

Interim Report for Baseline Data for the Belonging Matters pilot programme 2025



Susanne Robinson, Catherine Culbert and Peter K. Smith

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INTRODUCTION

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) has a vision for every child to thrive, and a mission to build a better childhood for every child. The NCB follows an evidence-informed approach, united individuals and organisations alongside cutting-edge research and voices of lived experience to direct positive change and to build brighter futures for children and young people.

The 'Belonging Matters' (BM) programme is a new 18-month evidence-based programme developed and run by the National Children's Bureau (NCB). The programme has been designed with several key aims in mind, the first is to develop and enhance pupils' sense of belonging within school, with a focus on vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). In addition, the programme aims to foster an inclusive school environment, strengthen teacher-student relationships, promote positive peer interactions, enable the development and implementation of school policies to support school belonging and to increase parental engagement.

This pilot programme was offered free to participating schools in London starting in June 2024 until July 2025. The schools recruited consisted of mainstream schools, a special school and an alternative provision school, across primary, secondary and sixth form.

School belonging is the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment (Allen et al, 2018).

There are many factors that influence a sense of school belonging among pupils such as teacher and peer relationships and peer support, school climate and safety, parental support, extracurricular activities in school and pupil aspirations. Measures of school belonging relate strongly to important outcome measures, for example school bullying and victimization rates, mental health and wellbeing, academic achievement, and school attendance. It is crucial that school belonging is assessed regularly as school communities face unprecedented levels of mental distress among pupils across all age groups and increasing inequality and disadvantage among underrepresented groups.

This report was prepared by a team of independent researchers from Goldsmiths, University of London and will present baseline data gathered from a number of sources which include BM Pupil Questionnaire, Parents/carers Questionnaire and Teacher/Staff Questionnaire. The report will also provide a summary for the BM 360 School Audit Tool. The survey questions are derived from previous research questionnaires developed and used to examine pupils' sense of school belonging and therefore have an established background within the field of research examining children a), School Belonging Scale (PISA 2015) and School Connectedness Scale (SCS) (O'Brennan & Furlong, 2010).

METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

Schools in the London area were invited to enrol in the pilot of the Belonging Matters Programme (BM), with the aim of recruiting 10 schools to participate overall at this stage. Involvement in the BM programme is free and requires schools to undertake and complete questionnaires at baseline and final data collection stages, to ascertain the impact of the programme across the school. Pupils, parents/carers and teachers/staff were asked to complete questionnaires and the schools were asked to complete the School Audit Tool.

BM PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

The BM Pupil questionnaire was developed with the assistance of the Goldsmith's team and contains 13 questions, these questions examine identification and participation in school, perception of fitting in and generalised connection to teachers. Pupils were asked to complete the self-report questionnaire, all items response were on a four-point Likert scale ranging from never (0), a little (1), a lot (2) or always (3), two questions are negatively worded (Question 3 and Question 6) and therefore reverse coded, never (3), a little (2), a lot (1) and always (0).

Data were collected from 11 schools who signed up to participate in the pilot programme, however, only data provided from 10 schools could be used. The BM Pupil Questionnaire is a self-report questionnaire and was completed by 1,214 children and young people from seven primary schools, two secondary schools and a sixth form plus school. The findings will examine overall responses before highlighting differences for gender and for SEND/non-SEND status pupils, and by school type.

PARENTS/CARERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Parents/carers were asked to complete a seven-item questionnaire, 435 parents/carers with 237 (54%) primary and 198 (46%) secondary school children participated in completing the questionnaire and providing responses in relation to their child's sense of belonging and how parents/carers feel about their child's school community.

All the questions were responded to on a 4-point Likert scale and scored scale ranging from never (0), a little (1), a lot (2) or always (3). A lot and always score were collapsed to create positive feelings of School Belonging. The graphs will show the findings for negative responses (never and a little) and positive feelings (a lot and always). The findings will examine parents/carers overall responses before highlighting differences for gender and for SEND/non-SEND status pupils, and by school type.

Parents/carers were also asked if they had any further comments, a total of 31 parents/carers provided responses, this qualitative data will be presented at the end of the section.

TEACHER/STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

Teachers and staff from the 10 participating schools completed a short questionnaire in which they responded to six questions that examine staff-pupil relationships. A total of 248 teachers/staff provided responses this consisted of 145 (58%) primary school and 103 (42%) secondary school teachers/staff participated. The questions were responded to on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from never (0), a little (1), a lot (2) or always (3). A little and always were collapsed to create positive School belonging. The findings will examine teacher/staff responses overall before examining differences by school type.

Teacher/staff were also asked if they had any further comments 102 teachers/staff responded, this qualitative data will be presented at the end on the section.

BM 360 SCHOOL AUDIT TOOL

The BM 360 Audit Tool is a valuable tool for measuring key components that influence sense of belonging among pupils and is completed by the schools' Senior Leadership Team. The Audit Tool encourages schools to assess and reflect upon their current state of belonging practices, with a focus on vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND.

The Audit Tool focuses on four compulsory categories:

1. Creating an inclusive school culture (3 items)
2. Whole school data, policies and training (4 items)
3. Fostering positive relationships (5 items)
4. School activities (6 items)

Participating schools were asked to complete the BM 360 Audit Tool and rate each item in the four categories as to whether they fully met, partially met or have not yet met the criterion, schools are asked to provide responses to 'How do you know'. Based on their responses as to whether the criterion has been met, schools are asked to indicate if any of the item categories will form part of their action plan. The 11 schools provided baseline data this is evaluated and presented in this report.

PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

Data presented here were collected from 1,214 pupils who attended 10 school's seven primary, two secondary schools and one Sixth Form school. Pupils were asked 13 questions about their experiences of school belonging, On the four-point Likert scale (0 = never, 1 = a little, 2 = a lot, 3 = always, a lot or always responses were collapsed to provide scores for positive school belonging), those pupils who responded a little or never were considered to have experienced negative feelings of belonging. The findings are presented as percentages, rounding up to the nearest number for results 0.5 and above. For participants who responded 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say' in response to SEND status, this data was included as non-SEND status.

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics of participants by gender, SEND status. The is presented in relation to school type (primary, secondary and sixth form plus participants).

DEMOGRAPHIC

Table 1: Descriptive statistics (number of pupils, and percentages of total sample) for gender and SEND at baseline

	Total	Gender		SEND	
		Males	Females	No	Yes
Total	1.214	628 (52%)	545 (45%)	1072 (88%)	128 (11%)
Secondary	346 (29%)	198 (58%)	130 (38%)	293 (86%)	47 (13%)
Primary	739 (61%)	375 (51%)	346 (47%)	658 (90%)	75 (10%)
Sixth Form	129 (11%)	55 (43%)	69 (54%)	121 (95%)	6 (5%)

FINDINGS FOR BM PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

The following section provides the findings for the BM Pupil Questionnaire, the findings will be reported overall, by gender and SEND status and by School Type for each question.

I feel like I belong in my school

Figures 1.a, 1.b and 1.c graphs show pupil responses to the question 'I feel like I belong in my school' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 1.a shows overall pupil responses, just over a third (34%) of pupils responded negatively to the question.

Figure 1.a Overall pupil responses to I feel like I belong at my school



Figure 1.b The findings show that slightly more females (35%) than males (31%) responded negatively. 43% of SEND status pupils responded negatively compared with 32% of negative responses for non-SEND pupils.

Figure 1.b responses for Gender and SEND to I feel like I belong at my school

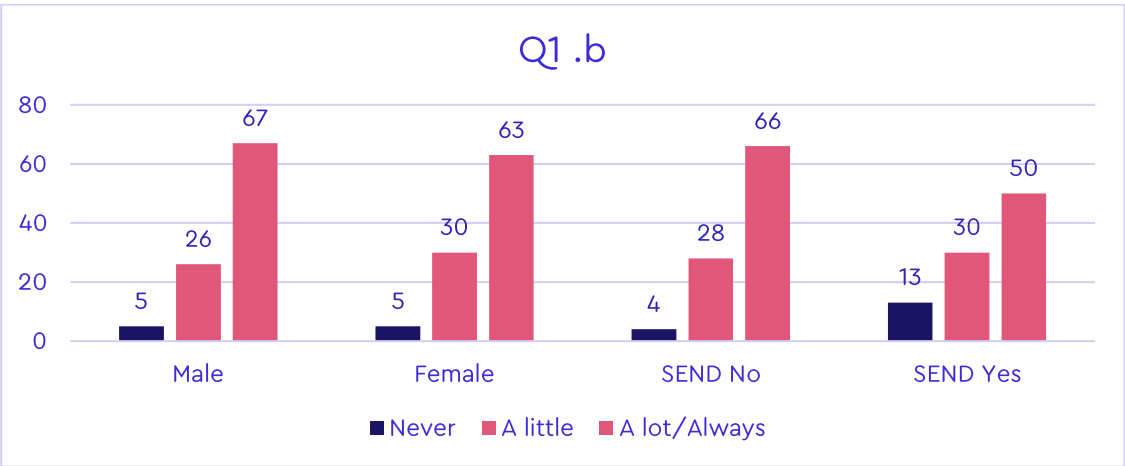
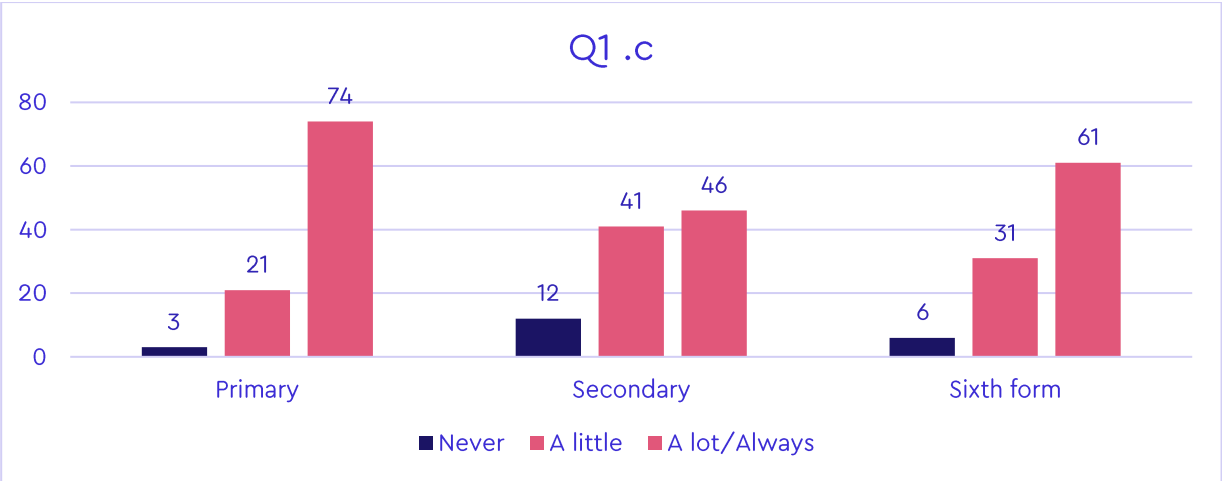


Figure 1.c shows that a significant percentage of secondary school pupils (53%) responded negatively compared to 37% of pupils at sixth form and 24% of pupils who attend primary school.

Figure 1.c responses by school type to I feel like I belong at my school



Most of my teachers at my school are interested in me

Figures 2.a, 2.b and 2.c graphs show pupil responses to the question 'Most of my teachers at my school are interested in me', for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 2.a shows nearly half the overall sample (48%) responded negatively to the question.

Figure 2.a overall responses to *Most of my teachers at my school are interested in me*

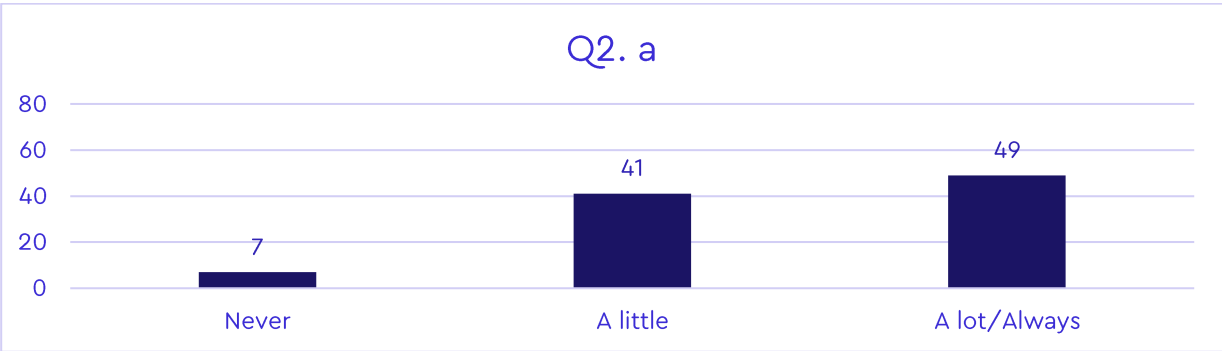


Figure 2.b shows 50% of male pupils and 47% of female pupils responded negatively. 46% of SEND pupils responded negatively, however, 49% non-SEND pupils responded negatively to the question.

Figure 2.b responses by gender and SEND pupils to *Most of my teachers at my school are interested in me*

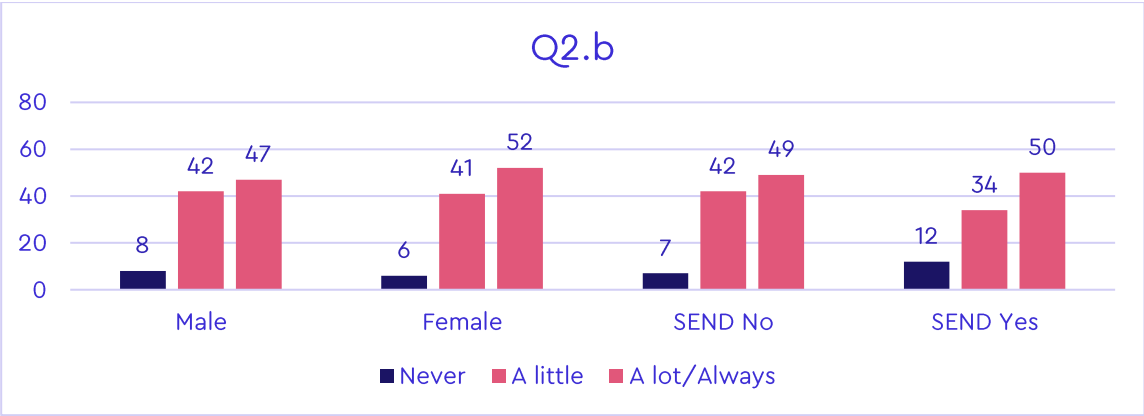
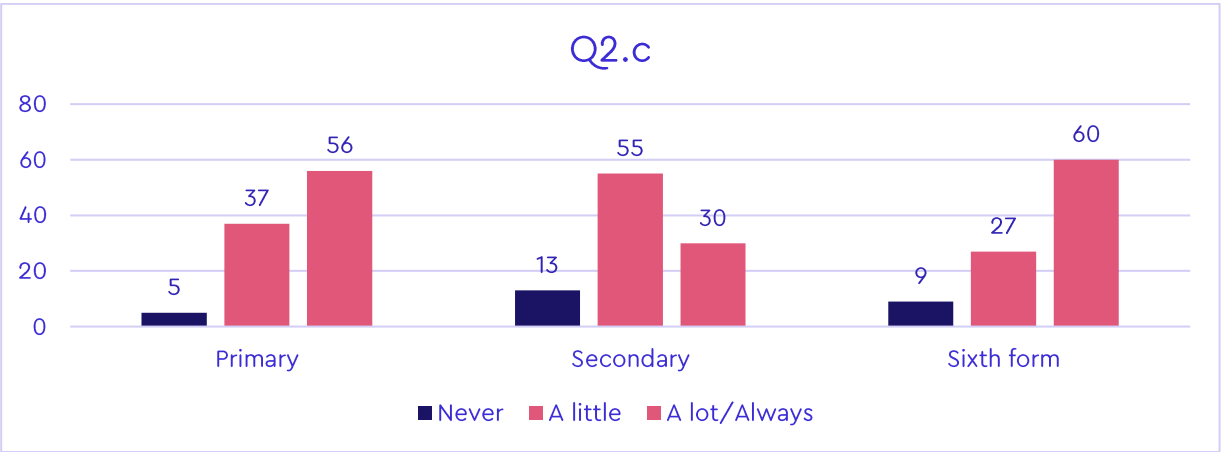


Figure 2.c shows significant percentage of secondary school pupils (68%) responded negatively compared to 42% of primary school pupils and 36% of sixth form pupils.

Figure 2.c responses by school type to *Most of my teachers at my school are interested in me*.



I feel different from most other pupils

Figures 3.a, 3.b and 3.c graphs show pupil responses to the question 'I feel different from most other pupils' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type (this question is reverse coded).

Figure 3.a shows overall pupil responses with nearly a third of pupils (31%) responding that they feel different from other pupils a lot or always.

Figure 3.a Overall pupil responses to *I feel different from most pupils*

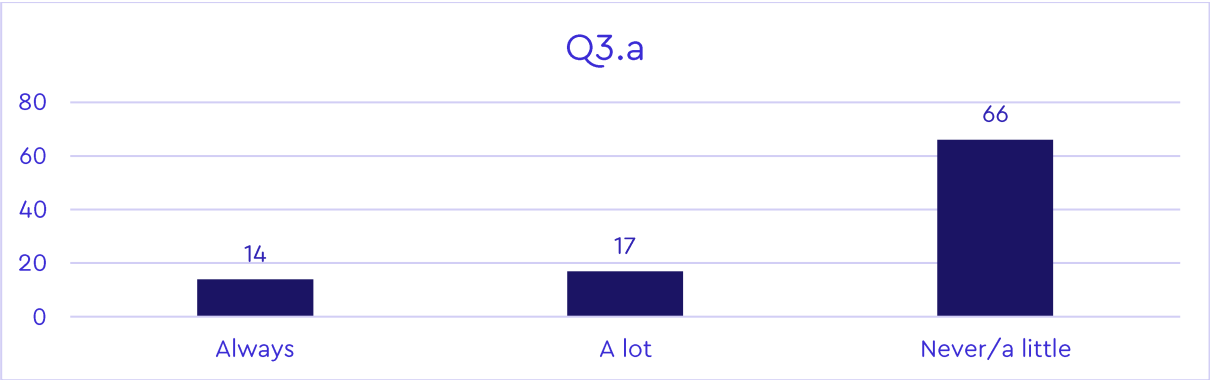


Figure 3.b shows slightly more male pupils (32%) than female pupils (30%) responded feeling different a lot or always. A significant percentage of SEND pupils (47%) compared to non-SEND pupils (29%) responded feeling different to other pupils.

Figure 3.b responses for Gender and SEND pupils to *I feel different from most pupils*

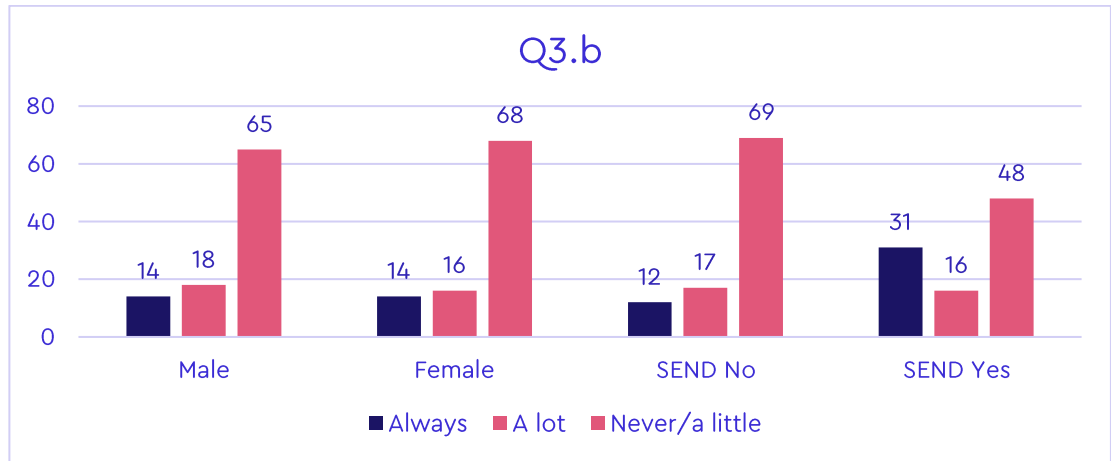
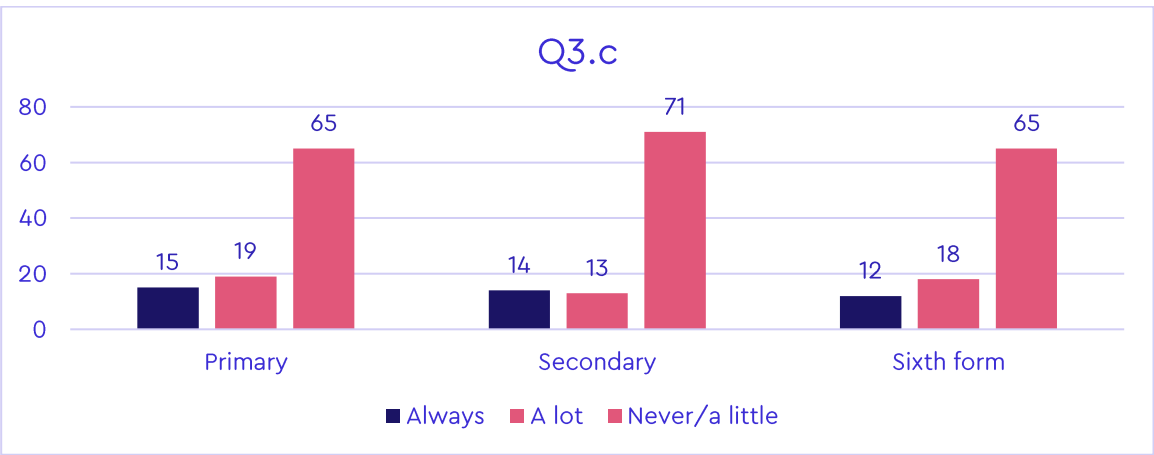


Figure 3.c shows over a third of primary school pupils (34%) feel different a lot or always compared to sixth form pupils (30%) and secondary school pupils (27%) least likely to respond feeling different from most pupils.

Figure 3.c responses by school type to *I feel different from most pupils*.



People at my school support me in my work

Figures 4.a, 4.b and 4.c graphs show pupil responses to the question 'People at my school support me in my work' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 4.a shows overall, 43% of pupil responded a negatively to feeling supported in their work.

Figure 4.a overall pupil responses to the question *People at my school support me in my work*

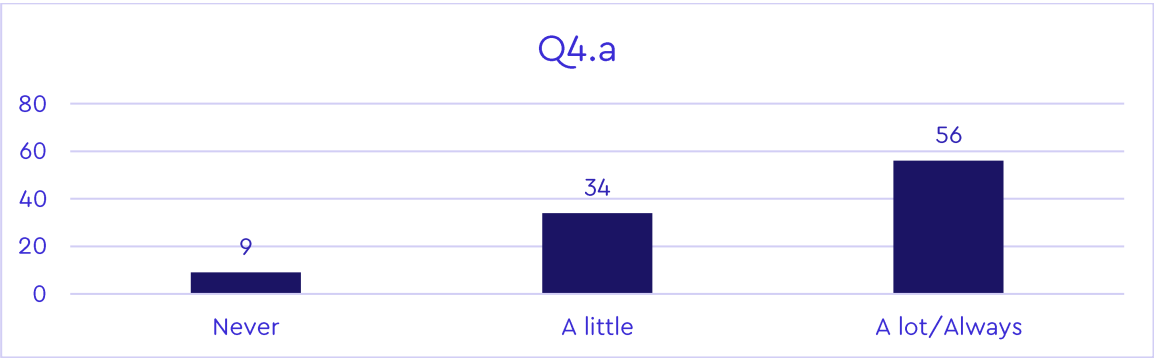


Figure 4.b shows 45% of male pupils responded negatively compared with 39% of female pupils indicating that they felt 'never' or 'a little' supported in their work by people at school. 40% of SEND compared with 43% of non-SEND pupils felt negatively to being supported with their work 'never' or 'a little'.

Figure 4.b responses for gender and SEND pupils to *People at my school support me in my work*.

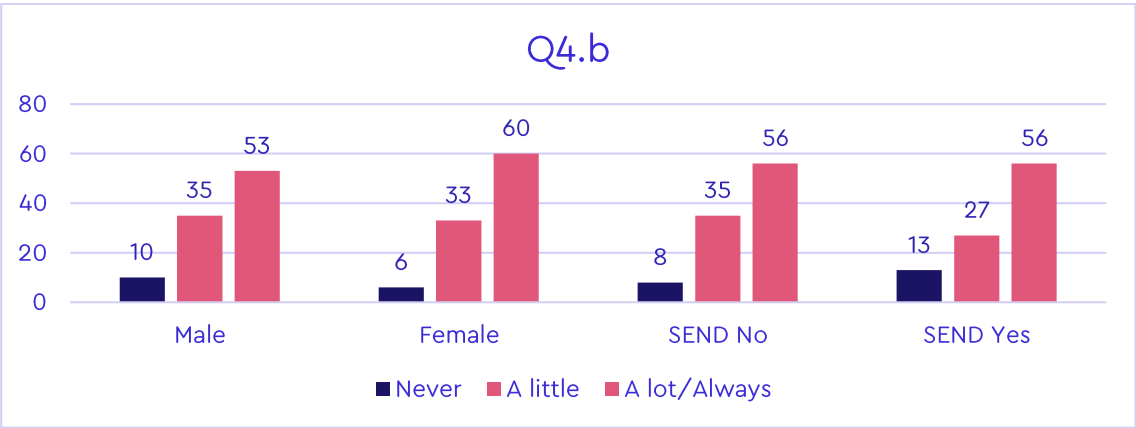
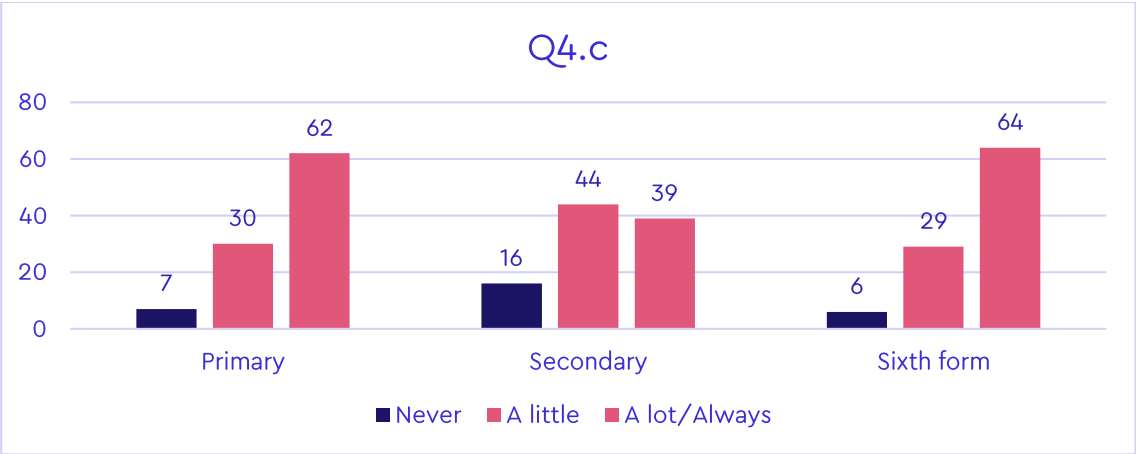


Figure 4.c shows a significant percentage of secondary school pupils (60%) feel unsupported in their work, compared to 37% of primary school pupils and 35% of sixth form pupils being supported in their work at school.

Figure 4.c responses by school type to *people at my school support me in my work*



I feel safe at my school

Figures 5.a, 5.b and 5.c graphs show pupil responses to the question 'I feel safe at my school' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 5. shows over a quarter of pupils overall (26%) responded negatively to feeling safe at school.

Figure 5.a responses overall to *I feel safe at my school*

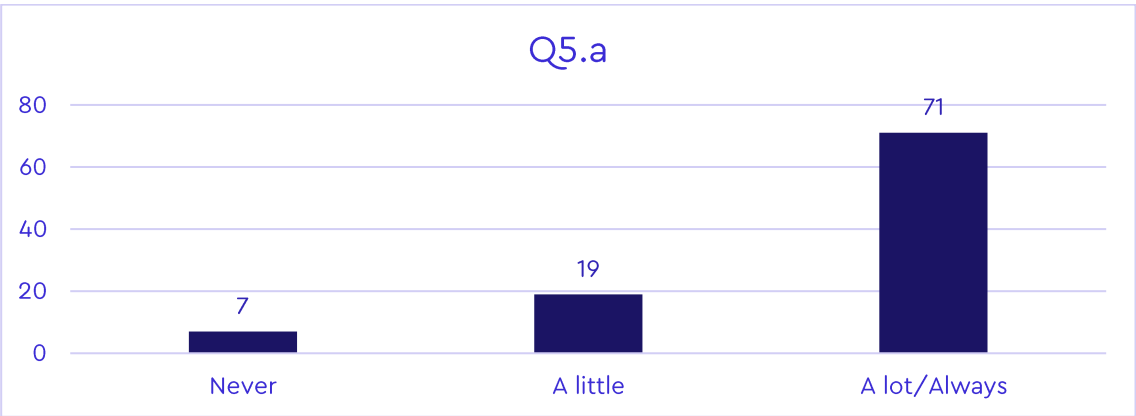


Figure 5.b shows 26% of male and female pupils responded negatively indicating that they felt 'never' or 'a little' feeling safe in their school. Over a third (34%) of SEND pupils responded negatively compared with 26% non-SEND pupils indicating that they felt 'never' or 'a little' safe in their school.

Figure 5.b shows gender and SEND responses to *I feel safe at my school*

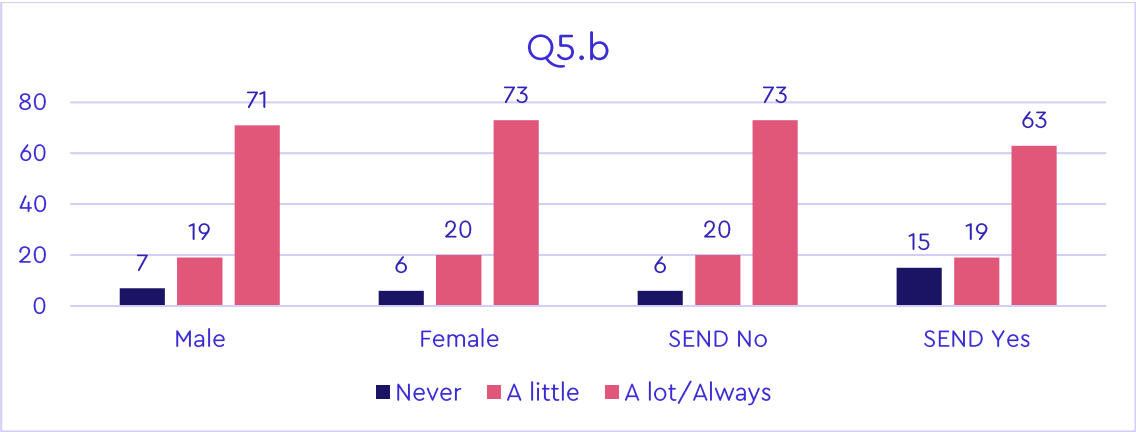
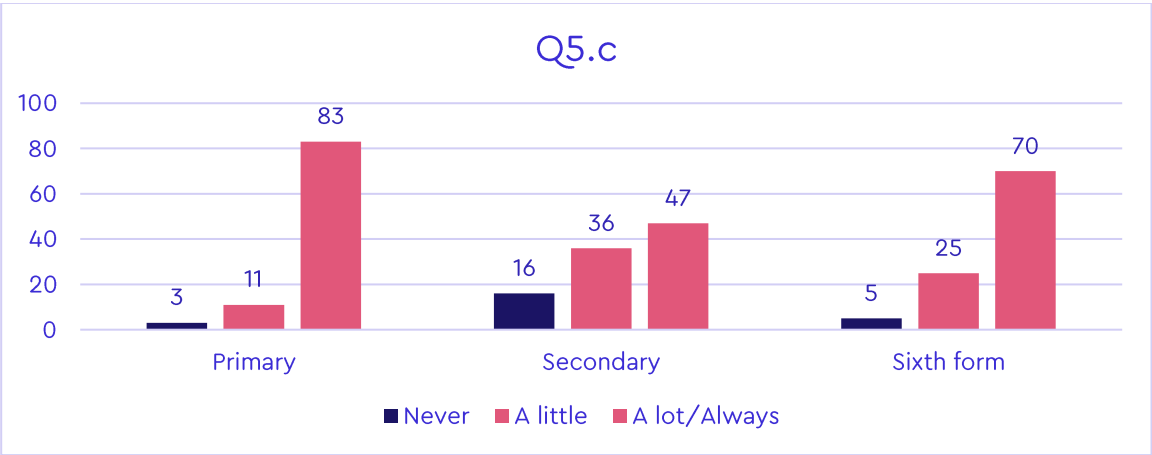


Figure 5.c shows a significant percentage of secondary school pupils (52%) responded negatively compared to 30% sixth form pupils and 14% primary school pupils.

Figure 5.c responses by school type to *I feel safe at my school*



I feel lonely at my school

Figure 6.a, 6.b and 6.c graphs show pupil responses to the question 'I feel lonely at my school' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type. (this question was reverse coded)

Figure 6.a shows overall, 11% of pupils feel lonely at their school a lot or always.

Figure 6.a overall pupil responses to *I feel lonely at my school*

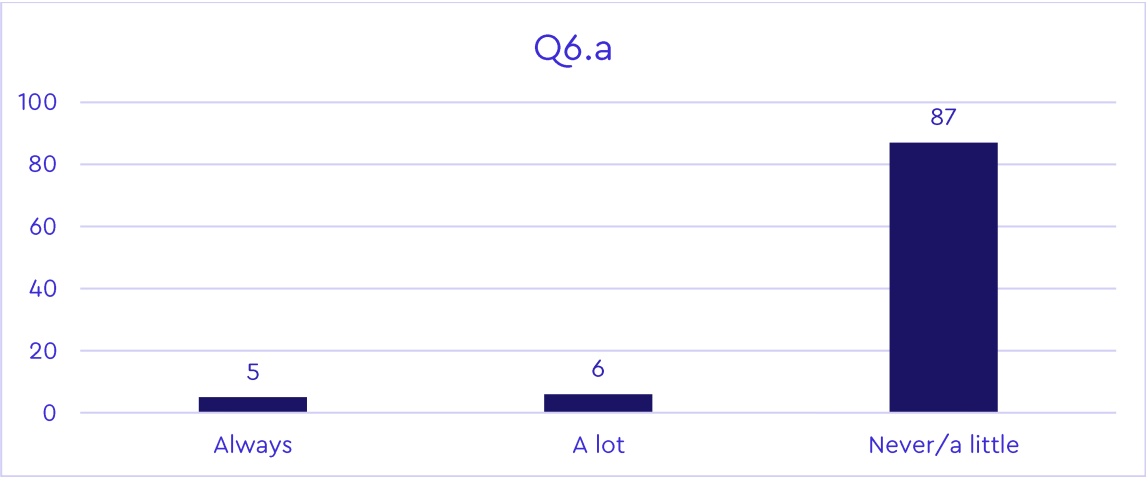


Figure 6.b shows 11% of female pupils and 10% of male pupils feel lonely 'a lot' or 'always' at their school. 18% of SEND pupils responded to feeling lonely 'a lot' or 'always' at their school compared to 10% of non-SEND pupils.

Figure 6.b responses for gender and SEND to *I feel lonely at my school*

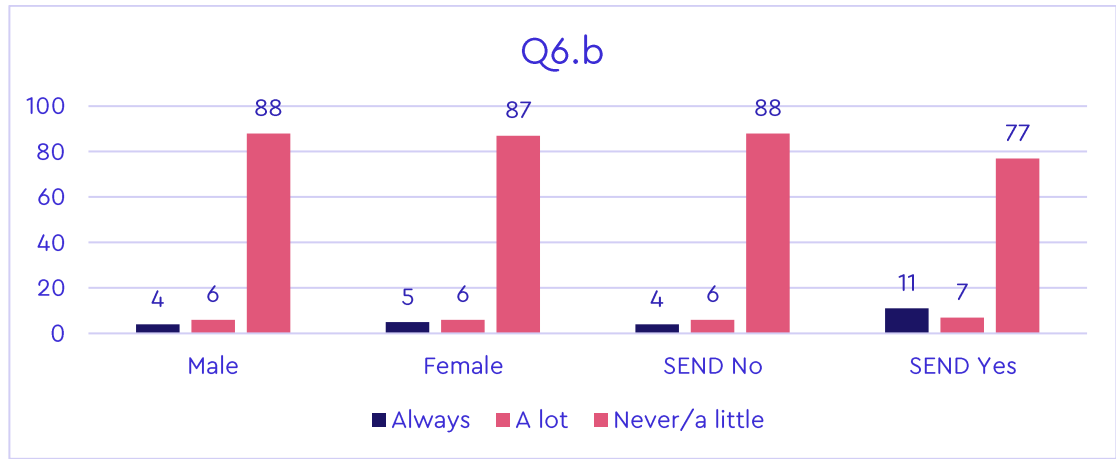
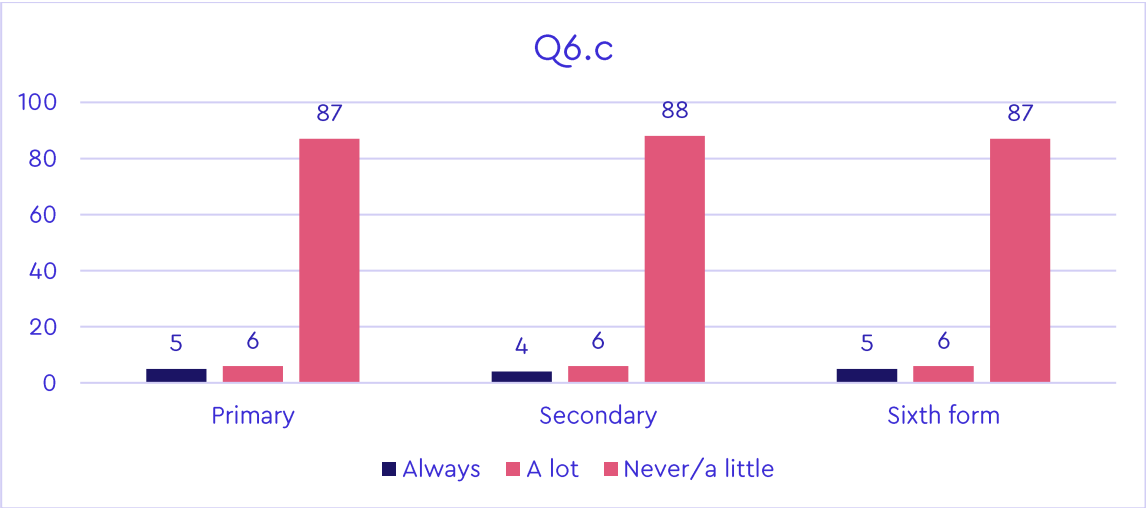


Figure 6.c pupil responses show that around 10-11% of pupils felt lonely a lot or always for all school types.

Figure 6.c responses by school type to *I feel lonely at my school*



People at my school are friendly to me

Figures 7.a, 7.b and 7.c show pupil responses to the question 'People at my school are friendly to me' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 7.a shows overall, nearly a quarter of pupils (23%) responded negatively to the question indicating that the felt people at their school were friendly to them never or a little.

Figure 7.a overall responses to *People at my school are friendly to me*

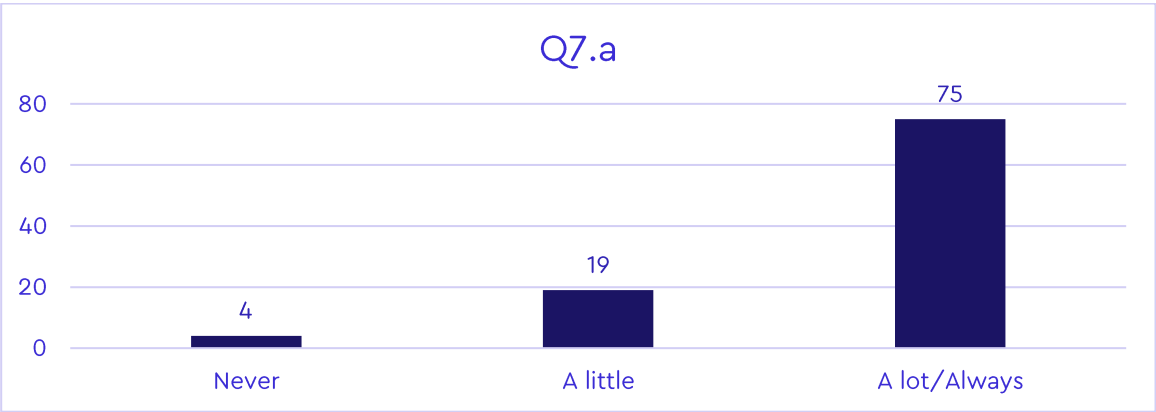


Figure 7.b shows slightly more female pupils (25%) than male pupils (21%) responded negatively that people at their school were not friendly to them. 25% of SEND pupils responded negatively compared with 23% of non-SEND.

Figure 7.b responses for gender and SEND to *People at my school are friendly to me*

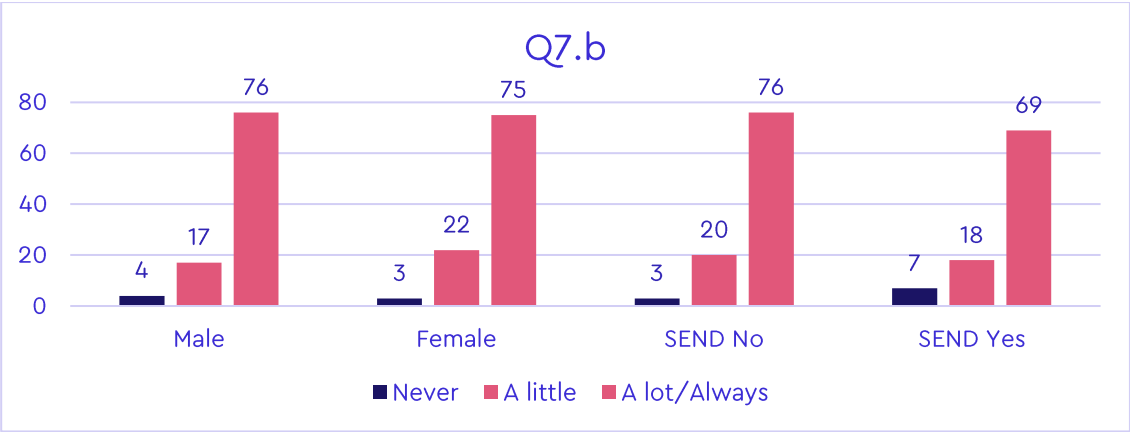
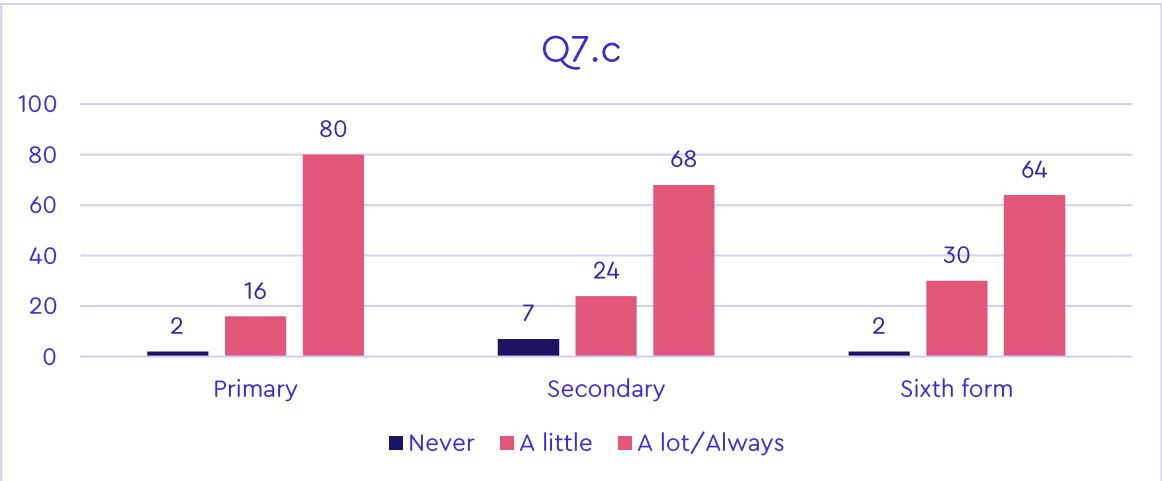


Figure 7.c shows 32% of sixth form pupils respond negatively compared with 31% of secondary school pupils responded negatively, similarly to the question and 18% of primary school pupils.

Figure 7.c response by school type to *People at my school are friendly to me*



There is a teacher or adult at my school that I can talk to if I have a problem

Figure 8.a, 8.b and 8.c graphs show pupil response to the question 'There is a teacher or adult at my school that I can talk to if I have a problem' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figures 8.a shows a quarter (25%) of pupils overall responded negatively to the question.

Figure 8.a overall responses to *There is a teacher or adult at my school that I can talk to if I have a problem*

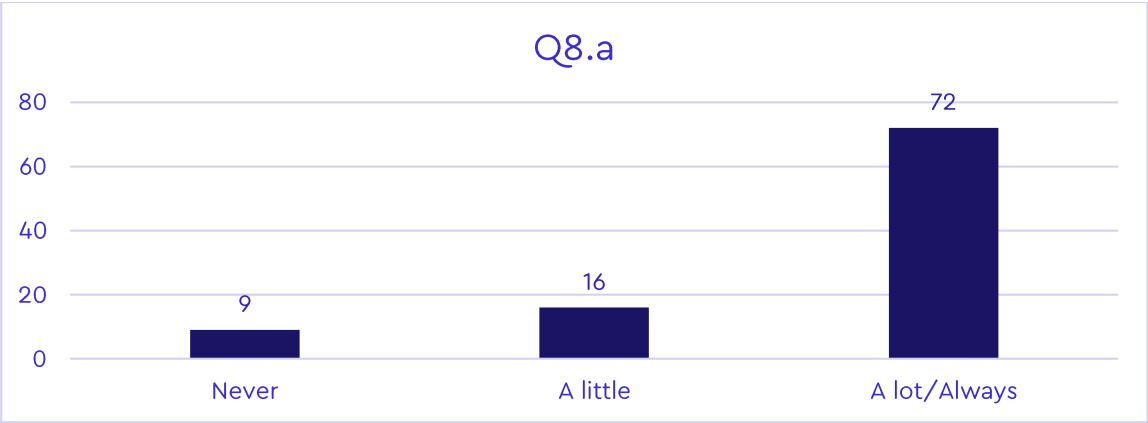


Figure 8.b shows that slightly more male pupils (26%) responded negatively compared with 23% of female pupils to the question. 26% of non-SEND pupils responded negatively to the question 'a little' or 'never' there is compared with 21% of SEND pupils.

Figure 8.b pupil responses by gender and SEND to *There is a teacher or adult at my school that I can talk to if I have a problem*

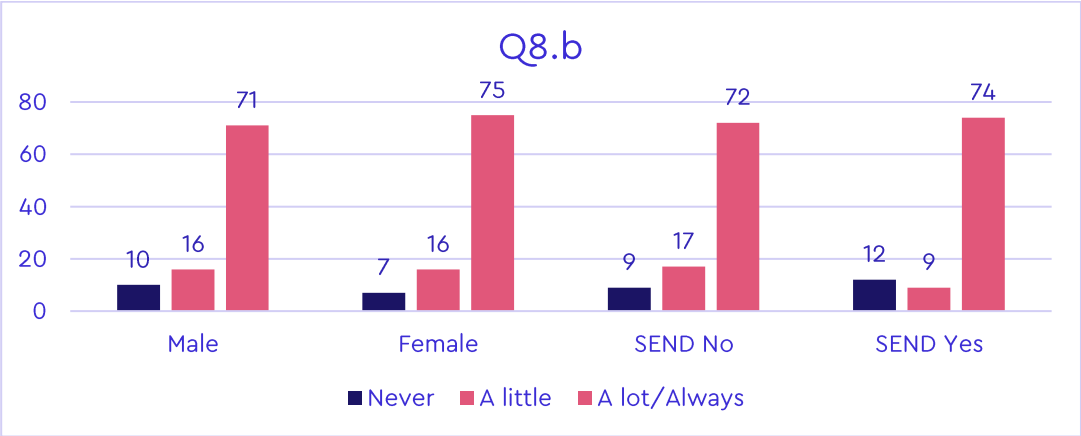
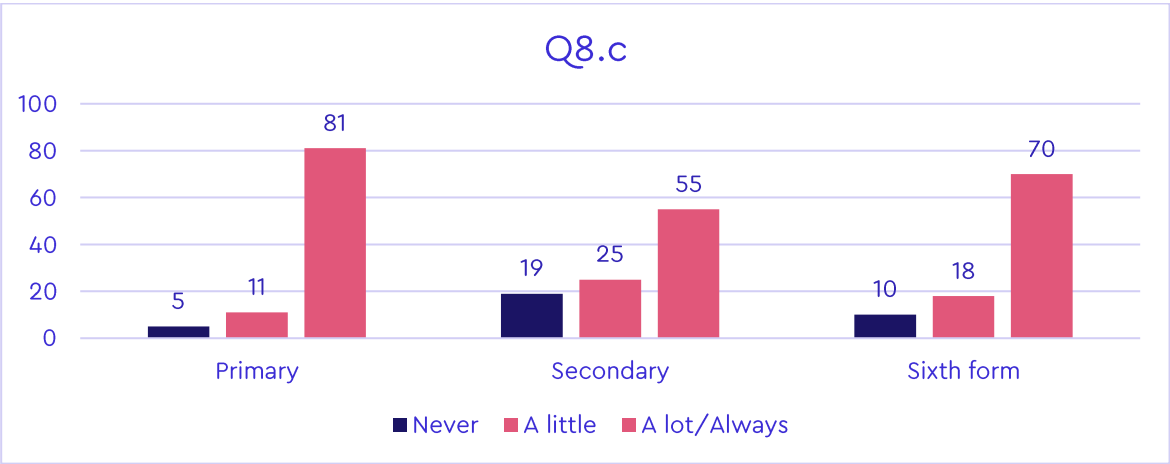


Figure 8.c shows that nearly half of secondary school pupils (44%) responded negatively compared to 28% of Sixth form pupils and 16% of primary school pupils.

Figure 8.c pupil responses by school type to *There is a teacher or adult at my school that I can talk to if I have a problem*



I feel included in school and classroom activities

Figures 9.a, 9.b and 9.c graphs show pupil responses to the question 'I feel included in school and classroom activities' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 9.a shows overall just under a quarter of pupils (23%) responded negatively to the question.

Figure 9.a overall responses to *I feel included in my school and classroom activities*

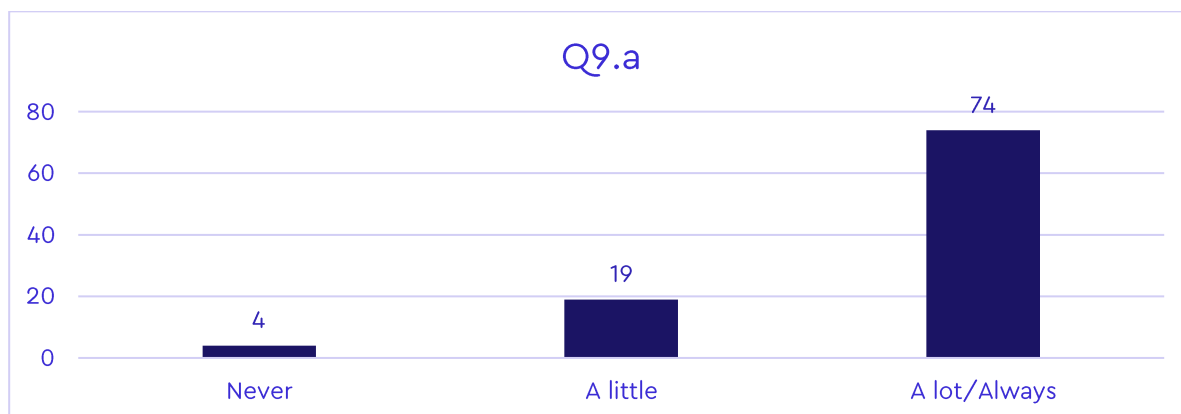


Figure 9.b shows a quarter of female pupils (25%) responded negatively 'a little' or 'never' to feeling included in classroom activities compared with just over a fifth of male pupils (21%). 31% of SEND pupils responded negatively 'a little' or 'never' to feeling included in classroom activities compared to 23% of non-SEND pupils.

Figure 9.b pupil responses by gender and SEND status to *I feel included in school and classroom activities*

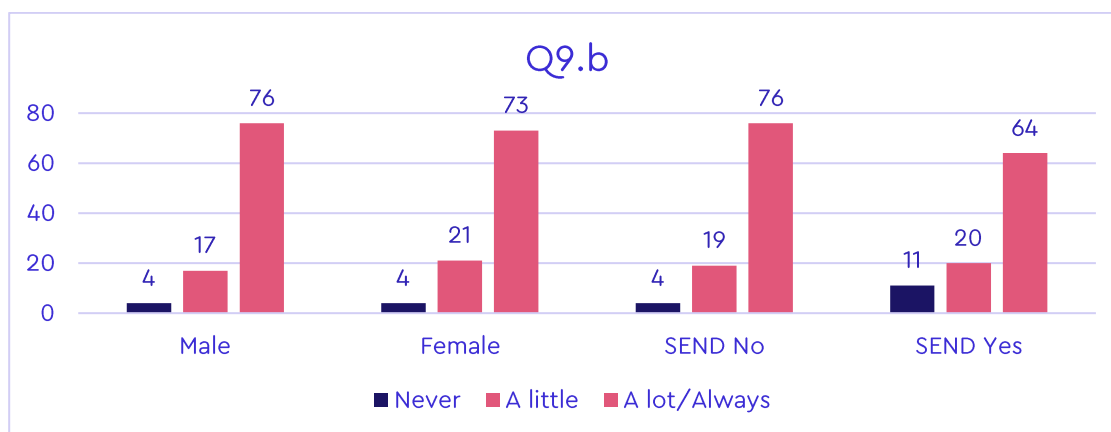
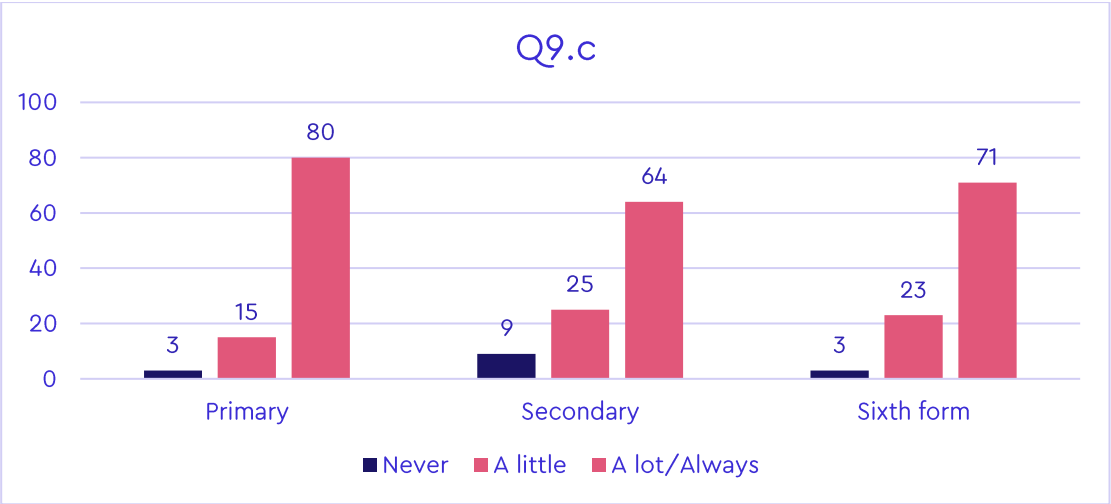


Figure 9.c 34% of secondary school pupils respond negatively compared with 26% of Sixth form pupils and 18% of primary school pupils.

Figure 9.c pupil responses by school type to *I feel included in school and classroom activities*



Other pupils like me the way I am

Figures 10.a, 10.b and 10.c graphs show pupil responses to 'Other pupils like me the way I am' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 10.a shows overall, 30% of pupils responded negatively to the question.

Figure 10.a overall responses to *Other pupils like me the way I am*

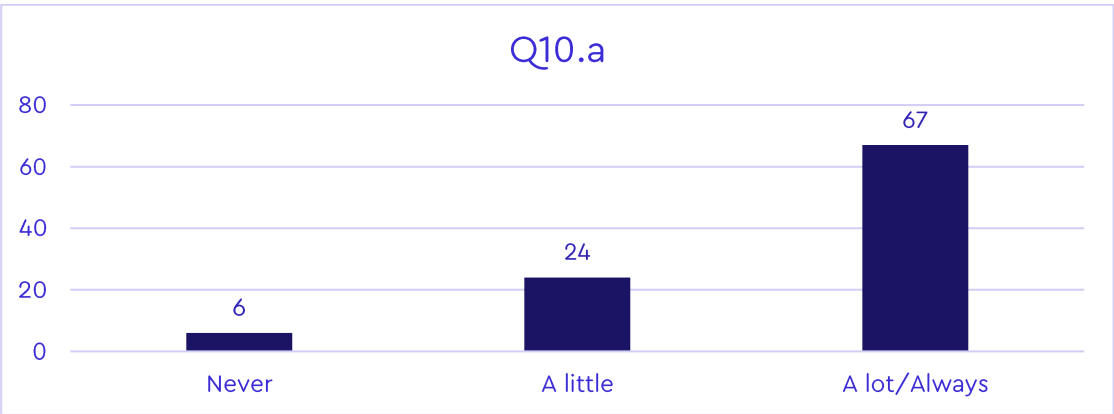


Figure 10.b shows 32% female pupils respond 'a little' or 'never' that other pupils liked them the way they are negatively compared to 27% of male pupils. A greater percentage of SEND pupils (47%) responded negatively 'a little' or 'never' that other pupils liked them the way they are compared with 28% of non-SEND pupils.

Figure 10.b responses for gender and SEND pupils to 'Other pupils like me the way I am'

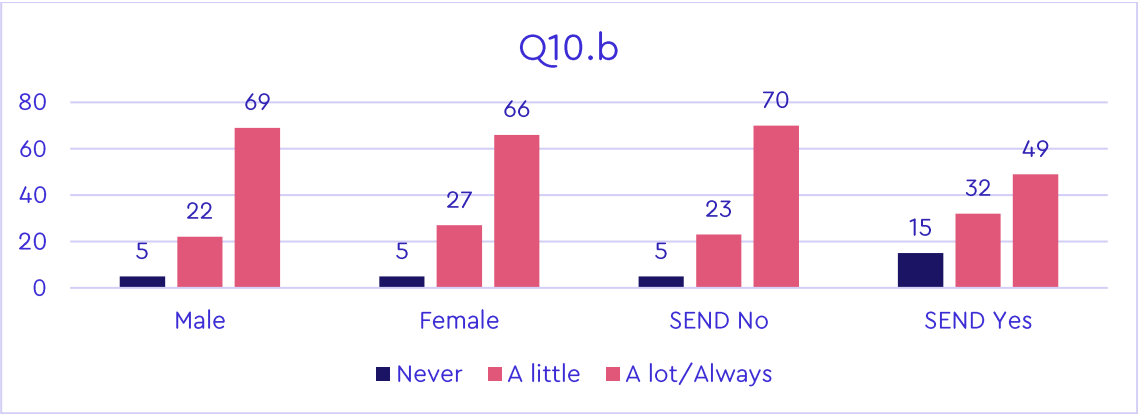
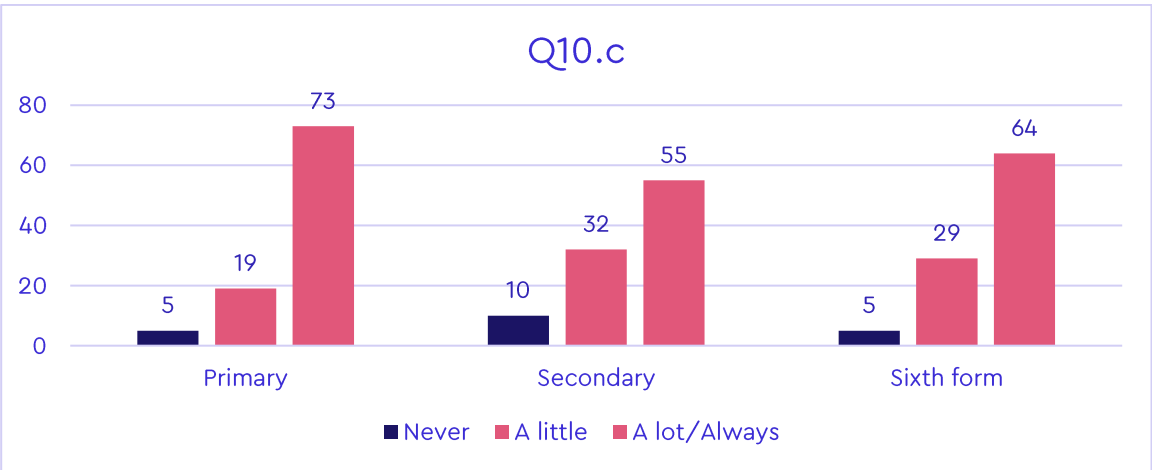


Figure 10.c shows a high percentage of secondary school pupils (42%) responded negatively compared with 34% of Sixth form pupils and 24% of primary school pupils.

Figure 10.c responses by school types to *Other pupils like me the way I am*



Teachers at my school respect me the way I am

Figures 11.a, 11.b and 11.c graphs show pupil responses to 'Teachers at my school respect me the way I am' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 11.a shows a fifth of pupils overall (20%) responded negatively to the question.

Figure 11.a overall pupil responses to *Teachers at my school respect me the way I am*

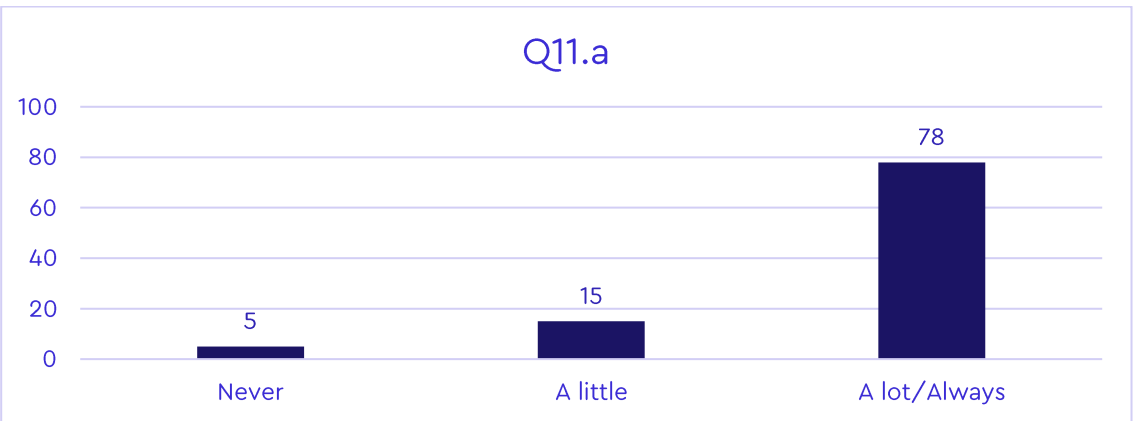


Figure 11.b shows 20% of male pupils and 19% of female pupils responded negatively 'a little' or 'never' that teachers at my school respect me the way I am. 29% of SEND pupils (29%) responded negatively 'a little' or 'never' that teachers at my school respect me the way I am compared to 18% of non-SEND pupils (18%).

Figure 11.b responses for gender and SEND pupils to *Teachers at my school respect me the way I am*

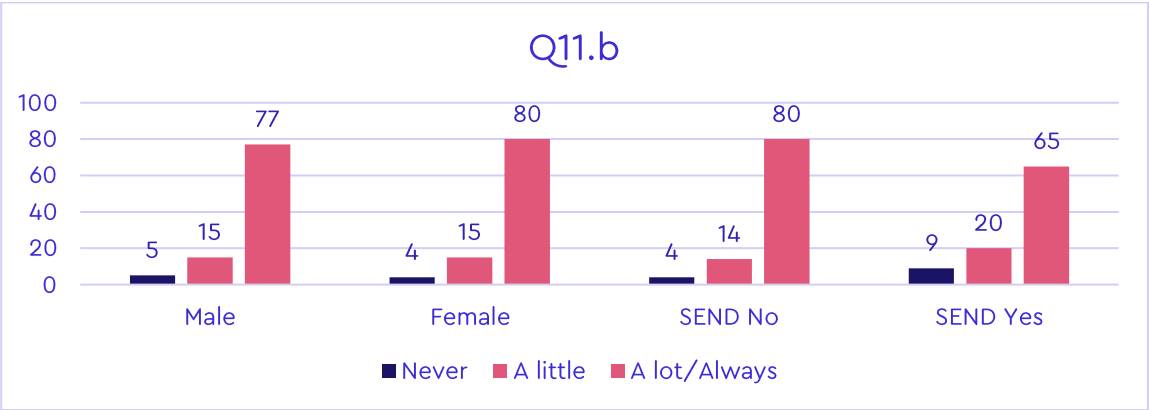
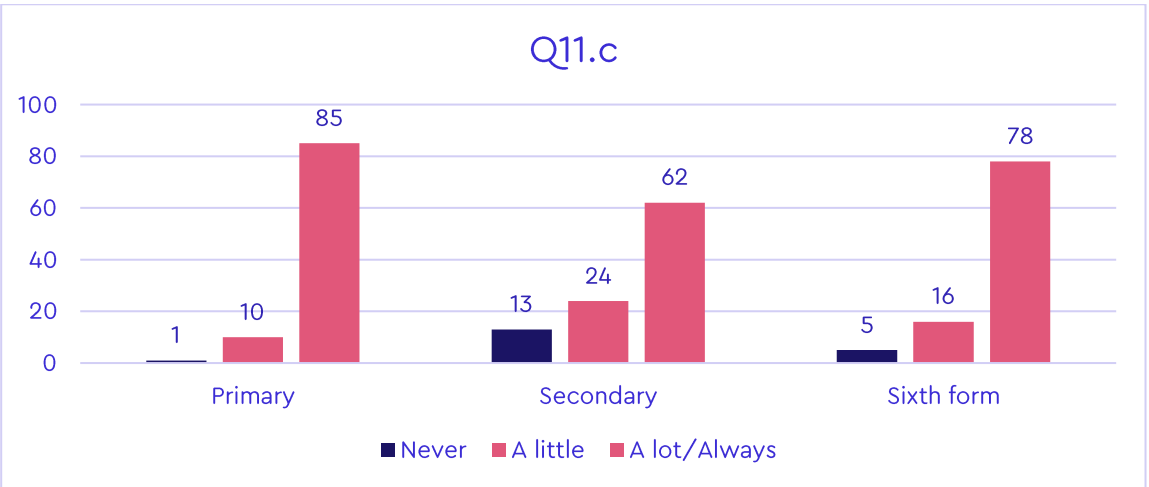


Figure 11.c shows over a third of secondary school pupils (37%) responded negatively compared to 21% of sixth form pupils and 11% of primary school pupils.

Figure 11.c responses by school type to *Teachers at my school respect me the way I am*



Teachers at my school treat pupils fairly

Figures 12.a, 12.b and 12.c graphs show pupil responses to the question 'Teachers at my school treat pupils fairly' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 12.a shows 29% of pupils overall responded negatively to the question.

Figure 12.a shows overall pupil responses to *Teachers at my school treat pupils fairly*

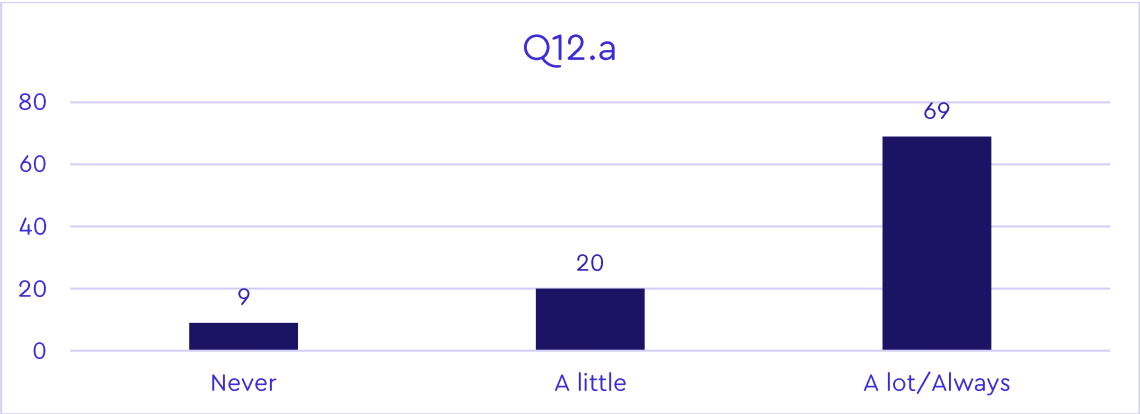


Figure 12.b shows over a quarter of male pupils (29%) and female pupils (28%) responded negatively 'a little' or 'never' to the question. 30% of SEND pupils and slightly less non-SEND pupils (29%) respond negatively 'a little' or 'never' to the question.

Figure 12.b shows gender and SEND responses to *Teachers at my school treat pupils fairly*

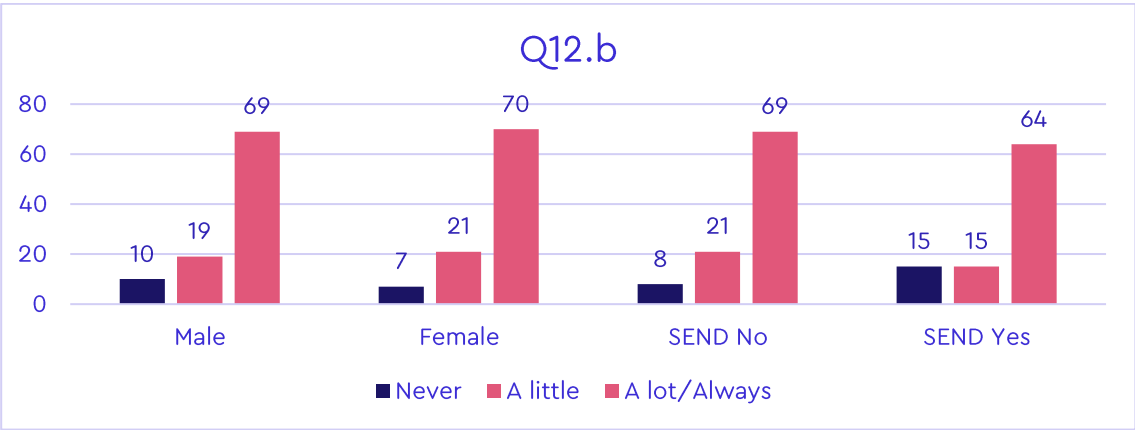
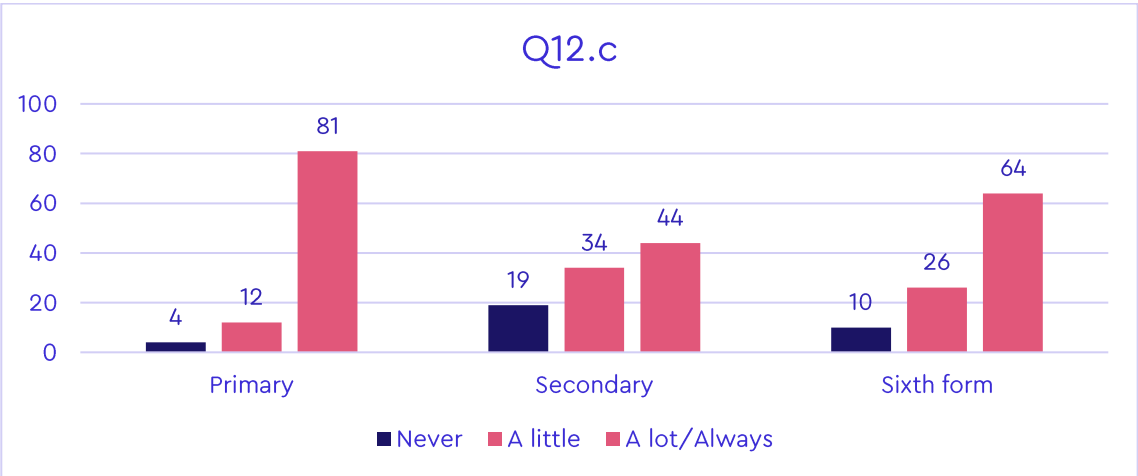


Figure 12.c shows significant percentage of secondary school pupils (53%) responded negatively compared 36% of Sixth form pupils and 16% of primary school pupils.

Figure 12.c shows responses by School Type to the question *Teachers at my school treat pupils fairly*



I am happy to be part of my school

Figures 13.a, 13.b and 13.c graphs show pupil responses to the question 'I am happy to be part of my school' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 13.a shows 23% of pupils overall responded negatively to the question.

Figure 13.a overall pupil responses to *I am happy to be part of my school*

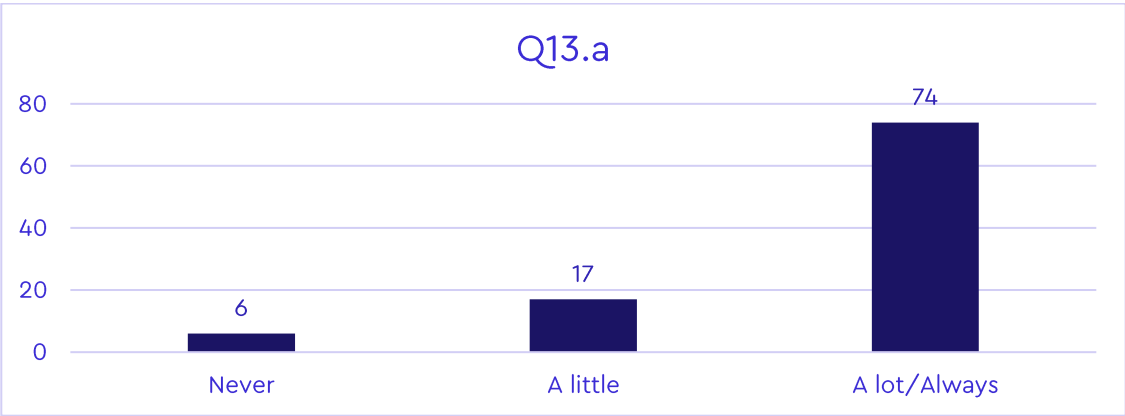


Figure 13.b shows almost a quarter of male pupils (22%) and female pupils (23%) responded negatively. Nearly a third of SEND pupils (31%) responded negatively compared to 22% of non-SEND pupils.

Figure 13.b gender and SEND pupil responses to *I am happy to be part of my school*

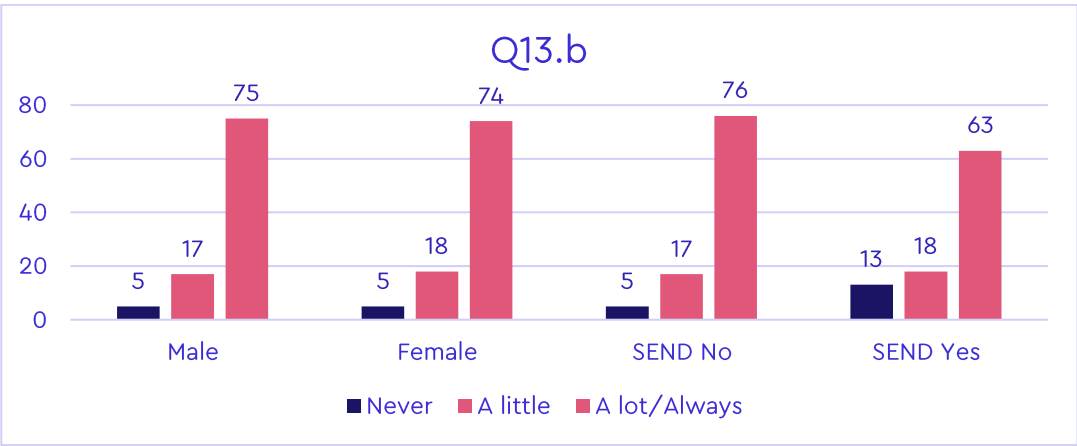
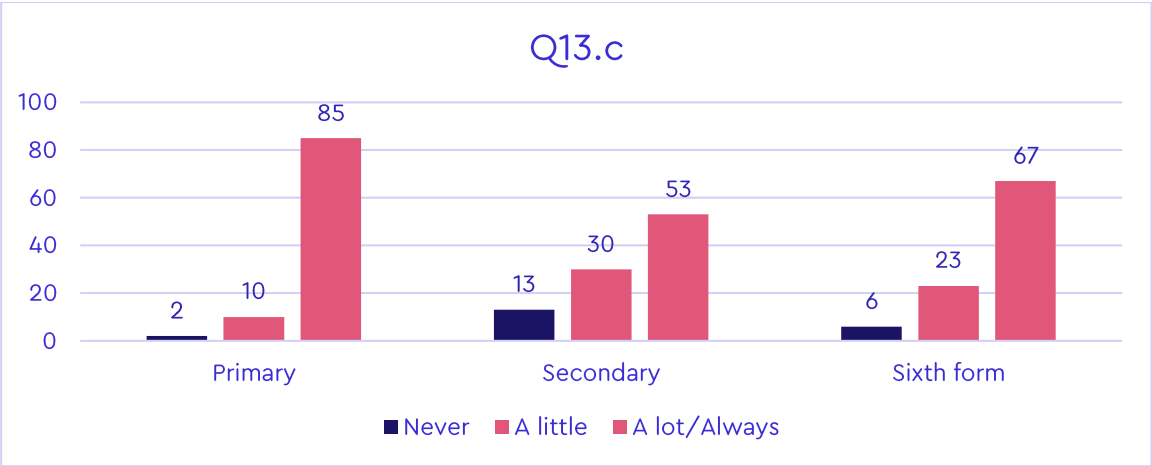


Figure 13.c graph shows that nearly half of secondary school pupils (43%) responded negatively compared with 29% of sixth form pupils and 12% of primary school pupils.

Figure 13.c shows responses by School Type to *I am happy to be part of my school*.



PARENTS/CARERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Parents/carers were asked to complete a seven-item questionnaire, 435 parents/carers participated and provided responses in relation to their child's sense of belonging and their inclusion in the school community.

Table 2 shows the demographic breakdown for the parent/carers that completed the questionnaire 73 identified as having a child with SEND, eight preferred not to say and 9 responded that they did not know about their child's SEND status. For participants who responded 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say' in response to SEND status, this data was included as non-SEND status.

Table 2 shows for gender, SEND status and by school type

	Total	Gender		SEND	
		Males	Females	No	Yes
Total	435	218 (50%)	211 (49%)	330 (76%)	73 (17%)
Secondary	196 (46%)	111 (57%)	85 (43%)	153 (77%)	38 (20%)
Primary	233 (54%)	107 (46%)	126 (54%)	194 (84%)	35 (15%)

The findings will present responses overall for parents/carers, and responses split by child's gender and SEND status and responses in relation to child's school type.

All the questions were responded to on a 4-point Likert scale and scored never (0), a little (1), a lot (2) or always (3), a lot and always were collapsed to provide positive school belonging. The graphs will show the findings as percentages for never and a little and positive feelings (a lot and always).

Q1 'Your child feels like they belong at their school'

Q2 'There is someone at school that your child knows they can talk to if they have a problem'

Q3 'You feel that your child is included in school activities'

Q4 'You feel your child is supported in school'

Q5 'You feel part of your child's school community'

Q6 'You feel like you have a good relationship with your child's school'

Q7 'You feel the school listens to you'

Your child feels like they belong at their school

Figures 14.a, 14.b and 14.c graphs show parents/carers responses to 'Your child feels like they belong at their school' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 14.a shows just over a quarter (28%) of parents/carers responded negatively to the question.

Figure 14.a Parents/carers overall response to *Your child feels like they belong at their school*

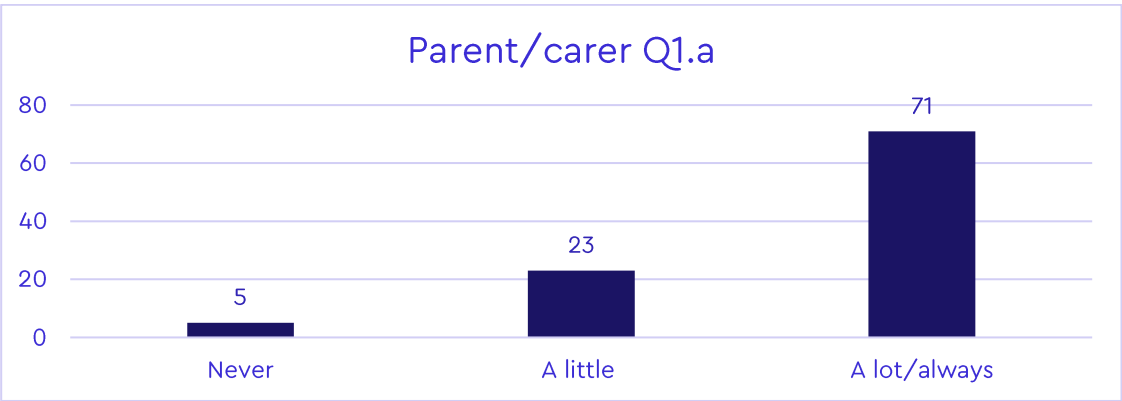


Figure 14.b shows parents/carers of male pupils (31%) responded slightly more negatively than parents/carers for female pupils (25%). 38% of SEND pupil parents/carers responded negatively compared to 23% of non-SEND parents/carers.

Figure 14.b parents/carers responses for Gender and SEND to *Your child feels like they belong at their school*

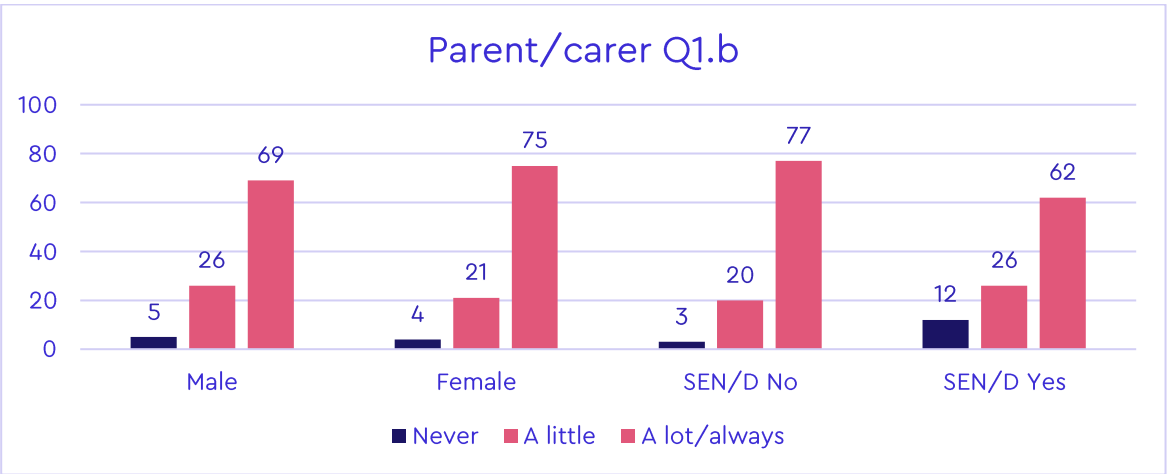
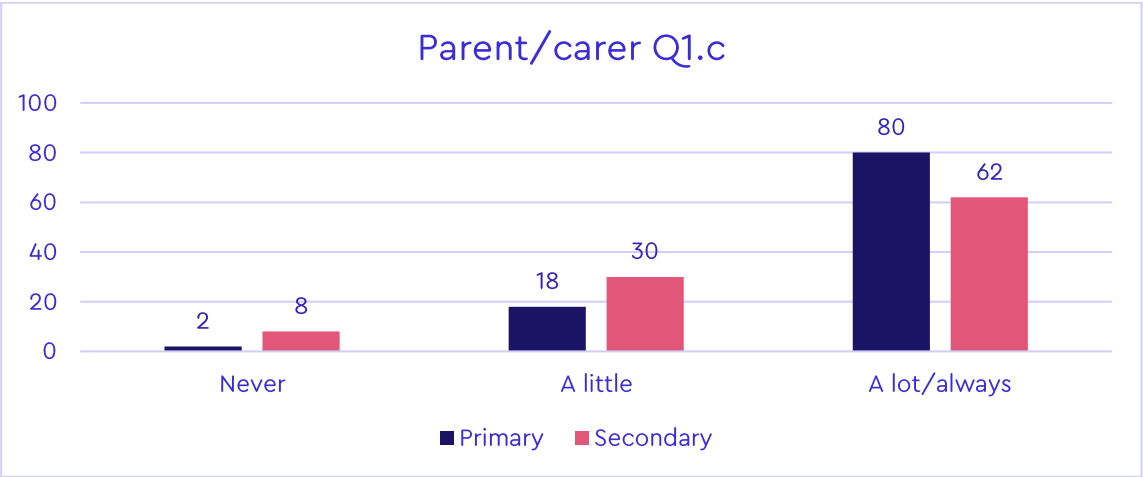


Figure 14.c shows that 38% of parents/carers of secondary school pupils responded negatively to compared to 20% parents/carers for primary school pupils.

Figure 14.c parents/carers responses by School Type *Your child feels like they belong at their school*



There is someone at school that your child knows they can talk to if they have a problem

Figures 15.a, 15.b and 15.c graphs show parents/carers responses to 'There is someone at school that your child knows they can talk to if they have a problem' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 15.a shows overall a third of parents/carers (33%) responded negatively to the question.

Figure 15.a parents/carers responses overall to *There is someone at school that your child knows they can talk to if they have a problem*

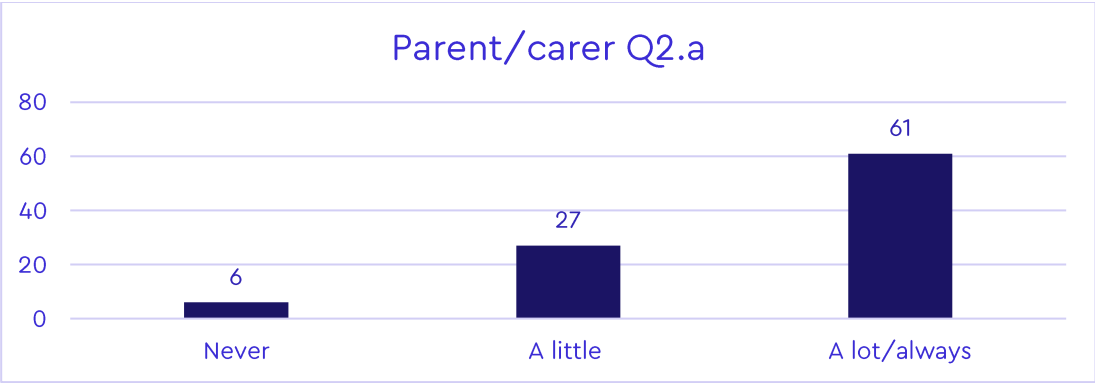


Figure 15.b shows parents/carers of male pupils (40%) responded much more negatively compared to parents/carers of female pupils (29%). Nearly two fifths (39%) of SEND parents/carers responded negatively compared to a third (33%) of non-SEND parents/carers.

Figure 15.b parents/carers responses for Gender and SEND to *There is someone at school that your child knows they can talk to if they have a problem*

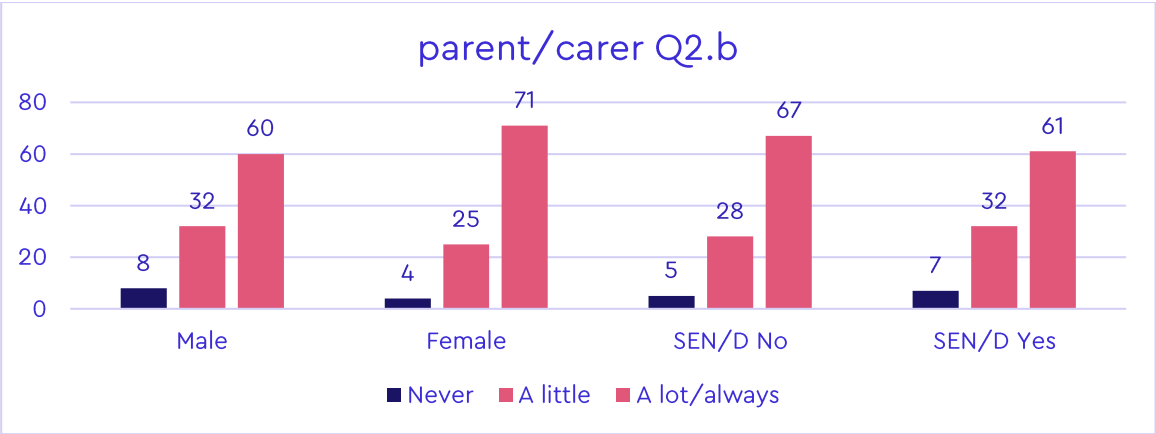
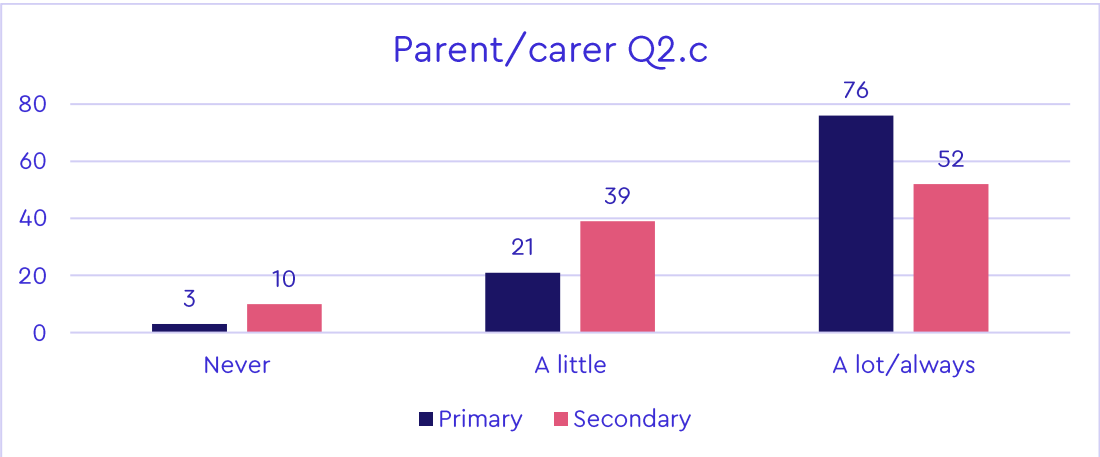


Figure 15.c shows nearly half of all parents/carers for secondary school pupils responded negatively (49%) compared 24% of parents/carers of primary school pupils.

Figure 15.c parents/carers response by School Type to *There is someone at school that your child knows they can talk to if they have a problem*



You feel that your child is included in school activities

Figures 16.a, 16.b and 16.c graphs show parents/carers responses to the question 'You feel that your child is included in school activities' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 16.a shows overall, 21% of parents/carers responded negatively to the question.

Figure 16.a parents/carers responses overall to *You feel that your child is included in school activities*

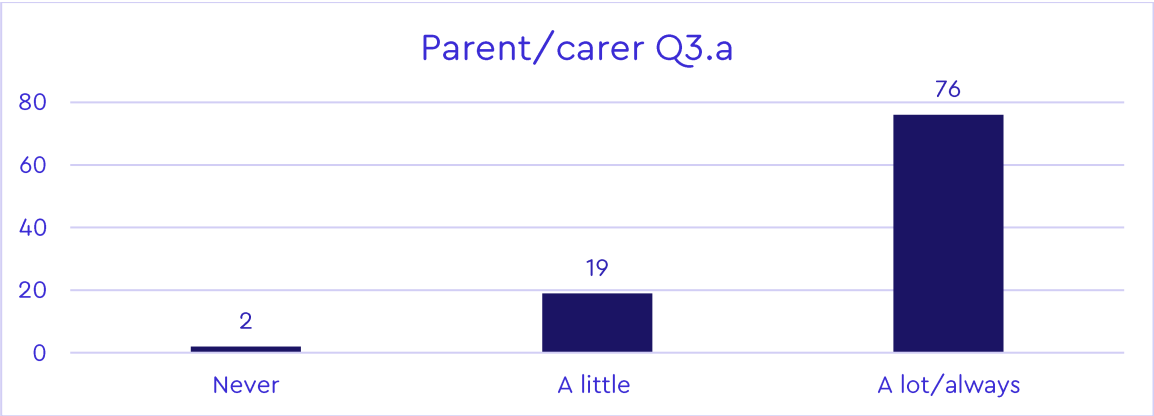


Figure 16.b shows parents/carers of male pupils (23%) respond slightly more negatively than those of female pupils (21%). There was a larger difference for parents/carers of SEND pupils (28%) responded negatively compared non-SEND parents/carers (19%).

Figure 16.b parents/carers response for Gender and SEND to *You feel that your child is included in school activities*

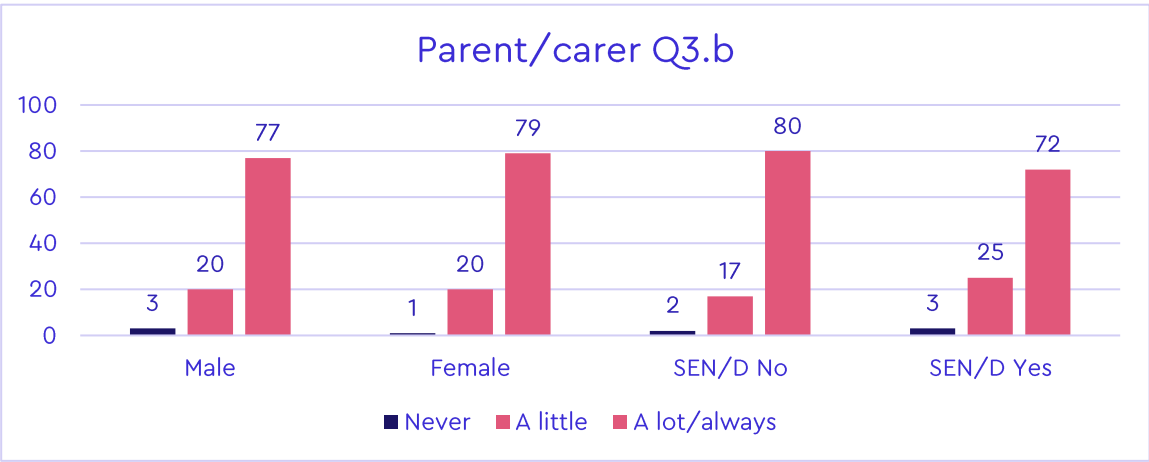
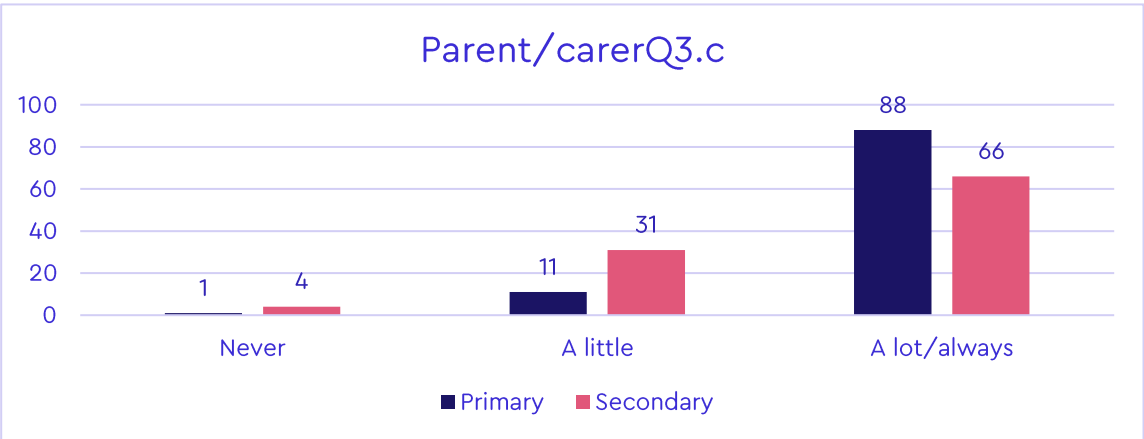


Figure 16.c shows over a third of parents/carers (35%) for secondary pupils responded negatively compared to 12% of primary school parents/carers.

Figure 16.c parents/carers responses by School Type to *You feel that your child is included in school activities*



You feel your child is supported in school

Figures 17.a, 17.b and 17.c graphs show parents/carers responses to 'You feel your child is supported in school' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 17.a shows overall, 25% of parents/carers responded negatively to the question.

Figure 17.a parents/carers responses overall to *You feel your child is supported in school*

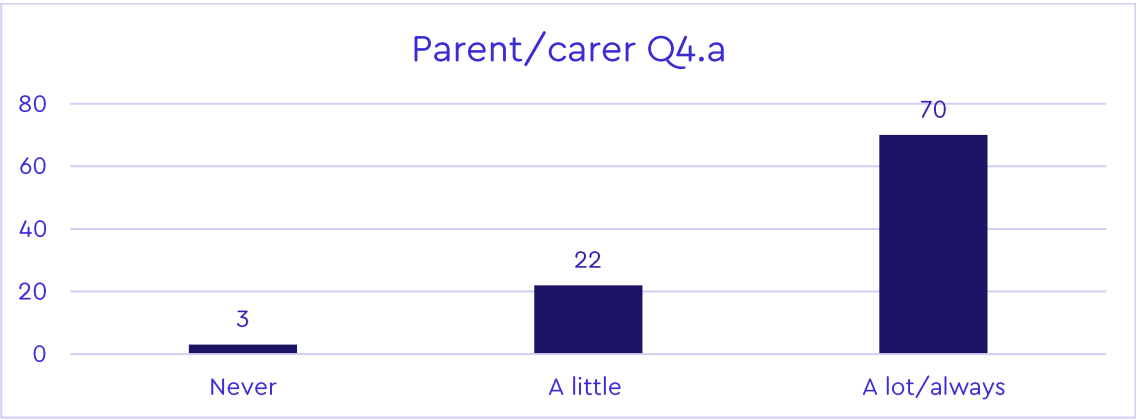


Figure 17.b shows nearly a third (32%) of parents/carers for male pupils responded negatively compared to a fifth (20%) of parents/carers for female pupils. Twice as many SEND pupil parents/carers responded negatively (42%) compared with non-SEND parents/carers (21%).

Figure 17.b parents/carers responses for Gender and SEND to *You feel your child is supported in school*

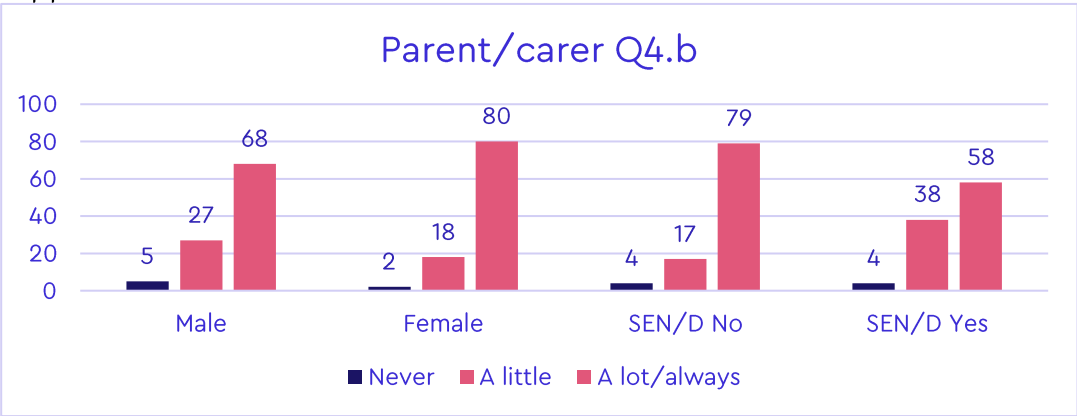
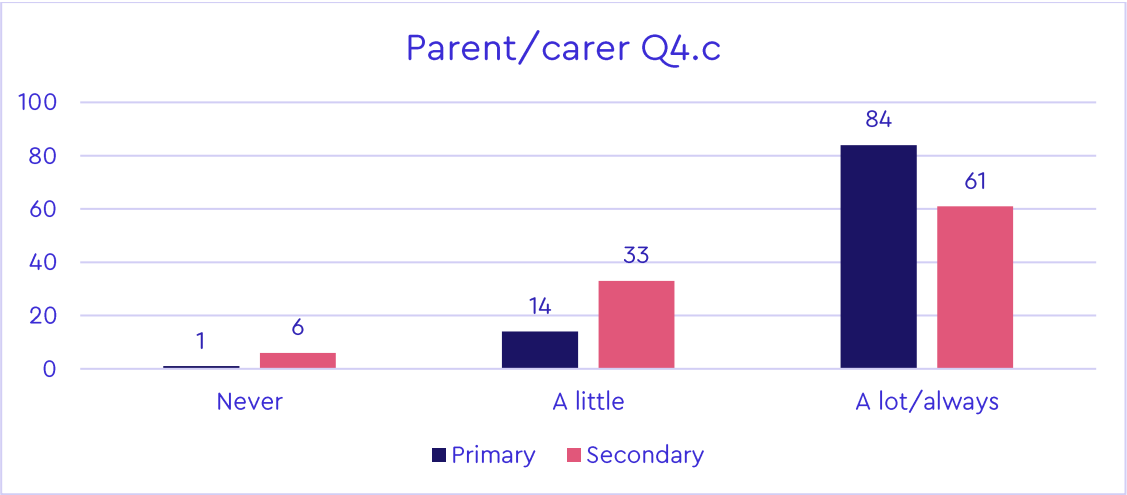


Figure 17.c shows that more than twice as many of secondary school parents/carers (39%) responded negatively compared to 15% of primary school parents/carers.

Figure 17.c parents/carers response by School Type to *You feel your child is supported in school*



You feel like you have a good relationship with your child's school

Figures 18.a, 18.b and 18.c graphs show parents/carers responses to 'You feel like you have a good relationship with your child's school' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 18.a shows 26% of parents/carers overall responded negatively to the question.

Figure 18.a parents/carers responses overall to *You feel like you have a good relationship with your child's school*

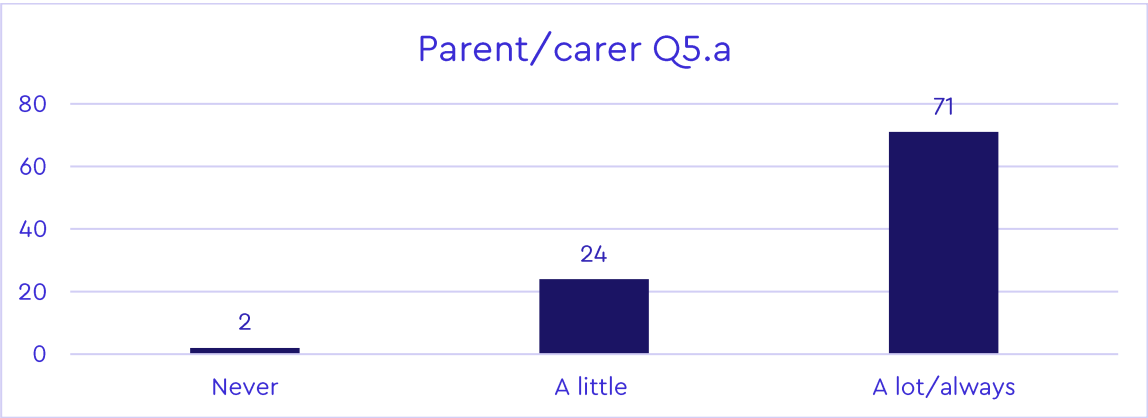
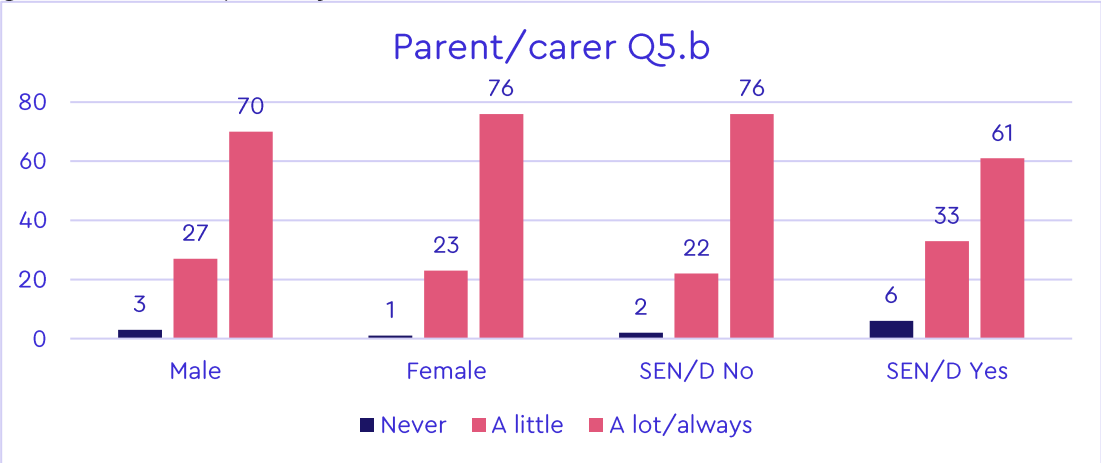


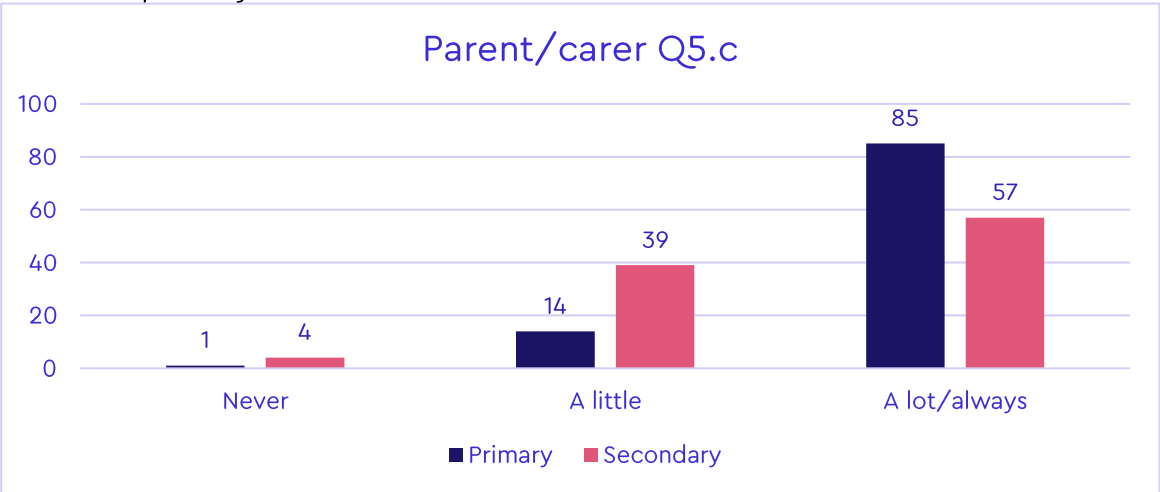
Figure 18.b shows 30% of male pupil parents/carers responded negatively compared to 24% of female pupil parents/carers. 39% of SEND pupil parents/carers responded negatively compared to 24% non-SEND pupil parent carers.

Figure 18.b parents/carers responses for Gender and SEND to *You feel like you have a good relationship with your child's school*



Figures 18.c shows almost three times as many secondary school parent/carers (43%) responded negatively to the question compared to 15% of primary school parents/carers.

Figure 18.c parents/carers responses by School Type to *You feel like you have a good relationship with your child's school*



You feel part of your child's school community

Figures 19.a 19.b and 19.c graphs show parents/carers responses to 'You feel part of your child's school community' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 19.a shows nearly half of parent/carers overall (43%) responded negatively to feeling part of their child's school community.

Figure 19.a parents/carers response overall to *You feel part of your child's school community*

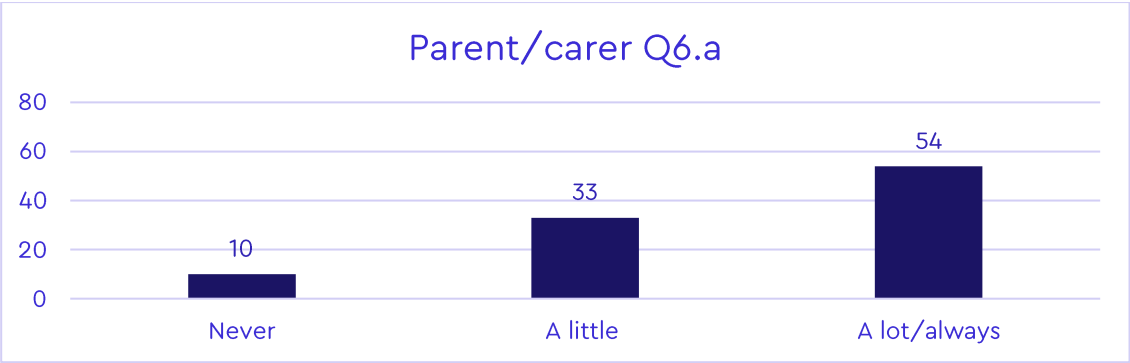


Figure 19.b shows a significant number of parent cares responded negatively to this question. Parents/carers responses by gender were similar 46% of parents/carers for male pupils' parents/carers and 44% of parents/carers for female pupils responding negatively. Parents/carers of SEND pupils (55%) responded negatively compared with two fifths (41%) of non-SEND parents/carers.

Figure 19.b parents/carers response for Gender and SEND to *You feel part of your child's school community*

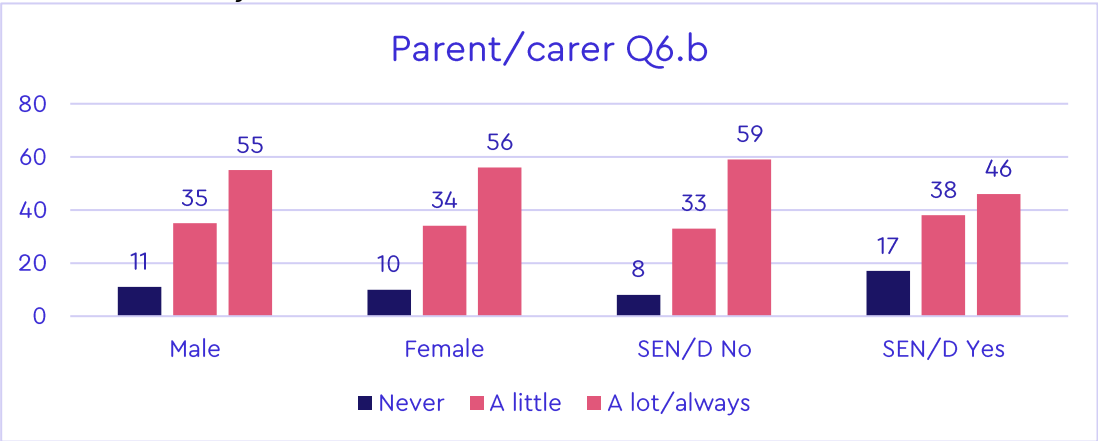
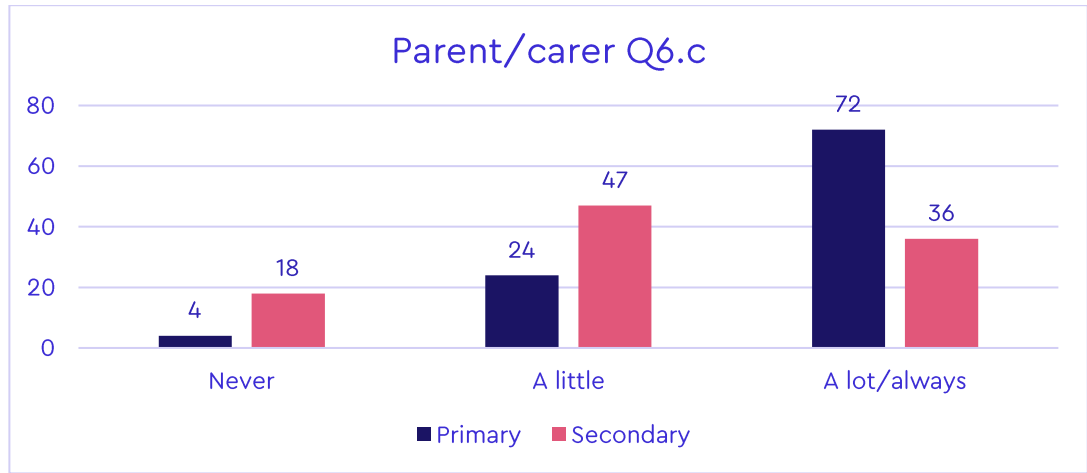


Figure 19.c shows a significant percentage of secondary school parents/carers (65%) responded negatively compared with 28% primary school parents/carers.

Figure 19.c parents/carers responses by School Type to *You feel part of your child's school community*



You feel the school listens to you

Figures 20.a, 20.b and 20.c graphs show parent responses to 'You feel the school listens to you' for the overall sample, and split by gender, SEND status and by school type.

Figure 20.a shows overall, 30% of parents/carers responded negatively to the question.

Figure 20.a parents/carers response overall to 'You feel the school listens to you'

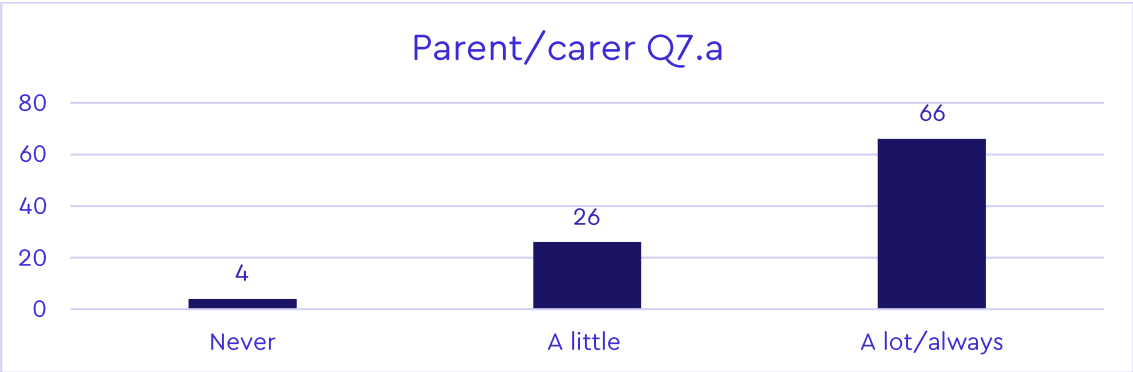


Figure 20.b shows 33% parents/carers of female pupils responded slightly more negatively than parents/carers of male pupils (31%). Almost half of SEND pupil parents/carers (45%) responded negatively compared to 29% of non-SEND parents/carers.

Figure 20.b parents/carers response for Gender and SEND to 'You feel the school listens to you'

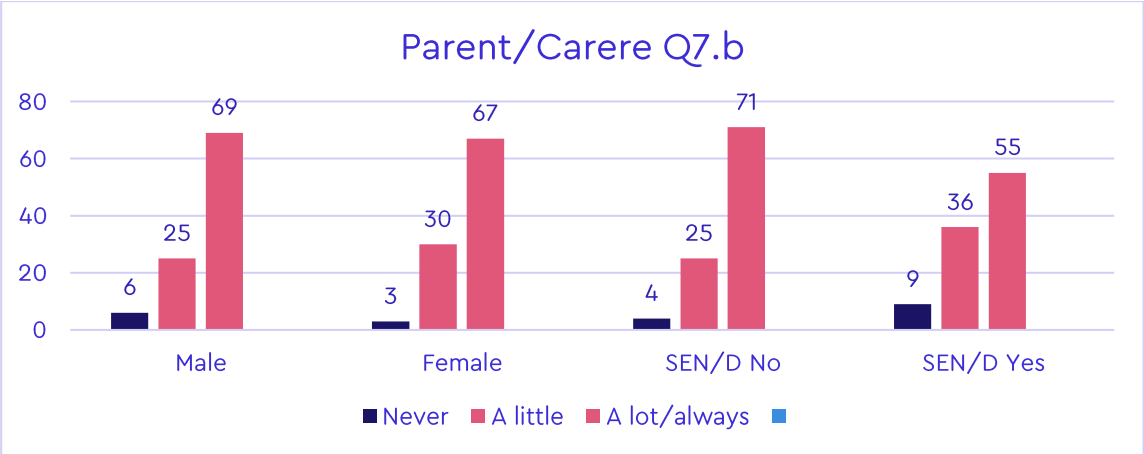
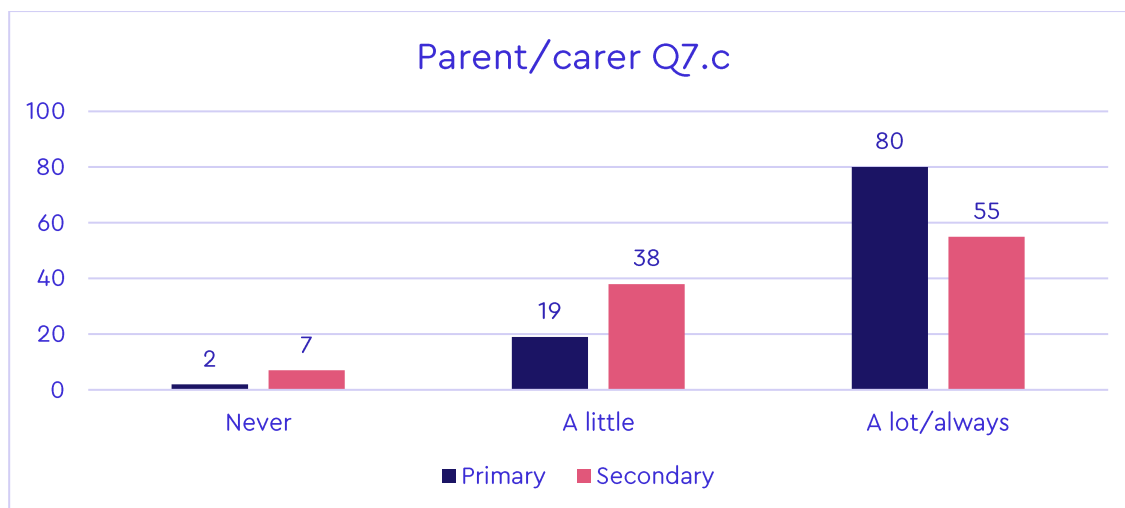


Figure 20.c shows nearly half of secondary school parents/carers responded (45%) negatively to feeling like the school listens to them, compared with 21% of primary school/parents/carers.

Figure 20.c parents/carers response by School Type to 'You feel the school listens to you'



PARENTS/CARERS COMMENTS

Only one school provided parents/carers comments.

Within the Belonging Matters survey, parents/carers had the opportunity to share their perspectives on 'belonging' at their child's school, prompted by the following statement, 'The survey is anonymous but if there is anything you would like the school to know about 'belonging' please include below'. A total of 31 parents/carers from one mainstream secondary school in north-west London responded to the statement.

A wealth of data was offered reflecting what helps to foster a sense of belonging, with two main themes emerging, (1) satisfaction, and (2) support.

Satisfaction: Some parents/carers felt the school provided a sense of belonging for their child saying, *'happy with the results', 'you're doing it alright' and 'good rating'*, whilst others expressed gratitude towards the school, *'thank you for all your efforts' and 'I am really grateful to you for every detail'*. Parents/carers expressed their appreciation of the Belonging Matters programme, *'it's a good campaign'*.

Support: Some parents/carers identified the emotional support given to the whole family by teaching staff and this increased a sense of belonging, *'me and my daughter have been supported at every step by the school'*, and *'my family has experienced emotional stress in the house, which sometimes made my son feel sad while at school. I am so glad that the school staff from the head teacher to X and teachers supported him emotionally. I felt supported too as a mother'*. In addition, one parents/carers was offered financial support by the school for their child to attend a school trip capturing the impact of this gesture on increasing school belonging, *'I am so thankful that they also helped my son to go to the trip which I know I couldn't afford. This gave my son something to look forward to and diverted his sadness and loneliness to excitement'*.

Many parents/carers also identified different concepts within the school that reduced a sense of belonging for their children. Three themes emerged, (1) interpersonal relationships, (2) school climate and (3) curriculum.

Interpersonal Relationships: Parents/carers remarked on the quality of teacher-pupil interactions as negatively impacting their child's sense of belonging. Inconsistency around being approachable was a concern, *'Some teachers have got it right and are friendly,*

responsive and approachable. They could not do more. Others however, are dismissive and hard to approach. This can make learning challenging', and identifying unfair treatment of pupils, 'some teachers are not fair in handling disciplinary issues. Some children are more punish than others for committing similar offences'. Some parents/carers expressed their children were not heard by their teacher, 'the school have to all pupils to have a balance on listening not just take side of judgement', and this included the Head Teacher at the school, 'I feel my child is not appreciated...he feels let down by the Head! For not changing his class! He feels let down by his teachers...'.

Responses by parents/carers indicated peer relationships negatively altered a sense of belonging for their children with different religious affiliations not respected by others, *'We don't like to talk about religion to children. I have a problem with this issue with my child. Even some of his friends preach Islam to my child. If our family does not accept any religion',* furthermore, ethnicity was highlighted as a barrier to belonging, *'there are often racial distinctions when there are disagreements between students, which are always resolved on the basis of skin colour'. Parents/carers reported peer bullying behaviour had negative repercussions for their children due to the absence of anonymity when reporting it, 'it would be appreciated if the bullying concern made by the pupil is anonymously dealt with as it will help the pupil to report'.*

Some parents/carers reported how bullying behaviour is not dealt with at the school, *'my child is subjected to bullying but unfortunately the school never takes any action, even though we were told it will be investigated and we will be notified of what action was taken, we never have this answer and my child is still being bullied', and 'there are a lot of bullying in the school and nothing is being sorted out'. Furthermore, some parents/carers commented on specific types of bullying their child had experienced that affected their belonging, 'there is always bullying from some students on my son because they talk about short people'.*

Climate: Parents/carers shared comments of interactions with teaching staff that seemed threatening, and this was detrimental to belonging, for example, *'to make the children belong rather than treating the child parents that the child space will be given to someone else'.*

Some parents/carers expressed a lack of ways to communicate with teachers, *'As a parent of a child who has just started a new school...it would be nice to have had better communication within the school. As it's not always easy to find who the right person is to speak to, and there is not always a response to queries raised'. The physical safety of outdoor spaces was highlighted by parents/carers to have negative impact of a sense of belonging, 'the school does not have a bicycle stand, it will be better to have a safer place for student to have their cycle chained up'. Parents/carers remarked on the lack of inclusivity of pupils with disability, 'a little or no help is rendered by the school for my special needs son. He struggled throughout the years that affects his grades...it is sad to watch him struggle though...', and for schools to welcome those with and without disability, 'inclusion of more SEN children in mainstream'.*

Curriculum: Some parents/carers reported the school curriculum did not offer activities to help with pupil engagement, *'I would like more incentives for the child...', and in addition, parents/carers expressed more education is needed around belonging, 'regular updates of how belonging themes are translated or interpreted to the students so they can build and consolidate on the idea of belonging'.*

TEACHER/STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

Teachers and staff from the 10 participating schools completed a short questionnaire in which they responded to six questions that examine staff pupil relationships. A total of 248 teacher/staff, this consisted of 145 primary school teachers/staff and 103 secondary school teachers/staff who provide response presented in the graphs below. The questions were responded on a 4-point Likert scale, never (0), a little (1), a lot (2) and always (3), a lot and always were collapsed to create positive School belonging. All findings are presented in percentages.

Teachers and staff completing the questionnaire were asked to respond to the following questions:-

- Q1. Pupils in your school have a sense of school belonging.
- Q2. You feel that all pupils are included in classroom activities.
- Q3. You feel that pupils are generally welcome to join in school activities outside the classroom.
- Q4. You feel connected to your pupils.
- Q5. You feel connected to the school's values.
- Q6. You feel that pupils are treated fairly in school.

Pupils in your school have a sense of school belonging.

Figures 21.a and 21.b graphs show teacher/staff responses to the question 'Pupils in your school have a sense of school belonging' for overall sample and by School Type.

Figure 21.a shows for the overall sample, 12% of teachers/staff responded negatively to the question. However, figure 21.b shows differences in school type with over three times as many secondary school teachers/staff (21%) respond more negatively compared to 6% of primary school teachers/staff.

Figure 21.a teacher/staff responses to 'Pupils in your school have a sense of school belonging'

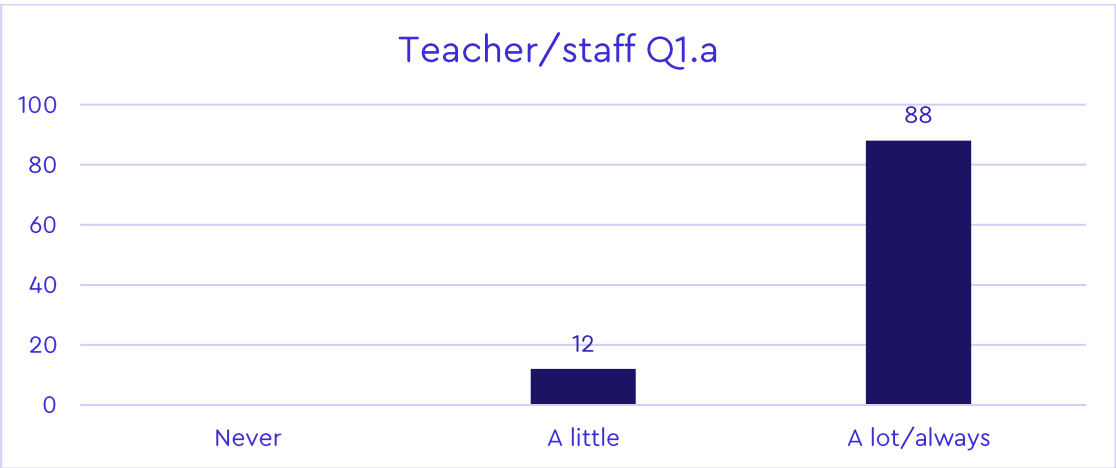
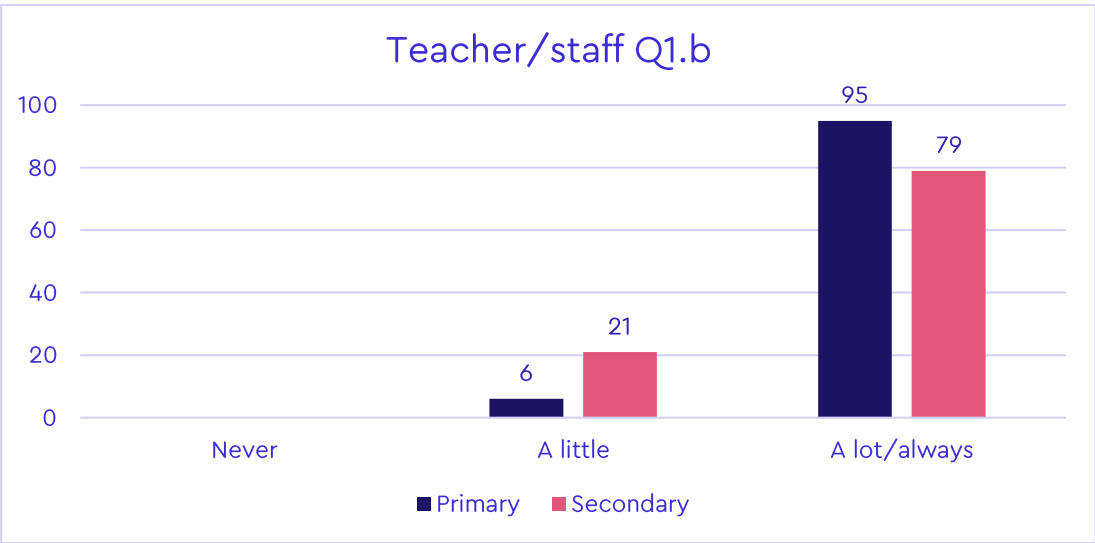


Figure 21.b teacher/staff responses by School Type to 'Pupils in your school have a sense of school belonging'



You feel that all pupils are included in classroom activities.

Figures 22.a and 22.b graphs show teacher/staff responses to the question 'You feel that all pupils are included in classroom activities' for overall sample and by School Type

Figure 22.a shows for the overall sample, 7% of teachers/staff responded negatively to the question. However, figure 22.b shows secondary school teachers/staff feel more negatively (14%) compared with 2% of primary school teachers/staff.

Figure 22.a teacher/staff responses to 'You feel that all pupils are included in classroom activities'

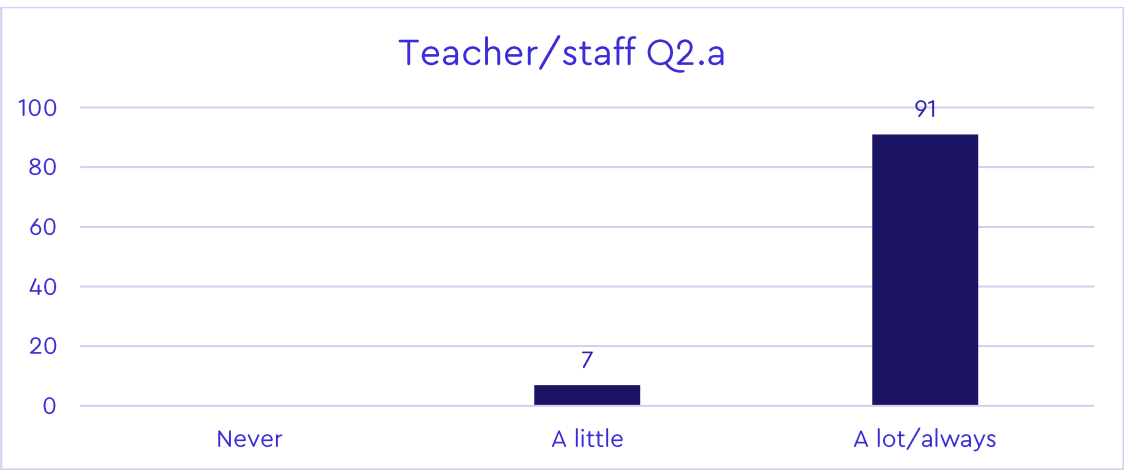
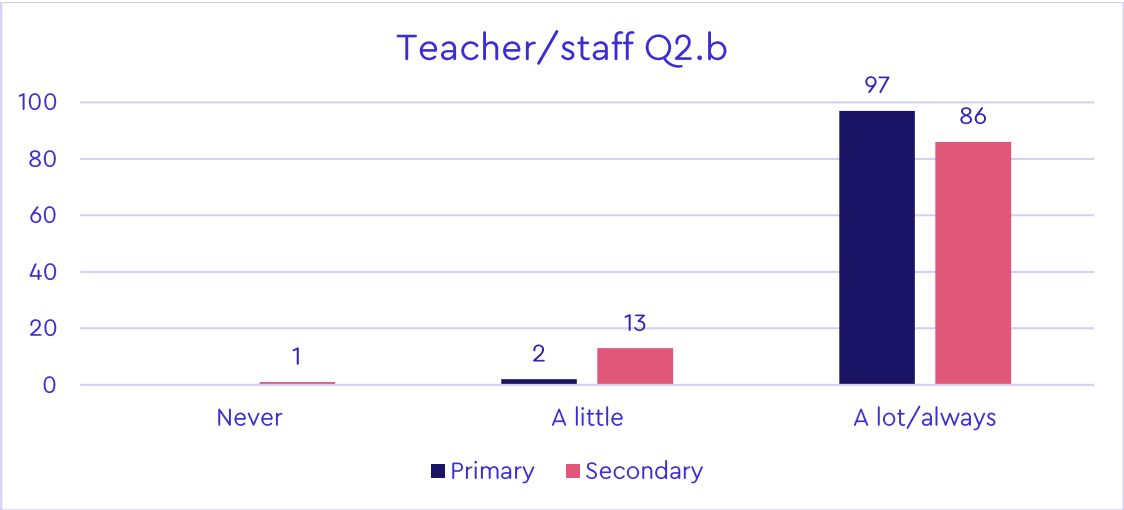


Figure 22.b teacher/staff responses by School Type to 'You feel that all pupils are included in classroom activities'



You feel that pupils are generally welcome to join in school activities outside the classroom.

Figures 23.a and 23.b graphs show teacher/staff response to 'You feel that pupils are generally welcome to join in school activities outside the classroom' for overall sample and by School Type

Figure 23.a shows overall 6% teacher/staff responded negatively to the question. Figure 23.b shows twice as many secondary school teacher/staff (9%) responded negatively compared with 4% primary school teacher/staff.

Figure 23.a teacher/staff responses over all to 'You feel that pupils are generally welcome to join in school activities outside the classroom'

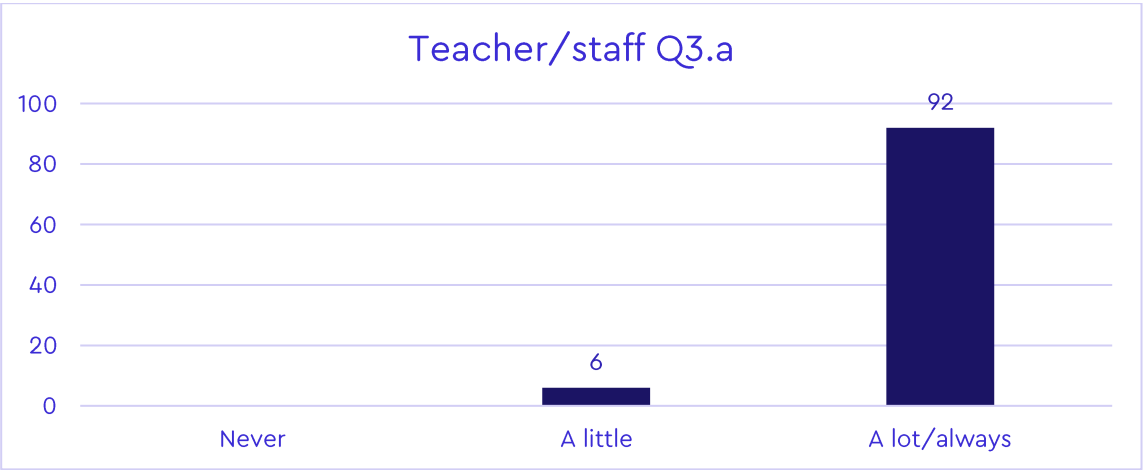
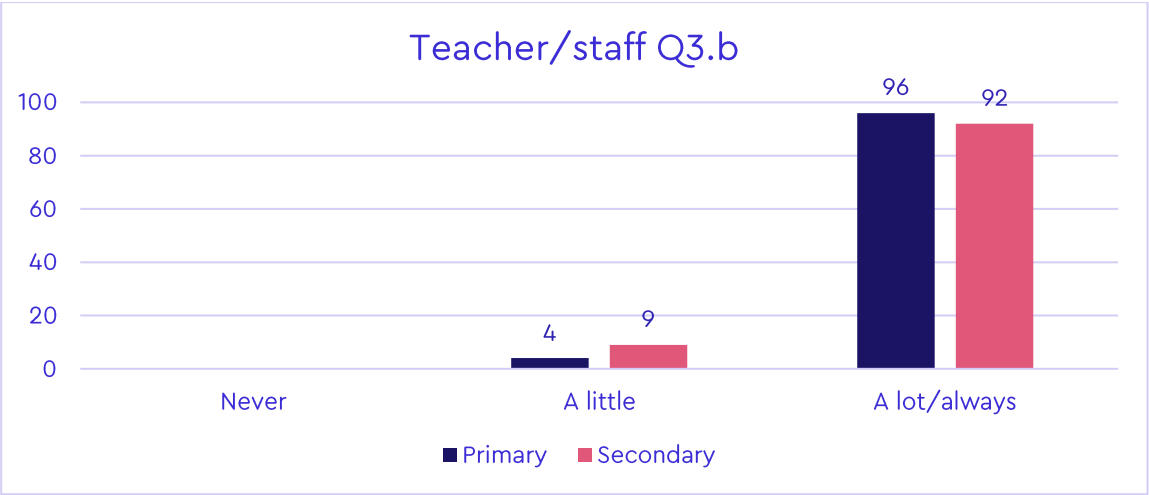


Figure 23.b teacher/staff responses by School Type to 'You feel that pupils are generally welcome to join in school activities outside the classroom'



You feel connected to your pupils.

Figures 24.a and 24.b graphs show teacher/staff responses to 'You feel connected to your pupils' for overall sample and by School Type

Figure 24.a shows for the overall sample, 4% of teachers/staff felt negatively about their schools' values. However, figure 24.b shows 10% of secondary school teachers/staff respond negatively to the question of feeling connected to their pupils, compared with 1% of primary school teachers/staff.

Figure 24.a teacher/staff responses overall to 'You feel connected to your pupils'

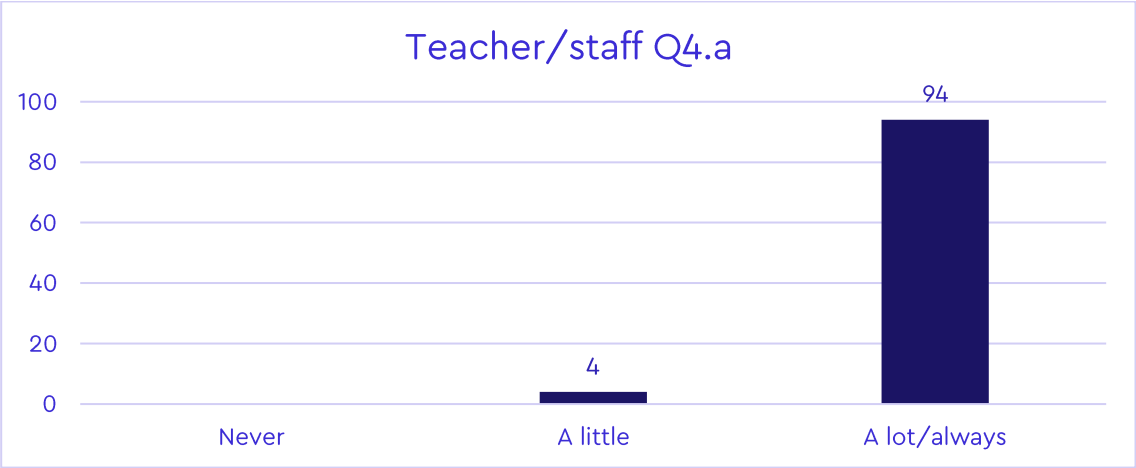
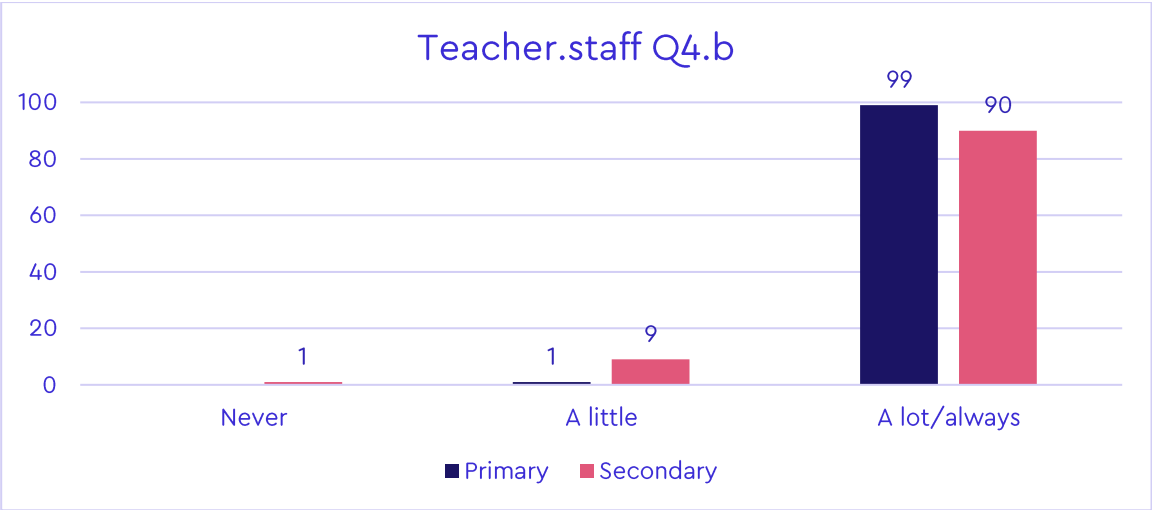


Figure 24.b teacher/staff response by School Type to You feel connected to your pupils



You feel connected to the school's values.

Figures 25.a and 25.b graphs show teacher/staff responses to the question 'You feel connected to the school's values' overall sample and by School Type

Figure 25.a shows overall 8% of teacher/staff responded negatively to the question. However, Figure 25.b shows 15% of secondary school teacher/staff responded negatively compared with 4% of primary school teachers/staff.

Figure 25.a teacher/staff responses overall to 'You feel connected to the school's values'

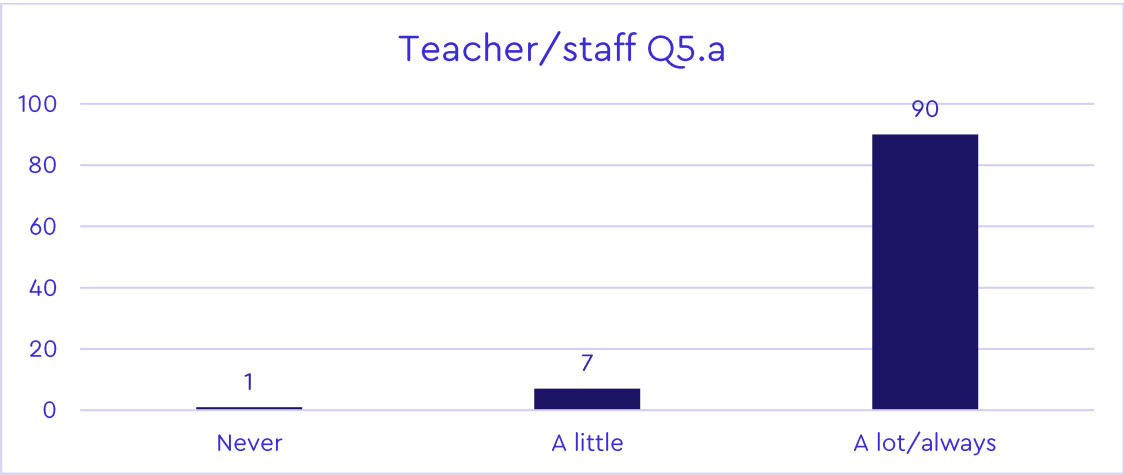
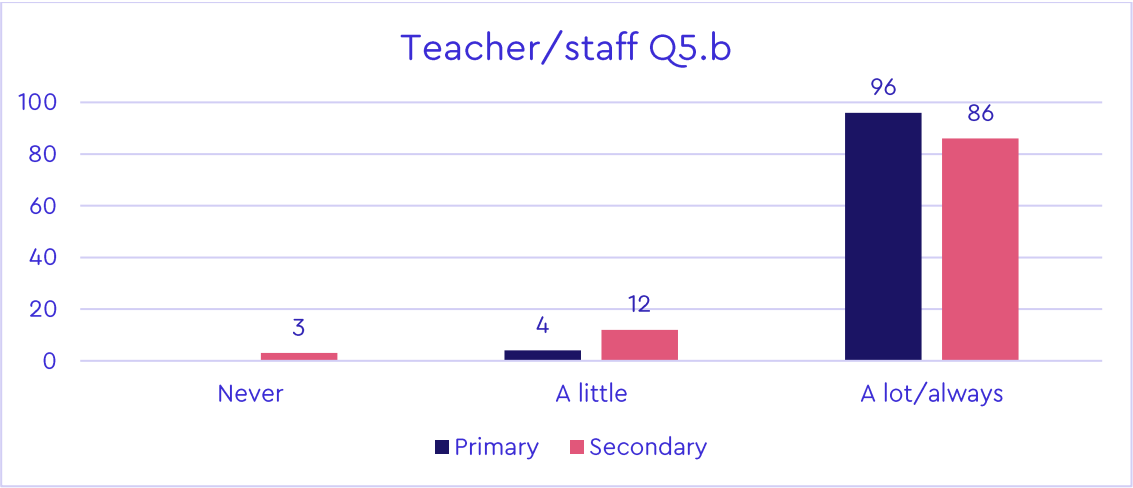


Figure 25.b teacher/staff responses by School Type to 'You feel connected to the school's values'



You feel that pupils are treated fairly in school.

Figures 26.a and 26.b graphs show teacher/staff responses to 'You feel pupils are treated fairly in school' overall sample and by School Type.

Figure 26.a shows of the overall sample, 7% of teachers/staff respond negatively to the question. However, figure 26.b shows secondary school teachers/staff responded less positively with 12% responding negatively compared to 3% of primary school teachers/staff.

Figure 26.a teacher/staff responses overall to 'You feel pupils are treated fairly in school'

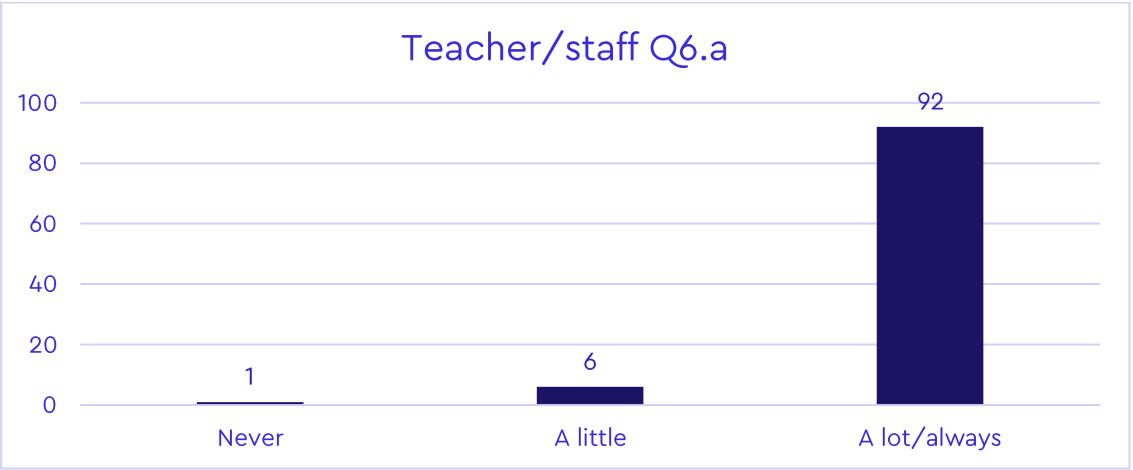
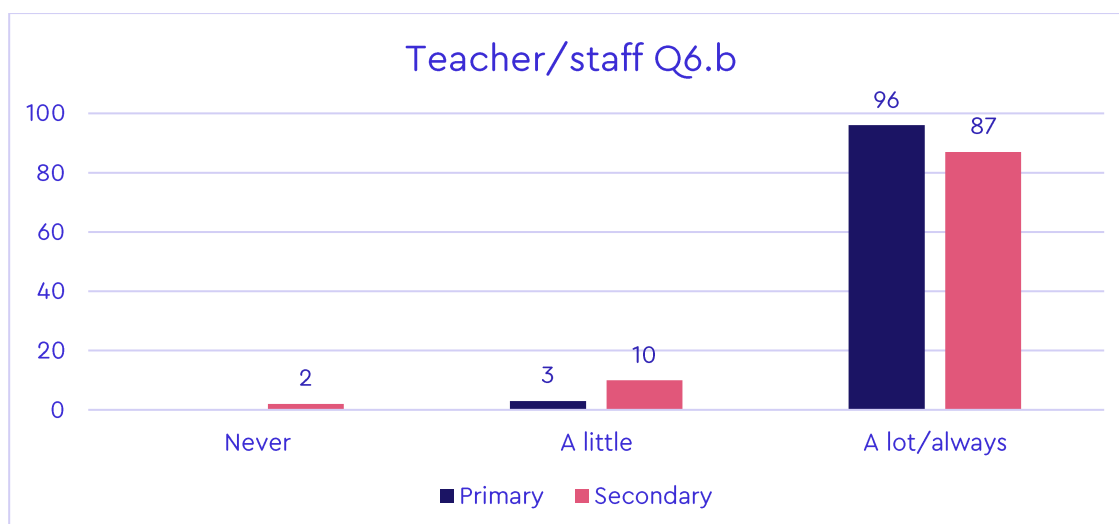


Figure 26.b teacher/staff responses by School Type to 'You feel pupils are treated fairly in school'



TEACHER/STAFF FEEDBACK

Within the survey, teachers/staff were invited to expand on their understanding of belonging among pupils at their school. 102 teaching staff from 11 schools responded to the question, 'Do you have anything you'd like to tell us about your school's sense of belonging for pupils?'.

What promotes school belonging consisted of three main themes all with sub-themes, (1) teacher-student relationships, (2) school curriculum and (3) school climate, whilst the causes of a reduction in belonging elicited five main themes some with sub-themes, (1) pupil temperament, (2) teacher relationships, (3) peer relationships, (4) parental responsibility and (5) curriculum.

Teacher-student relationships: Teachers/ staff reported positive relationship with pupils help to nurture belonging, this theme consisted of six sub-themes (1) pupils heard, (2) support, (3) fairness, (4) mutual care and respect, (5) friendliness and (6) inclusion. Teachers reported being available to listen to their pupils and it had a positive impact, *'we pride ourselves in making sure our students feel heard and represented', 'we encourage children to express their thoughts and ideas, helping to create a respectful community where everyone's voice matters', and 'I hear them talking about their school life a lot which convinces me that this is their school, they have a say and are listened to'*. Some teachers/staff indicated the importance of support as being a central tenet of belonging, *'our school is a community that supports each other', 'people always are supported and included', and in addition, emotional support too, 'there are many caring individuals working to help pupils in their school life and with their personal struggles supporting them in a positive way'*. Fostering fairness is reported to significantly influence belonging with some teachers expressing so, *'all pupils are treated well and equally and pupils feel that they belong'*. Teachers/staff highlighted mutual care and respect shown towards their pupils helped with nurturing a sense of belonging at school, *'students feel that teachers will value their opinion and help them feel safe', 'it is a beautiful place where everyone is accepted, cared for and understood', with one response being very succinct, 'unconditional positive regard'*. Making the school environment feel a welcoming and friendly place for pupils was reported by many teachers/staff and responses varied from the simple gestures, *'all children are greeted each morning with a cheerful 'good morning' and a warm smile which starts off their day with a positive attitude', to the general attitude in school, 'making pupils always feel welcomed and treating them with respect and*

showing kindness', 'there is a great sense of belonging within the school- we are very welcoming', and 'we are very welcoming'. Teachers/staff indicated that inclusion was necessary for a sense of belonging to thrive, 'pupils are and feel included in lessons and I believe that 90% of children are happy', and 'being inclusive is promoted throughout the school'. The responses reflected the importance of inclusivity of all pupils, 'the staff always make a concerted effort to include all pupils. The effort can be quite significant at times given the high levels of EAL students but they always go the extra mile', and for those who have not experienced inclusion, 'at our school, we take children who have always been on the periphery and give them a place to belong. We reinforce that being part of community does not mean negating one's own individuality...', and 'children who haven't fit in in other schools often say that they like it here'.

School Curriculum: Many teachers/staff reported understanding the importance of engaging in school activities to help reinforce school belonging, this theme consisted of three sub-themes, (1) representative curriculum, (2) opportunities, and (3) extra curricula activities.

Representative Curriculum: Teachers expressed offering a 'representative curriculum' that was inclusive for all cultures and religions helped belonging, *'we take into account everyone's religions and cultures and celebrate these regularly. We work hard to make sure the children are represented in the curriculum', and 'the school tries to represent the children through cultural events, text and in the curriculum, e.g. history and geography'.*

Opportunities: Creating opportunities such as initiatives and a range of activities was reported by many teachers and staff to have a positive impact on belonging, *'there are so many opportunities and diverse activities that pupils can feel a sense of belonging', and in addition, 'school A emphasises a strong sense of belonging for its pupils through various initiatives'.* Staff shared that pupils and the whole school community was thriving from such implementations, *We have recently created amazing opportunities through the 'Volunteering Work' especially for the students to support KS3 and KS4 students and this can have a very positive effect on the whole school community...'. Developing different systems and creating opportunities to celebrate pupil diversity were reported by teaching staff to nurture belonging, 'I think the house system has made a tremendous impact on sense of belonging at school A. Particularly dressing up in your colours and being able to have fun conversations between students and staff fostered a sense of camaraderie and positivity that transcended age, race, religion, friendship groups etc...' and 'I think cultural day is a good step in making students feel welcome in the school'.*

Extra-curricular activities: Pupil participation in extracurricular activities (ECAs) increases a sense of belonging and teaching staff indicated their importance, *'I think we have a lot of activities that try and involve pupils in different ways from a variety of clubs to a variety of leadership opportunities', 'overall I think the school aims to ensure that pupils feel a sense of belonging through events that take place and day to day life'.*

School climate: A wealth of data was shared by teachers/staff on school climate and the influence it has on pupil's sense of belonging. This theme consisted of three sub-themes, (1) safety, (2) institutional environment and (3) leadership and efficacy.

Safety: Safety was reported by many teachers/staff to be important, for example, the physical safety of pupils in school, *'often school is a safe space for pupils', and emotional safety, 'pupils feel connected to the school and community', and 'They feel safe'.* Safety is

also characterised by the policies/values and expectations a school has in place and many members of staff reported their influences on belonging, examples of the former *'our school cultivates a sense of belonging rooted in shared catholic values'*, *'it is a very inclusive school with a clear Christian ethos'*, and the latter *'I think the work in routines and expectations throughout the children's school journey have given a huge sense of belonging and an understanding of expectations and allows them to work intrinsic rewards, giving them a sense of pride'*.

Institutional environment: Teachers/staff reported the institutional environment impacted on belonging. Belonging increases in a positive environment, *the school is a nurturing, inclusive and positive environment for all children...*, where relationships are nurtured *'we prioritise building positive, nurturing relationships'*, and where there is a family feeling in school, *'The emphasis is on being a family and being there for each other'*, *'They mention a family like feel'*. One teacher reported the importance of laying the foundations right from the start, *'once we know a new child is starting, books, peg, label are prepared and ready for their first day'*.

Leadership and efficacy: A school climate that enhances belonging is influenced by its leadership and many teachers/staff reported the importance of encouraging *'the message'* of belonging, *'school tries really hard to ensure a sense of belonging for all children'*, and *'our school works hard to encourage a sense of belonging to their school...'* and emphasising it every day, *'it is important to reiterate the message constantly'*. However, teachers/staff highlighted staff training on school belonging is a constant process, *'continued training is needed for staff around the language with children to create a sense of belonging'*, and *'it is important that we continue to learn and find ways to ensure all pupils feel that they belong'*. Belonging is a complex concept and teachers/staff reported time is required to fully comprehend it, *'staff need to take time to fully understand their positive core intentions to implement their best efforts for inclusivity, they must remain the primary vein throughout all planning and tasks carried out'* and learning is a reciprocal process between teacher and pupil, *'I would question whether we give children opportunities to talk about their sense of belonging and how they interpret what belonging feels like to them- unless we understand this from their perspective it is difficult to gauge'*.

Barriers: Having a sense of belonging at school is affected by whether pupils feel accepted, supported and included by their peers and members of staff. The teachers/staff revealed many barriers are present at school which prevent or have a negative impact on belonging. The main theme consisted of six sub-themes, (1) pupil temperament, (2) unfairness, (3) ethnicity and religion, (4) disability, (5) parental responsibility, (6) disconnection. Pupil temperament affected belonging, such as *'I sometimes feel that the quieter students don't always feel heard or valued, the louder students at times dominate'*, and *'the less popular students struggle to belong'*, and finally, *'students who shout the most, disrupt the most and end up getting what they want, other students feel they are over looked and therefore don't feel they belong to the school'*. Teachers/staff reported unfairness shown towards certain pupils and this negatively impacted on belonging, *'some children are excluded and treated differently at times'*, *'at times, seems always the same students picked for activities'*, and finally *'there is sometimes different treatment between students which makes it hard for pupils to feel as though they belong, e.g. some students being expelled after one incident whereas others have had multiple major incidents and have still been allowed to stay'*. Ethnicity and religion are reported to affect a sense of school belonging, *'I worry that the white students might not feel a sense of belonging'*, *'certain groups of*

students feel more sense of belonging than others', and 'I think we need to have reminders of all faiths'. Similarly, teachers/staff reported that pupils with disability are frequently neglected with their needs not met on a daily basis, 'the SEN students need to be included in all class activities', 'the students with extra needs are often left out of class activities or in experiments are just bundled up together, which neither helps the individual student or peer group to become inclusive', and 'to show greater understanding to students who clearly have educational needs but not receiving support at the moment'. School belonging is achieved when all parties work together to create an accepting, supportive and respectful environment. Teachers/staff reported the importance of parents/carers involvement to enhance belonging but not forthcoming, 'the school's sense of belonging is good towards pupils and we always try to create an environment of belonging, however parents sometimes are not committed to the community of the school...', and 'I feel like it starts at home. Parents can also help their children feel a sense of belonging by taking an interest in their school life, getting them to school on time...'. Teachers/staff reported pupils felt disconnected from school by choosing to dislike the environment and this reduced belonging, 'I believe that all pupils think they belong but they still have the misconception that the school is a bad school so they don't always want to belong and identify with the school' and 'students don't respect the school'. Furthermore, a disconnection between Key Stages negatively affected a sense of school belonging too, 'students tend to have good relations within year groups, but there is little cohesion between the sixth form and the rest of the school...'.

BM 360 SCHOOL AUDIT TOOL

The BM 360 Audit Tool is a valuable tool for measuring key components that influence sense of belonging among pupils and is completed by the schools' Senior Leadership Team. The Audit Tool encourages schools to assess and reflect upon their current state of belonging practices, with a focus on vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND.

The Audit Tool focuses on four compulsory categories:

1. Creating an inclusive school culture (3 items)
2. Whole school data, policies and training (4 items)
3. Fostering positive relationships (5 items)
4. School activities (6 items)

OVERVIEW OF BASELINE RESPONSES FOR EACH OF THE CATEGORIES

The 11 participating schools were asked to complete the BM 360 Audit Tool and rate each item in the four categories as to whether they fully met, partially met or have not yet met the criterion.

Overall, the participating schools responded highly for most of the items being partially or fully met, however, for the following items these were identified as not yet met for some schools at baseline: -

- 1.2 shows three schools not yet meeting the criteria
- 2.1 shows three schools not yet meeting the criteria
- 2.2 shows two schools not yet meeting the criteria
- 2.3 shows three schools not yet meeting the criteria

- 2.4 shows two schools not yet meeting the criteria
- 3.3 shows three schools not yet meeting the criteria
- 3.4 shows one school not yet meeting the criteria
- 3.5 shows one school not yet meeting the criteria
- 4.3 shows six schools not yet meeting the criteria

Schools provide evidence for each of the criteria as to how the school knows they have met this criteria.

1. Creating an inclusive school culture

This criterion contains three items which focus on how participating schools create a welcoming environment for the whole school community to help foster a sense of belonging.

Q1.1

School values were frequently reported by participants to help nurture belonging, *'school values are referred to regularly'*, and *'values include respect, kindness, equality, responsibility'*, and in addition *'one of our school values is to be inclusive'*. Furthermore, participants shared how school values are expressed daily at school, *'assembly themes are values throughout the year'*, *'we actively promote our school values, rules and motto underpinned by a restorative approach'*, *'our children know and understand our values and visions because we explicitly refer to them every day'* and finally, *'our Christian values are a thread throughout the school'*.

Participants reported how their schools promoted an inclusive environment giving examples of actions undertaken, *'inclusion is celebrated and promoted through regular whole staff training, themed across the curriculum, assemblies, displays and pupil led campaigns and calendar of events'*, and *'there are discussions about diversity and inclusion (specialist CPD from the provisions/SEND and EAL)'*. Furthermore, welcoming pupils at the entrance of school each day promoted belonging, *'on the morning Welcome Gate, pupils are greeted'*, and during the school day, *'pupils are met at the classroom doors and dismissed from there at the end of each lesson whereby, "well done today, have a good day" etc messages can be shared'*, and in addition the importance of small gestures, *'all staff are reminded that "every interaction is an intervention" and the importance of interactions such as a smile or greeting...'*.

Participants shared the importance of pupil behaviour expectations to promote the feeling of belonging, *'one of our school values is to be inclusive...it highlights expectations of behaviour amongst all and is displayed visibly in every classroom'* and the use of incentives, *'students are given positive achievement points specifically for displaying inclusive behaviour and entered in a weekly prize draw if they have received an inclusive behaviour point'*.

Participants mentioned the importance of regular staff training to promote a welcoming environment, *'staff are reminded of this every year in CPD at the beginning of the year'*, *'staff regularly receive CPD training about inclusion, this includes our most recent whole staff training about trauma informed schools and regulation training'*, and *'all staff receive CPD, with more opportunities for teaching/support staff weekly'*.

However, some participants highlighted items that reduced feelings of belonging, for example, inconsistent training, 'new staff do not receive specific CPD for inclusiveness rather more general student wellbeing and safeguarding CPD', and unfairness shown towards non-teaching staff 'our teaching staff regularly gets training focused on expanding our vision and values but some of these opportunities are missed by non-teaching support staff due to timetabling'.

Q1.2

Many participants reported pupils, staff and parents/carers being involved in school initiatives that foster a sense of belonging, two pupil initiatives being '*...eco council pupils meet regularly to plan actions and have a say, they run eco refill shop to reduce plastic waste, they also organise active travel to reduce air pollution*', and '*Friendship Ambassadors seek pupil voice through Friendship Friday activities*'. Schools reported many initiatives that enabled pupils to have their concerns heard, '*pupils are regularly reminded we are a telling school and encouraged to tell a trusted adult if they have a worry*', and '*we are implementing a whisper box where pupils can share their concerns, ideas anonymously (except stating the year group so that issues can be dealt with)*', and for parents too, '*we have suggestion boxes for parents and pupils to raise concerns and ideas*'.

Participants reported pupils empowering change in their schools, 'Pupils have always been involved in implementing change, as an example, pupils remain integral in staff recruitment interviews and their views are listened to and considered alongside the views of senior management', and parents/carers being involved in setting up their suggestions, 'Recently parents suggested to set up a 'tuckshop' which they set up and proved to be a huge success'. Participants shared how staff members are supported at school, 'staff are supported through half termly well-being sessions which are offered by a retired CAMHS practitioner where they can share their concerns and questions', and how their wellbeing is measured throughout the academic year, 'Pulse survey to monitor staff well-being half termly. The outcomes are analysed and addressed as necessary'.

A reoccurring issue reported was the difficulty around involving parents/carers, 'Parental engagement is often very minimal as it is, though we hold occasional coffee mornings or hold surveys, we struggle to get parents involved', with some participants reporting gaps in getting parents/carers onboard, 'Work needs to be done with parents' and 'Engaging with parents is an area that we have not really been able to develop in any meaningful way'. Some participants shared effects of initiatives being set up by the senior leadership team as opposed to seeking pupil or parents/carers led opportunities, 'A lot of times, initiatives are established top-down...whilst we have some level of platform such as ambassadors and student reps to raise concerns etc, it is not cohesive and centralised as we recognise it should be'.

Q1.3

Participants reported that behaviour policies are used guide behaviour and maintain consistency to support belonging, ' Fully reflected in behaviour policy and consistent practice', 'Our behaviour policy has three simple rules- to be respectful, to be safe and be ready to learn- we have a relational approach', 'behaviour policy is centralised with achievement and behaviour points being logged under SIMS under very specific branches of our school values. These are applied consistently across the board and so are the

sanctions', and 'We have a behaviour policy that is used consistently and highly effectively throughout the school'.

Several participants reported their school made adjustments for all pupils where necessary to help foster belonging, 'We make reasonable adjustments and are intentional in our practice', 'Reasonable adjustments are made for students with needs such as SEMH or SEND needs', and 'This also includes adapted strategies to support dysregulation in children and to identify triggers for behaviour...'. Many participants reported having clear expectations of the pupils at school, '3 non negotiable rules understood and know by all', and in addition 'Pupils were involved in writing the 'Everyday Expectations' posters of which can be seen throughout the school and in every classroom. Staff and pupils refer to these all the time, especially in lessons', furthermore the strategies used to maintain these, Teachers are not allowed to give their own sanctions or detentions which are held in faculty or in their own classrooms at break or lunch to avoid inconsistencies in standards and expectations'. Schools reinforce positive and negative behaviour with different systems, '...all positive points and rewards go through a centralised system', and 'Positive and negative points are used as a vehicle for rewards and sanctions, success is celebrated via strategies such as SLT, the Lookup targeted pupil strategy, ice skating, Alton Towers, early dinner queue passes etc'.

Frequently, participants expressed how schools recognise and reflect that all behaviours are communication, '...we are reflective and curious in our approach to support pupils', 'debrief three times a week to consider behaviour as communication', and 'Our behaviour approach comes from a place of unconditional positive regards and we show compassion in all interactions with children'. Some participants acknowledged that in their schools negative incidents are viewed through a lens of opportunity for growth, 'Our school curriculum includes a growth mindset approach, where each half term a different aspect is revisited and supporting children to build resilience and learn from mistakes', 'Staff have received CPD INSET on NVR techniques to use in the classroom...pupils are excited and motivated by these as they give a chance to modify or strive for good behaviour' and 'We have done work as a staff body re positive reinforcement and building relationships'.

2. Whole school data, policies and training

Q2.1

Participants report feedback is collected from pupils, parents/carers and staff via surveys, however the frequency and specific data around school belonging varied. Some schools reported data collection happens once a year, '*The leadership team gathers feedback from pupils, staff and parents annually*', and '*Child, parent and staff surveys carried out at least once a year...*' whereas other schools reported more data collection at different time points during the academic year, '*We send all parents/carers a survey twice a year to gather views and act upon this...*', and '*Surveys are sent out yearly, We try to do so both at the beginning and end of year*'. One participant reported pupil surveys are continuous, '*Students throughout the year complete a range of surveys, organised by student voice*'. Participants reported the subject matter of surveys did not capture data on a sense of belonging, '*Annual surveys but not specifically for belonging*', '*We collect pupil voice around mental health and wellbeing but not specifically about 'belonging'*', and in addition, '*Also, the surveys may ask questions about belonging but do not focus solely on belonging*', '*The half termly the staff TES Pulse survey provides a gage of staff wellbeing and opinions*'.

Alongside survey data to obtain feedback, one school reported using data collected via CPOMS to help with school development, *'We generate reports from CPOMS to show data in relation to pupil characteristics including SEND, FSM and age etc'*. Several participants reported using the data collected to guide school improvements, *'We send all parents/carers a survey twice a year to gather views and act upon this, in turn improving areas of the school'*, and *'The school leadership team gathers information from our annual parent survey and analyses the data and put actions in place...this including holding assemblies about antibullying and sending regular information to parents about online safety'*, and finally, *'Next steps: reintroduce the pupil questionnaire, could be completed online in ICT lessons'*. Schools expressed some additions to their current surveys, *'However, at the moment the target groups are students and parents, staff surveys aren't existent or consistent'*, and *'Not all surveys include characteristics, but we can assume that some groups will find these harder to engage with e.g. EAL parents/students'*, and amendments required, *'...staff surveys but maybe it needs to be more specific'*.

Q2.2

A wealth of data is reported around being able to anticipate those pupils at risk of not feeling like they belong at school. Nearly all schools monitor their data very closely to be alert for any potential warning signs, *'The safeguarding team meet regularly to understand the needs of any vulnerable children including any early signs or concerns raised on CPOMS'*, and *'Safeguard platform used by staff to report any pupils who they feel may need early help'*. Some participants named these warning signs such as absences, *'Student support officers and Safeguarding leads monitor attendance and detention list'* and *'Attendance is carefully managed and any absences are addressed in coordination with the Education Welfare Officer'*, and any fluctuations in attainment, *'SLT closely monitors attainment and progress data and analyses any trends for groups'*. Two participants shared the steps taken to formulate a bespoke plan of action, *'Highlighting meetings weekly between Heads of Year and SLT, SENDCO and safeguarding leads. Both SENDCO and safeguarding lead attends for every year group and then they collaboratively decide best action'* and *'Weekly triage meetings involving representatives from behaviour, mental health, learning support and attendance provide a forum in which pupils of concern, regardless of the reason are discussed, strategies implemented to support their sense of inclusion and belonging'*.

Participants reported schools to have early interventions in place for 'highlighted' pupils to feel valued and included such as an individual plan, *'We might make individual plans e.g. lunchtime activity rotas, a lunchtime provision, daily rate my day chats, circle of friends etc...'*, or how to help an unsettled child, *'When there are children who have flagged as not settling into a class or developing a sense of belonging, we put them into social group interventions to further support this'*. Schools reported enlisting outside provision, *'External provisions are also utilised such as the borough's bus team and THEWS and EHA system'*, or creating incentives for pupils, *'To pro-actively address and improve attendance and punctuality the school has introduced Magic Breakfast for all children and invited families for a free place at the school's breakfast club'*.

One school reported how peer support initiatives can help those pupils who do not feel like they belong, *'We have completed some proactive work to encourage engagement and ensure a sense of wellbeing e.g. buddies and peer mentors'*. Participants reported specific details for pupils with SEND, *'The SENDCO meets with parents at regular SEND forum meetings with inclusion and support foci'*, *'The SEN dept have recently been*

rebranded as the Learning Hub and acquired additional space so there is an SEN sensitive/academic space and another space for decompression, time out to reset, and targeted intervention', in addition one participant shared early steps towards families not only the pupils, 'Part of our monitoring of vulnerable families is their SEMH needs, which directly link to the relationships they have made and how secure we deem them to be'. One school had no data monitoring pupils at risk, one school commented on regular monitoring is required, 'This can be done more often', whilst another school reflected how the data was used ineffectively to the detriment of pupils, 'We gather opinions but these are inconsistent and not always shared with the wider team, the wellbeing survey does highlight students who might be struggling and are the 'swans' and may have gone unnoticed'.

Q2.3

Safety is paramount and many school reported monitoring and supervision in place, 'All times of the school day are monitored and supervised by staff members', and 'We do monitor times of the day and are aware of the impact of the many transitions in a school day and the challenges that might present for children and staff'. Some participants explicitly reported times of the day where safety may feel compromised to pupils such as in the mornings, 'We have a soft start to the morning and recognise 'lining up' can be a difficult transition or sometimes cause of conflict or dysregulation', 'We have run internal audits and identified that the start of the day was a time when some children were feeling anxious and potentially disconnected so have ensured there are always members of staff across the site to welcome them and have connected conversations' and at the end of the day, 'A member of our SLT is at the school gate at the beginning and at the end of the day', Unstructured times of the day make some pupils feel unsafe so schools reported the planned steps to address this, 'No unstructured or unsupervised time in school', 'We have staff available and supporting at the unstructured times where students are likely to feel less safe'.

Schools reported safety hotspots and addressed these accordingly, 'We have surveyed pupils re safety hotspots. At all transition times there is a rota of staff on staircases and playgrounds...', 'Students are not allowed in the buildings at break and lunch to ensure safety as supervision is not possible in all corridors in all buildings'. Lunchtime was reported as a time in the day when pupils may feel unsafe, disconnected and isolated. Schools reported offering alternative places to go, 'We have also identified that lunchtimes can be difficult so have built a low sensory playroom that children have responded incredibly well too. In addition to this we wanted children to have a place where they could reflect and feel moments of safety and peace so have built a wellbeing garden to support this', 'The School Council have asked to create a warm space club where older pupils can support younger pupils by giving them a quiet space, helping with homework or just be a listening ear', and lunchtime clubs and activities, 'Our ELSA trained TA provides a drop-in service during lunchtime where she provides targeted activities to support pupil's sense of belonging and where she fosters positive friendships', 'There are lunchtime clubs available including the library which remains open before, during and after school and during lunchtime'. One school recognised work remained to be carried out in this area, 'We have not taken any feedback, and it is still possible to see students that are isolated and disconnected'.

Q2.4

Participants reported policies are reviewed regularly, *'Policies reviewed annually and then distributed by SLT'*, *'Our policies are regularly reviewed and form a backbone to our CPDs'*, and *'Policies are written by staff and reviewed by Governors'*, however a lack of input from the entire school was frequently reported, *'Whilst our policies are directed by our 4BE's values including be inclusive, we do not currently have whole school input'*, *Policies are reviewed and enforced, but don't consistently have input from pupils and staff'*, and *'they are limited opportunities for students or parents to get involved'*. No participants explicitly reported staff CPD covering the concept of a sense of belonging, however, one participant reported having a culture of inclusivity, *'All new toolkits are shared with our wider communities so that we are all working collaboratively to ensure we are inclusive all oof all members'*.

3. Fostering positive relationships

Q3.1

Participants reported their school to have clear expectations of positive interactions with their pupils, *'High expectations are set for all staff and students'*, and *'Modelled expectations'*. Some participants shared details of policy in place to assist staff, *'SLT share the staff handbook and policies with staff annually to set clear expectations in regards to respectful interactions'*, and pupil involvement, *'The school code of conduct and community expectations, as written by the pupils, sets out what we expect of each other in terms of how we communicate'*. Two participants gave insight into how respectful interactions are encouraged in their schools, *'In staff areas, we promote the Four Agreements to remind staff that all their interactions (pupils, staff or parents)- to be impeccable in our word, not to make assumptions, not to take things personally and to try our best- it also promotes forgiveness'*, and *'Pupils are encouraged to be polite and respectful and staff are required to model behaviours that we would wish to see from pupils'*.

Participants reported their leadership teams offering training to staff, *'The leadership team sets clear expectations for staff and there are regular reminders in staff training'*, *'All staff have participated in restorative approach training this year'*, *'Ongoing training is provided for staff including the 'maximising impact of TAs training and the trauma informed schools training'*, and *'training is provided and resources available'*. Some schools reported their CPD training covering this, *'There has been specific CPD around compassion-led teaching practice and leadership where staff co-produced agreed outcomes to ensure all interactions are fair and friendly etc..'*, *'Inclusion lead involved and runs CPD'*. Two participants shared their schools weekly schedule which clearly reports opportunities to foster positive interactions, *'Lime management meetings managers are asking if there is any additional support or training, they would need'*, and *'Morning operational briefing, reflective debrief x3, access to EP weekly and SLT weekly, share children via induction slides'*. Additionally, one participant reflected on their school values, *'School values of Hope, compassion and Forgiveness are entwined and embedded in all lessons and throughout the school community'*. Future planning was shared by one school to help enhance what already exists, *'We are currently planning on introducing a staff reflection space as part of our regular staff training to support staff to experience empathy and being heard to develop skills and ideas'*. However, for some it highlighted areas requiring attention, *'This is not fully met, there are gaps in our monitoring of expectations and ensuring that interactions are professional'*.

Q3.2

Participants reported that fostering positive relationships was practiced in their schools, *'School and classroom culture underpinned by positive relationships', 'Class teachers actively seek out opportunities to foster positive relationships and some additional adults', and 'some staff encourage positive relationships'*. Some participants shared in more detail how positive relationships are fostered in their schools such as having Ambassadors available, *'where classroom dynamics or relationships are difficult we reflect on ways to support eg we have used a small group restorative approach circle this has included with adults but we have also used Pupil Friendship Ambassadors to run small check in groups with younger ones', and 'The school employs anti-bullying and well-being ambassadors which receive training from Spotlight/ Inside Out/The Diana Trust'*.

School values are reported to foster good relationships, *'Core values of empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard fostered by all staff', and are used when faced with challenging situations, 'Reconciliation meetings are held between pupils and/or staff when required to encourage Hope, Compassion and Forgiveness and show respect'*. Implementation of initiatives are some ways participants reported the fostering of empathy, antibullying, respect and trust.

A variety of initiatives included, *'We hold a multicultural event annually and promote all faiths in our assemblies and newsletters...'*, and those initiatives led by pupils, *'We have student led assemblies and wellbeing clinics which are monitored by staff, 'Our school council pupils organise annual multadays and assemblies to highlight the importance of empathy, respect and kindness through our 'odd-sock' day and celebrating antibullying week', 'last year, we had weekly antibullying updates in the student bulletin which all teachers would go through on Mondays, this year, these updates will be led by ambassadors on a weekly Friday whole school tannoy'*. Two participants reported work that was still needed to be done outside of the classroom, *'Strong in class but needs developing at playtime to improve adult modelling and responses that empower and support children', and to help improve peer support, 'Peer mentoring is part of the school but is in its early stages of development'*.

Q3.3

Participants reported their school offering structured programmes to encourage positive relationships between pupils. Older pupils have opportunities to become mentors by taking on ambassador roles to help pupils with different needs, for example pupils facing difficulties, *'We have an ambassador scheme where ambassadors are used as mentors to other students that may be facing difficulties. They lead assemblies and attend bi-weekly meetings to discuss initiatives...'*, to support younger pupils, *'All pupils in our school have ample opportunities to support their peers through structured programmes. This includes 10 pupils in Year 5 who are 'guardian angels' and support EYFS pupils during lunchtimes. A group of 10 Year 6 pupils have been trained to be B's buddies. They help their peers in Key Stage 1 during lunchtimes to support positive play. When going to church, the older classes link up with younger classes for peer support and our reading buddies in Key stage 2 support younger children with their reading', and to support more vulnerable pupils, 'Sixth form mentors were effective in supporting some of our vulnerable pupils. Some are trained as Well-being Ambassadors'*.

Participants reported schools offering buddy systems such as reading buddies/reading ambassadors. Participants reported offering spaces in schools to help facilitate the mentoring and buddying schemes, *'School council have asked to create a 'warm space club' where older pupils can support younger pupils by giving them a quiet space, helping with homework or just being a listening ear', and 'The Learning Support Centre is a busy, welcoming environment that is there for pupils to come to anytime if they need to speak to someone in a safe space, they can reset and refocus and return to class, or have specific timed placements in there'*. Participants mentioned structured programmes being in the early stages of development, *'We have started having wellbeing ambassadors in KS2 who should be role models for these positive relationships but this is in the very early stages', and schemes still in discussion, 'Considering reintroduction of the sixth form mentoring of KS3 pupils', 'This is something we have thought about but not yet got off the ground'*. Barriers to development were highlighted such as limited capacity to accommodate the whole school in the initiative, *'Some students are involved in peer support/buddying programmes. It does not include the whole school and no real assessment has taken place on success of these', and to include disability ambassadors, 'at the moment, we do not have training/capacity to include send reps in the scheme'*.

Q3.4

Participants reported schools working hard to help parents/carers feel like they belong in the school community. Many initiatives are offered, *'When we do hold celebrations and host events such as our annual art display etc there is always some really lovely feedback and gratitude to the school', 'We have a parent engagement scheme through foodbanks, coffee mornings and SEND parents day'. 'We have regular coffee mornings and school events which allows us to do this', 'As a school we are working very hard to involve parents through inviting them to a number of parent workshops, such as online safety events, coffee mornings with the education psychology service or reading breakfasts. Newsletters are sent out regularly to parents to inform of curriculum updates and events', and 'Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) training introduced for families who are struggling with their child. Mental Health in Schools Team (MHST) working with children and families to provide mental health support where families may be on a long waiting list for CAMHS X School Association (PTA) have hosted fun days for families to attend, BBQs at transition meetings and opportunities to buy pre-loved uniform at a cheaper price'*.

Some participants shared details of how schools target disengaged parents/carers, *'Individual invitations are targeted at hard to reach', vulnerable parents/carers, 'Parents with SEND are targeted in particular for additional parent support workshops and information from the local offer', and workshops offered to improve communications, 'Targeted parent/pupil evenings such as 'How to Support Your Child with Their GCSEs' workshops, 'Success in the Sixth Form' and 'Supporting your Child with Online Safety' are held to boost communication with difficult to reach families'*. Many participants expressed the challenges of fostering belonging with parents/carers despite their best efforts, *We try really hard with this but sometimes there is a low take up to engagement when we put on workshops, seek survey response, offer tea and talk opportunities', and the possible reasons for disengagement, 'We are finding it difficult to entice parents with language barriers or parents that may have busy schedules to attend. It is the same few select parents that attend and engagement numbers are not entirely strong'*. Schools acknowledge those harder to reach parents/carers and the work required for their engagement, *'Equally survey responses are mostly positive but it is perhaps the harder to reach parents/carers that we could think more creatively about', 'Leadership have worked*

very hard to engage with harder to reach families but this is still very much a work in progress', 'We try this a lot but still need support in reaching those harder to reach families'. Two participants reported minimal work carried out in this area, 'more work on true sense of belonging with parents and wider school community', 'This is an area where little work has taken place'.

Q3.5

Many participants reported their schools partnering with the local community to promote belonging, some examples include, *'We liaise with our local parish priest and attend regular masses at our parish church. We are also involved with our local intergenerational Sparkle project where our Year 4 pupils visit their elderly 'grandfriends' ', 'Pupils are involved in fundraising events to reach out to the wider community e.g., 'The Rotary Club Christmas Collection' and toy fundraiser, food banks and Save the Children' and 'We use local services as part of learning e.g. local vicar attends assemblies to talk about Harvest or Easter'. Some participants reported their schools are at the early stages of working with their local communities, 'Beginning to establish links with the wider community', 'We have some engagement in events but these have been inconsistent', whilst one participant reflected initiatives do not have the focus of belonging, 'We do not have anything specific for belonging and do not have established family events such as fairs, family nights, bring a parent to school day etc, this is all things we would like to implement in the future'.*

4. School activities

Q4.1

Participants reported teachers and support staff setting high expectations for all pupils at their school, *'Teachers and support staff work closely together with pupils and parents to set high expectations including those with SEND making reasonable adjustments and personal progress', with guidance of school vision and policy 'Achievement and behaviour policy includes scope for high expectations', 'This is ingrained in the culture of the school, due to the high aspirations from SLT', and 'Our school vision of Reach higher, Shine Brighter encourages inclusion and aspiration'.*

Many participants shared different ways in which progression is monitored for pupils, some schools use measurements such as surveys or reports, *'All pupils progress is measured in a way that values and celebrates personal achievement...We know from pupil surveys that pupils feel supported by staff', 'Pupil and parent surveys and review meetings suggest pupils feel supported and progress is being made', 'Parents receive three data collection reports representing progress made throughout the year', whilst other participants reported in person meetings, 'Key worker reports TAC meetings, open afternoons for key workers to meet in person with parents...', and 'We have three progress review days across the academic year and a parents evening for each year group to communicate high expectations regularly to parents'.*

One participant shared the approach fostered in school, *'We refer to growth mindset and actively encourage children to make mistakes as part of learning and use the word 'yet' to 'I can't'. We have assemblies recognising uniqueness, journeys, making mistakes etc...'. Adaptive teaching methods are used to set high aspirations, 'task plans used and adaptive teaching promoted across the school', 'Our curriculum is well thought through and all children are supported with clear adaptive teaching strategies built through learning plans that incorporate professional advice', with one participant sharing more details,*

Implementation of adapted teaching is a whole school priority this year. Staff receive weekly training and updates on how to adjust teaching to meet the needs of those in their classes, this supports the recently adopted 'Teach to the Top' mantra'. One participant reported the adaptive methods employed for pupils with SEND, 'We support children and recognise sensory needs e.g. sensory breaks, headphones, quiet spaces, learning toys, using iPad, choice of individual/group workstations'. Some participants expressed concerns on pupil engagement and its negative effect on aspirations, 'Not all lessons engage all groups of children and some children have shared that other get more support than them', and inconsistencies present, 'This can be inconsistently applied, the huge and wide range of needs can lead to not all students feeling. Alternatives are available for those not meeting NC levels but there is more that could be done to support some groups', 'SEND faculty reps are embedded across the school though they don't meet consistently'. Pupil aspirations are desired; one participant shared the difficulty experienced when this is challenged, 'Occasionally, it can be a challenging area for school and parents to agree on attainment needs even when outside services and professionals such as SALT or STEPS, Occupational therapy, ASD Outreach share school's view of progress and needs. This can impact the relationship between school and parents'.

Q4.2

Many schools offer a curriculum which includes diverse cultural perspectives and histories and participants reported a wealth of embedded themes, an example from one school, 'Cultural diversity is embraced throughout school life, as an example, Black History Month is celebrated every year and incorporated into the whole school curriculum. The multicultural day provides pupils with an opportunity to wear their cultural dress, pupils are able to sample food and enjoy activities such as henna hand painting. We recognise and celebrate Pride week with pupils. All cultures and religious beliefs of our pupils, staff and families are recognised and celebrated. We observe and celebrate important times of the Christian calendar but also other religious beliefs'.

Participants shared school curriculums are regularly reviewed and reflect their communities, 'Integrated approach to the curriculum, reviewed annually, representative of the school community'. Methods of delivery were shared by two participants, 'This is regularly reviewed with provision meetings and SENDCO and also other services/expertise e.g. Ed Psych, ASD Outreach and SALT. We have been selected to participate in PINs this year', one participant shared specific details, 'Teachers are taught to differentiate learning in collaboration with TA's and lesson plans and unit overview maps highlight areas for scaffolding instruction. Weekly T&L tips to share best practise particularly adaptive teaching methods'.

Q4.3

Two participants shared information on pupils having a say in their learning experiences with schools using different systems, 'This year we have signed up to Voices 21 and are working hard to promote oracy for children - all staff have had training. Our participation in PINs project is helping us to develop our approach in response to different ways of learning', and 'Our Senior leadership team has worked with staff to develop and embed our 'pedagogical toolkit' which enables our pupils to engage through an enquiry-based curriculum where every learning opportunity is phrased as a question. The Toolkit also ensures that each child has the necessary models, scaffolding and resources to access learning', and one participant reported different ways that pupils engage effectively with

the material, *'some pupils use a laptop in lesson rather than writing. One particular pupil uses noise cancelling ear phones on occasions to help maintain focus and encourage creativity'*. However, many participants reported inadequacies, *'we fall short in this category', 'pupil voice is carried out over the year but this is not always put back into action, although pupils do feel heard', 'We can work on this', 'Students are not given a say in the learning We have no evidence of the Universal Design for Learning'*.

Q4.4

All participants reported social-emotional learning (SEL) is integrated into their PSHE curriculum, for example one participant shared *'Our PSHE curriculum has elements of SEL and we use Zones of Regulation across the school as shared language...'*, whilst another reported its importance, *'We integrate SEMH and wellbeing through our curriculum and PSHE is valued and promoted highly. This is a strength of the school'*. One participant reported their school to use role-play and reflective journaling, *'The RE coordinator meets with the faith council pupil on a weekly basis to equip the faith leaders to lead weekly collective worship with their classes. They use role-play and reflective journalling to explore the 'Wednesday Word' which is based on the Christian Gospel values'*. However, several schools reported inconsistencies with the integration of SEL into their curriculum, *'but consistency and cohesiveness is lacking across the school and across subjects', 'We do this but it can be better improved. We are having a big push this year on Oracy so that should help', 'SEL is integrated into some areas of the curriculum'*.

Q4.5

Some participants shared how extracurricular activities are offered at their schools, *'Our school offers a wide array of extra-curricular activities ranging from sports clubs, SETM club, drama, guitar, piano and choir groups to breakfast and after school care'*, one school shared how participation is encouraged, *'Extra Curricular fairs are held at the start of the academic year show pupils what is on offer and encourage participation. A wide range of clubs are available both at lunchtimes and after school. Ranging from sport, art and gardening, dance, music etc'*.

One participant reported having specific support in place for pupils with SEND and disadvantage, *'Adjustments have been made to provide an additional adult to enable a high needs pupil to access piano lessons. In addition to this, grant and free places have been offered and provided for pupil premium pupils to access their preferred club free of charge'*. Barriers are reported for pupils with SEND such as funding and transport constraints, *'We are looking into more After School activities for our SEN children with specific funding', 'There are a range of extra-curricular activities, but they do not cater for the needs of all students. After-school clubs often have barriers to those who have additional needs. Many have transport and so are not able to attend'*. Two schools reported lacking a diverse range of clubs noticing their current focus is sport, *'Focus for this academic year, more club offers. Could expand out of physical activity', 'We are looking to keep broadening interests away from sport'*. One school reported needing to understand pupils' interests, *'We could look more at our data to see representation and also perhaps gather pupil voice around the types of activities they would like to do'*, whilst another reported needing to know how to increase participation, *'Weekly registers are done so we do know who is attending but need to encourage more and others to do so. We need to try and tap into how to include them more'*.

Q4.6

Many participants shared details of how their school helps pupils transition between year groups and school stages, a brief example, *'Supervision, pupil passports, transitions meetings between teachers, banking time, Y6-Y7 transition SLT involvement'*, and a more detailed example, *'Staff support at transition time. Meet with P/C to discuss how best child supported. Sanctuary- lunchtime club for those who find playground overwhelming. End and beginning of term unsettling- small groups with activities. Pupil passport with photo of new classroom etc'*. Participants reported detailed adjustments and personalised plans for pupils with SEND during transition times, two examples follow, *'Personalised plans in place for most complex kids, timetables, support, transition meetings. SENDCO ensures smooth transition. Worry ninja workshops delivered by Ed wellbeing service. Additional sessions for SEN by SALT service. Y6 travel safe session. SENCO has meetings with sec school SENCO to ensure all SEN needs are met. Pupil passport completed by pupil so they themselves can identify where they need support. Can meet new teachers in summer term. SEN supported by LSA. Each SEN child is heard'*, and *'Transition time- Y6 have personalised consults with SENCO before pupils join school. Hubs open during breaks (LSC and SEN LH). All pupils have buddies on arrival. LSC run skill sessions to help those struggling with transition. HoY reg check-ins. Adapted timetables for those unable to follow curriculum. SEND annual reviews. PP complete survey to inform school what barriers to learning they may have. Then support given accordingly. Examples given'*.

SUMMARY FINDINGS FROM THE AUDIT TOOL

1. Creating an inclusive school culture

We create a welcoming environment where everyone feels they belong by living inclusive values daily.

This criterion contains three items and focused on how eleven schools created a welcoming environment for their whole school community to help foster a sense of belonging. Item one was answered by ten schools, item two answered by nine schools and item three by all eleven participating schools. School values were reported to nurture a sense of belonging and how the schools expressed them everyday at school. Schools reported actions undertaken that helped promote an inclusive environment such as pupil led campaigns and regular staff training. Welcoming pupils into school each day promoted belonging including the importance of small gestures such as a smile. High expectations of good behaviour among all pupils promoted the feeling of belonging helped by incentives such as positive achievement points. Regular staff CPD training helped teachers promote a welcoming environment, however inconsistencies in terms of training and delivery to all members of staff were reported to reduce feelings of belonging.

We empower all pupils, staff and parents/carers to be involved in initiatives that help foster a sense of belonging; and support them to feel comfortable and able to share concerns, questions and ideas.

Initiatives involving pupils, parents/carers and staff were reported to foster belonging, such as pupils organising active travel to reduce air pollution. Furthermore, many initiatives enabled pupils and parents/carers to have their concerns heard such as the implementation of whisper boxes for the former and suggestion boxes for the latter. Empowering pupils to make changes in their schools helped to nurture belonging and for parents/carers to feel able to action their ideas, for example setting up a tuckshop. Staff who feel like they are supported at school helped to foster belonging, such as half-termly wellbeing sessions. Many schools reported ongoing issues of parental engagement and the depths of work that is outstanding in this area.

Our behaviour approach fosters belonging by anticipating needs, making reasonable adjustments, and recognising all behaviour as communication. We set clear expectations, use consistent routines, and reinforce positive behaviour, treating mistakes as chances to teach and build relationships.

Behaviour policies were used to guide behaviour and maintain consistency to support belonging and this included adjusting teaching practices for pupils with dysregulation or other SEMH and SEND. Clear expectations of pupil behaviour were reported and strategies shared for their implementation such as non-negotiable rules and detentions. Positive behaviour was reinforced by a points reward system in many schools, rewards included trips to theme parks or lunch passes, furthermore, a growth mindset approach was frequently used when pupils made mistakes.

2. Whole school data, policies and training

This criterion contains four items and focused on how eleven schools monitor their data about school belonging, such as monitoring times of the day when safety may be compromised, staff training and policy. Item one was answered by nine schools, item two answered by ten schools, and items three and four answered by nine schools, respectively.

Our school leadership team gathers feedback from pupils, staff and parents about their sense of belonging at least once a year. We use this information to drive whole school improvement.

Feedback from pupils, staff and parents/carers was collected via surveys and CPOMS, however the frequency and specific data varied around school belonging. Sometimes the data was used to guide school improvements such as holding assemblies on anti-bullying and information sharing on e-safety. However, some schools expressed amendments and additions were required for example to include questions on protected characteristics and belonging.

We closely monitor data and feedback to understand and anticipate which pupils including those with SEND may be at risk of not feeling they belong at school, and if identified we take early steps to ensure they feel valued and included.

The majority of schools reported monitoring their data very closely to be alert for any warning signs of not feeling they belong at school such as persistent absenteeism and fluctuations in attainment. The incremental steps taken to formulate a 'plan of action' was shared by some schools when belonging and inclusion were a concern, including the creation of individual/bespoke plans for pupils. Outside provision was frequently brought in to assist schools with their belonging work along with incentives such as free breakfasts for families at school. Specific details of action taken for pupils were SEND were reported by many schools and often the whole family was involved too.

We monitor and address times of day when some pupils may feel unsafe, isolated, or disconnected, taking planned steps to enhance their sense of belonging during these times.

Safety is paramount and many schools reported monitoring and supervision in place, some explicitly sharing times of day where this is most compromised. Unstructured times of the day such as lunchtime was frequently reported to cause pupils to feel unsafe, disconnected or isolated. Pupils reported safety hotspots such as areas in the playgrounds or staircases in school buildings. Many schools offered alternative places to go during these times such as lunchtime clubs, libraries or wellbeing gardens.

Policies and staff CPD including induction are regularly reviewed, with input from the entire school, to ensure that the concept of belonging is well understood and that our culture of inclusivity is thoroughly woven into all policies.

Polices were reviewed regularly but input from the entire school was lacking and the concept of belonging was not included in staff CPD training.

3. Fostering positive relationships

This criterion contains five items and focused on how eleven schools fostered positive relationships among the whole school community. Items one, two and three was answered by ten schools, item four answered by all eleven participating schools and item five by ten schools.

Our leadership team ensures all staff maintain empathetic, friendly, fair, encouraging and respectful interactions with pupils daily and are provided with the time, resources and skills to enable this.

Many schools have high expectations of how staff should interact with their pupils, frequently back up within school policies and codes of conduct; respectful interactions were encouraged in many schools. Leadership teams assisted staff members with training to nurture empathic and fair interactions, whilst others reported staff CPD training covered this. Fostering positive interactions was reported as an everyday opportunity with schools sharing examples of their weekly schedules. Planning ahead to enhance what already exists and what still requires attention was also highlighted by schools.

Staff work hard to foster good relationships among all pupils, both inside and outside the classroom, by encouraging empathy, anti-bullying, respect, friendships, teamwork and trust.

Many schools practiced fostering positive relationships between staff and pupils with many sharing details, for example the role of Ambassadors and adhering to school values such as congruence and unconditional positive regard. The implementation of different initiatives supported the fostering of empathy, antibullying, respect and trust such as annual multicultural events, odd-sock day and celebrating antibullying week. However, for some schools there was work still required in this area namely peer support and in the school playground.

We ensure that pupils across all age ranges and backgrounds have opportunities to take the lead in supporting their peers through structural programmes like mentoring and buddy systems, regularly assessing and improving these initiatives to strengthen positive relationships.

Schools frequently offered structured programmes to encourage positive relationships, examples given included reading buddy schemes and older pupils becoming mentors to pupils facing difficulties and to pupils lower down the school. Some schools reported these programmes to be in the early stages of development whilst others reported the barriers to providing these initiatives.

We work with parents and carers to foster belonging and focus on involving parents that are harder to reach and/or disengaged through strong home-school partnerships and diverse initiatives such as family workshops, regular communication updates, and community-building events,

Schools reported working very hard to help parents/carers feel like they belong in the school community with many initiatives being shared, for example foodbank schemes, coffee mornings and an annual art display. Schools shared details of how they target disengaged or hard to reach parents/carers such as sending out personal invitations and offering workshops. However, it was frequently reported to be a challenging area with schools acknowledging the difficulties experienced here, such as language barriers and parents/carers work commitments.

We partner with the local community to promote belonging through events like school fairs and service projects. Staff are also equipped to access external support and share referral information with parents, ensuring everyone feels supported.

Many schools reported partnering with their local communities to promote belonging, one example given was Year 4 pupils involvement with a local intergenerational Sparkle project visiting their elderly 'grandfriends'. Several schools reported limited community partnerships in place, one school reflecting their initiatives having no focus of belonging.

4. School activities

This criterion contains six items and focused on pupil aspirations, learning experiences, extracurricular activities and offering diverse curriculum. Item one was answered by eleven schools, item two answered by ten schools and item three by nine participating schools, with the remaining three items answered by all eleven schools.

Teachers and support staff set high aspirations for all pupils, including those with SEND, using adaptive methods and fostering a growth mindset. High expectations are communicated regularly to pupils and parents.

School vision and policy guided the high aspirations set for all pupils with some schools sharing the different ways progression is monitored such as surveys or reports or in-person meetings. Adaptive teaching methods were reported to be in place at many schools both for pupils with and without SEND. However, schools reported issues with a lack of pupil engagement and inconsistencies in fostering aspirations often leading to detrimental effects on pupil aspiration. In

addition, the complexity of parents/carers and school agreeing on attainment needs for some pupils.

Our curriculum includes diverse cultural perspectives and histories, using methods like differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, and scaffolding instruction.

A wealth of embedded themes in school curricula were reported and included diverse cultural perspectives and histories. Many schools observe and celebrate all religious beliefs too. Methods of how the curriculum is delivered was shared by a small number of schools with only one participant giving specific details on scaffolding and differentiated instruction.

We give pupils a say in their learning experiences and emphasise Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to provide multiple ways to learn and engage to ensure all pupils feel acknowledged, valued, and can effectively engage with the material.

Schools offered different systems to give pupils a say in their learning experiences with one school reported the imminent implementing of Voices 21 in their practice, whilst another school developed and embedded a pedagogical toolkit. Many schools reported inadequacies UDL.

We integrate social-emotional learning (SEL) into the curriculum to teach empathy, self-awareness, and relationship-building through activities like role-playing, reflective journaling and collaborative projects.

Social-emotional learning is integrated into schools via their PSHE curriculum however, inconsistencies are present for some schools.

We offer a diverse range of extracurricular activities that cater to pupils' interests, motivations, and accessibility needs, with specific support for disabled pupils and those with SEN. This includes providing necessary transport, trained adult support, and ensuring broad and balanced participation.

Schools reported a wide array of extracurricular activities being offered in their schools such as sports and drama clubs. One school shared how participation is encouraged in their school with extracurricular fairs held at the start of the academic year ensuring broad, fair and balanced participation. Many barriers are reported for pupils with SEND and their accessibility to attending extracurricular activities, for example transport prebooked and funding constraints.

We ensure smooth transitions for all pupils, especially those with SEND, between school stages, year groups, and during key times like breaks or transport. This includes personalised plans, regular person-centred meetings, and clear communication to make every pupil feel valued and supported.

Schools reported a wealth of planning in place to help assist pupils with transitions. Personalised plans and details of adjustments were shared especially for pupils with SEND. Summary findings from the Audit Tool

ABOUT THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU

For 60 years, the National Children's Bureau has worked to champion the rights of children and young people in the UK. We interrogate policy and uncover evidence to shape future legislation and develop more effective ways of supporting children and families. As a leading children's charity, we take the voices of children to the heart of Government, bringing people and organisations together to drive change in society and deliver a better childhood for the UK. We are united for a better childhood.

We bring people and organisations together under the umbrella of the NCB family to drive change in society and deliver a better childhood across the UK. Our membership groups draw partners together to drive change in key areas where we need to make childhood better. Belonging Matters is run by the following NCB family members:

- **Anti-Bullying Alliance:** The Anti-Bullying Alliance is a unique coalition of organisations and individuals working together to stop bullying and create safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn. - anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/
- **Council for Disabled Children:** The Council for Disabled Children, as part of the NCB family, operates a number of different networks, programmes and special interest groups that focus on specific aspects of the SEND sector. - www.ncb.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are/our-ncb-family/council-disabled-children