

Using survey data to evidence Personal Development and Wellbeing in your SEF

Personal Development and Wellbeing is a key area of Ofsted's 2025 Education Inspection Framework. Inspectors are clear that this goes beyond programmes or events – it's about how effectively schools help pupils develop confidence, resilience, aspiration, and a sense of responsibility for their own learning and future.

When completing the SEF, leaders are expected to show how they evaluate this impact – and pupil voice is an important part of that understanding.

What Ofsted is looking for

Inspectors consider whether schools:

- Support pupils' wider development, including character and independence
- Help pupils develop aspirations and understand future pathways
- Provide a broad range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities
- Promote wellbeing, mental health, and positive relationships
- Enable pupils to take responsibility for their learning and behaviour

Ofsted wants to see that these experiences are consistent across the school, not just described in policy documents.

Core evidence leaders will draw upon

Survey data is certainly not going to provide all the evidence here. Judgements are typically based on triangulating many areas of evidence, likely including:

- Pastoral, safeguarding, and wellbeing logs
- Behaviour and attendance data
- Curriculum and PSHE provision
- Participation in extra-curricular activities and enrichment
- Careers education records and destination data

These sources show what the school offers and how it is organised, but they don't always capture how pupils experience these opportunities day to day.

Pupil survey data: understanding lived experience

Pupil surveys provide a window into how personal development and wellbeing are actually experienced. They can show whether pupils:

- Are encouraged to aim high and plan for their future
- Feel included in wider school life
- Feel supported emotionally and pastorally
- Value the opportunities available to them

Headline indicators – such as the percentage of pupils enjoying learning, feeling supported, or benefiting from enrichment – can be referenced in the SEF to support leaders' evaluations. In line with our principles of good surveying, we recommend including specific questions where possible – what happened in your last lunchtime, what you thought of your last trip, how you felt this week etc.

Here's an example of a survey that focuses on asking pupils for views about the school's careers education and work experience opportunities:

Careers Provision Review

Questions (10)

- 1 What year are you in? (Y7-Y13) ✓
- 2 My school provides me with information about my next steps (For example: moving school, choosing qualifications, going to university or other options like apprenticeships, or finding a job) ✓
- 3 I have had useful opportunities to hear from or meet people who work in different jobs or industries ✓
- 4 The careers events or talks I have attended have been useful in helping me think about my options ✓
- 5 Which careers talks or meetings have you found the most helpful or inspiring? 🗨
- 6 My work experience helped me think more clearly about my future career options ✓
- 7 What did you find most useful or enjoyable about doing work experience? 🗨
- 8 Is there any advice you would pass onto future year groups for when they are doing work experience? 🗨
- 9 There is a member of staff I can speak to if I want advice about my future career or next steps ✓
- 10 Is there anything that you would like to share regarding the school's support with preparing you for your next steps? 🗨

SUMMARY

Survey type

PUPILS-SECONDARY

START SURVEY

📅 4th May 2026

🕒 10:00

CLOSE SURVEY

📅 25th May 2026

🕒 18:00

SETTINGS

Allow retake

A template survey, editable in the School Surveys platform. Leaders can re-order, add, delete or write their own questions.

Using survey evidence proportionately

Leaders do not need to include extensive survey data in their SEF. Referencing a small number of clear pupil survey headlines is usually enough to:

- Support judgements about wellbeing and personal development
- Demonstrate leaders' understanding of pupils' lived experience
- Show how evidence informs improvement priorities

Targeted pupil surveys and wellbeing-focused templates allow schools to gather rich insight while keeping SEF references concise and inspection-ready.

Used well, pupil survey data strengthens the SEF by showing personal development and wellbeing through the eyes of pupils themselves – exactly what Ofsted expects. see.

Further ideas and support

There are lots of other posts that you may find useful here in the School Surveys blog, including [boosting parent responses](#), support with [survey planning](#) and our summary of [surveying and the new Ofsted framework](#).

There's also plenty of [debate](#) and discussion about what constitutes 'belonging' for pupils, and how this can be measured; you can read more about this in our sister post on [Pupil Belonging: Measuring What Matters](#).

If you are an existing member of School Surveys, remember that you can always email or phone 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 book a demo [here](#), or get in touch via hello@schools-surveys.com.