

# Successful Surveying: Where To Start (Or Re-Start...)

When chatting about surveying, leaders often ask for our thoughts on where to get started. Some of the common questions we get include:

- Is a big annual survey a good approach, and what about "pulse surveying"? Here's our summary of [the pros of each](#), including tips to get started with pulse surveying.
- Is it useful to plan out the whole year ahead? Here are our [suggestions for a survey plan](#), including an editable template. If you are part of a [Trust that is running surveys centrally](#), it's even more important to coordinate effectively.

Another classic question is where to get started, or re-started after a long gap since the last survey. What do we suggest?

Last survey guilt - it's not too late to share - or is it?

if you didn't talk to people about the last survey they did, what are your options now?

1. Talk about it. Maybe you can still share some of those results, even if it was many months ago. Draw out some headlines and prepare a few words of what you have and haven't done since then. Tell the story of what has changed since (and what hasn't). Relate it to the current priorities and the changes in landscape. Launch the next survey positively.
2. Acknowledge it but move on. Apologise that it didn't get actioned, and explain that too much has changed since then, so it's best to start again. Rather than spend time on dated results, it's probably more helpful to channel any staff energy for the subject into getting input on new questions to ask, or working parties for areas to take forward from the next survey.
3. Ignore it and start again. Sometimes a previous survey really does feel too far back and you'd rather crack on with a new approach without even mentioning previous efforts. Only go for this option if it really was AGES ago (two years or more? more than a third of staff new since then? A change of leadership since?) But commit to getting it right this time by sharing a timeline for the follow up.

Setting up a first (or first in ages) survey

Why don't you run a short survey following this format -

An open positive question - "What's something you've done lately that you feel proud of?" "I'm

particularly grateful for..." "Something that's made me smile recently at school was...."). We have a bank of "positive" questions, or you can write your own. The summary in the report will draw out key themes, and you can view full comments in the appendix or online (where you can edit and create word clouds too).

A benchmarkable question or two about overall morale or engagement, and/or an aspect of communication or leadership. This could be a question you've asked before, or the beginning of a commitment to track this over time.

A specific question or two about current priorities. You might find what you need in the question bank, or write your own question(s) if not. Again, this could help chart progress with something if you plan to ask it again later in the term or year.

An open improvement question - "Is there anything else you'd like the leadership team to know?" - a chance for people to share what feels most important to them at present.

Here's an example:

## Staff Check-In

Questions (8)    Distribution

Survey templates    Add questions

- 1 Which of the following two options best describes your role?
- 2 Taking everything about life at work into consideration, I am currently...
- 3 The thing I am most proud of having done recently is...
- 4 Leaders at my school usually explain why we're doing things, not just what needs to be done
- 5 My school has a shared language for talking about effective teaching
- 6 Strong lesson starts are working well in my classes
- 7 In the last half term, have the meetings you attended been a good use of your time?
- 8 The other thing I'd like to let the leadership team know is...

Example of a school survey drafted in the portal, created by editing the "Quick Check-in" template

Once you've set up a survey, you can schedule it right away, or pause to reflect for a while first. Once drafted or scheduled you can try it out (click 'preview'), ask another colleague to preview it for you (invite them into the portal from 'settings'), and make any changes (remember to click 'save').

Click on 'Distribution' to see options for sharing the survey, whether you want to do it yourself, or ask us to do it for you.

You can make changes until it opens, and once open you can view your results online as they come in, or wait for the PDF once it closes. You can also duplicate to plan another future survey based on the same questions.

Make it work - diarise next steps

Boost your chances of making surveying a success by thinking about your next steps.

We suggest that you

- Diarise time for people to complete the survey - allocate time in a staff training session or meeting to boost response rates. Set enough time, and consider extending the survey close date if necessary.
- Diarise time to share back. Even if it's just a few words in briefing, don't let too much time slip by before thanking people for responding and sharing some headlines about what you are doing next. Don't be afraid to share what you aren't doing too - it can be just as helpful to be honest about capacity and priorities as it is to talk about the things you are taking forward.

And think about where you'll go from there. Will it be an annual survey a year hence, or might you see value in some additional [shorter check-ins](#) meanwhile?

And remember, you are always welcome to book a call to discuss your situation. Email us at [hello@schoolsurveys.com](mailto:hello@schoolsurveys.com) or follow the booking link in the newsletters. We love talking about surveying!