

LocalMotion

LocalMotion
Torbay

Support in Schools-
A Youth-Led Analysis of Wellbeing and the School Experience in the Context
of Educational Reform in England

 **NDTi**
National Development
Team for Inclusion

This report presents a comprehensive analysis of the "Wellbeing in Schools Survey," a significant piece of youth-led research conceived, created and conducted by a group of young people as part of the LocalMotion Torbay "Support in Schools" project. The survey, which engaged over 500 secondary school students, provides a critical and timely snapshot of the lived experiences of young people within England's education system. The findings reveal a disconnect between the perceived priorities of schools and the wellbeing needs of their pupils, offering vital evidence for current and future educational policy.

The analysis highlights three critical findings that demand the attention of school leaders, policymakers, and all stakeholders invested in the future of education. First, the data reveals a "perception gap": while most students (68%) believe their academic success is important to their school, fewer than half (43%) feel the same about their emotional wellbeing. This 25-percentage-point difference indicates a school culture that is experienced as focused on academic metrics, at the expense of pastoral care.

Second, this imbalance is reflected in quantifiably poorer mental health outcomes. Using the validated Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS), the student cohort registered a mean wellbeing score of 21.82, significantly lower than the general population mean of 23.61. This finding suggesting that the pressures and environment of the current school system are contributing to a measurable wellbeing deficit among young people.



Third, the report suggests actionable pathways for improvement. Statistical analysis of the survey data highlights the link between a student's sense of belonging at school and their overall mental wellbeing. The feeling of belonging to a school are correlated to positive mental health, followed by the availability of teacher support and the perception that the school genuinely cares about student wellbeing.

These findings are not an anomaly but a reflection of a national trend of declining youth wellbeing, as corroborated by major national reports. By amplifying the missing voice of students in this national conversation, this youth-led research supports the urgent need for systemic reforms that move beyond curriculum content to address school culture, accountability, and place student wellbeing at the very heart of England's educational mission.

1. Introduction: A Youth-Led Inquiry into School Life

The Origins of the Project

The "Support in Schools" project, from which this survey data originates, is a compelling example of participatory action research, which originated as an initiative conceived and driven by young people themselves. The project was initiated on March 13, 2023, following an "Action Change Event" in Torbay, where three young women articulated a pervasive sense of being overlooked within the education system.¹ They employed a powerful analogy to describe their experience: in school, "if you were a goldfish, you got lots of attention, if you were a shark, you got lots of attention but if you were an ordinary fish then you got left to your own devices and school was a stressful place".¹ This sentiment—that the system is primarily reactive, focusing its resources on the most vulnerable or the most disruptive, while leaving the majority to navigate mounting pressures alone—formed the foundational impetus for this inquiry. Their stated desire was simple yet profound: they wanted "someone to talk to in school".¹

Methodology of Empowerment

Guided by this initial insight, the young researchers, with support from The Children's Society and National Development Team for Inclusion, embarked on a structured exploration of the problem using established research frameworks. The project adopted the Design Council's double diamond approach, moving systematically from problem exploration to the development of potential solutions.¹ The initial phase involved qualitative analysis of the school system. The young people created a participatory system map to visualise the complex interplay of factors influencing their education, from curriculum and OFSTED to uniforms and social media.¹ They further utilised tools to consider the perspectives of different stakeholders and the "Circle of Influence" to delineate which aspects of their school lives they felt they had control over versus those that were imposed upon them by external bodies like the government and its regulators.¹ This rigorous methodological

process demonstrates a commitment to empowering young people as active researchers who define, investigate, and analyse the issues that affect them, rather than positioning them as passive subjects of adult-led inquiry.

Survey Scope and Demographics

As part of this exploratory work the young people wanted to know if their experience of school reflected the experience of other pupils and this led to the design and dissemination of the "Wellbeing in Schools Survey,".. The survey was initially piloted with 190 Year 10 students. This allowed for some learning and refinement of the survey, with the support of school leadership and NDTi Research and Evaluation Team, before being expanded across multiple secondary schools in Torbay.¹ The final dataset analysed in this report comprises responses from 517 students, with most school-related questions having a valid response base of 443 students.¹

The demographic profile of the respondents provides an important context for the findings. The cohort spans the entirety of secondary education, from Year 7 to Year 13, with the largest representations from Years 8 (27.31%) and 9 (26.64%).¹ The gender balance is relatively even, with 48.54% identifying as female and 44.66% as male.¹ The ethnic composition of the respondents is predominantly White (87.14%), with smaller representations from Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups (5.10%), Asian/Asian British (2.43%), and Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (2.18%) backgrounds.¹ In terms of the total population of Torbay this represents a diverse mix. 96.1% of Torbay residents classified themselves as White for the 2021 Census 92.1% as White British.

2. The Student Experience: A Quantitative Snapshot

The survey results paint a detailed and often challenging picture of the contemporary student experience. The data reveals a school environment characterized by significant academic pressure, insufficient opportunities for respite, and a worrying level of disengagement and alienation among a substantial portion of the student body. Underpinning these issues is a clear perception among students that their academic performance is valued far more by their schools than their personal and emotional health.

The School Climate: Support, Workload, and Downtime

While schools are positioned as places of support and development, the data suggests a gap between this ideal and the reality for many students. In terms of pastoral care, the findings are mixed. A slim majority of students (52.6% combined 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree') feel that their teachers can support them with their wellbeing. However, this leaves a large proportion who are either ambivalent (26.86%) or who actively disagree (20.54% combined 'Disagree' and 'Strongly disagree').¹ This points to an experience of teacher support that is inconsistent across the student population.

More concerning are the findings related to academic pressure and the pace of the school day. A combined total of 38.6% of students disagree or strongly disagree with the statement "I can cope with the school workload".¹ This indicates that for nearly two in five students, the academic demands placed upon them are perceived as unmanageable. This sense of being overwhelmed is compounded by a perceived lack of adequate rest and recovery time. The most definitive finding in this domain relates to breaks between classes, where a clear and substantial majority of students (54.63% combined) disagree or strongly disagree that they have the right amount of downtime.¹ Only a small fraction (21%) feel that their breaks are for the right amount of time. This combination of high workload and insufficient respite points to an intense, high-pressure school climate that affords little room for mental recuperation, a finding that directly aligns with the initial concerns of the young researchers about school being a "stressful place".¹

Engagement and Belonging: A Fraying Connection

The pressures of the school climate appear to be taking a toll on students' connection to their educational environment. The data on school enjoyment is notable. Only 30.25% of students positively affirm that they enjoy being at school ('Strongly agree' or 'Agree'), while a larger group of 37.25% actively express their dislike ('Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree').¹ The largest single response category is ambivalence, with 32.51% selecting 'Neither disagree or agree'. This widespread lack of enjoyment suggests a level of disengagement from the core purpose and daily life of school.

This disengagement is mirrored in the findings on students' sense of belonging. Feeling part of a community is a critical component of wellbeing, yet less than half of the students surveyed feel a strong connection to their school. A minority of 36.8% agree or strongly agree with the statement "I feel a sense of belonging in school".¹ Conversely, more than a quarter of students (27.76%) feel alienated, responding that they disagree or strongly disagree. The prevalence of a neutral response (35.44%) again underscores a sense of detachment rather than active



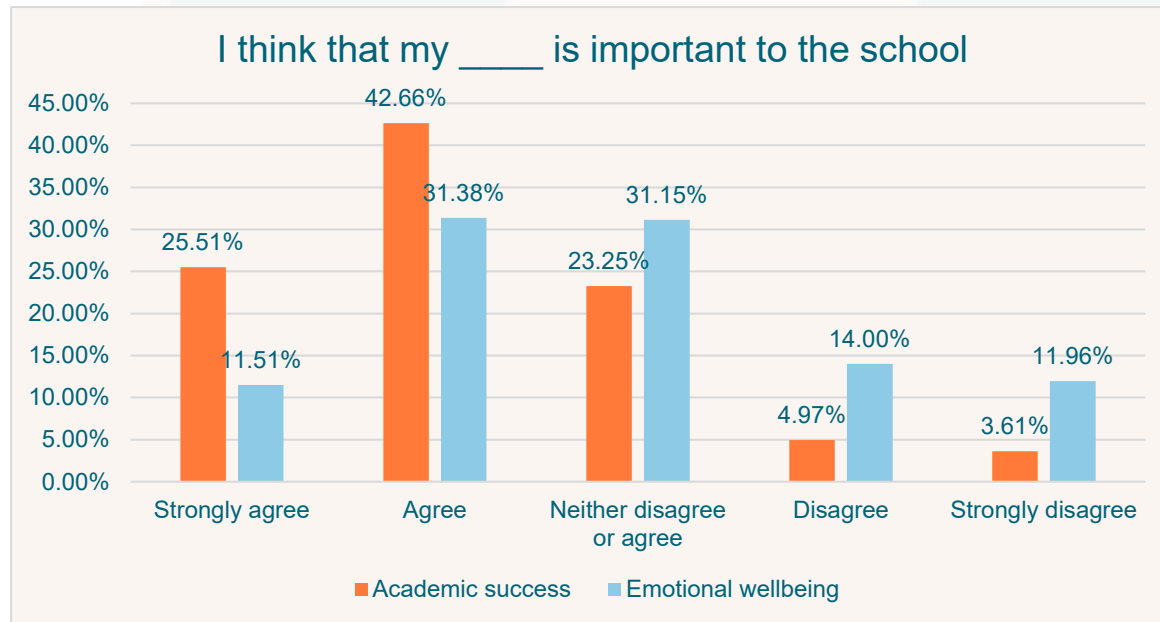
inclusion for a large plurality of the student body. These figures suggest that for many young people, school is not a community to which they feel they belong.

A Tale of Two Priorities: Academic Success vs. Emotional Wellbeing

Perhaps the most illuminating finding of the entire survey is the chasm it reveals between what students believe their school values. When asked if they think their academic success is important to the school, a commanding majority of 68.17% agree or strongly agree.¹ This demonstrates a perceived institutional focus on grades, attainment, and academic progress.

However, when asked the parallel question, "I think my emotional wellbeing is important to the school," the picture changes. Only 42.89% of students agree or strongly agree with this statement.¹ This creates a 25-percentage-point "perception gap" between the perceived value of academic achievement and that of emotional health. A combined 25.96% of students actively disagree that their wellbeing is important to the school. This is not a minor discrepancy; it is an indicator of the cultural values that students are absorbing from their educational environment. The operational reality of the school day—characterized by high workload and insufficient downtime—is a direct reflection of this perceived imbalance of priorities. This finding suggests that any school-based initiatives aimed at improving wellbeing are likely to be undermined if students perceive the institution's core mission to be purely academic.

Table 1: Student Perceptions of School Priorities: Academic Success vs. Emotional Wellbeing



Response Category	Academic Success is Important to the School (%)	Emotional Wellbeing is Important to the School (%)
Strongly agree	25.51%	11.51%
Agree	42.66%	31.38%
Neither disagree or agree	23.25%	31.15%
Disagree	4.97%	14.00%
Strongly disagree	3.61%	11.96%
Total Agree/Strongly Agree	68.17%	42.89%
Total Disagree/Strongly Disagree	8.58%	25.96%

3. Mental Wellbeing: A Comparison with National Benchmarks

To move beyond perceptions of the school environment and objectively measure the mental health of the student cohort, the survey incorporated the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS). This validated, seven-item scale measures positive mental wellbeing, with higher scores indicating a greater sense of optimism, purpose, and resilience. The results from this section provide quantitative evidence that the pressures and cultural imbalances identified previously are manifesting in measurably poorer wellbeing outcomes compared to the general population.

Key Indicators of Positive Mental Health

An analysis of the responses to the individual SWEMWBS items provides a granular view of the specific challenges to student wellbeing. While many students report positive feelings some of the time, a significant minority consistently struggle across several domains. One of the most acute issues appears to be stress and a lack of relaxation. A combined total of 48.19% of students report "Rarely" or "None of the time" feeling relaxed, suggesting a state of persistent tension for almost half the cohort.¹

Another area of concern is a diminished sense of purpose and usefulness. Over a third of students (34.94%) state that they rarely or never feel useful.¹ This may reflect a school experience where students feel like passive recipients of information rather than active, valued contributors to their community. Other indicators also point to significant challenges: over 23% rarely or never feel optimistic about the future, and over 32% rarely or never feel they are thinking clearly.¹ These specific data points give texture to the overall wellbeing score, indicating that for a large number of students, the school years are characterized by anxiety, a lack of purpose, and cognitive strain.

Overall Wellbeing Scores: A Concerning Deficit

Overall wellbeing scores: a concerning deficit (youth benchmarks).

When the seven SWEMWBS items are aggregated (range 7–35), the cohort’s mean is 21.82 (median 22.00). Benchmarked against youth norms, this is clearly low. Relative to large, nationally representative school-age data from Wales, [SHRN-MHW-Briefing-Report-2022-FINAL-01.08.22-en.pdf](#) the cohort sits 1.18–1.88 points below the averages reported for 2021 (23.0) and 2019 (23.7). Using England 16–24 norms from the Health Survey for England (combined mean 23.34, SD 3.76), the deficit is –1.52 points, a moderate effect ($d \approx -0.40$). Variability is also greater: the cohort SD (5.24) exceeds the HSE youth SD (3.76), implying a more polarised distribution of experiences—some students doing very well while a sizeable minority experience markedly poor wellbeing—underscoring the limits of “one-size-fits-all” interventions.

4. Deepening the Analysis: Unpacking Nuances in the Data

A deeper analysis of the survey data, disaggregated by year group and examined through statistical correlations, reveals patterns in the student journey. This granular view moves beyond broad averages to identify *who* is most affected by the pressures of school, *when* these pressures intensify, and, most importantly, *what* factors can be leveraged to foster a more positive and supportive educational environment.

The Journey Through Secondary School: A Year-Group Analysis

The data shows that the student experience is not static but evolves significantly as young people progress through the different stages of secondary education. Key pressure points, particularly the transition into secondary school and the onset of public examinations, correspond with notable declines in satisfaction and engagement.

A clear and worrying trend of declining enjoyment is visible after the first year. In Year 7, nearly half the students (48.83%) agree or strongly agree that they enjoy school. This figure plummets in Year 8 to just 23.14% and remains low throughout the subsequent years.¹ Strong disagreement with the statement "I enjoy being at school" rises sharply

from Year 8 onwards, reaching peaks in the key exam years of Year 10 (26.39%) and Year 13 (29.41%). This mapping of dissatisfaction onto the primary academic pressure points of Key Stage 4 (GCSEs) and Key Stage 5 (A-Levels) suggests that higher academic demands are crowding out positive emotional experiences.

This is further reinforced by students' evolving perceptions of school priorities. The belief that academic success is important to the school intensifies as students approach their exams, with agreement being particularly high in Year 12 (85.71% 'Agree').¹ Simultaneously, the belief that emotional wellbeing is important to the school tends to stagnate or, in the case of Year 12, decline, with 35.71% of students in that year group disagreeing with the statement.¹ It may be that, as academic demands increase, pastoral concerns are perceived to take a back seat.

Table 3: Changes in School Experience by Key Stage (Selected Indicators)

Statement	Key Stage 3 (Y7-9) % Agree/Strongly Agree	Key Stage 4 (Y10-11) % Agree/Strongly Agree	Key Stage 5 (Y12-13) % Agree/Strongly Agree
I was happy with the transition between primary school and secondary school.	59.3%	51.5%	50.3%
I enjoy being at school.	32.2%	31.2%	35.5%

Note: Percentages are calculated as a weighted average of the year groups within each Key Stage. Source: ¹

Connecting the Dots: Identifying the Drivers of Student Wellbeing

While the year-group analysis identifies problems, the survey's correlation matrix provides a powerful roadmap toward solutions. By measuring the strength of the relationship between different variables, the matrix pinpoints the factors that are most strongly associated with positive mental wellbeing. The results are unequivocal and provide a clear, evidence-based focus for school improvement efforts.¹



The single most powerful indicator of a student's total wellbeing score is their sense of belonging. The correlation between "School Belonging" and "Wellbeing TOTAL" is moderately strong at $r=0.63$. More than coping with workload, having downtime, or even enjoying school, the feeling of being a valued and accepted member of the school community is the most strongly associated with positive mental health in this dataset. This highlights the importance of fostering an inclusive and supportive school culture, particularly given the earlier finding that over a quarter of students feel they do not belong.

NHS 2023 survey: Children with a probable mental disorder were less likely to have positive views of school than those unlikely to have a mental disorder as follows:

- 75.3% agreed that 'I have at least one friend I can turn to for support' compared with 92.4% of those unlikely to have a mental disorder
- 56.3% agreed that 'I feel safe when I am at school', compared with 85.1% of those unlikely to have a mental disorder
- 49.1% agreed that 'I can be myself at school', compared with 84.6% of those unlikely to have a mental disorder

All these statements relate to feeling of belonging.

The power of positive relationships is further emphasized by the next set of correlations. The availability of "Teacher Support" ($r=0.58$) and the student's perception that the school values their "Importance Wellbeing" ($r=0.56$) are also highly predictive of better mental health outcomes. When combined, these factors create an evidence-based triad for intervention: **Belonging + Teacher Support + Perceived Institutional Care = Higher Student Wellbeing.**

Finally, the data confirms that the daily environment and academic pressures are not separate from mental health but are impact upon it. "Enjoy School" ($r=0.55$) and the ability to cope with "School Workload" ($r=0.54$) are also moderately correlated with wellbeing. This demonstrates that wellbeing cannot be siloed into pastoral programmes or occasional assemblies; it is shaped continuously by the core business of the school—the learning environment, the curriculum, and the academic demands placed on students. These correlations provide a clear mandate for schools to focus on building community, strengthening relationships, and creating a balanced and engaging academic environment as the most effective means of supporting student mental health.

Table 4: Key Drivers of Student Wellbeing (Correlation Highlights)

Factor	Correlation with Total Wellbeing Score (r)
I feel a sense of belonging in school.	0.63
I feel like teachers are able to support me with my wellbeing.	0.58
I think my emotional wellbeing is important to the school.	0.56
I enjoy being at school.	0.55
I can cope with the school workload.	0.54

Source: ¹

5. Context and Relevance: The National Picture

The findings from the LocalMotion survey, while rooted in the specific context of Torbay, seem not to be an isolated phenomenon. When placed within the broader landscape of education and youth mental health in England, they resonate with a growing body of national evidence. The issues of declining wellbeing, dissatisfaction with school, and a high-pressure academic culture identified by the young researchers are reflected in several national surveys; The Schools for All (2023) report. NHS mental health surveys, The Good Childhood Survey, The Parson Survey of 7000 teachers. This LocalMotion project taps into a nationally significant issue. Arriving at a critical moment of potential reform within the English education system the question remains if we can build upon this foundation to create a national voice of children and young people that can shape and influence the reform of the education system

A System Under Strain: Echoes of a National Concern

The LocalMotion data on low student wellbeing and happiness with school aligns with major national studies. The Children's Society's landmark *Good Childhood Report 2024* found that, based on 2022 PISA data, 15-year-olds in the UK have the lowest average life satisfaction in Europe.² The same report highlighted that school was the aspect of life with which the highest proportion of children (14.3%) were unhappy.² This national data provides powerful corroboration for the Torbay findings, demonstrating that the challenges identified are systemic, not localized. Furthermore, NHS Digital's 2023 survey on the mental health of children and young people paints a similar picture, showing that children with a probable mental disorder are seven times more likely to miss significant amounts of school and are far less likely to feel safe at school or enjoy learning.⁵ This provides a clinical context for the lower SWEMWBS scores found in the LocalMotion survey, linking the school environment directly to tangible health and attendance outcomes.

This lived reality of declining student wellbeing exists in tension with the official narrative of school quality, creating what can be termed the "OFSTED Paradox." OFSTED rates the majority of state schools as "Good" or "Outstanding," this often contrasts with stagnant attainment data and the expressed dissatisfaction of students and parents.¹ This paradox is explained by academic research. A 2020 study from the University of York found that OFSTED ratings have a negligible bearing on student wellbeing and account for less than 1% of the variance in GCSE results once socio-economic factors are controlled for.⁶ Meanwhile, surveys show that parents are increasingly prioritizing pupil wellbeing over OFSTED ratings when choosing schools⁸, and the inspection process is known to cause extreme stress and workload for teachers, negatively impacting the very school climate it is meant to assess.¹⁰

This evidence suggests the English education system may be caught in a self-perpetuating "accountability trap." The focus of the OFSTED framework on data-driven, easily measured academic outcomes incentivizes schools to prioritize these metrics above all else. This institutional pressure logically leads to the creation of the high-workload, low-downtime environment that students in the LocalMotion survey described. This environment, in turn, damages the very things that are harder to measure but are shown by this report's correlation data to be critical for wellbeing and, ultimately, for engaged learning: a sense of belonging and positive relationships. The problem is not necessarily with individual schools, but with the systemic pressures they operate under.

A Timely Intervention: Informing Inclusive Education

The LocalMotion project's findings have emerged at an opportune moment. In July 2024, the UK Government launched a major independent Curriculum and Assessment Review, (Appendix 1 includes the peer researchers response to OFSTED recent consultation on the curriculum.) tasked with ensuring the national curriculum and assessment system are "fit for purpose and meeting the needs of children and young people".¹¹ The review's stated aims include delivering a curriculum that balances "ambition, excellence, relevance, flexibility and inclusivity,"



ensures young people leave school "ready for life and ready for work," and is supported by an assessment system that captures "the strengths of every child and young person".¹³

The evidence presented in this report speaks directly to the heart of this mission. It provides a powerful, student-generated assessment of how the current system falls short of these goals. The low enjoyment, poor sense of belonging, and the perception that wellbeing is a secondary concern all call into question the notion that the system is currently "meeting the needs of children." The government's call for evidence for the Curriculum and Assessment review explicitly sought input from "experts, parents, teachers and leaders," but the voice of students themselves was conspicuously absent.¹ This report, therefore, serves to begin to fill that critical gap.

The findings constitute a mandate for the review to recommend substantive changes that go beyond the content of the curriculum. They call for a fundamental re-evaluation of school culture, the structure of the school day, the purpose of assessment, and the values that schools are expected to embody and promote. The young people of Torbay have provided a clear, evidence-based case for an educational model where wellbeing is not an optional extra, but the essential foundation upon which all other success is built.

6. Key Learnings and Future Direction

The LocalMotion "Support in Schools" project offers a wealth of learning, not only through its specific findings but also through its innovative, youth-led process. The data provides a clear diagnosis of the challenges facing students and, crucially, points toward evidence-based solutions. This final section synthesizes the most salient learnings from the analysis and proposes key questions to guide future research and strategic discussions among stakeholders.



Summary of Key Learnings

Three overarching conclusions emerge from this comprehensive analysis. First, the project demonstrates that **student voice is a potent catalyst for authentic change**. The "goldfish versus shark" analogy, born from the lived experience of the young researchers, proved to be a more accurate assessment for the systemic issues at play than many top-down analyses. By empowering young people to define the problem, design the research, and analyse the data, the project has uncovered nuanced and actionable insights that an adult-led initiative might have missed.

It makes a compelling case for embedding participatory practice and listening to the voice of the pupils as a core component of school improvement and educational policy development. As one member of the LocalMotion core team put it “We have Parent Teacher Forums but wouldn’t it be great if we had pupil, parent, teacher forums.”

Second, the data conclusively shows that **wellbeing is not an add-on; it is the foundation of learning**. The strong correlations between feeling able to cope with workload, enjoying school, and overall mental health demonstrate that wellbeing is not a separate, pastoral issue to be addressed by specialist staff. It is fundamentally intertwined with the academic mission of the school. A school culture that neglects wellbeing, as evidenced by the "perception gap," will inevitably struggle to foster the engaged, resilient, and successful learners it aims to produce.

Third, and most actionably, the analysis reveals that **relationships are paramount**. The correlation data provides a clear and unambiguous message: the quality of relationships within the school community is most strongly correlated with student's mental health. A strong sense of belonging, supported by caring teachers within an institution that is perceived to value emotional health, is the bedrock of student wellbeing. This provides a clear, strategic focus for schools: to improve student outcomes, they must first and foremost invest in building a strong, inclusive, and supportive community.

Questions for Further Inquiry and Discussion

The richness of this data opens numerous avenues for deeper investigation and strategic dialogue. The findings should be seen not as an endpoint, but as the beginning of a new, more informed conversation about the future of education. The following questions are proposed to guide the next steps for the LocalMotion project, school leaders, and policymakers.

- **For Further Research (Qualitative Deepening):** The quantitative data tells us *what* students are feeling; the next step is to understand *why*. What are the specific school practices, policies, and environmental factors (e.g., behaviour policies, assessment methods, the design and use of social spaces, curriculum content) that either enhance or inhibit a student's sense of belonging? The project team are exploring how follow-up focus groups and qualitative interviews could help to further explore these causal mechanisms to uncover these causal mechanisms.¹
- **For School Leaders (Structural Re-evaluation):** The data shows a clear "downtime deficit." What would an ideal school day and week look like from a student's perspective if it were designed to balance academic rigour with adequate mental respite? How can timetables, homework policies, and break times be restructured to reduce stress and create a more sustainable pace of learning without compromising academic standards?
- **For System Leaders (Understanding Professional Experience):** This survey captured the student perspective. What is the teacher's experience of the tension between supporting student wellbeing and meeting the academic targets imposed by the current accountability system? A parallel survey of teachers and school staff, as envisioned in the project's ten-point plan, is a critical next step to gain a holistic view of the pressures within the system.¹
- **For Policymakers (Scaling and Embedding Change):** The LocalMotion project has created a powerful model for local change. How can the practice of an annual, student-led wellbeing survey be embedded not just across Torbay, but as a national model for ensuring student voice is a continuous and integral part of school improvement and national policy-making?

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Ten-point plan

Pupils, Parents, Professionals: Perfecting Education Together

1. Conduct a whole school survey of pupils in Torbay.
2. Roll this survey out to other secondary schools in Torbay and wider.
3. Embed wellbeing surveys in the annual school cycle.
4. Create a steering group of pupils, teachers and parents to drive the work forward.
5. Apply for funding to support the work.
6. Employ a member of staff to drive things forward at pace.
7. Carry out a survey of teachers and parents
8. Conduct focus groups to discuss the results of the survey.
9. Lobby Government and advocate for annual Wellbeing Surveys in Schools.
10. Conduct a Citizen Assembly in Torbay to discuss future aspirations for education.



Appendix 1 Submission to OFSTED

Improving the way Ofsted inspects education

Where you work

Are you responding in an official capacity on behalf of an organisation?

Yes

About your organisation

Please provide the name of your organisation

We are responding as part of LocalMotion subgroup.



About you

Please tell us in which capacity you are completing this survey (select all that apply):

Child/learner

Other (please specify):

We have run a survey in our school asking students about their wellbeing and have drawn upon some of the responses.

Please tell us where you work:

Other (please specify):

We are working on behalf of LocalMotion.

Does your school or organisation have a faith ethos?

No

Part 1: how we report

Which specific evaluation areas would you like to comment on? (please select as many as you wish)

I want to comment on:

state-funded schools evaluation areas

Part 1: how we report

What do you think about our evaluation areas?

early years evaluation areas

state-funded schools evaluation areas

- leadership and governance: This section mentions leaders engaging with parents and carers, but this evaluation area could be improved by engaging with pupils to understand their perspectives on leadership or governance.
- curriculum: Students' experience of the curriculum is not assessed; we think they should be able to comment on it and express their opinions about what they're learning and what they're having to memorise. We appreciate that teachers can be under a lot of stress in terms of trying to deliver all of the content in the curriculum and this means they have less free reign than they used to.
- developing teaching: We think that Ofsted should be interested in student's perspectives of whether they

What do you think about our evaluation areas?

experience teaching as high-quality and inclusive. Over their inspection days, Ofsted get a tiny snapshot of a not very realistic situation, which may not indicate the level of teaching students are getting. The students are in much better position to judge how good the teacher is.

- achievement: we think achievement should be about more than test scores. Students' own sense of achievement and progress should also be valued.
- behaviour and attitudes: sometimes teachers may think they have dealt with bullying, but it hasn't always worked, and they can't necessarily see that. It might then move to online bullying or be something that happens out of school. Unless you get the voice of students you won't get the full view of what goes on.
- attendance: We think that lack of attendance is not always about a student not wanting to go to school. This might be related to health issues, hospital appointments etc. and yet the attitude towards low attendance rates is judgemental and negative.

We think it is important to explore the reasons they people aren't attending. If low attendance rates are due to health problems in students, then it doesn't mean the school is doing anything wrong.

In our survey only 40% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel a sense of belonging at school. If most students don't feel they belong this might impact on their attendance. The reasons behind low attendance should be explored and evaluation of attendance shouldn't only be based on quantitative data.

- personal development and well-being: We do not think that well-being should be evaluated alongside personal development. These are two completely different things, and schools may be doing well in one and not another, therefore it could be unclear what the scoring actually represents. We recently sent a survey to all student at our school asking about wellbeing and the data showed that more than half of the respondents do not think that their emotional wellbeing is important to the school. We wanted to do this survey because we think that student wellbeing is an important issue and that there is not always enough, or the right, pastoral support for students. The toolkit talks about indicators such as "All pupils feel welcome, valued and respected. They feel that they

What do you think about our evaluation areas?

belong within the school community.” But we don’t know how Ofsted inspectors can judge that without hearing from the pupils themselves. We are also concerned that there can be too much focus on achievement in terms of participation in sports clubs. People of all standards should be able to take part, and sport is still good for wellbeing and sporting standards should not affect the rate of participation.

- Inclusion: Students with SEND should be asked to comment on this.

**independent schools
evaluation areas** -

**further education and
skills evaluation areas** -

**initial teacher
education evaluation
areas** -

general comments -

Do you have any other ideas we could consider?

We believe that for almost everything that Ofsted reports on, student voice matters. School is literally where we spend five days of our week, and we are involved in all the proposed evaluation areas in some way. We don't think that the student voice is shown within Ofsted reports. Given that the school system is targeted towards students we think they should have a bigger input into the evidence that Ofsted reviews. This consultation says that Ofsted wants to answer the question: 'What is it like to be a child or learner in this provider?' We think the best way to answer that question is by hearing from the school students.

We understand that Ofsted is changing some of the reports to stop the pressure that it puts on teachers. We think this is a good thing, but we want Inspectors to see what is actually going on. If they spoke to the students that go there every day, they would have a much better understanding of what goes on.

We think the toolkit should provide guidance on how inspectors should gather the voices of students. We know there is a survey from students from Ofsted and we think that the findings of such surveys should be made public. We also think the survey would be improved by having some open questions, so students have the chance to share their opinions. We know Ofsted speaks to some students, but we would like a larger number of students to be able to contribute to inspections. We know that some students would be keen to speak to Ofsted but there isn't a way to volunteer to get involved. Perhaps during Ofsted visits there could be a comments or suggestions box where people could write stuff and it be anonymous. Overall, we think that Ofsted should think about ways in which they can hear the voices of students and be explicit about how they use these to inform their inspections.

Part 2: how we inspect

Would you like to give your views on these proposals?

No - take me straight to the closing questions

We are committed to making sure that our consultations are accessible. To enable us to improve our consultation processes and reach, would you be willing to tell us a bit about yourself and how you found this survey?

Yes

How did you hear about this consultation?

Other (please specify):
From the Head of the Children's Society who was working with LocalMotion.

I found the consultation information clear and easy to understand.

Disagree

I found the consultation easy to find on the Ofsted website.

Neither agree nor disagree

I had enough information about the consultation topic.

Agree

I would take part in a future Ofsted consultation.

Agree

Is there anything you would like us to improve on or do differently for future consultations?

Make it more accessible for younger people. Also to promote it more actively so young people know it is happening. You could do a version that is shorter and in plainer language that is aimed at young people.

Sex

Female

Age

14-18