

There Wasn't Enough Hot Water in the Staffroom... And No One Told the Headteacher ■■

"We are using School Surveys as a tracker to help with our recruitment, retention and stability goals. We value what it offers so much!"

Kate Edwards, Vice Principal for Quality of Education, MEA Central

About MEA Central

Established in 2017, [Manchester Enterprise Academy Central](#) is a mixed secondary of over 1050 scholars in South Manchester. In its 2022 Ofsted inspection, the school's approach to leadership and management was rated as 'Outstanding' and highlighted the determination that the leadership team has to ensure that each and every pupil succeeds.

As part of the school's mission, its pupils are encouraged to develop their communication skills as well as their sense of social responsibility. This integral part of the school's ethos extends to the wider community; its staff and parents. As a relatively young school, it was deemed important to embed a culture of effective feedback amongst its communities from the outset. A range of projects, aimed at providing a safe space for voicing opinions was introduced, and we are thrilled that School Surveys has become part of this initiative.

Creating a Culture of Feedback from the Start

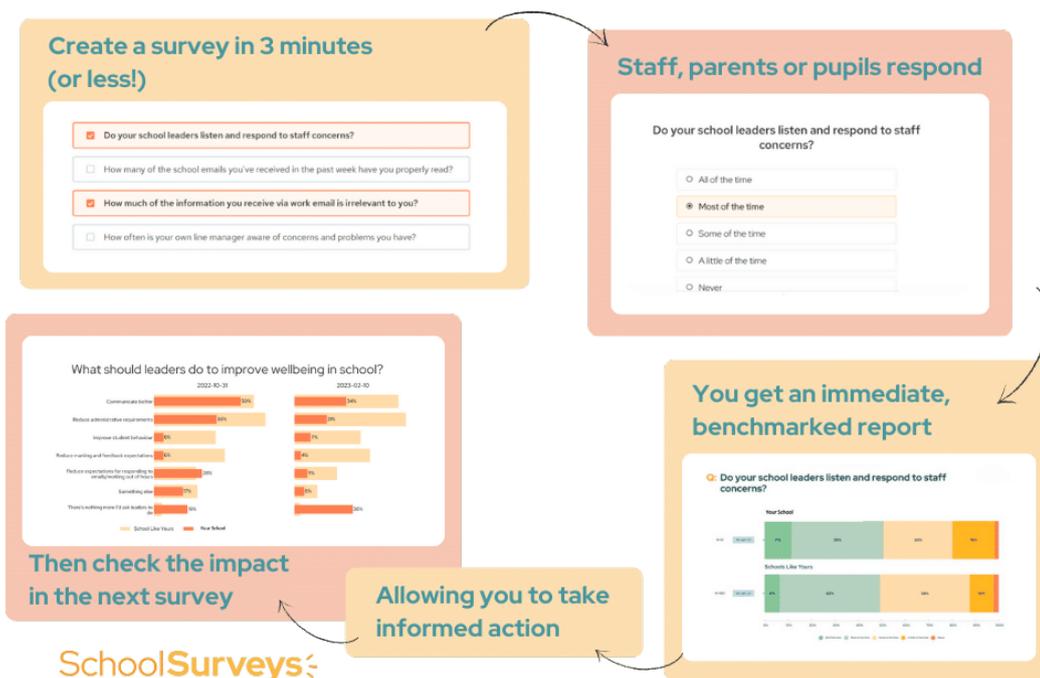
The leadership team at MEA Central encouraged staff to provide feedback in earnest in the months after the pandemic. As you might expect, people were anxious, unsettled and generally unhappy. While this was no doubt reflective of the national mood, the reasons around this atmosphere needed to be assessed in-depth by the SLT to see if this was truly reflective of life at school.

The first step was to work on opportunities and behaviours around face-to-face feedback. This included a central roundtable session every half-term with representatives from each department. Points to consider were proposed and staff spent time during INSET days discussing these and sharing their views. Not only did these sessions allow people to voice their opinions in a safe space, but because time was set aside during INSET, staff were more relaxed and happy and were more likely to offer balanced and thoughtful responses and suggestions.

Embedding practices such as this have paved the way for the successful launch of [School Surveys](#) within the school, the first survey of which was delivered to staff at the beginning of the 2023 Autumn Term. Due to the community already feeling comfortable with the idea of effective feedback, the roll-out of School Surveys has been another string to the school’s communication bow.

“We did the groundwork before we launched School Surveys. The platform has been so valuable and has made a big difference.”

Staff, parent and pupil voice - the easy way



Key Discoveries

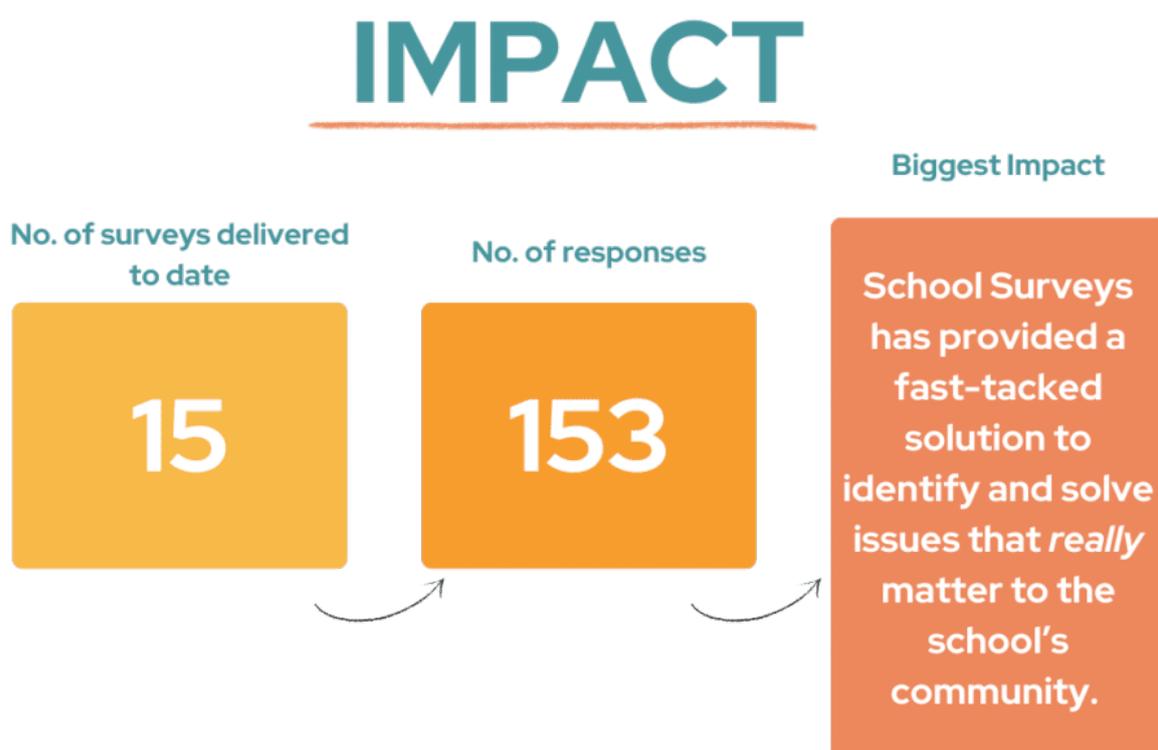
One of the biggest surprises to emerge from embedding School Surveys software into the feedback routine of the school has been the number of small but meaningful issues that are raised weekly. Issues that, during busy school days, are often missed by those in the best position to resolve them. One very good example of this was the broken hot water system in the staff room. Staff were becoming frustrated with the lack of facilities to make a cup of tea at break time. When asked why this hadn’t been reported, they stated it was too trivial an issue to bother the leadership team with. This was one of the first issues that became apparent through the initial survey delivered to teachers by School Surveys. It was identified and quickly and easily resolved. A seemingly inconsequential problem but one that had large ramifications for the morale and well-being of the staff.

Having a regular and predictable cycle of anonymous feedback has also fostered a culture of creative suggestions concerning school improvement. Staff and parents have time to consider ideas that they feel will benefit the school in the knowledge that there will be many

opportunities to voice these, and essentially, that they will be valued.

“We’re about to send out our second Parents’ survey. The responses from our last one were unbelievably positive - they were full of gratitude and we got hundreds of lovely messages!”

Another surprise for the leadership team at MEA Central, and one that has become an invaluable asset, is the platform’s benchmarking capabilities. As School Surveys is powered by [Teacher Tapp](#) data, it is possible to compare your school’s results to those of similar schools nationally. This fully informed perspective allows school leaders to put the issues that matter into context so that decisions can be made and action can be taken to drive positive change.



We are delighted that School Surveys has been welcomed so quickly into the feedback routines at MEA Central and we look forward to continuing to support them with discovering what the staff, parents and pupils really think.