

Successful Surveying: What To Ask?

We've probably all had experiences of bad surveying: missing response options, repetitive questions, biased framing, interminable length... and that's assuming the survey is relevant in the first place! Bad surveying is often worse than no surveying – if people feel care hasn't been taken, their answers aren't going to be listened to, and no real action will follow, they'll soon lose energy for completing surveys at all.

Thankfully, running surveys in school can be straightforward and impactful, and we've got some top tips for helping you do it well!

What topics should I ask about, and when?

Surveying can be a very effective tool for engagement, whether it's regular [pulse surveys](#), a more traditional annual survey, or variations in between. Choosing what to ask about will be somewhat determined by the approach you plan to take.

If you are just starting out, you may want to ask about whatever is interesting, relevant or on your mind. In most schools, the concerns which emerge most frequently are around behaviour, communication and wellbeing, so it may make sense to focus questions around these topics.

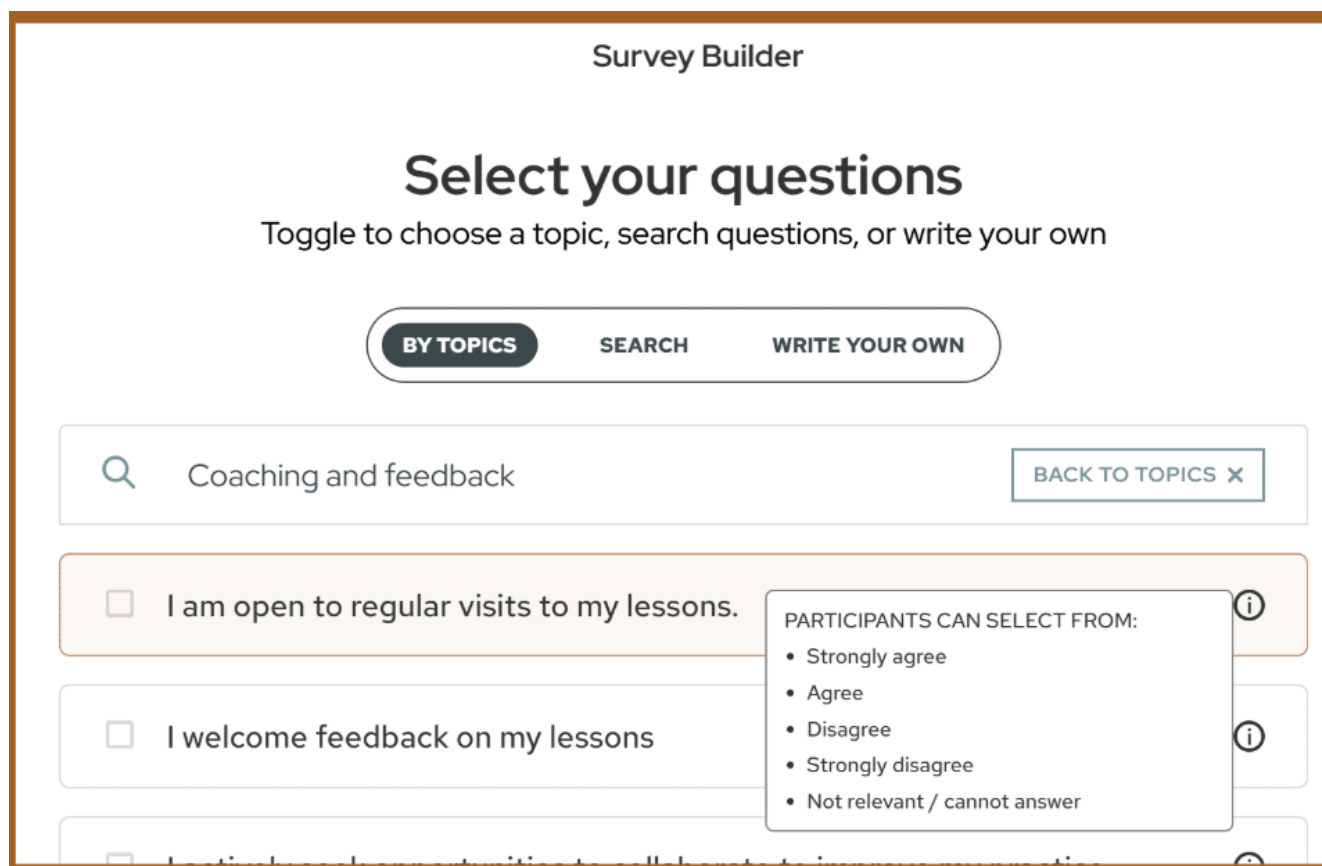
We'd suggest that, longer-term, there seems to be value in focusing on specific topics. This might mean following a schedule through the year, asking about particular themes at certain times. For example, behaviour during Autumn 1 when setting up or embedding new routines, or CPD needs in Summer 1, in line with planning the new year's CPD schedule.

It could mean linking survey questions to your school's development plan, and may lend itself to taking a 'before and after' approach with repeated questions over time. This could work well for monitoring the implementation of a new policy or activity, such as a new Teaching & Learning Policy or a new CPD coaching programme.

How do I choose or write the questions?

This is where we try to do a lot of the hard work for you. Our bank of over 300 expertly-written questions is available, sorted into topic areas. It means that you can craft an excellent survey quickly and simply, and know that the resulting report will include benchmarked answers to make the responses more meaningful.

When you are in our survey builder, you can look through the questions by topic area. Hovering over the information button next to any suggested question brings up the response options, as you can see in this example below from our 'Coaching and feedback' topic list:



If you are crafting your own survey, our top tips are:

- Keep it short - we'd suggest around 6 - 12 questions per survey
- Use our suggested opening and closing questions*
- Don't include too many open questions (these can be valuable, but are harder to see at-a-glance results from and can't be benchmarked)

*For some staff, a new survey may be the first opportunity they've had in a while to share their thoughts. It could elicit a flood of comments, ideas, and pent-up frustrations. For this reason, we suggest including a positive, free response question at the start, and also an open, "Is there anything else you'd like us to know?" question at the end. The survey builder prompts you with these suggestions.

What if you haven't got the question I need to ask?

We recommend choosing questions from our question bank as these have been curated by our team of question writing experts and will generate benchmarks in the reports. We do appreciate however that you may need to ask something specific to your school, and you can do this within our survey building platform.

Write your own

Write your own questions

Create free, single and multiple select questions

☒ Single choice ⓘ

☐ Multiple choice ⓘ

☐ Open questions ⓘ

Question:

Type your question here...

Participants can select a single answer from

Answer 1

Not relevant/cannot answer

+ Add answer

You can add as many 'custom' questions as you wish, selecting from single choice, multiple response or open questions. There's quite an art to writing questions well, and you can find some advice from Teacher Tapp's Chief Analyst Becky Allen on a previous blogpost [here](#). All questions you create will be saved for future surveys, so you have the option to ask the question multiple times. This also ensures that you will receive comparison reports for this question.

Ready to get started? Want some more help?

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@schools-surveys.com.