Pupil Experience Report

2025

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Introduction

Introduction

The last five years have been marked by turbulence and uncertainty across England and beyond, and the impact on children studying must be carefully considered. The Covid-19 pandemic saw children start secondary school at a time of social distancing and school closures and a knock-on effect on GCSE grading. There has been an increasing focus on health and mental wellbeing as other support services have faced cuts, while growing concerns around technology usage have left schools and parents trying to carve a new path. Furthermore, wider societal and global issues have added to a sense of anxiety for many.

Listening carefully to pupils' voices helps schools and trusts understand what is working well and identify areas for growth. The start of the academic year provides the perfect opportunity to turn this reflection into action and shape a learning environment where every child can thrive. Research consistently shows that wellbeing, belonging, safety, and engagement are not only important in their own right but also act as powerful predictors of outcomes such as attendance, motivation, and attainment.

Drawing on feedback from over 230,000 pupils across England collected during the 2024/25 academic year, this report provides the largest, up-to-date view of pupil experience available today. By combining rigorous analysis with practical application, we seek to empower school and trust leaders to take action with confidence: celebrating strengths, addressing barriers, and creating meaningful change that supports both pupil learning and wellbeing.

Our findings are grounded in Edurio's significant national benchmarks and longitudinal dataset, enabling leaders to track progress over time and situate their school or trust within a far broader national context.

This report is therefore both a reflection of pupils' daily realities and a tool for informed decision-making. It highlights how pupils feel about school, and speaks to the wider challenges and opportunities facing the education system.

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 with 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.

2024/25 Survey Sample

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Trusts:
75

Schools:
608

Pupils:
231,259

Primary	**56,908**
Secondary	**157,468**
All-through	**11,476**
16 Plus	**3,012**

North East — Sample size too small

North West 16,615

Yorkshire and the Humber 30,840

East Midlands 27,825

West Midlands 33,449

East of England 14,640

London 33,499

South West 30,059

South East 34,650
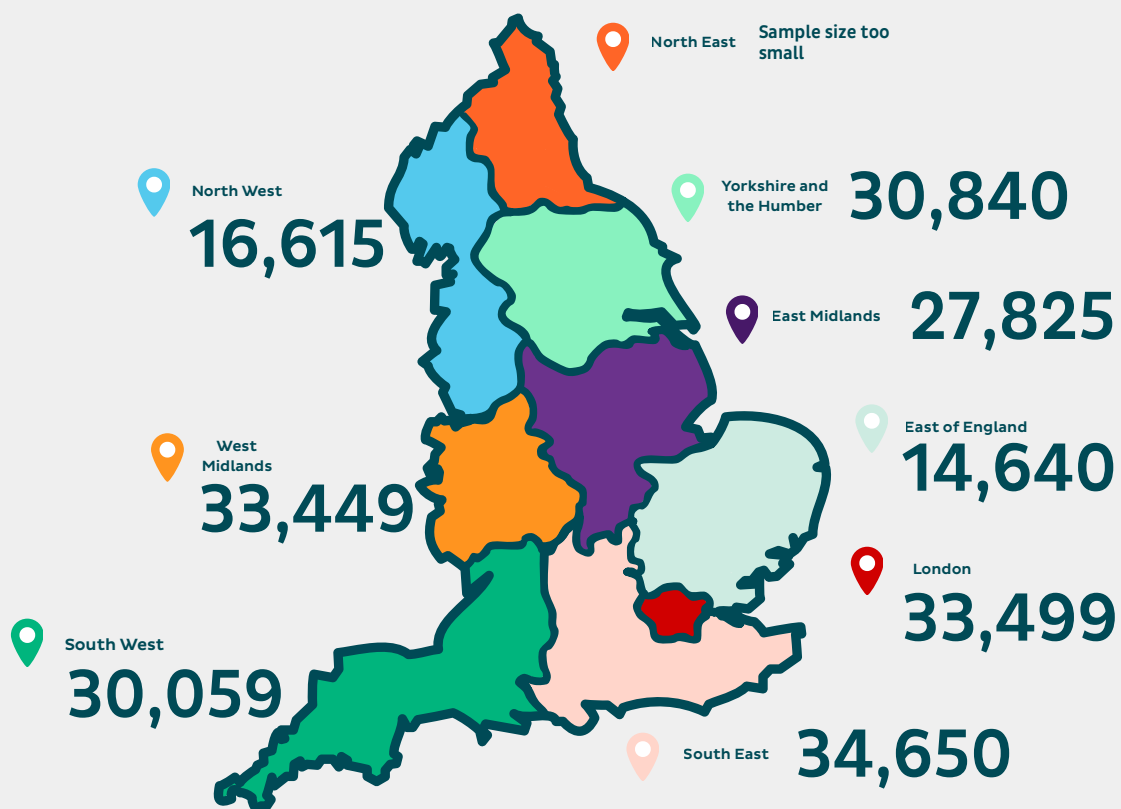
We are committed to representing the voice of staff across all of England. To help us boost our regional data, please get in touch: contact@edurio.com

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

Executive Summary

The overall experience is improving but clear issues remain

Pupil experience has improved across the majority of topics measured. Overall wellbeing has grown year upon year: 40% of secondary school pupils report feeling very or quite well, up from just 34% two years ago. However, just a quarter report finding what they learn in school interesting, in line with last year, and the proportion of pupils who see people like them in the curriculum has dropped to just 16%.

The experience changes vastly with age, and somewhat by gender

Happiness at school: 79% of primary pupils report being happy at school, but this diminishes steadily between Year 3 and Year 6. Among secondary pupils, happiness has risen for the first time since 2021, with 44% now reporting that they are happy to be studying at their school. There are gender differences, with boys typically reporting higher happiness and wellbeing than girls.

Engagement with learning: There is a clear difference between phases. While two-thirds of primary pupils find their lessons interesting, only one in four secondary pupils says the same. Older students in post-16 education are significantly more positive: three in five pupils in Years 12 and 13 often find their lessons interesting.

Safety: Feelings of safety remain high in primary schools and have improved slightly in secondary settings, though again, boys report slightly stronger feelings of safety than girls.

Clarity of instruction: Most primary pupils (87%) feel that their teachers explain what they need to work on clearly, but fewer than half of secondary pupils agree - a continuing decline over the past three years. Meanwhile, inclusion remains a pressing concern. Only 16% of secondary pupils say they often learn about people like themselves in class, a drop from 20% the previous year.

In their own words, pupils show gratitude for the support and relationships they build in school

Pupils consistently highlight supportive and kind teachers, enjoyable lessons, and extracurricular clubs as the best aspects of school life. At the same time, they call for less rigid rules, better food, more practical and collaborative approaches to learning, greater sensitivity to individual needs, and more opportunities for enrichment through trips and real-world experiences.

The National Picture

360° View of School Experience

Edurio has tracked the sentiment of the sector 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 are able to thrive, and by thinking at a whole-school level, we are able to better understand the dependencies between one group and another. 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 give a complete overview of the situation in the sector as we embark on the next academic year. This introductory section of the Pupil Experience Report 2025 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

Using the annual CEO survey as a starting point and to contextualise our focus on pupils, we start our analysis with a review of the overall priorities for CEOs looking to the new academic year. Now in its third year, the survey shows some significant re-prioritisation for the sector. Improving the quality of education is the second highest priority for the second year, after being overtaken by financial security following sector-wide challenges in previous years. Pupil outcomes are a top priority, overtaking trust growth and staff-related matters for the first time this year. Digital strategy has had a material increase in prioritisation in each of the last two years: While 21% saw this as a priority in 2023, this year, 35% of CEOs expect this to be one of their top five priorities.

What are the top five strategic priorities for your trust in the next academic year?

Legend:
- Financial sustainability
- Improving quality of education
- Inclusion
- Pupil outcomes
- Growth
- Digital strategy
- Workforce development and people strategy
- Culture and values
- Operating model and effectiveness
- Estates strategy
- Development of the governance structure
- Environmental sustainability
- Developing civic partnerships
- Succession planning for the executive leader
- Improving communication
- Succession planning for trustees
- Pastoral care
- Other (please specify)

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 that teachers and school leaders are beginning to feel more positive about their work, with a decrease in the proportion considering leaving compared to previous years. Particularly relevant here are the improvements in pupil behaviour and respect, reduced risk of resignation, and staff regaining excitement for their roles. This stability is vital, as it ensures pupils benefit from consistent teaching and leadership. However, some staff – particularly administrative teams and teaching assistants – still feel undervalued, reminding us that supporting all school roles is essential to sustain positive pupil outcomes.

Key findings:

- Overall, staff experience has improved slightly: of 13 topics measured, six improved and only three worsened.
- Staff report better pupil behaviour (+4%) and higher levels of respect from pupils (+3%), with 71% now saying they feel respected. There is cause to celebrate the role pupils themselves play as a driver of positive staff sentiment.
- Staff retention has shown the first signs of recovery since the pandemic: the percentage considering resignation dropped from 43% to 41%. Improvements are particularly strong among teachers and middle leaders, traditionally the most at risk. Top reasons for staff considering resigning relate more to their workload and organisational culture, than to purely pupil-related matters.

You can access the full report at: https://home.edurio.com/resources/insights/school-staff-experience-report/

The Parent Experience

The parent experience paints a mixed but generally positive picture in 2024/25. The greatest decrease in positive responses is just 1%, compared with improvements of 3%. Engagement and communication have improved, but ease of accessing school events and understanding of the trust's role have shown no improvement.

Key findings:

- Engagement and communication with the school have improved over the last three years, though the relationship with the trust is unclear: Satisfaction with schools' efforts to engage parents rose to 61%, while 71% of parents feel respected by their child's school. Meanwhile, confidence in the role of the trust continues to decline: only 43% of parents find the trust's role clear.
- Primary parents tend to be more positive, though the gap is narrowing: Secondary parents are less positive than primary parents in most of the core areas of the parent experience. However, parents of children at secondary school grew more positive last year, and at a steeper rate than their primary school counterparts, leading to a smaller gap than in previous years. Ease of attending school events shows no difference between primary and secondary school parents.
- In their own words, progress reporting and meetings with the school are high on parents' priorities: When asked what they most value about the relationship with the school, and where they think the school could go further, progress reporting and events like parents' evenings stood out in response to both questions. The responses showed that parents are grateful for these but also keen to see them improve, suggesting these are key areas of focus for parents in English schools.

You can access the full report at: https://home.edurio.com/resources/insights/parent-experience-report/

Primary Experience in 2024/25

The Edurio Pupil Experience Survey is organised into topics (modules), designed to highlight areas of strength or opportunities for improvement. We also split the survey by phase. This year, in the primary-aged survey, results are slightly more positive than last year, with two out of four modules more positive and two showing both positive and negative changes.

Topic	Change since 2023/24
General	Improvements in all questions
Behavior and Safeguarding	Improvements in most questions
Health and Emotional Wellbeing	Mixed results
Learning and Curriculum	Mixed results

The most significant differences will be explored further in this report, along with key topics we have identified as vital indicators of pupil thriving:

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

Secondary Experience in 2024/25

For the more in-depth survey designed for older pupils, this year, results are more positive in seven out of 12 areas and more negative in three, indicating an improvement in the overall experience for secondary pupils. It is noteworthy that the areas which have worsened relate to assessment, the learning process and the curriculum.

Topic	Change since 2023/24
Use of English*	Improvements in all questions
Safeguarding	Improvements in all questions
Health and Emotional Wellbeing	Improvements in most questions
General	Improvements in most questions
Extracurricular Activities	Improvements in most questions
Engagement with Learning	Improvements in most questions
Behaviour	Improvements in most questions
Workload	Mixed Results
Relationships	Mixed Results
Learning Process	Worsening results
Curriculum	Worsening results
Assessment	Worsening results

*Questions about use of English are only for pupils for whom English is not their first language. This is the section in the survey with the smallest number of responses.

Biggest Changes – Primary

Results across the survey are, on balance, more positive this year than they were last year for primary pupils. Whilst there have not been any changes higher than 2% compared to last year, it is noteworthy and reassuring to observe these positive trends. For all of the data on this page, we show the **change in the proportion of pupils responding positively** in 2024/25 compared to the previous academic year.

Positive Changes

The most positive changes for primary pupils came in two modules: Health and Emotional Wellbeing and Behaviour and Safeguarding. Primary pupils were more likely to report feeling worried rarely or never – 48% compared to 46% in 2023/2024. Primary pupils were also more likely to report feeling lonely rarely or never, with 61% reporting this compared to 59% in 2023/2024.

+ 2%
How often do you feel worried?
(Rarely/Never)
46% in 2023/24 | 48% in 2024/25

+ 2%
How often do you feel lonely?
(Rarely/Never)
59% in 2023/24 | 61% in 2024/25

+ 1%
How often do you follow the rules in your school?

85% in 2023/24 | 86% in 2024/25

+ 1%
How often does your teacher help you do better at school?

73% in 2023/24 | 74% in 2024/25

Negative Changes

Only two questions saw a decrease in the percentage of positive responses, and the decrease was marginal in both cases: 1 percentage point from last year to this. The proportion of positive responses to questions "How often do you read books outside of lessons?" and "How well did you sleep last night?" has decreased slightly compared to last year.

– 1%
How often do you read books outside of lessons?

48% in 2023/24 | 47% in 2024/25

–1%
How well did you sleep last night?

63% in 2023/24 | 62% in 2024/25

Biggest Changes – Secondary

Results across the survey for secondary pupils are, on balance, more positive this year than they were last. Although there have been no changes higher than four percentage points compared to last year, this is to be expected with a dataset of this size, and it is reassuring to observe these positive trends. For all of the data on this page, we show the **change in the proportion of pupils responding positively** in 2024/25 compared to the previous academic year.

Positive Changes

Across the survey, the topics with the most positive changes were in safeguarding and the use of English. However, the **question** with the largest increase in the percentage of positive responses was "Overall, how well do you feel lately physically and mentally?" with 40% reporting that they feel "very well" or "quite well" in 2024/25.

+ 3%
Overall, how well do you feel lately physically and mentally?

37% in 2023/24 | 40% in 2024/25

+ 2%
How comfortable do you feel speaking English in class?

74% in 2023/24 | 76% in 2024/25

+ 2%
When something is difficult, how often do you keep trying to solve it?

53% in 2023/24 | 55% in 2024/25

+ 2%
Do you know someone else in the school who has been bullied in the past three months? (No)

59% in 2023/24 | 61% in 2024/25

Negative Changes

Sentiment towards factors relating to curriculum and the learning process has deteriorated since last year. The question with the biggest change compared to the previous year was "How often do you learn about people like you in class (e.g. with a similar background or identity to yours)?" with only 16% of secondary pupils reporting in 2024/25 that they learn about people like them very often or quite often, down four percentage points from 2023/24.

− 4%
How often do you learn about people like you in class (e.g. with a similar background or identity to yours)?
20% in 2023/24 | 16% in 2024/25

− 2%
How often do your teachers ask you to read for your studies (e.g. stories, books, other texts)?
31% in 2023/24 | 29% in 2024/25

− 2%
How often do you get a chance to work on what you need to improve?
37% in 2023/24 | 35% in 2024/25

− 2%
How clearly do your teachers explain the work they set?
50% in 2023/24 | 48% in 2024/25

Thriving Pupils

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, the percentage of pupils reporting that they felt very or quite happy at their school has remained relatively steady for the past three years. In 2024/2025, 79% of primary pupils felt very or quite happy to be studying at their school, up from 78% in 2023/2024. This is still slightly lower than in 2022/2023 (80%).

How happy are you at this school?

Primary (Over time)

80%   78%   79%

| 2022/2023 | 2023/2024 | 2024/2025 |
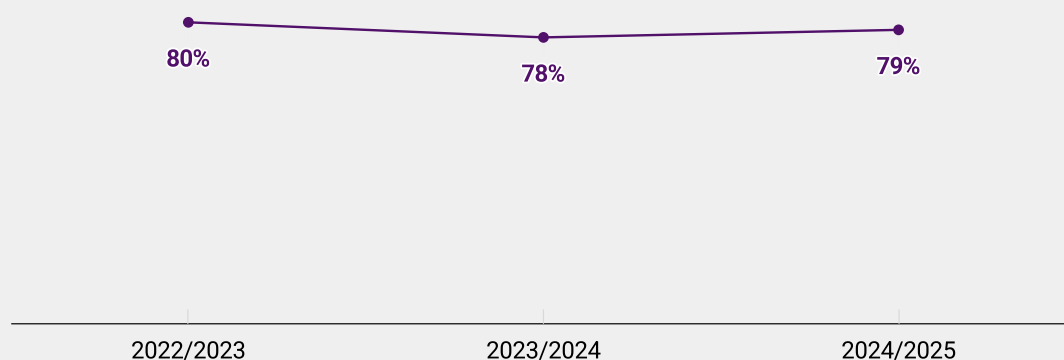
By School Year

The percentage of pupils who report feeling very or quite happy at school decreases the older they get. 81% of Year 3 pupils report feeling very or quite happy, but only 71% of Year 6 pupils report feeling very or quite happy at their school.

How happy are you at this school?

Primary (By Year Group)

81%   76%   73%   71%

| Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |

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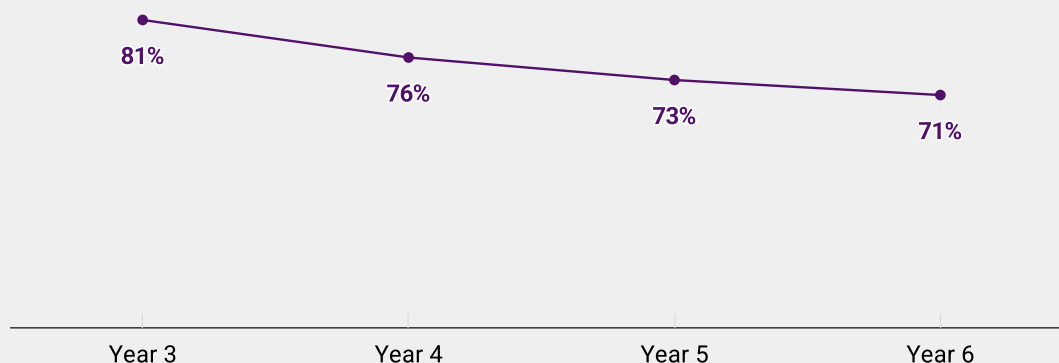
Happiness at School: Secondary

Trends Over Time

In 2024/2025, 44% of secondary pupils felt very or quite happy to be studying at their school, an improvement from 2023/2024, but still lower than previous years.

How happy are you to be studying at this school?
Secondary (Over time)

46%   42%   44%

2022/2023   2023/2024   2024/2025
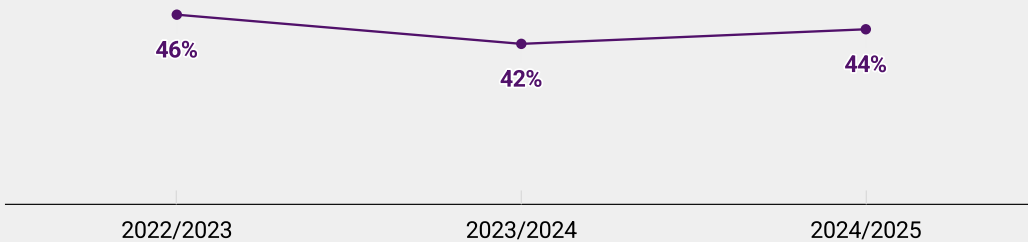
By School Year

Year 7 pupils enter secondary school reasonably happy, with 57% reporting they feel very or quite happy. This reduces materially in Year 8 and remains similarly low to the end of Key Stage 4. Sixth-form pupils – a smaller group than those in younger years – are significantly more positive about studying at their school than those in Years 8 to 11.

How happy are you to be studying at this school?
Secondary (Over time)

57%   42%   40%   41%   42%   71%   59%

Year 7   Year 8   Year 9   Year 10   Year 11   Year 12   Year 13
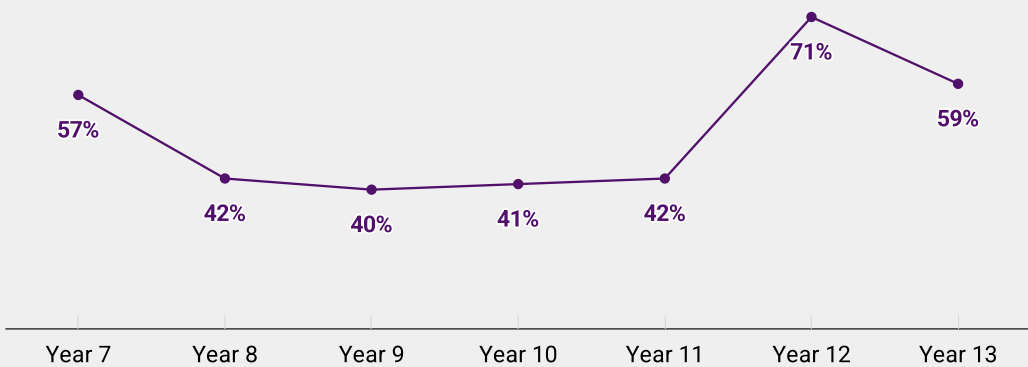
By Gender

Boys are more likely to report being happy studying at their schools (48%) compared to girls (44%), they are both much happier at their school than pupils with another gender identity (25%).

44%	48%	25%
Female (girl)	Male (boy)	Another gender identity

Wellbeing: Primary

Trends Over Time

Around 73% of primary pupils report feeling very or quite happy on the day they took the survey. This has remained steady over the last three years, with only a 1% decrease since 2022/2023.

How happy do you feel today?

Primary (Over time)

74%	73%	73%
2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
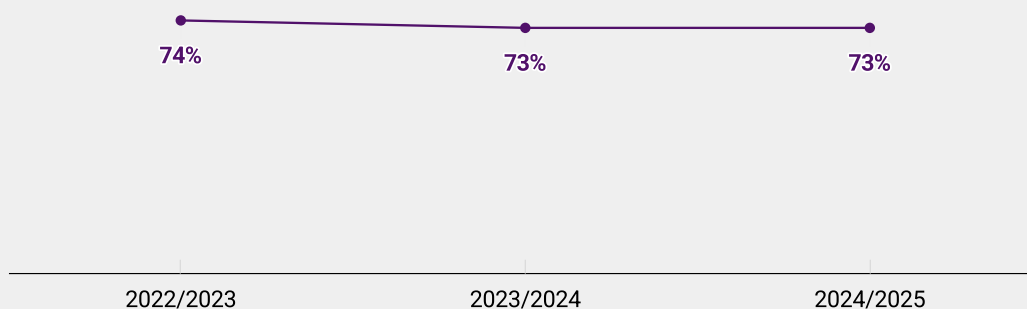
By School Year

There is a decline in the percentage of pupils who report feeling very or quite happy, the further through primary school they are. Year 3 pupils are most likely to report feeling happy (76%), and Years 5 and 6 are least likely to report feeling happy (65%).

How happy do you feel today?

Primary (By Year Group)

76%	74%	65%	65%
Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
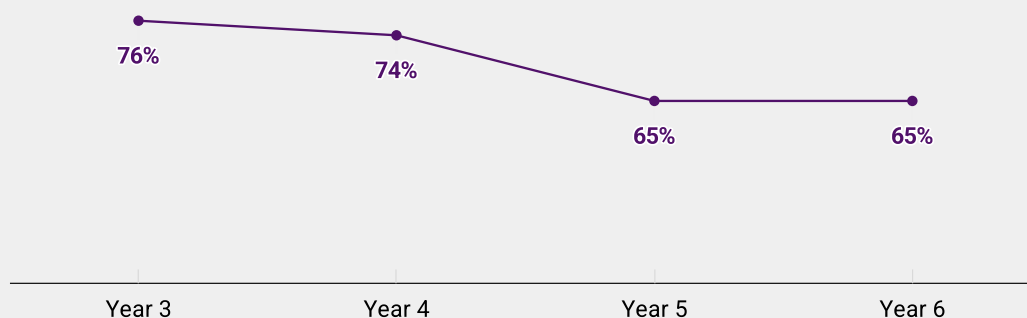
Wellbeing: Secondary

Trends Over Time

For the second consecutive year, the proportion of secondary pupils reporting feeling very or quite well has increased, from 34% of pupils in 2022/2023 to 37% in 2023/2024 and now 40% in 2024/2025.

Overall how well do you feel lately physically and mentally?

Secondary (Over time)

34%   37%   40%

2022/2023   2023/2024   2024/2025
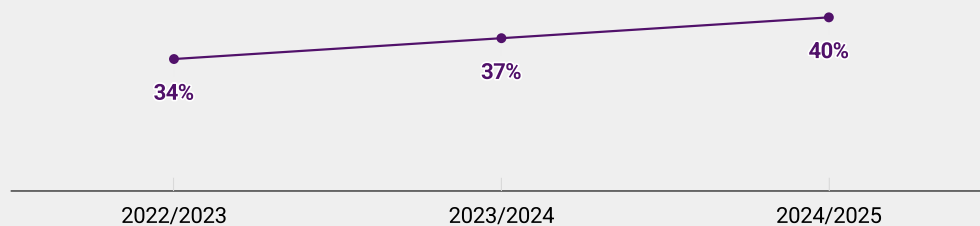
By School Year

45% of pupils in Year 7 feel very or quite well physically or mentally. This decreases as pupils get older, with only 33% of Year 11 pupils reporting feeling very well or quite well physically or mentally. There is a slight increase to 38% for Year 12 pupils, but Year 13 pupils are the least positive across all year groups, with only 31% of them reporting feeling very or quite well.

Overall how well do you feel lately physically and mentally?

Secondary (By Year Group)

45%   39%   37%   36%   33%   38%   31%

Year 7   Year 8   Year 9   Year 10   Year 11   Year 12   Year 13
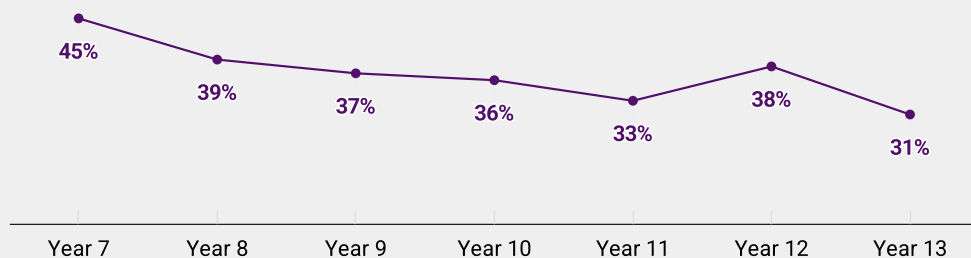
By Gender

Male pupils in secondary schools were considerably more likely to report feeling very or quite well (50%) compared to 30% of female pupils and pupils with another gender identity (22%).

30%	**50%**	**22%**
Female (girl)	Male (boy)	Another gender identity

Engagement in Learning: Primary

Trends Over Time

The percentage of primary pupils who report finding their lessons very interesting or quite interesting has remained the same this year at 67% of pupils, after a decline of four percentage points the previous year.

How interesting do you find your lessons?
Primary (Over time)
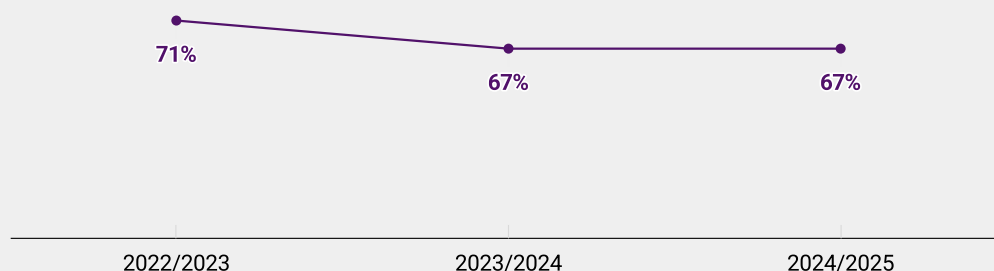
71%   67%   67%

2022/2023   2023/2024   2024/2025

By School Year

The percentage of pupils who report finding their lessons very interesting or quite interesting decreases sharply as pupils progress through primary school with 72% of Year 3 pupils reporting this compared to only 53% of Year 6 pupils.

How interesting do you find your lessons?
Primary (By Year Group)

72%   66%   56%   53%

Year 3   Year 4   Year 5   Year 6
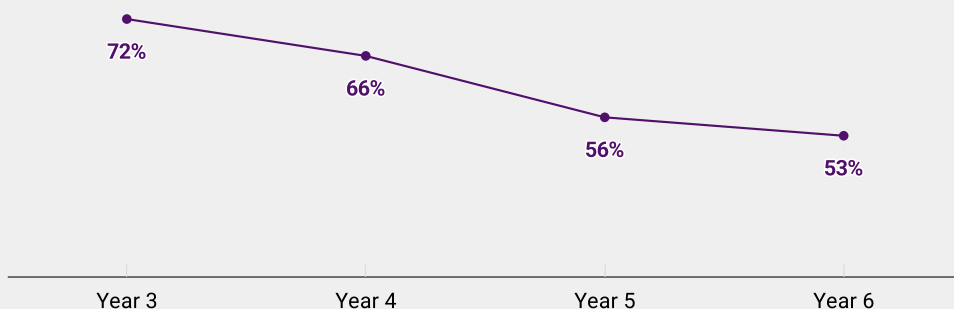
Engagement in Learning: Secondary

Trends over time

Just a quarter of pupils (26%) report that they often find what they learn at school interesting. This is in line with last year (up marginally from 25%). A slightly larger proportion (28%) in 2022/23 reported that they find what they learn at school interesting.

How often do you find what you learn at school interesting?
Secondary (Over time) (Percentage of pupils who responded very often and quite often)

2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
28%	25%	26%
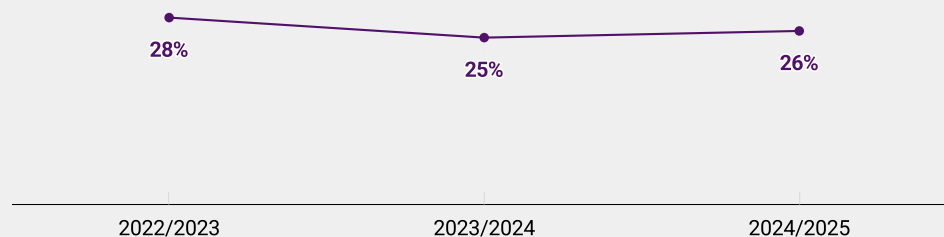
By School Year

Year 7 pupils are more likely to report finding what they learn at school interesting compared to Years 8-11. Furthermore, Years 12 and 13 were far more likely to report finding what they learn at school interesting, increasing from one in five in Year 11, to almost two thirds in Year 12. We see Year 12 and 13 pupils responded more positively to most questions in the survey compared to other secondary pupils, though this is a bigger margin than most.

How often do you find what you learn at school interesting?
Secondary (By Year Group)

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
32%	21%	20%	22%	21%	63%	58%
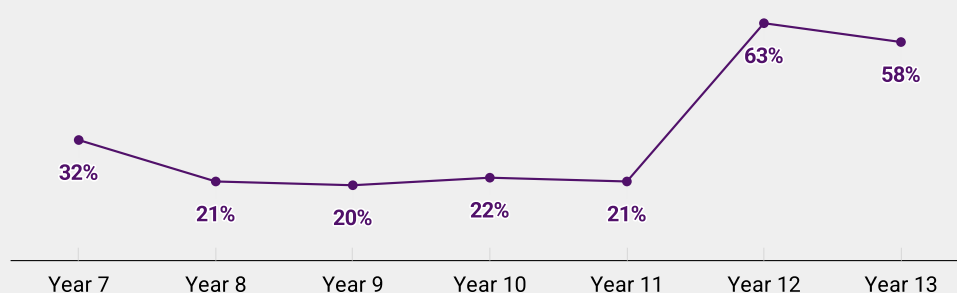
By Gender

Male pupils from secondary schools we more likely to report finding their lessons interesting very or quite often (27%) compared to female pupils (24%) and those with another gender identity (18%).

| **24%**	**27%**	**18%**
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 remained steady over the last three years. Over two thirds of primary pupils (69%) report feeling very or quite safe in their school.

Do you feel safe in school?
Primary (Over time)

68%   69%   69%

2022/2023   2023/2024   2024/2025
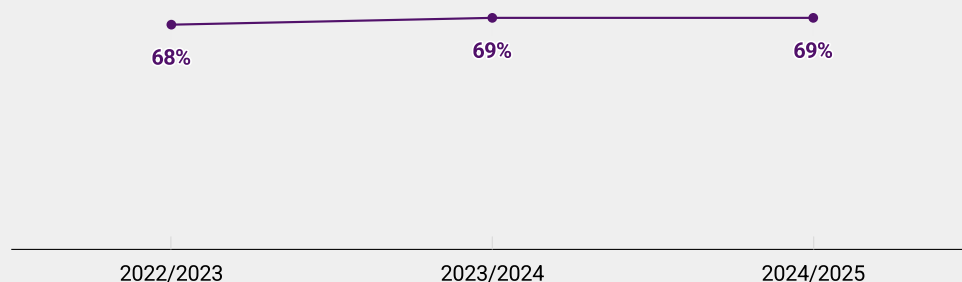
By School Year

By school year, feelings of safety reduce somewhat in Years 4 and 5: 64% of pupils in these year groups feel safe in school, compared to 69% in Year 3 and Year 6.

Do you feel safe in school?
Primary (By Year Group)

69%   64%   64%   69%

Year 3   Year 4   Year 5   Year 6
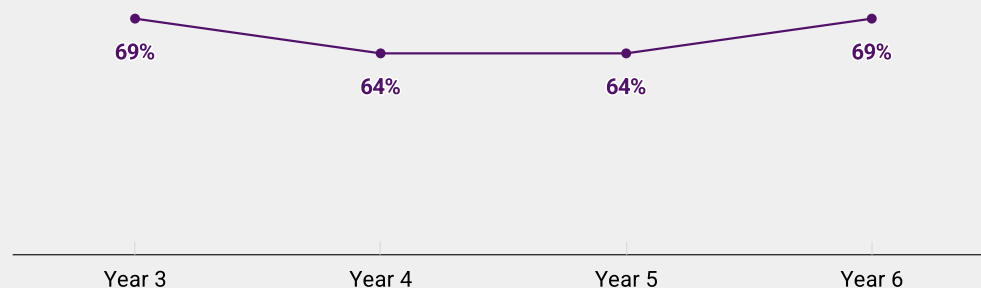
Safety: Secondary

Trends Over Time

63% of secondary school pupils reported that they feel very or quite safe in class. Whilst direct comparisons with the primary survey cannot be made, it is noteworthy that the proportion responding positively to this question is similar in both phases.

How safe do you feel during class?
Secondary (Over time)

	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
	63%	61%	63%
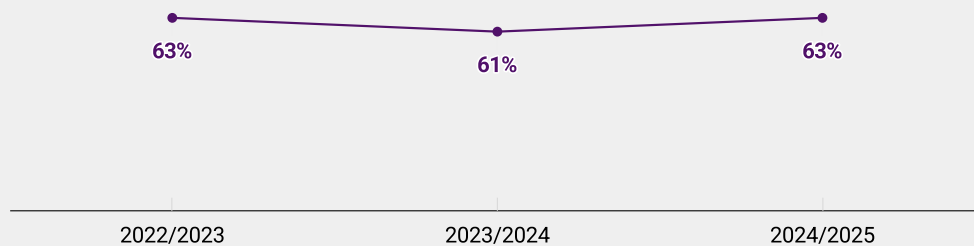
By School Year

There is a notable dip in feelings of safety between Year 7 (67%) and Years 8 and 9 (58%). From Year 9, there is an incremental increase in the percentage of secondary pupils who report feeling very or quite safe during class. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 in secondary schools are most likely to report feeling very or quite safe.

How safe do you feel during class?
Secondary (By Year Group)

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
67%	58%	58%	62%	65%	87%	88%
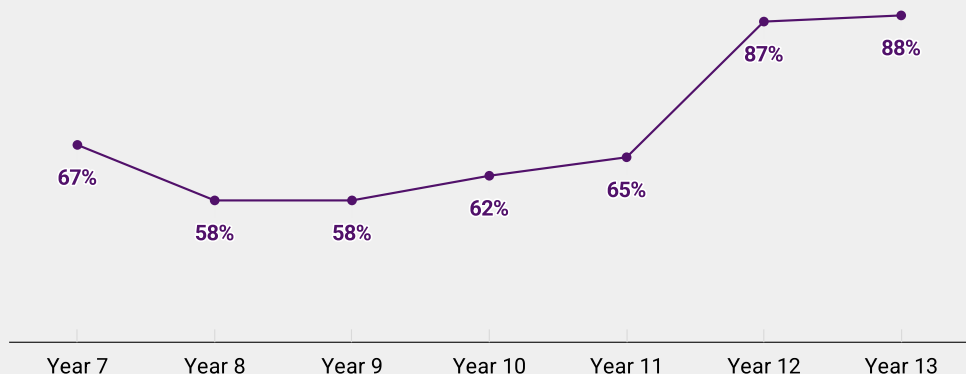
By Gender

Male pupils are more likely to report feeling very or quite safe (67%) than female pupils (60%); both are much more likely than pupils with another gender identity (37%).

60%	**67%**	**37%**
Female (girl)	Male (boy)	Another gender identity

Teaching: Primary

Trends Over Time

The percentage of primary pupils who report that their teachers explain what they need to work on in class well has remained stable over the last three years, increasing by just one percentage point. 87% of pupils report that their teachers explain what they need to work on in class very well or quite well.

How well do your teachers explain what you need to work on in class?
Primary (Over time)
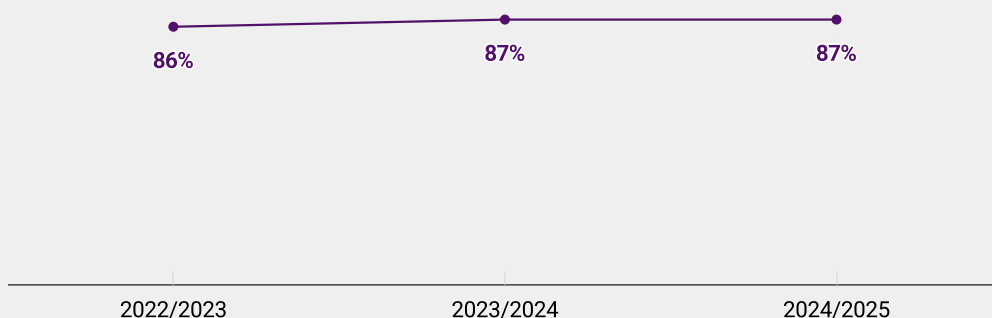
86%   87%   87%

2022/2023   2023/2024   2024/2025

By School Year

The percentage of primary pupils who report that their teachers explain what they need to work on in class very well or quite well is relatively consistent throughout Key Stage 2. There is a marginal decrease as pupils enter Year 5, and a slight increase for pupils in Year 6.

How well do your teachers explain what you need to work on in class?
Primary (Over time)

88%   87%   85%   86%

Year 3   Year 4   Year 5   Year 6
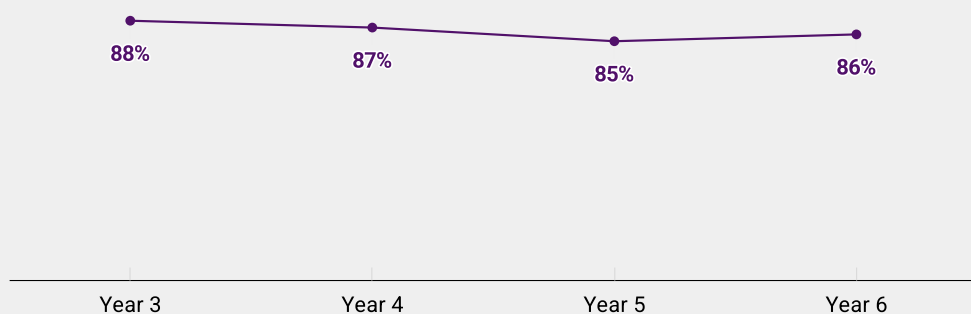
Teaching: Secondary

Trends Over Time

Over the last three years, the proportion of secondary pupils who report that their teachers explain the work they set, very or quite clearly, has decreased by four percentage points. In 2024/2025, less than half of secondary pupils (48%) reported this.

How clearly do your teachers explain the work they set?
Secondary (Over time)

52%   50%   48%

2022/2023   2023/2024   2024/2025
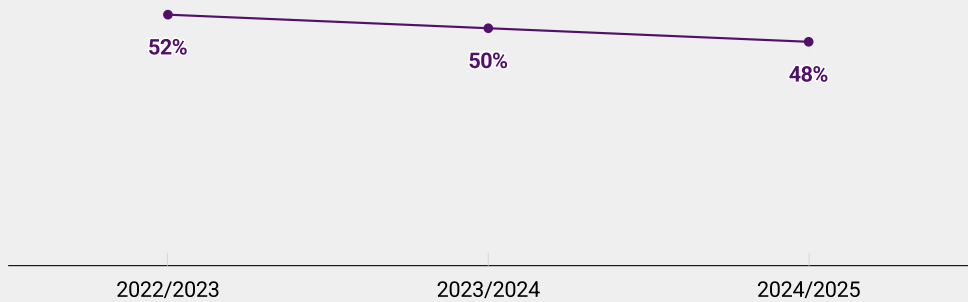
By School Year

60% of Year 7 pupils believe their teachers explain the work clearly. This drops materially, to 45% in Year 8, and remains around this level until pupils enter Year 12. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 are most positive about this: over two thirds of this group report that teachers explain the work they set clearly.

How clearly do your teachers explain the work they set?
Secondary (By Year Group)

60%   45%   42%   44%   47%   67%   71%

Year 7   Year 8   Year 9   Year 10   Year 11   Year 12   Year 13
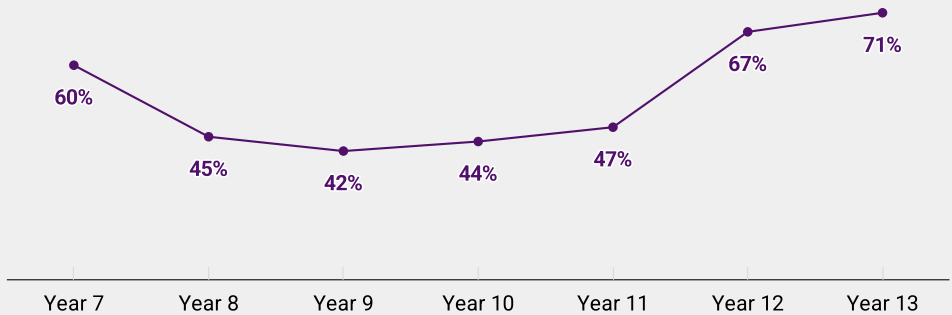
By Gender

There is a disparity in experience between male secondary pupils (53%), female secondary pupils (46%) and pupils identifying as another gender (32%). While these differences are noteworthy, they are not as big as differences for other questions, when comparing girls and boys with pupils with another gender identity.

46%
Female (girl)

53%
Male (boy)

32%
Another gender identity

Inclusion: Secondary

Trends Over Time

For the last two years, we have asked secondary pupils how often they learn about people like themselves in class. There has been a decline in this area since last year, with only 16% of pupils reporting so in 2024/2025, compared to 20% in 2023/2024. This is the steepest decline across all questions in the survey.

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

20%

16%

2023/2024   2024/2025
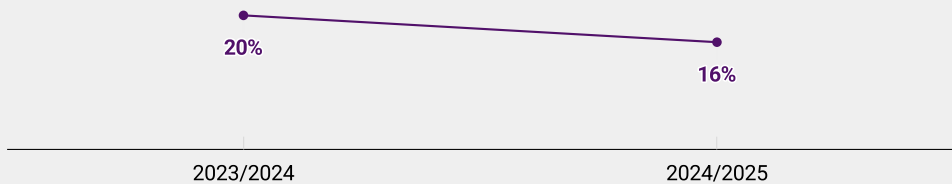
By Year Group

There is a slight decrease between pupils in Years 7 and 8, no change between Years 8 and 11, and then a significant increase when it comes to pupils in Years 12 and 13.

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

17%   14%   14%   14%   14%   21%   26%

Year 7   Year 8   Year 9   Year 10   Year 11   Year 12   Year 13
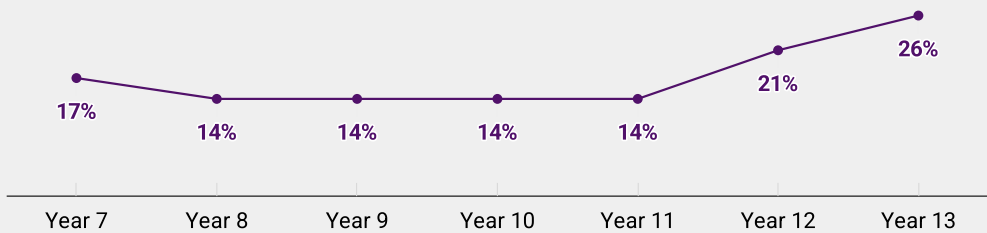
By Gender

The percentage of how often secondary pupils learn about people like them in class is identical for male and female pupils (16%), while the experience is slightly less positive for pupils with another gender identity (12%).

16%
Female (girl)

16%
Male (boy)

12%
Another gender identity

What Pupils Think About Their Schools

Analysis of open answer question responses

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.

Theme	Examples
High Levels of Support	"The staff in there are very helpful and really make me feel like I can talk to someone." "Great community of staff and students, a good working environment and plenty of support where needed."
Enjoyment of Learning	"The science practicals and fun activities." "All the opportunities and the large range of fun lessons."
Teacher Support	"Maybe the fun/good teachers that try to make the lessons more fun." "Teachers make lessons fun by quizzing us with a game."
Kindness and Positive Environment	"The best thing about my school is how nice people are." "I think the best thing about our school is that everyone is nice and cares."
Clubs and Extracurricular Opportunities	"The clubs after school and the really lovely, kind and helpful teachers." "Doing fun things in class and doing after-school clubs."

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.

Theme	Examples
Less Strict Rules	"Uniform rules to be less strict." "The School rules are too strict."
Food	"Better school food." "Healthier food choices." "Better food and homework system maybe."
More Practical and Social Learning	"More hands-on, practical learning." "More time to work in groups or pairs to share ideas and collaborate/talk more about real life situations in subjects." "More debates and turn and talk."
Teachers	"Teachers need to respect students more." "Teachers should be more understanding of send needs." "Some teachers could be more fair and clear on instructions."
More Trips and Fun Experiences	"To be able to participate in more interactive opportunities during the school year, e.g. school trips or workshops." "I would like to get more trips because they are fun and educational at the same time."

It is noteworth that teacher support, along with practical and social learning and extracurricular activities, appear as responses to both questions: pupils value these areas but also see room for improvement. This could highlight that no single approach to these common issues currently meets the needs of all pupils in schools in the UK. It could also highlight that some schools are doing this well, and some schools aren't doing it so well. The best way to determine how to support pupils and enhance their happiness and engagement is to ask them. Regularly seeking feedback from your pupils can help uncover some of these pain points or things that are working well in your school.

Conclusion

Reflections by Roisin McEvoy

edurio

Conclusion

> **Roisin McEvoy**
> Head of training and national programmes, Anna Freud

Firstly, it is fantastic to see so many children and young people being given this platform to share their experiences of school.

At Anna Freud, a mental health charity for children and young people, we put article 12 of the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child at the centre of everything we do. This enshrines a child's right to have their view heard and be given due weight.

To help us uphold this right, we use the Lundy model, a framework for meaningful participation for children and young people. This approach outlines that young people should not only be given space to share their views, but also that their opinions should be listened to and acted upon, where appropriate.

We really welcome schools prioritising student voice through regular surveys like this. Along with giving students a platform to share their experiences, it's vital school leaders ensure these voices meaningfully influence decisions. We know this all takes time and resource. The wellbeing of students is dependent on the wellbeing of staff, who we can't keep asking to do more without being given appropriate space, support and training.

Transitions

It's encouraging to see that aspects of pupil experience have improved compared to previous years, however, numbers surrounding happiness are still low.

For example, it's striking to see a significant reduction in how happy children report feeling during the early years of secondary school, with those saying they feel happy or quite happy dropping from 57% in year 7 to 42% in year 8. This matches what we're hearing from school leaders across the country who say many of their students are struggling during this time.

The transition from primary to secondary school can be a particularly challenging milestone, with major adjustments, new routines and social pressures. Although there is currently no recognised framework to help schools support students during this time, evidence suggests approaches that emphasise belonging, relationships and agency can support wellbeing.

We also know that some young people are more likely to struggle with this step, including marginalised groups or those with additional needs. It is notable that, in these findings, girls and those with another gender identity report lower levels of happiness than boys during this time.

Safety

The low levels of children reporting feeling safe in class, with only 69% in primary schools reporting feeling very or quite safe at their school and just 63% in secondary settings, are also concerning.

Reasons for feeling unsafe are likely to be context and individual specific but, based on what young people tell us, it could be due to factors such as bullying, unmet learning needs or fears around criticism.

Our Strategies for Safety and Wellbeing programme has been shown to be a helpful tool for staff having conversations with students about mental health. We strongly link feeling safe with feeling well and, to help build psychological safety in classrooms, we emphasise the need to create safe spaces to talk about potentially challenging or embarrassing topics.

Representation
Only 16% secondary students report that they learn about people like them "very often" or "quite often". This is another area where local context will be key to understanding student experience.

Whether these low figures are related to ethnicity, gender, class, or other factors, we do know that not feeling represented in the curriculum can be disempowering and discouraging, negatively affecting student wellbeing and learning as a result.

To improve representation, staff can work with local communities and organisations to bring in diverse voices and perspectives that can enrich lessons, along with other local schools who have taken steps to diversify and decolonise their curriculum. Asking students what they want to see and providing opportunities for them to co-create the curriculum is key too.

Final thoughts
In the qualitative feedback, the support of teachers and positivity of the school environment were mentioned by many when asked about what the liked about their schools. This should be read as a celebration of all that school staff do to make sure pupils feel known, cared about and able to enjoy their learning. School and trust staff are experiencing increasingly complex challenges and demands, so it is encouraging that fun and kindness are central to so many students' experiences.

Indeed, I was struck by how many young people reported valuing aspects of school related to inclusion, from relationships and support, to engaging activities. However, only 20% of school CEOs surveyed say that inclusion is a priority for them this year, dropping from 29% in 2024.

One student said their school has a "great community of staff and students, a good working environment and plenty of support where needed." This wonderful yet simple description is exactly what schools should be aiming for. The more we see schools adopting this ethos through a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing, the more likely we are to see pupils reporting increased levels of happiness. We look forward to seeing next year's results.

About Anna Freud

Anna Freud is a mental health charity and they've been supporting children and young people for over 70 years. They listen to and learn from their diverse voices, and integrate this with learnings from our science and practice to develop and deliver mental health care.

This holistic approach has world-changing potential – their training, schools' support, networks, partnerships, and resources equip those who impact children and young people's lives with the knowledge and skills to support their mental health.

They believe mental wellbeing is the foundation from which children and young people achieve their potential. By continually expanding their understanding and translating it into practice – grounded in science and guided by children and young people – they can ensure they get the right support at the right time.
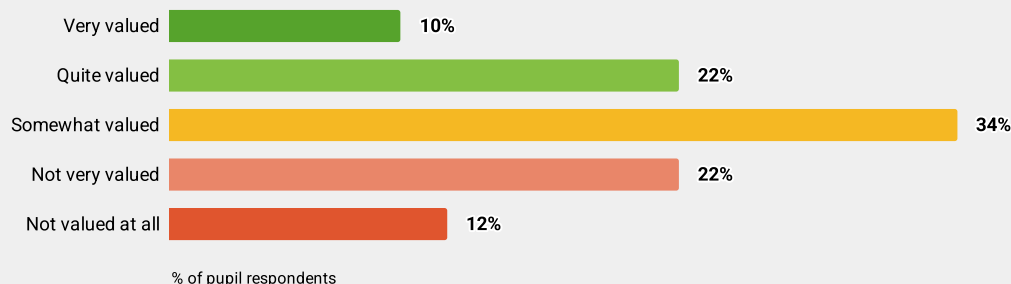
www.annafreud.org

Listening Organisations

Listening Organisations

Strengthening Schools Through Stakeholder Voice

In today's education landscape, leadership is less about having all the solutions and more about creating the conditions for others to thrive. The strongest leadership is relational—built on trust, openness, and the willingness to hear and act on what others say. Yet, too often, listening remains passive - occasional surveys, symbolic forums, or surface-level responses. Edurio data shows us that we have a way to go, even among schools that are running surveys to capture the experiences of their pupils.

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

Response	%
Very valued	10%
Quite valued	22%
Somewhat valued	34%
Not very valued	22%
Not valued at all	12%

% of pupil respondents

To truly flourish, organisations must move beyond transactional feedback and embrace embedded listening. Embedded listening transforms the way schools operate, a cultural shift where listening becomes the work itself. Leaders, staff, pupils, and parents co-create solutions, share responsibility, and build trust through continuous dialogue, resulting in stronger relationships, better decisions, and long-term resilience.

Why Embedded Listening Matters

Research highlights the benefits:
- For staff: Feeling heard increases motivation, retention, and engagement.
- For pupils: Valued voices nurture empathy, resilience, and confidence.
- For parents: Transparent communication fosters belonging and stronger connections with schools.

At the organisational level, embedded listening drives adaptability, reputation, and improved educational outcomes.

The Framework for Listening Success

The Edurio Listening Framework guides schools through four essential practices:
1. Voice – Creating diverse, regular opportunities for feedback, ensuring every voice is recognised.
2. Understanding – Looking beyond surface data to uncover meaningful patterns and emotions.
3. Action-taking – Turning feedback into visible, co-created change that builds trust.
4. Communication – Closing the loop with transparent updates on what has, and has not, changed.

But listening is not just about practices, it's about culture. When listening becomes the work itself, how you listen can supercharge the impact. Compassion, openness, responsiveness, empathy, psychological safety, and a commitment to equity and inclusion define how schools listen. These daily behaviours determine whether listening feels tokenistic or transformational.

Moving Beyond Basic Listening

Many organisations stop at basic listening: occasional surveys, patchy actions, and inconsistent communication. The framework shows the journey to embedded listening, where dialogue is continuous, leaders model openness, and stakeholders co-own solutions. Here, listening becomes a defining feature of the organisation's identity.

A Call to Lead with Listening

In an era of polarisation, disruption, and rapid change, schools and trusts can act as anchors of fairness, cooperation, and resilience. By embedding listening, leaders not only strengthen outcomes but also model the values our communities need most.

Because when every voice matters, the whole school community thrives.

Scan the QR code to discover how to use stakeholder feedback strategically and become a truly listening organisation.

Appendix

Primary

By Year

Question	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
How happy are you at this school?	11,050	19,243	45,627
How happy do you feel today?	10,486	17,805	35,669
How interesting do you find your lessons?	11,232	18,771	42,392
Do you feel safe in school?	10,572	18,605	44325
How well do our teachers explain what you need to work on in class?	11,267	18,758	42,394
How often do you feel worried?		18,392	40,666
How often do you feel lonely?		17,948	38,639
How often do you follow the rules in your school?		18,117	38,065
How often does your teacher help you do better at school?		18,187	41,206
How often do you read books outside of lessons?		18,800	41,650
How well did you sleep last night?		17,785	40,216

Primary

By Year Group

Question	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
How happy are you at this school?	4,977	4,930	4,962	5,081
How happy do you feel today?	3,200	3,144	3,185	3,176
How interesting do you find your lessons?	4,326	4,358	4,239	4,360
Do you feel safe in school?	4,902	4,780	4,854	4,921
How well do our teachers explain what you need to work on in class?	4,306	4,367	4,261	4,369

Secondary

By Year

Question	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
How happy are you to be studying at this school?	55,050	81,465	125,194
Overall how well do you feel lately physically and mentally?	45,838	72,537	90,062
How often do you find what you learn at school interesting?	42,187	69,895	110,340
How safe do you feel during class?	46,493	72,425	102,913
How clearly do your teachers explain the work they set?	41,899	78,532	116,405
How often do you learn about people like you in class? (e.g. with a similar background or identity to yours)?	33,811	66,241	89,716
How comfortable do you feel speaking English in class?		7,074	10,408
When something is difficult, how often do you keep trying to solve it?		68,725	111,058
Do you know someone else in the school who has been bullied in the past three months?		66,431	96,865
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
How often do your teachers ask you to read for your studies (e.g. stories, books, other texts)?		67,996	105,946
How often do you get a chance to work on what you need to improve?		73,416	104,560

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?	16,106	14,746	14,378	11,502	7,580	1,982	1,406
Overall how well do you feel lately physically and mentally?	10,508	9,871	9,653	7,674	5,559	1,330	944
How often do you find what you learn at school interesting?	14,856	13,492	13,175	10,652	7,966	1,879	1,467
How safe do you feel during class?	15,071	13,677	13,237	10,745	7,529	1,897	1,391
How clearly do your teachers explain the work they set?	16,120	14,589	14,132	10,853	8,398	2,168	1,614
How often do you learn about people like you in class? (e.g. with a similar background or identity to yours)?	13,607	12,161	11,873	9,796	6,828	1,730	1,207

Secondary

By Gender

Question	Male	Female	Other
How happy are you to be studying at this school?	40,425	39,935	1,816
Overall how well do you feel lately physically and mentally?	28,002	27,619	1,248
How often do you find what you learn at school interesting?	36,376	35,854	1,627
How safe do you feel during class?	38,105	37,899	1,613
How clearly do your teachers explain the work they set?	38,346	37,577	1,695
How often do you learn about people like you in class? (e.g. with a similar background or identity to yours)?	31,981	31,382	1,380

Open Answer Questions

Question	2022/2023
What is the best thing about your school?	118,544
What would you like to be different in your school?	115,911