

# Ofsted Staff Survey vs School Surveys template: what's the difference?

If you've logged into the School Surveys portal recently, you'll have noticed two similar-looking options:

- The official Ofsted Staff Questionnaire
- The School Surveys Ofsted-aligned template

So why are there two versions? And which should you use?

The short answer is: either can be a starting point – both are fully editable – but they serve slightly different purposes.

Here's the quick answer

If you want to...

Mirror Ofsted's wording exactly --> use the official Ofsted version

Gather cleaner data that's benchmarked --> use ours

Customise or mix and match --> start with either - both versions are editable and all questions are available individually to add into either one

Consideration #1: wording

One difference is how questions are structured.

Some official Ofsted questions combine multiple ideas into one statement. For example, the third question asks about fairness and respect in the same sentence: All staff are treated fairly and with respect at this school.

The difficulty with this approach is that if a member of staff agrees with one part but not the other, their response becomes harder to interpret.

At School Surveys, we aim to avoid "double-barrelled" questions. Our versions typically:

- Focus on one idea at a time
- Make results easier to interpret
- Give you clearer next steps

This often leads to more actionable data. For this example, we ask for agreement with two separate statements: My school treats all employees fairly

and

Staff at my school treat each other with respect

Consideration #2: benchmarking

Our Ofsted-aligned questions weren't written overnight. Many pre-date the new Ofsted questionnaire and have already been tested and benchmarked through Teacher Tapp, using responses from thousands of teachers nationally.

This means when you use our template, you're not just seeing:

64% of your staff agree

You can also understand how that compares to national patterns and responses from staff in a school "like yours" (matched by phase and free school meal quartile).

That context makes conversations with governors, trustees and inspectors more meaningful.

Why have we included the Ofsted version?

That said, we know some leaders prefer to:

- Replicate Ofsted's wording exactly
- See responses to the precise questions inspectors may reference
- Avoid even small wording differences

That's why we include the official questionnaire as a ready-made option. Benchmarks will also build up on these questions over time, both from use within School Surveys, and when we choose to put some of these questions to the Teacher Tapp panel.

But remember – both templates are fully editable. You can:

- Start with the official version and tweak it
- Start with ours and adjust wording
- Build your own from the question bank

There's no locked format.

Comparison table:

Here is a side-by-side list of the questions so you can see what your options are, particularly useful if you are going for a mix-and-match approach.

Ofsted	School Surveys (Teacher Tapp benchmarked)
Role question (6 categories)	Role question (2, 3, 4 or 6 categories*)
The school is well led and managed	Overall, I have confidence in the decisions made by the leadership team at my school
All staff are treated fairly and with respect at this school	My school treats all employees fairly
I am proud to be a member of staff at this school	Staff at my school treat each other with respect
Leaders are considerate of my wellbeing	I am proud when I tell others I am part of my school
Leaders take workload into account (& follow up optional free text question)	Leaders in my school care about staff wellbeing
Pupils are safe at this school (& follow up optional free text question)	Leaders at my school are committed to reducing workload for staff
The school deals effectively with any cases of bullying of pupils	In general, do you think pupils feel safe in your school?
Staff consistently manage pupils' behaviour well	The school deals effectively with any cases of bullying of pupils
Leaders support staff well in managing behaviour (& follow up optional free text question)	How much of the time do your colleagues follow the behaviour management policy?
	Do you agree that leaders in your school are doing enough to support behaviour management?
	When you need help from leaders to manage behaviour, do you get it?
The school is effective in supporting pupils' wellbeing	Our school has good pastoral support in place for pupils
Leaders enable staff to support all pupils	Leaders enable staff to support all pupils
When pupils lack key skills, leaders take quick action to address them	When pupils lack key skills, leaders take quick action to address them
Leaders ensure that I have the professional development I need to make me more effective in my role	I can access the professional development I need
	Professional development I have accessed in the past 12 months has helped me improve in my role

\*choosing how many role categories to ask staff may impact on anonymity of responses - if your staff team is relatively small, it may be best to offer only 'Teacher / Support staff'.

So, which should you choose?

There isn't a "right" answer – only what's right for your purpose.

- If your priority is fidelity to Ofsted wording, choose the official version.
- If your priority is cleaner data and contextual benchmarking, our template may give you more insight.
- If you're not sure, start with one – you can always edit before launching.

Whichever you choose, you'll still have full control over your survey.

And, whichever template you start with, what matters most is what you do next: feeding back to staff, acting where you can, and making sure surveying feels like part of a healthy, responsive culture – not just a box to tick.

Further ideas and support

You may also find our recent series on [survey data to support Self Evaluation](#) useful. We point to areas where survey data (from staff, parents and pupils) can help you tell the story of how your school is performing and improving.

If you are an existing member of School Surveys, remember that you can always email us or book a call if you'd like any help. If you aren't yet a member and are interested to find out more, please get in touch via [hello@schoolsurveys.com](mailto:hello@schoolsurveys.com).