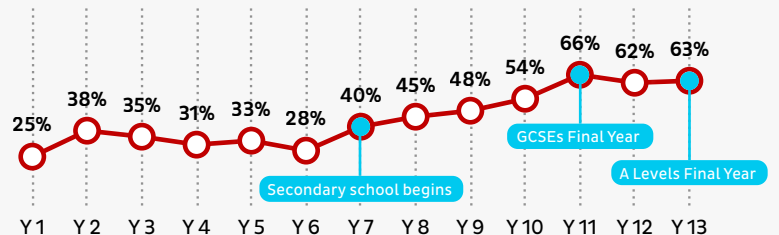


FIGURE 10: **HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU FELT OVERWORKED LATELY? (VERY /QUITE OFTEN BY YEAR GROUP)**

The proportion of pupils who feel overworked steadily increases with the beginning of secondary school, peaks in Year 11 (final year of GCSEs) and remains high through Years 12 and 13 (A levels).



In most cases, girls report lower wellbeing scores than boys, and those with a gender identity other than male or female report significantly lower wellbeing than either boys or girls.

FIGURE 11: **OVERALL, HOW WELL DO YOU FEEL LATELY? (BY GENDER)**

54% of boys report feeling well, compared to 43% of girls and just 20% of those with an identity other than male/female. 54% of pupils with a gender identity other than male/female report feeling unwell.

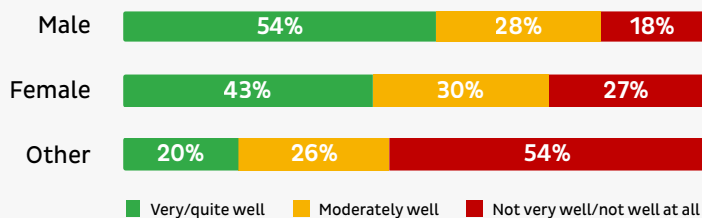


FIGURE 12: **HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU FELT STRESSED LATELY? (BY GENDER)**

A higher proportion of girls report feeling stressed than boys (55% compared to 36%), and the proportion is higher still for those with a gender identity other than male/female (68%).

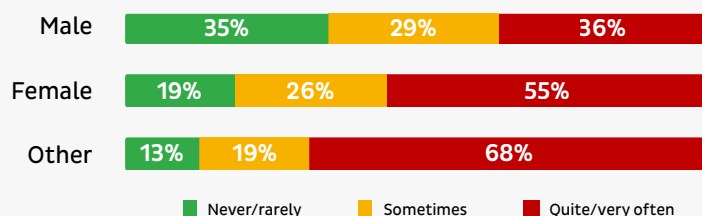


FIGURE 13: **HOW WELL DO YOU SLEEP LATELY? (BY GENDER)**

Sleep scores are worse for girls compared to boys (34% sleeping poorly compared to 28%), with scores especially low for pupils with gender identity other than male/female (59% sleeping poorly).

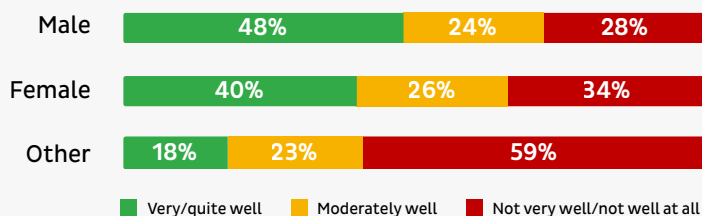
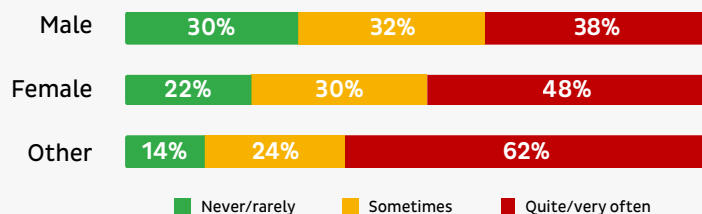


FIGURE 14: **HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU FELT OVERWORKED LATELY? (BY GENDER)**

More girls feel frequently overworked than boys, but again scores are worse among pupils with gender identity other than male/female.



Reflections on this section

Daniel Muijs

Former Head of Research at Ofsted

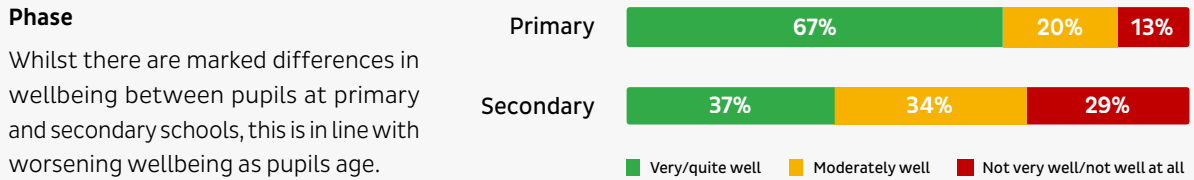
The data we are seeing on age is supported by studies in a range of countries generally showing a decrease in wellbeing in early adolescence, which only starts to improve in late adolescence, a trend we may be seeing the start of in year 13 (Gonzalez-Carasco et al, 2020). The lower wellbeing of girls again confirms existing research (e.g. Gonzalez-Carasco et al, 2020). With this in mind, it is not necessarily the case that school itself is the cause of decreased wellbeing, more a reflection of difficulties young people have in navigating adolescence. Of course, knowing where problems lay can help leaders to prepare their pupils for these challenges, and provide support during difficult stages of development.

All that being said, the fact that we saw peaks in pupils feeling overworked during exam years do appear illustrative of an effect of high-stakes testing, and the inevitable stress this may cause.

1.3 Wellbeing by school type

Wellbeing of pupils at different types of school is less varied, though there are some notable differences between regions, and between pupils at schools with different Ofsted ratings.

FIGURE 15: **OVERALL, HOW WELL DO YOU FEEL LATELY? (BY PHASE)**



School size

There is little difference by school size, aside from differences related to phase (and therefore pupil age).

FIGURE 16: **OVERALL, HOW WELL DO YOU FEEL LATELY? (BY SCHOOL SIZE: PRIMARIES)**

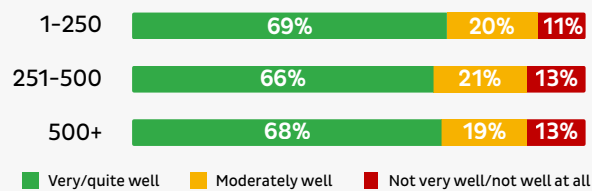
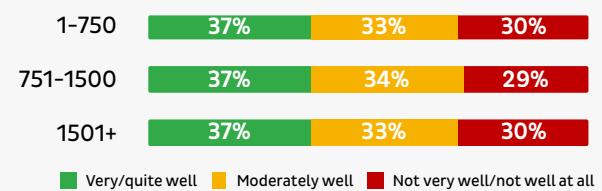


FIGURE 17: **OVERALL, HOW WELL DO YOU FEEL LATELY? (BY SCHOOL SIZE: SECONDARIES)**



Location

FIGURE 18: **OVERALL, HOW WELL DO YOU FEEL LATELY? (BY URBAN/RURAL DESCRIPTION)**

There is very little difference between how pupils studying at schools in rural locations feel, compared to how pupils studying at schools in urban locations feel.

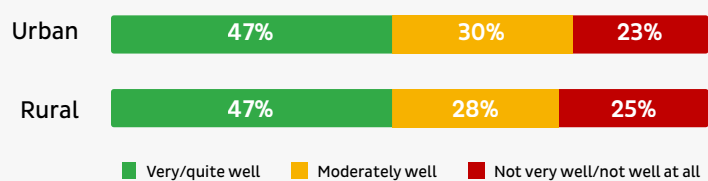
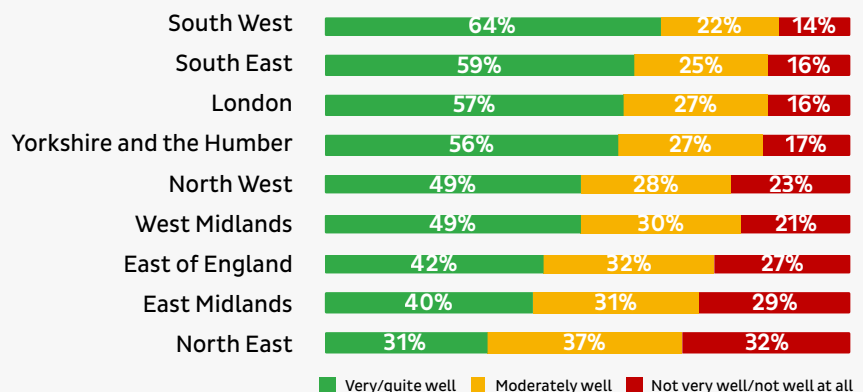


FIGURE 19: **OVERALL, HOW WELL DO YOU FEEL LATELY? (BY REGION)**

By region, there is a greater spread: a smaller proportion of pupils in the North East, East of England and East Midlands report feeling well lately, compared to those in the South West, South East and London.



Ofsted rating

Wellbeing of pupils at schools with different Ofsted rating is more varied.

FIGURE 20: **OVERALL, HOW WELL DO YOU FEEL LATELY? (BY OFSTED RATING)**

43% of pupils at Outstanding schools report feeling well lately. This is significantly lower than those at Good schools (50%) and RI schools (48%).

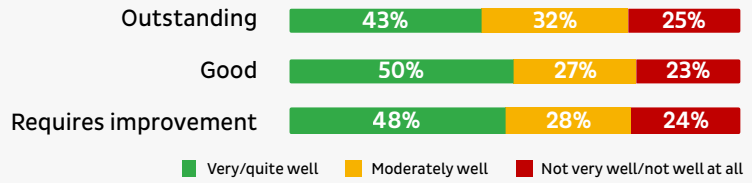


FIGURE 21: **HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU FELT STRESSED LATELY? (BY OFSTED RATING)**

Half of pupils (48%) at Outstanding schools report feeling stressed lately, compared to 44% of those at Good schools and 45% at RI schools.

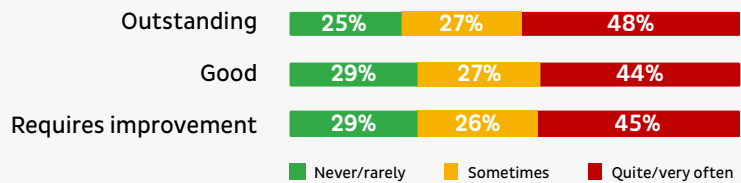


FIGURE 22: **HOW WELL DO YOU SLEEP LATELY? (BY OFSTED RATING)**

40% of pupils at Outstanding schools report sleeping well, compared to 44% and 45% at Good and RI schools respectively.

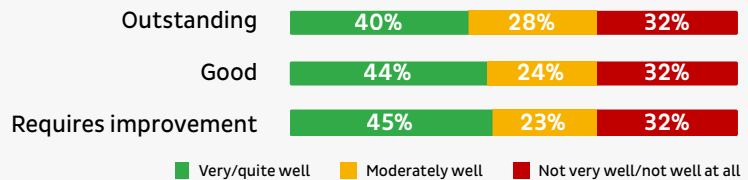
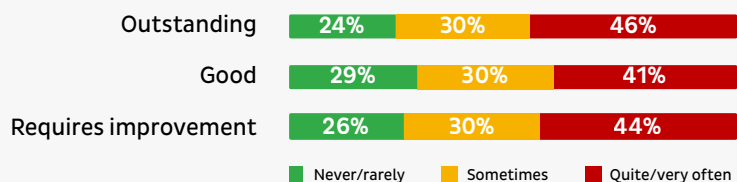


FIGURE 23: **HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU FELT OVERWORKED LATELY? (BY OFSTED RATING)**

A higher percentage of pupils at Outstanding schools report feeling overworked (46%), compared to those at Good (41%) or RI schools (44%).



Reflections on this section

Daniel Muijs

Former Head of Research at Ofsted

While the differences between schools with different Ofsted rating are not particularly large, they are interesting and with the size of the dataset, they are statistically significant. It is of course not possible to make a strong statement on causality. Many outstanding schools have been exempt from inspection over time, so the outstanding grades may be old (and possibly outdated). It is also possible that these schools put greater academic expectations on pupils, leading to higher levels of stress, or that they recruit pupils from homes in which parents put a lot of expectations on their children.

Chapter 2

Safeguarding and support

2.1 Most pupils feel safe in school, though a significant minority do not, and on average one in five pupils report being bullied

Safety

7 in 10 pupils feel safe in school: 71% feel safe in the classroom itself, and 68% report feeling safe in school outside of class. However, a minority of pupils report not feeling very safe, or not feeling safe at all: 8% during class and 9% outside of class.

FIGURE 24: HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL IN CLASS?

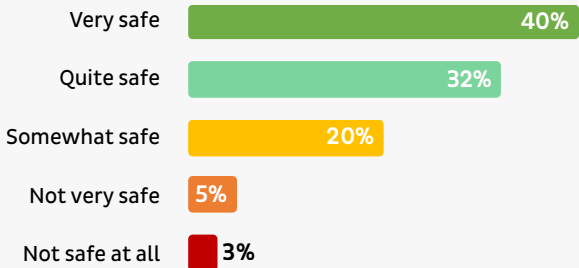
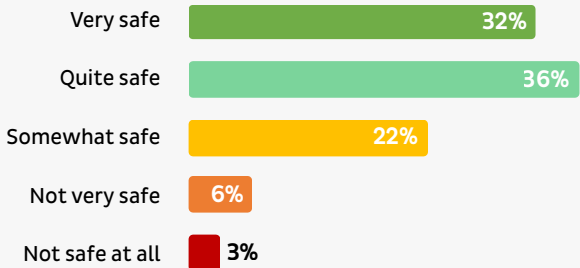


FIGURE 25: HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL IN SCHOOL OUTSIDE OF CLASS?



Bullying

Almost 2 in 10 pupils have been bullied in the 3 months before they took the survey, and a similar proportion of pupils declined to answer the question; only 65% of pupils confirmed they have not been bullied during that time period. 3 in 10 know someone else who has been bullied in the three months leading up to the survey.

FIGURE 26: IN THE PAST THREE MONTH, HAVE YOU BEEN BULLIED IN ANY WAY (PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY, ONLINE)?

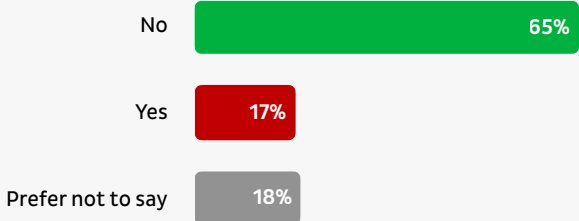
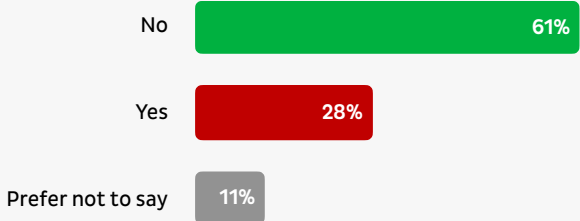


FIGURE 27: DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE ELSE IN THE SCHOOL WHO HAS BEEN BULLIED IN THE PAST THREE MONTHS?



2.2 Bullying rates are higher among pupils with certain characteristics

FIGURE 28: IN THE PAST 3 MONTHS, HAVE YOU BEEN BULLIED IN ANY WAY?

A similar proportion of males and females have experienced bullying, but the proportion is twice as high for pupils with a gender identity other than male/female

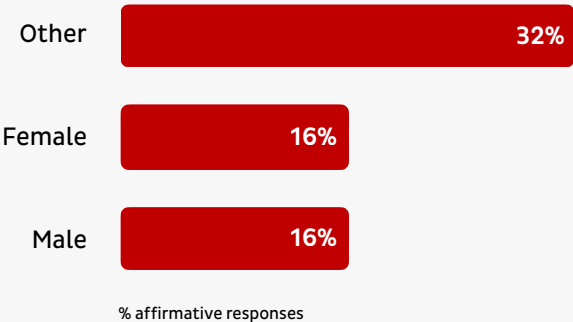
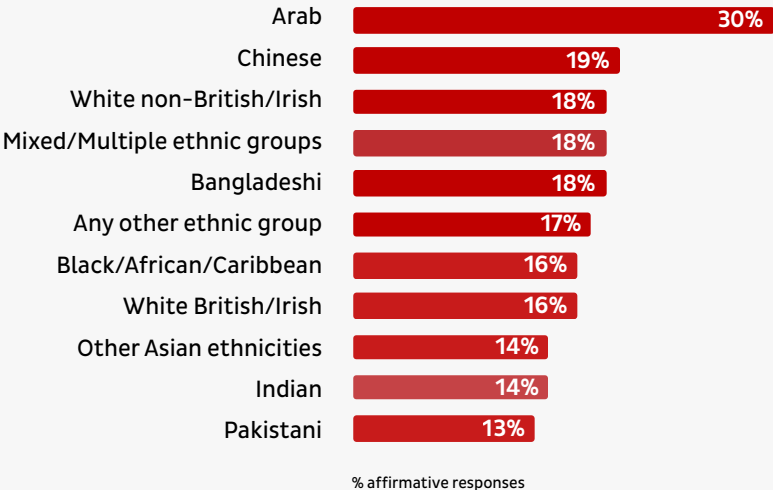


FIGURE 29: IN THE PAST 3 MONTHS, HAVE YOU BEEN BULLIED IN ANY WAY?

30% of pupils from Arab ethnic backgrounds have been bullied, for other ethnicities (and indeed for the national average) bullying rates are significantly lower, below 20%.



Reflections on this section

Daniel Muijs

Former Head of Research at Ofsted

These findings overall reflect previous research in England. The DfE, for example, found that around 17% of 10–15 year-olds reported having been bullied in the previous year (DfE, 2019), while research from the Anti-Bullying Alliance (2016) found that 25% of children reported being bullied. There is therefore no indication from these findings that bullying has necessarily increased, but it remains at relatively high levels.

However the data on bullying by characteristics is more varied. Findings on gender are not always consistent across the literature, and appear to depend in part on type of bullying (e.g. boys being more likely to suffer physical abuse, while girls have reported more cyber-bullying). Findings on ethnicity likewise differ, with studies differentially reporting bullying rates among children from different ethnic groups (Tippett et al, 2013; DfE, 2019; Anti-bullying Alliance, 2016). Previous studies have not typically looked at pupils of Arab ethnicity separately, however, and the high rates reported among children of Arab descent compared to other groups suggest the need for further monitoring.

2.3 Loneliness is an issue for a quarter of pupils, and many feel they do not have an adult at school they can talk to

Loneliness

FIGURE 30: HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU FELT LONELY LATELY?

Whilst half of pupils (53%) report that recently they have felt lonely rarely or never, a quarter of pupils (24%) report feeling lonely lately.

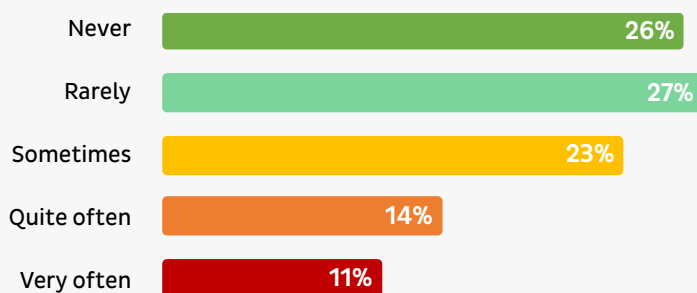


FIGURE 31: HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU FELT LONELY LATELY?

There are also notable differences between pupils with certain characteristics. A higher proportion of girls than boys report feeling lonely, and a higher-still proportion of those with a gender identity other than male/female do.

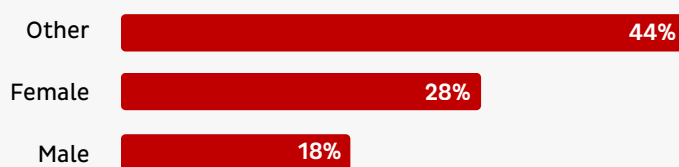
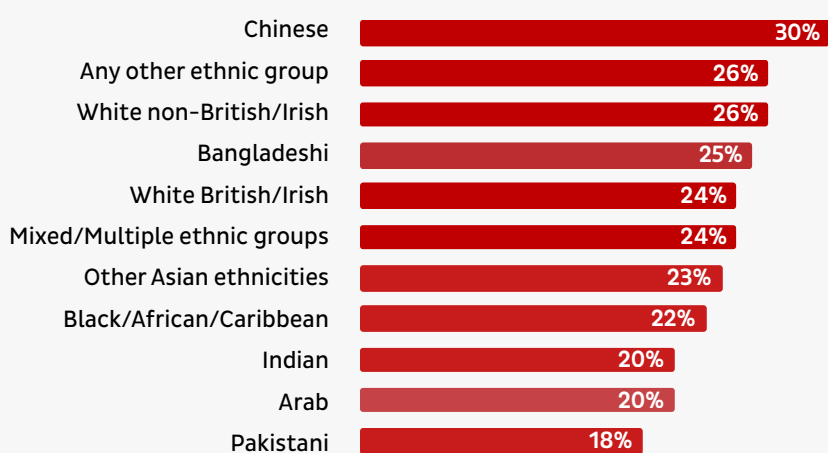


FIGURE 32: HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU FELT LONELY LATELY?

Results vary by ethnicity, with a higher proportion of children with Chinese ethnicity reporting feeling lonely than any other group.



Comments are quite mixed; some pupils mention the support they get from friends and family as having a positive impact, but where there is an absence of that support it is noticed. More comments mention an absence of friendship/family than bullying or being actively left out, though this does come up in a number of comments too.

Family support / lack of

~6%
of comments
Support from family

"I have family why would I feel lonely"

"I think I have lost quite a lot of trust, or maybe I am just careful with who I trust. The last year has shown people's true colours and sometimes only feeling comfortable around few people can be quite lonely, but I am lucky that I have an amazing family who are always there to support and help."

"I have 2 brothers and 2 sisters so I'm never lonely"

~6%
of comments
Lonely at home

"As I have no siblings that live with me."

"Sometimes when I am at home, I have felt lonely."

"I felt more lonely when I was learning from home. I missed my friends and teachers."

Friendship / lack of

~19%
of comments
Support from friends

"I have lots of friends to help me and make me confident"

"I don't ever feel lonely because I have good friends"

"Always have friends to talk to"

~6%
of comments
Lonely at school

"My friend has left the school and all my other friends are in a different class."

"At school people leave me out so I feel sad."

"Lonely in school, but not outside of it"

~5%
of comments
Don't have friends

"I have no friends"

"Because I have no friends and nobody plays with me"

"My best friend moved to wales and she was the only person I played with so sometimes I just sit by myself."

~3%
of comments
Lockdown, isolation

"Because people have been isolating"

"Lockdown has had a severe impact on how I have felt recently."

"Just because of lockdown but normally I do not feel lonely at all"

Bullying / fighting / being actively left out

~5%
of comments
Being bullied, feeling left out

"I feel lonely in school sometimes due to mean comments and people not playing with me"

"I feel left out by everyone at school and that they don't like me"

"I have people I talk to that I think don't like me or have a negative feeling towards me and rarely talk to me at school"

~4%
of comments
Fights with friends

"My friends are sometimes a bit mean to me"

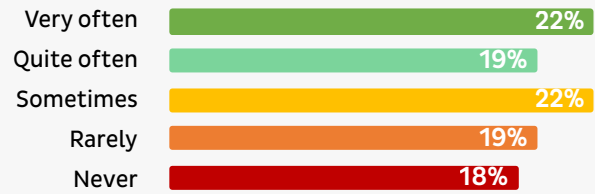
"I have friends although they kind of ignore me, that's why I have been trying to find people with the same interests as me"

"Been left out a lot lately, and friendships have been hard"

Support networks

FIGURE 33: IF SOMETHING WORRIES YOU, HOW OFTEN DO YOU HAVE AN ADULT AT SCHOOL WHOM YOU TRUST AND CAN TALK TO?

Less than half (41%) pupils feel they have an adult at school whom they trust and can talk to if they're feeling worried, whilst a similar proportion (37%) feel that they would rarely or never have someone they trust and can talk to.

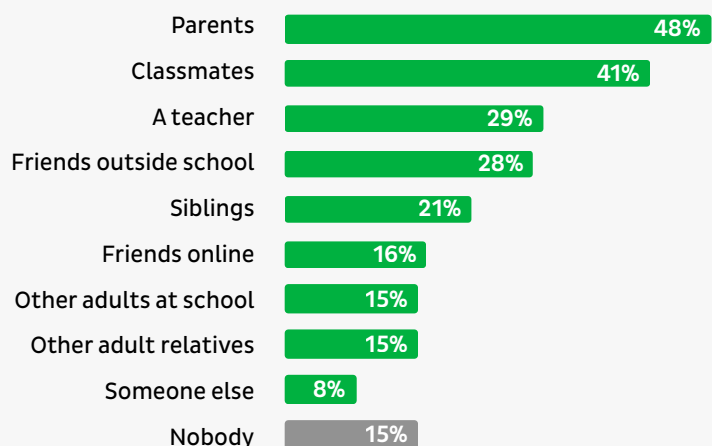


Comments highlight that trust is a complex issue. Some indicate personal reasons for not wanting to share, whilst others indicate that there are issues based on teacher-pupil relationships and overall school environment.

Reason Category	Comments
Personal reasons	"I have a bad habit of not trusting anyone"
	"Personal reasons. Trust issues, struggle to open up."
	"There are many adults at school who I trust to talk to about issues that I might have at home but I generally don't like to share with people any issues that I have. I mainly like to keep them private."
School-related reasons	"I used to, but I've heard teachers talking about students problems behind their backs and it's made me lose my trust with teachers"
	"Don't trust them and they are never really welcoming"
	"Most teachers will be too busy, so I don't bother them."
	"We cant walk around the school to find one and student services are too busy with covid so you either tell your friends or keep it to yourself"

FIGURE 34: WHEN YOU ARE SAD OR WORRIED, WHO DO YOU TALK TO? YOU CAN TICK MORE THAN ONE ANSWER.

When pupils feel sad or worried, almost half (48%) of pupils choose to speak to their parents about it. The second largest group is classmates, with 41% of pupils speaking to classmates if they feel sad or worried. Just 29% choose to speak to teachers, and 15% to other adults at school. 15% of pupils do not speak to anyone when they feel sad or worried.



Reflections on this section

Daniel Muijs

Former Head of Research at Ofsted

In 2018 the Office for National Statistics (2018) analysed surveys of children and adolescents on their level of loneliness. They used a three-scale measure, hardly ever or never, some of the time, and often. They found that only 11% of 10-15 year olds stated they were often lonely, a significantly lower proportion than we find in our survey. This suggests a possibly significant impact of the pandemic on feelings of loneliness. The fact that pupils are approaching classmates more than teachers is notwithstanding the fact that schools have formal pastoral roles and that teachers are usually very willing to deal with the pastoral needs of their pupils. This is a finding reported cross a range of studies (e.g. Bokhorst et al, 2010). This may be related to the differential perceived roles and credibility of actors to children and young people, whereby teachers' expertise is seen to lie mainly in school subject areas. However, some research suggests that lower perceived involvement of teachers with their pupils increases the influence of peers (Vollett, 2017).

Comment

Anna Menzel

1st year university student

During my A-Levels, I did an Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) focusing on young people's mental health and the idea that the first people teenagers go to when they encounter problems are their peers (I called these friends 'first responders').

I had decided on my EPQ topic because of my own personal experience. I have been in the position of first responder for my friends. While I am immensely proud of having been able to provide support to my friends, it has not always been easy to hear about complex and difficult issues from my friends and to try to help with no support or experience navigating the situation. My aim with the EPQ was to see if my personal experience reflected a more general issue and if other first responders would also benefit from training.

As part of my EPQ I ran a survey and talked to pupils and teachers in my school. I asked similar questions to the ones in this report; are young people more likely to talk to other young people about their problems first rather than adults and, if so, do these first responders need support to manage the stress of being exposed to their friends' mental health issues? My personal observation had been that the answer would be yes to both questions: I hypothesised that young people would be first responders for one another when it came to mental health and that the first responders needed training and support.

My research in literature and talking to my school and charities showed that there is little or no support for young people as advisors to peers on mental health. This report, with a much larger and broader audience and much larger number of responses, largely confirms those findings and provides more evidence to support my claims.

From my study and the study presented here it is clear that training and support for young people would be extremely helpful. Training is needed on the correct way to approach and conduct these conversations, and understanding when an adult or a professional should be involved. Particularly, it is often difficult to know how to set boundaries and handle confidentiality, and how to be involved that in a way that does not destroy the trust between friends.

I also believe that training will be beneficial to both groups, the young people who are suffering from mental health problems as well as their responders. This research is vital in highlighting that pupils and young people are heavily involved as first responders.

Chapter 3

Pupils' feelings towards school

3.1 The majority of pupils are happy to be studying at their school, but one in ten are not, and among those with low wellbeing scores the proportion is far higher

FIGURE 35: HOW HAPPY ARE YOU TO BE STUDYING AT THIS SCHOOL?

Two thirds of pupils (65%) are happy to be studying at their school, but one in 10 (10%) are not very happy or not happy at all.

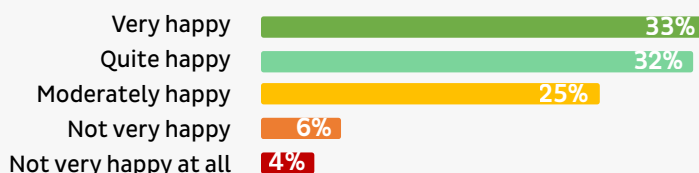
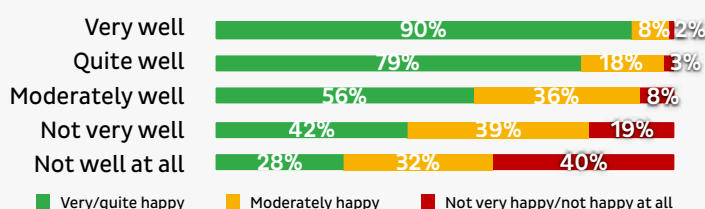


FIGURE 36: HOW HAPPY ARE YOU TO BE STUDYING AT THIS SCHOOL? (BY OVERALL WELLNESS)

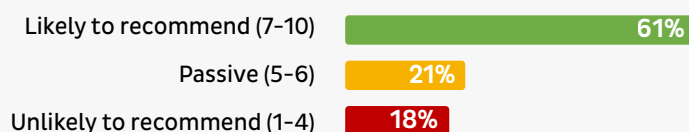
Overall wellbeing factors correlate strongly with pupils' happiness at school; among those who score positively on overall wellbeing, stress, sleep or work levels, the proportion of pupils who are happy at their school is far higher than those who score negatively on these factors.



3.2 Pupils' happiness at school is a strong indicator of how likely they are to recommend their school to peers

FIGURE 37: ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 10, HOW LIKELY WOULD YOU BE TO RECOMMEND THIS SCHOOL?

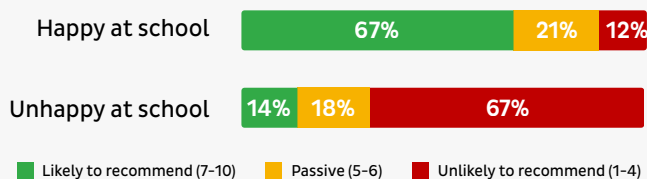
61% of pupils are likely (7 or more out of 10) to recommend their school, whilst only 18% of pupils would be unlikely (4 or less out of 10) to recommend their school to another pupil.



67% of pupils who are happy at school scored 7 or higher, compared to just 14% of those who are unhappy at school

FIGURE 38: ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 10, HOW LIKELY WOULD YOU BE TO RECOMMEND THIS SCHOOL?

There are significant differences between pupils who are happy at school, and pupils who are unhappy. Among those who are happy at school, 67% would recommend their school to another pupil. Among those who are unhappy, the proportion is far lower at just 14%.



3.3 Pupils at Outstanding schools are happier and more likely to recommend their school, despite reporting significantly lower wellbeing than pupils at schools rated “Requires Improvement”

There is a notable exception to the trend that happy pupils are more likely to recommend their school: pupils in schools with Good or Outstanding Ofsted ratings are happier and more likely to recommend their school to peers compared to those at schools rated “Requires Improvement”. For pupils at Outstanding schools this is noteworthy given their overall lower wellbeing.

FIGURE 39: HOW HAPPY ARE YOU TO BE STUDYING AT THIS SCHOOL? (BY OFSTED RATING)

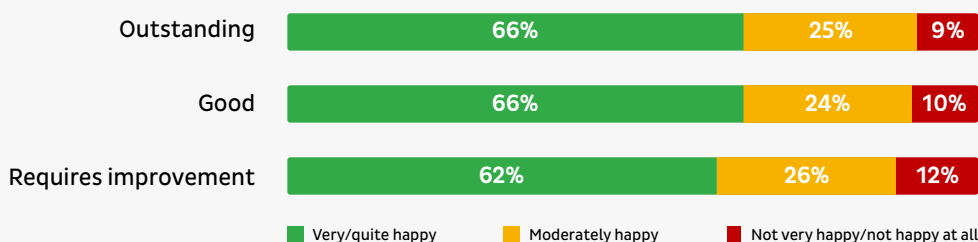
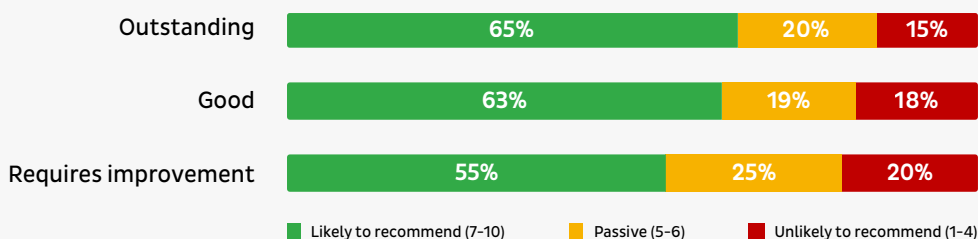


FIGURE 40: ON A SCALE FROM 1 TO 10, HOW LIKELY WOULD YOU BE TO RECOMMEND THIS SCHOOL? (BY OFSTED RATING)



Reflections on this section

Daniel Muijs

Former Head of Research at Ofsted





Overall levels of happiness with school is high, which is one of the most positive findings of this report. That there is a relationship with levels of stress and overall wellbeing is not surprising. What is more striking is the fact that this relationship is weaker in Ofsted outstanding schools, which suggests that pride in the performance of their school is also a key factor in pupils' judgements.

Chapter 4

Conclusion and comments from Daniel Muijs



~5 out of 25 pupils are unhappy

-  Stress
-  Overwork
-  Sleep problems
-  Bullying

This report presents findings from a large-scale survey into pupils' wellbeing. While we can't guarantee representativeness, the size of the sample, and the fact that most findings are in accordance with previous studies suggest these are to be taken seriously.

So is this good or bad news? On the one hand the majority of pupils feel at least moderately happy. However, over 1 in five does not, which means that in a class of 25 pupils one can expect on average five pupils to be unhappy. We also see significant levels of stress and overwork, sleep problems, and remaining high levels of bullying.

There are other concerning patterns, for example the fact that many negative factors get worse in secondary school, and the generally low scores for pupils who do not identify as either male or female. Clearly there is work for us to do to improve wellbeing, not least for those groups most negatively affected.

However, it would be wrong to posit these issues as being wholly or even primarily caused by school. Adolescent development across contexts shows decreases in wellbeing over time, for example, while happiness or otherwise is influenced by a large range of factors, many (such as relations with parents) outside of the school. It is telling in this respect that we are seeing levels of loneliness higher than in previous studies. Undoubtedly the impact of the pandemic has something to do with this. We also must not make the mistake of seeing our schools as heartless places. Pastoral support is well-established, and wellbeing is a key concern in most schools, as witnessed by the interest in this survey from them. And of course the survey shows that the majority of pupils are happy with their school.

Of course, there are factors related to school, such as the perceived pressure of school work. In that respect it is of course telling that overwork and sleeplessness peak in exam years. This is undoubtedly one of the negative impacts of high stakes testing. However, in making that argument we need to be careful what we wish for. As we saw during the suspension of exams as a result of the pandemic, teacher assessment, frequently posited as an alternative, leads to greater levels of inequality and lower reliability. This too is not a desirable outcome. A better option would be to reduce the stress of exams, which could be done through developing better study skills through methods such as retrieval practice and spaced practice.

Overall, this report provides food for thought, not just for us as educators, but for us as a society. The pandemic has brought the importance of mental health and wellbeing to the forefront of thinking, and ensuring that all pupils have the support they need to navigate an often confusing world as they grow up has to be a systemic priority.

About Edurio

Edurio is England's leading provider of stakeholder feedback solutions to schools and multi-academy trusts, working with over 100 Trusts and 1500 schools globally. Edurio has developed an advanced survey management and data visualisation platform for schools and multi-academy trusts as well as a research based survey library, covering topics like staff wellbeing, parental engagement and teaching & learning. The team designs surveys in partnership with academic experts and practitioners to address school management priorities and inspection requirements. Edurio publishes research, case studies and practical guidance on evidence-driven school improvement. Its publications can be found at home.edurio.com/insights.

edurio'

Appendix: Survey participants

RESPONDENTS BY SCHOOL TYPE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS (N)
Phase	
Primary	15348
Secondary	30366
Other (all-through, other)	589
School size	
Primary: 0-250	3911
Primary: 251-500	8240
Primary: 501+	2631
Secondary: 0-750	3857
Secondary: 751-1500	22138
Secondary: 1501+	4371
Urban/rural	
Urban	38449
Rural	9032
Region	
East Midlands	11016
East of England	13204
London	4600
North East	505
North West	6094
South East	2931
South West	3010
West Midlands	4497
Yorkshire and the Humber	1624
Ofsted Rating	
Outstanding	4931
Good	21948
Requires improvement	6398

RESPONDENTS BY CHARACTERISTIC	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS (N)
School year	
Year 1	1374
Year 2	2060
Year 3	3349
Year 4	3347
Year 5	2913
Year 6	3003
Year 7	7887
Year 8	7367
Year 9	6188
Year 10	5778
Year 11	1896
Year 12	1548
Year 13	728
Gender	
Female	17478
Male	16647
Other	1228
Ethnicity	
Chinese	342
Any other ethnic group	479
White non-British/Irish	4217
Bangladeshi	620
White British/Irish	17841
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	1413
Other Asian ethnicities	780
Black/African/Caribbean	1661
Indian	1043
Arab	734
Pakistani	1784