

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



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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. Children face unique challenges of an unprecedented variety and scale including discrimination, high numbers experiencing mental health issues and public services that are overstretched. 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) and is delivered in partnership with several specialist membership groups and funded by the Kusuma Trust. 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.

Primary and secondary schools brings both similarities and differences for pupils and their parents/carers. Primary school introduces many pupils to the world of education with small classes and one member of staff teaching core subjects. Parents/carers are involved in school life right from the start, for example, helping with homework, school trips and the 'school run'. On the other hand, secondary schools are large environments where pupils are taught a wide range of subjects by different teachers and pupils are expected to be more independent in their learning, travelling to and from school alone and navigating many different relationships within the school environment.

The school environment describes the infrastructure, physical surroundings and shared assumptions, beliefs and values within a school (Jessiman, 2022). When a classroom environment is supportive, it has the potential to influence individual identities which fosters and nurtures all relationships (Anderman, 2003). Pupils with disabilities are increasingly educated alongside their peers without disabilities. To ensure these individuals feel a sense of school belonging, the educational setting should accommodate and provide opportunities to ensure full participation in all school activities (Dimitrellou, 2017; Vetoniemi & Karna, 2019).

School belonging is a construct of considerable debate particularly over how it is defined, measured and applied. The most cited definition of 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). It is not based on the

number of friends one has but drawn from cues, experiences, events and relationships and about the quality of fit between oneself and the environment (Allen, 2023).

Social relationships play an important role in feeling belonging and schools provide an important social context in which pupils may form social relationships, and this establishes a sense of belonging (McDiarmid et al, 2023). Furthermore, pupils spend much of their days and much of the year in school making the school environment a place where opportunities for positive social interactions can happen. Positive social interactions have been identified as a direct contributor to pupils' development of school belonging (Fite, 2024; Osterman, 2000). Pupils who feel accepted, supported and feel a sense of closeness to their peers have increased belonging at school (Ahmadi et al, 2020; Porter et al, 2021). Age is an important factor when reviewing pupils and their sense of school belongingness. Changes in identity formation and shifting social relationships occur at different developmental ages therefore potentially affecting feelings of belonging during the academic life course (Allen et al, 2018).

Teacher support towards pupils is widely reported in the belonging literature to influence school belonging (Allen et al, 2018), their influence extends further than simply standing at the front of the classroom. The relationship between teachers and pupils is optimised when teachers promote respect, care, encouragement, and autonomy (Allen et al 2018). Studies indicate that when teachers are available to listen to pupils, it promotes feelings of school belonging (Allen et al, 2021; Shaw, 2019). In addition, friendliness and fairness shown in the classroom have been observed to influence and promote school belonging, with greater impact with increasing school age (Allen et al, 2018).

Parent/carer involvement in the school community helps to foster school belonging. Several studies indicate that when parents/carers provide support and show care, compassion and encouragement towards their child's schooling, the child is more likely to exhibit greater connectedness to school (Allen et al, 2016; Allen et al, 2018). Home and school can work together to create a supportive environment (Allen et al, 2018). Giving parents/carers an opportunity to express their experiences and understanding of school belonging is imperative to grow current knowledge.

This report was prepared by a team of independent researchers from Goldsmiths, University of London and will present baseline and final 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. Case studies that were designed, developed and implemented by participating schools will be shared as they provide evidence and impact of the work carried out on belonging at school. 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).

THE EVALUATION

The aim of this evaluation is to analyse data both quantitative and qualitative from the Pilot programme. The data comes from

- Belonging Matters Pupil Questionnaire
- Parent/carer Questionnaire
- Teacher/staff Questionnaire
- BM 360 School Audit Tool
- Case Studies

The report will be based on baseline and final data collected from pupils, parent /carers and teacher/staff participants between June 2024 and July 2025. The results will be evaluated using the data to examine pupils' sense of school belonging, feelings of inclusion in school, fostering positive parental engagement and strengthening teacher-pupil relationships.

The BM 360 School Audit will be examined and evaluated from baseline to final, findings will be summarised.

Case studies will be evaluated and presented

METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

This section outlines the data sources available.

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.

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 questionnaires at baseline and final, all items response were on a four-point Likert scale ranging from never (1), a little (2), a lot (3) or always (4), two questions (Question 3 and Question 6) are negatively worded and therefore reverse coded, never (4), a little (3), a lot (2) and always (1). Responses for 'a little' and 'never' and 'a lot' and 'always' were collapsed to create a score for positive feelings of school belonging.

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 at baseline by 1,212 children and young people from seven primary schools, two secondary schools and a sixth form plus school; and by 849 children and young people from nine schools who completed the final questionnaire. Detailed analysis of the questions examines overall pupil responses at baseline and final and consider responses by gender, by SEND status and by school type.

PARENTS/CARERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Parents/carers were asked to think about their oldest child in school when completing a seven-item questionnaire, 435 parents/carers with 237 primary and 198 secondary school children participated in completing the questionnaire at baseline; and 366 parent/carers with 118 primary school pupils and 248 secondary school pupils participated completing the questionnaire at final, 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 on a scale ranging from never (1), a little (2), a lot (3) or always (4), responses for 'a lot' and 'always' 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 examine responses for the overall sample for parents/carers before highlighting differences by Gender, by 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 at baseline and 36 parent/carers provided responses at final, 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 primary school and 103 secondary school teachers/staff completed the questionnaire at baseline; a total of 182 teacher/staff provided responses, this consisted of 133 primary school and 49 of secondary school teacher/staff completed the questionnaire at final. The questions were responded to on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from never (1), a little (2), a lot (3) or always (4). 'A little' and 'always' were collapsed to create positive School belonging. The findings were examined by overall sample for teacher/staff responses and by school type.

Teacher/staff were also asked if they had any further comments 102 teachers/staff responded at baseline and 50 teacher/staff providing responses at final, this qualitative data will be presented at the end on the section.

BM 360 SCHOOL AUDIT TOOL

The BM 360 Audit Tool is available to participating schools and is a valuable tool for measuring key components that promote and support sense of belonging among pupils, this 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 at baseline and final to complete the BM 360 Audit Tool, rating each item in the four categories as to whether they fully met, partially met or have not yet met the criterion at baseline, 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 action plan is specific to each schools needs and allows them to focus on specific items within the four categories to develop and foster feelings of belonging practices in their schools with a particular focus on SEND pupils. The 11 schools provided baseline and final data, this is evaluated and presented in this report.

CASE STUDIES

As part of the programme schools were invited to share case studies of effective practice developed whilst undertaking the Belonging Matters programme. Nine schools completed a Belonging Matters Case Study template to evidence their belonging work. The template consisted of five sections; details of each section will follow. Under the title, 'Context of your belonging work', schools were asked to provide basic background information about their school and where the need for the proposed intervention originated, 'Desired outcome of project' requested schools to share what they hoped to achieve, 'Action(s) taken' invited schools to share activities implemented with pupils, staff, parents, or wider community as part of the intervention, 'Impact' invited schools to share the positive outcomes for the school, learners, staff, parents, or wider school community, and finally, 'Learning' invited schools to share any advice they would give to other schools who are wanting to foster a sense of belonging.

The case studies will be summarised and presented in this report.

FINDINGS

The following sections provide the main findings from the different data sources.

Data was collected at baseline and final using the BM Pupil Questionnaire between September 2024 and July 2025. The data was cleaned to remove any corrupt or incomplete responses, additionally any data that contained any blank, don't know or prefer not to say was not included in the final analysis. Valid baseline data in response to the 13 questions was provided by 1,212 children and young people from 10 schools and by 849 children and young people from nine schools who completed the questionnaire at final. Pupils were asked to complete the self-report questionnaires at baseline and final, all items response were on a four-point Likert scale ranging from never (1), a little (2), a lot (3) or always (4), two questions (Question 3 and Question 6) are negatively worded and therefore reverse coded, never (4), a little (3), a lot (2) and always (1). Responses for 'a little' and 'never' and 'a lot' and 'always' were collapsed to create a score for positive feelings of school belonging.

PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

DEMOGRAPHICS

Tables 1a and 1b provide descriptive statistics for the total number of pupil sample who provided valid data at baseline and final and by school type, by gender and by SEND status.

Table 1a: Descriptive statistics by school type (number of pupils, and percentages of total sample) by gender and by SEND status at baseline

Baseline	Total		Gender		SEND	
			Males	Females	No	Yes
	Total	1.212	628	545	1072	128
			(52%)	(45%)	(88%)	(11%)
	Secondary	346	198	130	293	47
		(29%)	(58%)	(38%)	(86%)	(13%)
	Primary	739	375	346	658	75
		(61%)	(51%)	(47%)	(90%)	(10%)
	Sixth Form	129	55	69	121	6
		(11%)	(43%)	(54%)	(95%)	(5%)

Table 1b: Descriptive statistics by school type (number of pupils, and percentages of total sample) by gender and by SEND status at final

Final	Total		Gender		SEND	
			Males	Females	No	Yes
	Total	849	424	401	562	85
			(50%)	(47%)	(66%)	(10%)
	Secondary	53	21	28	37	6
		(6%)	(40%)	(53%)	(70%)	(11%)
	Primary	715	362	336	455	72
		(84%)	(51%)	(47%)	(63%)	(10%)
	Sixth Form	81	41	37	70	7
		(10%)	(51%)	(46%)	(86%)	(9%)

PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE FINDINGS

The following section provides the findings for baseline and final pupil responses of the BM Pupil Questionnaire, the findings will be reported by overall sample, by gender, by SEND status and by School Type for each question (see appendix1)

The findings are presented as percentages, rounding up to the nearest number for results 0.5 and above.

I feel like I belong at my school

Figures 1a, 1b and 1c show the percentages for pupil responses at baseline and final for the overall pupil sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type in answer to the question 'I feel like I belong at my school'.

Figure 1a shows that over a third of the pupil sample responded negatively at baseline (34%), this decreased to just over a quarter of the overall pupil sample responding negatively at final (28%) in answer to the question.

Figure 1a shows overall pupil responses to *I feel like I belong at my school*

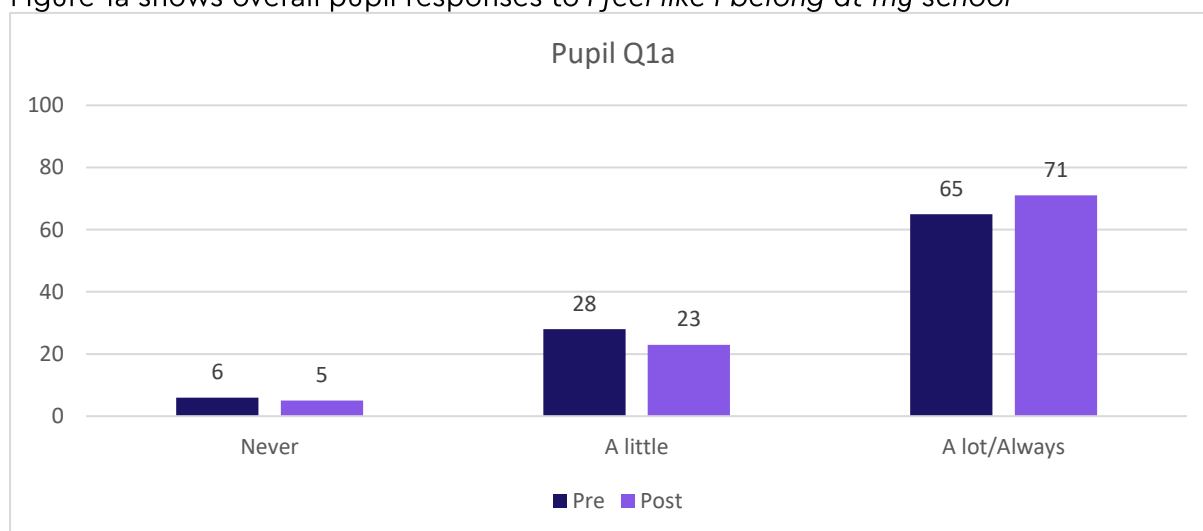


Figure 1b, shows pupil responses by gender and by SEND status negative decreased between baseline and final in answer to the question. Male pupils respond less negatively compared to female pupils. Pupils with non-SEND status respond less negatively than pupils with SEND status, however, SEND pupils responses are significantly more negative.

Figure 1b shows pupil responses by gender and by SEND status to *I feel like I belong at my school*

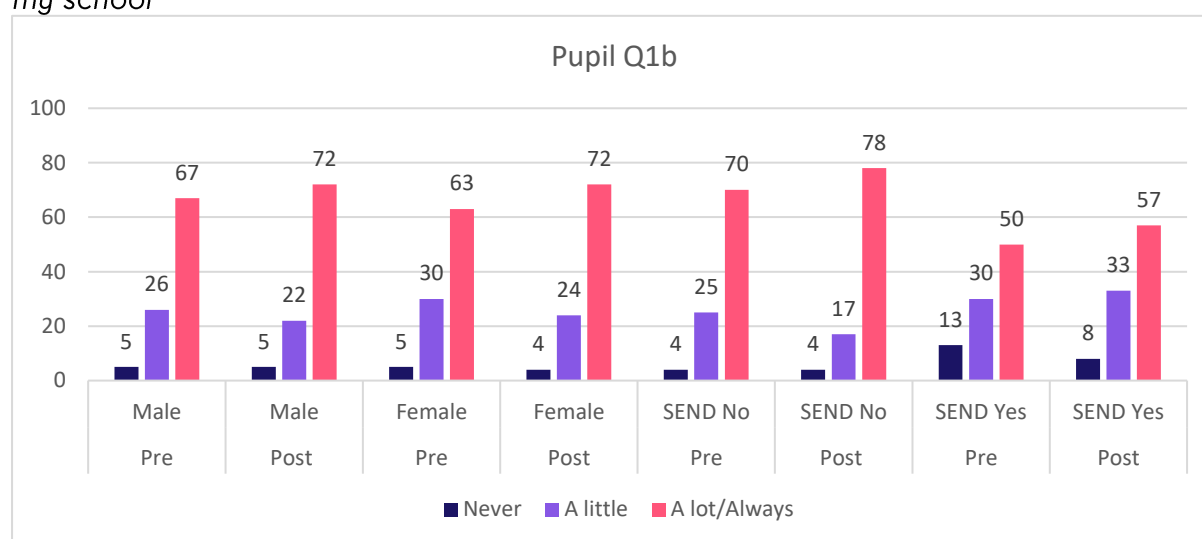
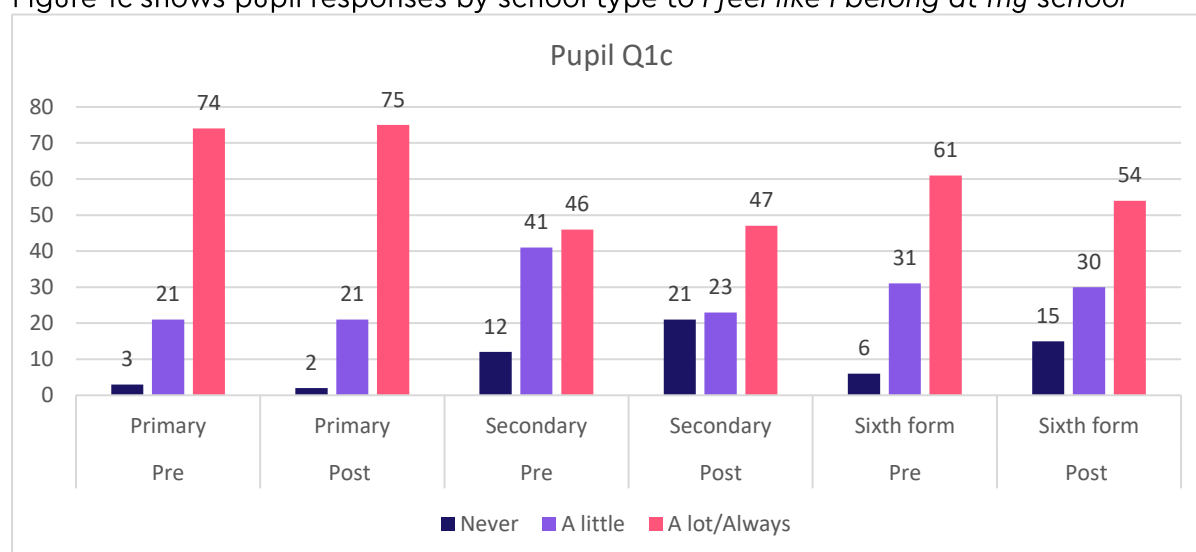


Figure 1c shows that primary and secondary school pupils negative responses decreased from baseline to final, whilst sixth form pupils' responses were more negative. Secondary school and sixth form pupil responses are significantly more negative compared with primary school pupils.

Figure 1c shows pupil 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 2a, 2b and 2c show the percentages for pupil responses at baseline and final for the overall pupil sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type in answer to the question 'Most of my teachers at my school are interested in me'.

Figure 2a shows nearly half of the pupil sample responded negatively at baseline, this decreased to just under two fifths at final (49-38%) in answer to the question.

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

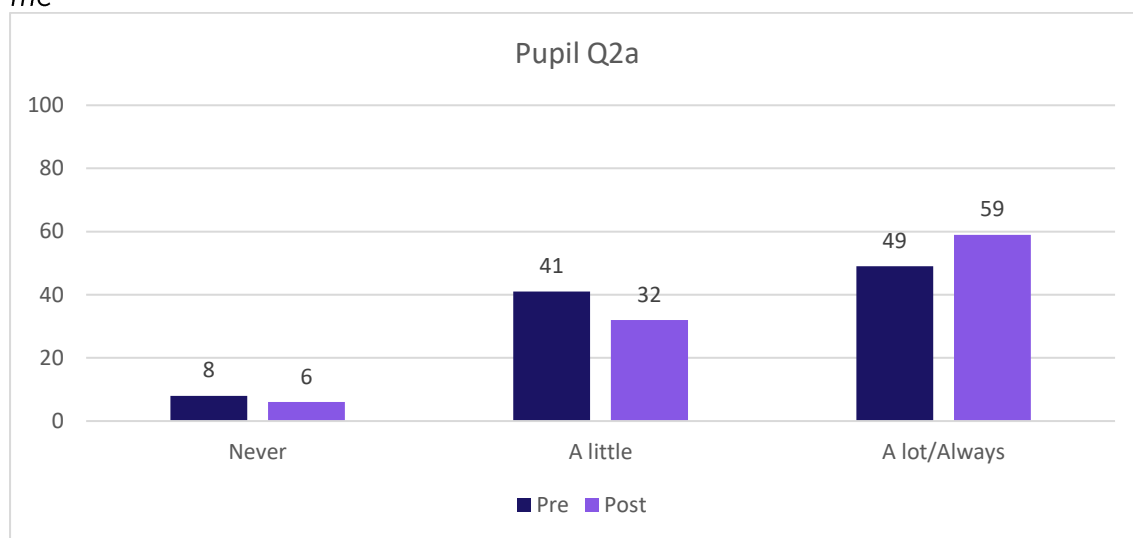


Figure 2b shows nearly half of the pupil sample responded negatively by gender and by SEND status at baseline, this decreased overall at final, with SEND pupil responses showing the smallest decrease overall (46-39%). Male pupil responses are more negative compared with female pupil response and non-SEND pupil responses are less negative compared with SEND pupils.

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

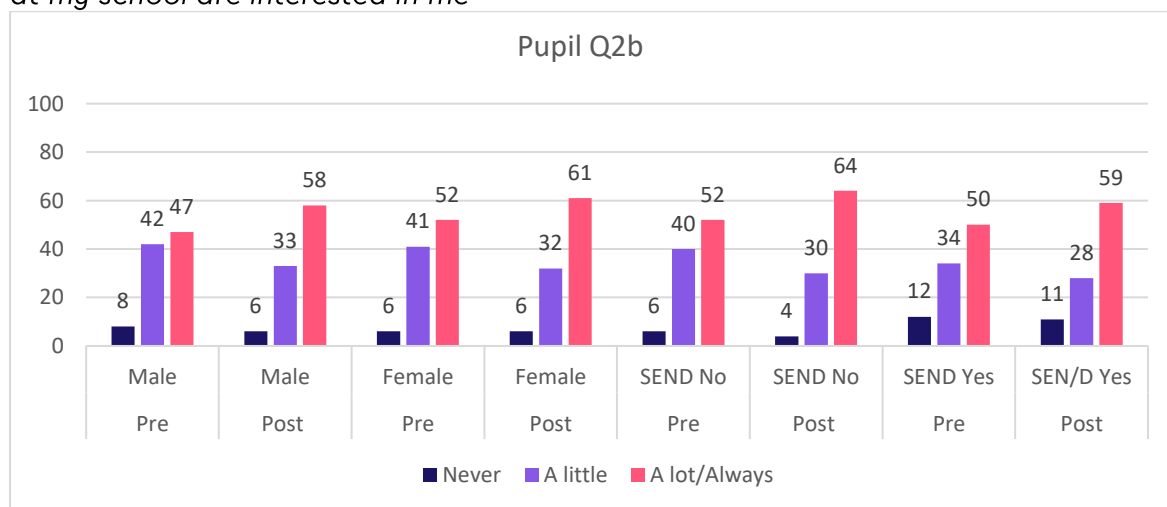
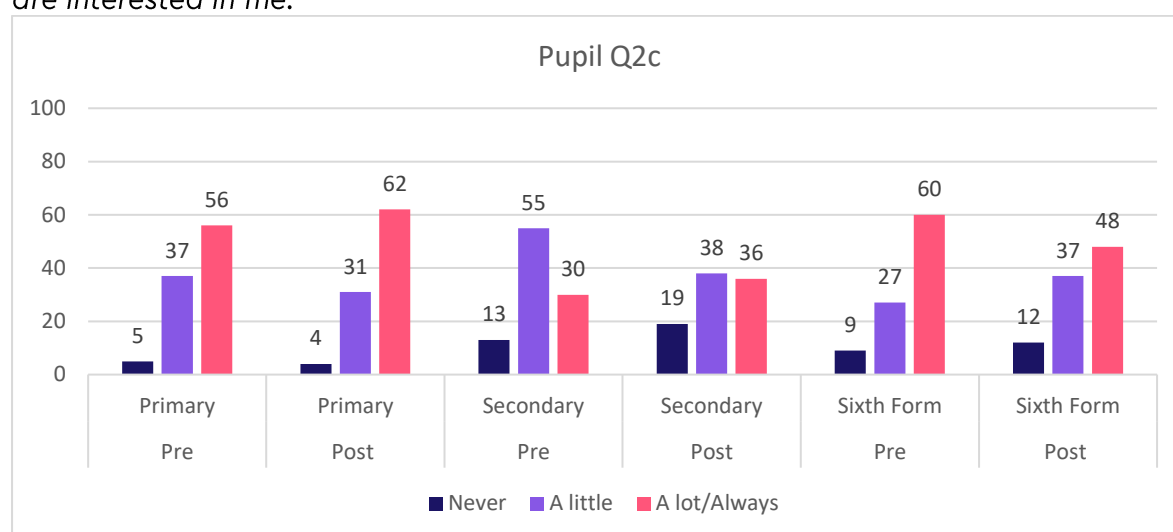


Figure 2c shows significant percentages across all school types at baseline and final. Sixth form negative pupil responses increased over time, whilst primary school and secondary school pupils' negative responses decreased from baseline to final. However, pupils' negative responses remain significant across all school types but particularly for secondary and sixth form pupils with around or just over fifty percent of pupils responding negatively in answer to the question.

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



I feel different from most other pupils - reverse coded

Figures 3a, 3b and 3c show the percentages for pupil responses at baseline and final for the overall pupil sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type in answer to the question 'I feel different from most other pupils'.

Figure 3a shows overall pupil responses with nearly a third of pupils responding they feel different a lot or always at baseline (31%), this increases slightly at final (33%).

Figure 3a shows overall pupil responses to *I feel different from most pupils*

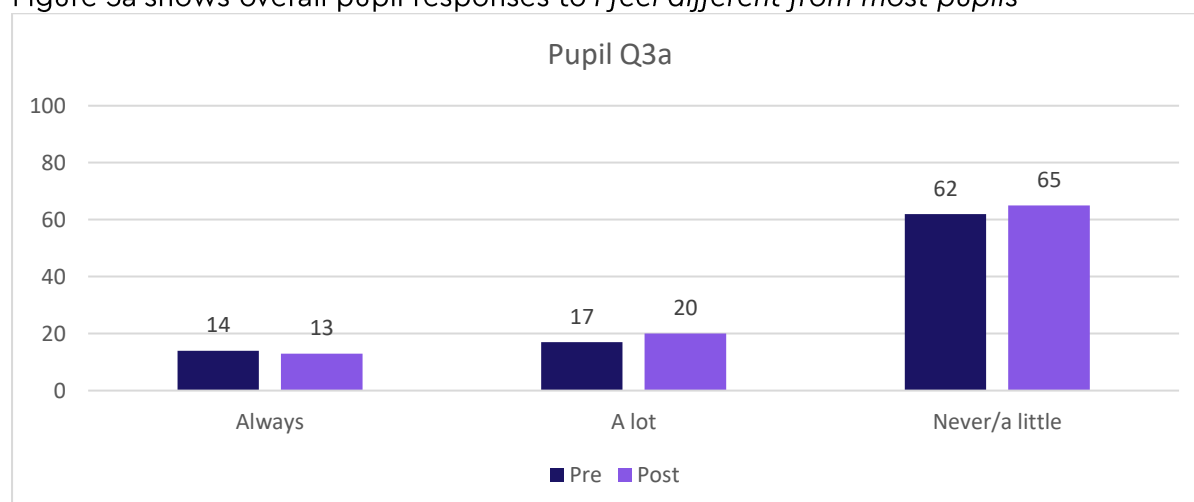


Figure 3b shows that slightly more male pupils responded feeling different a lot or always compared to female pupils and that male responses to feeling different increased over time, whilst female responses showed a slight decrease. A significant percentage of SEND pupils responded feeling different to other pupils at both baseline and final compared to non-SEND pupil responses, non-SEND pupils show a slight increase and SEND pupils show a slight decrease in feeling different from baseline to final.

Figure 3b shows pupil responses by gender and by SEND status to *I feel different from most pupils*

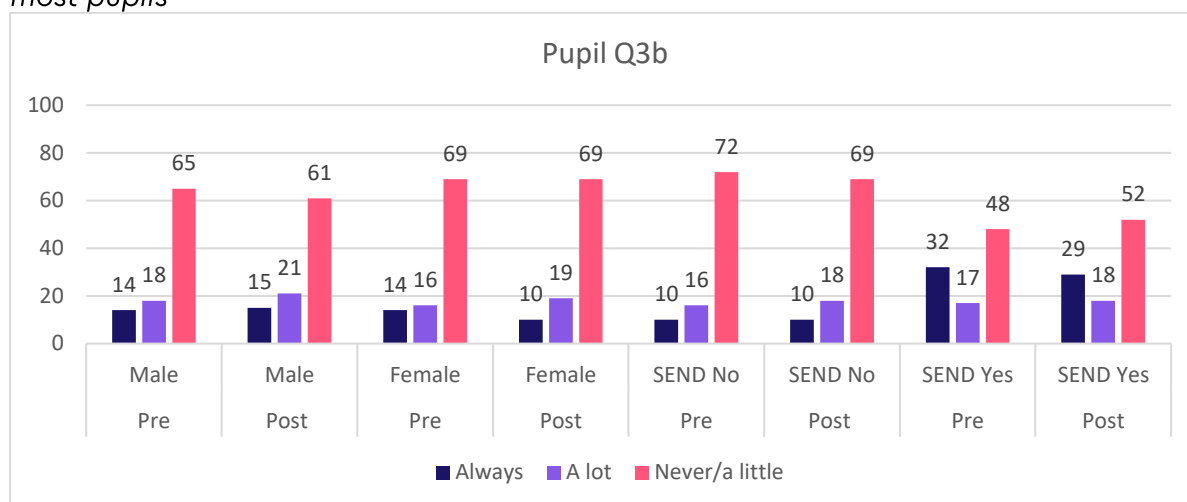
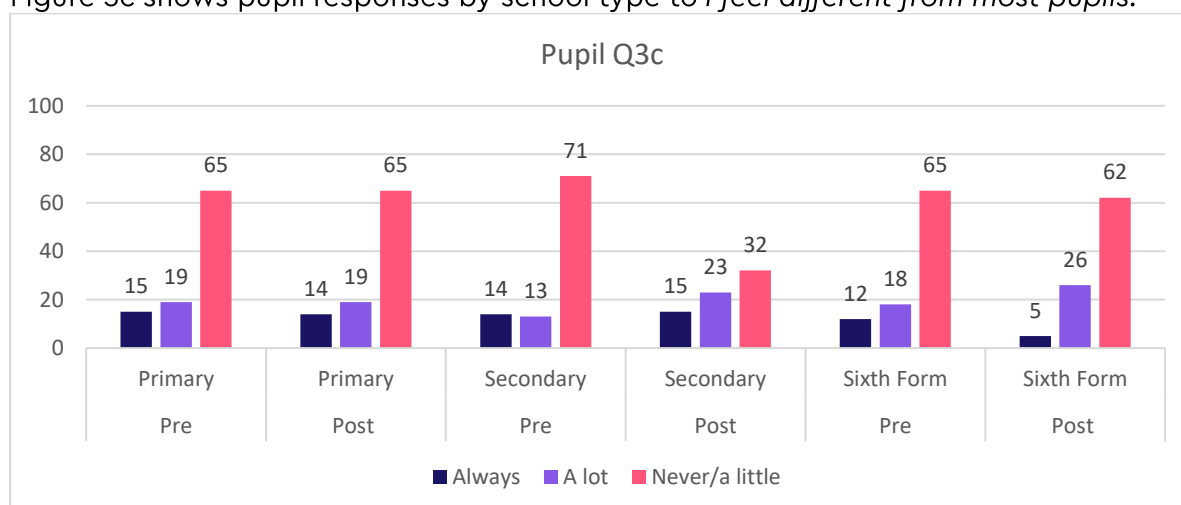


Figure 3c shows pupil responses in relation to feeling different by school type with about a third of primary school and sixth form school pupils responding to feeling different at baseline and final. However, secondary school pupils responded least likely to feeling different at baseline (27%) with nearly two fifths (38%) responding to feeling different at final in answer to the question.

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



People at my school support me in my work

Figures 4a, 4b and 4c show the percentages for pupil responses at baseline and final for the overall pupil sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type in answer to the question 'People at my school support me in my work'.

Figure 4a shows 32% of pupils overall feel more supported in their work at final compared to 43% at baseline.

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

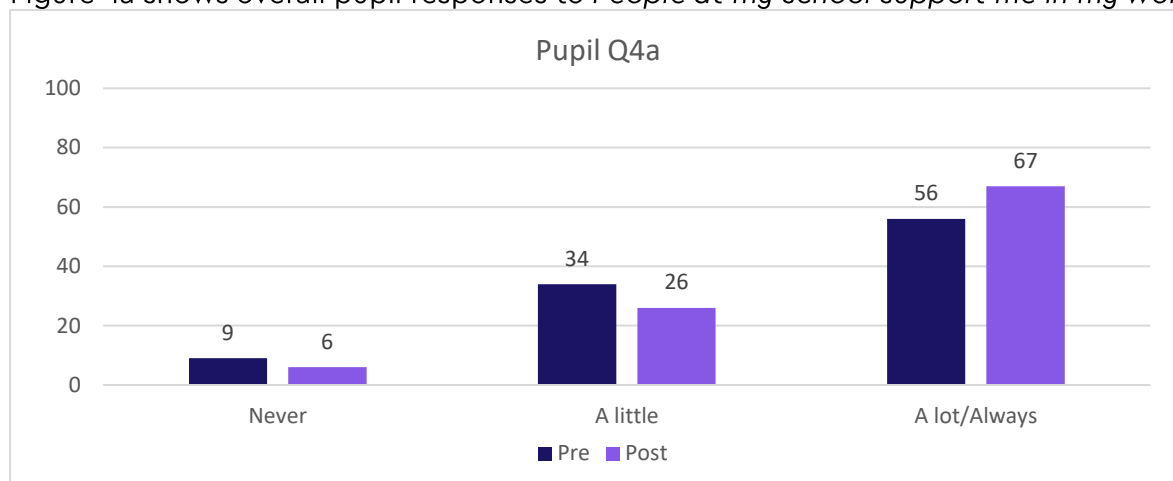


Figure 4b shows all groups respond less negatively from baseline to final in answer to the question, however, male pupils respond more negatively compared with female pupils indicating they 'never' or 'a little' supported in their work. Non-SEND pupils respond less negatively compared with SEND pupils in being supported 'never' or 'a little' in their work by people at school.

Figure 4b shows pupil responses by gender and by SEND status to *People at my school support me in my work*.

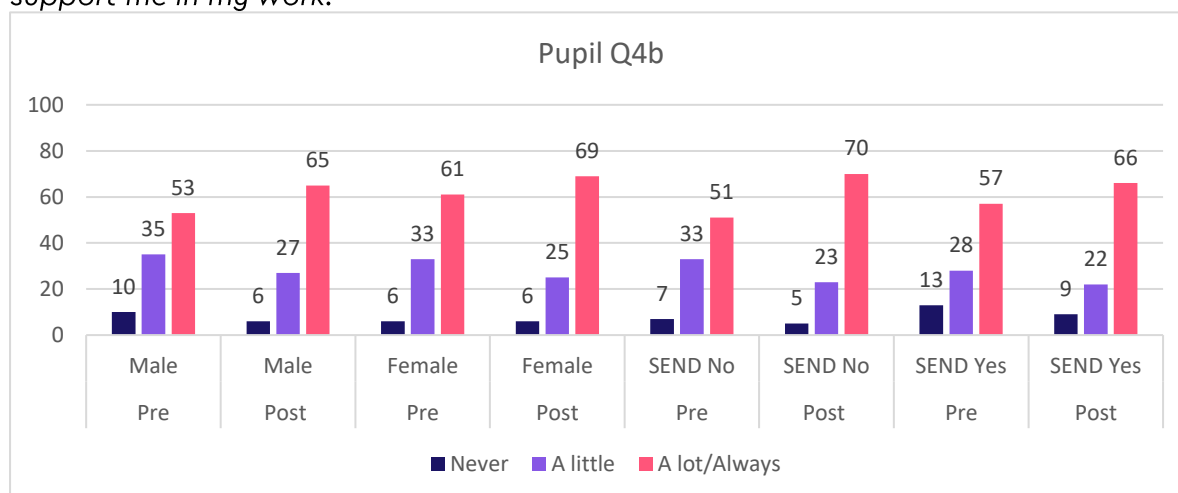
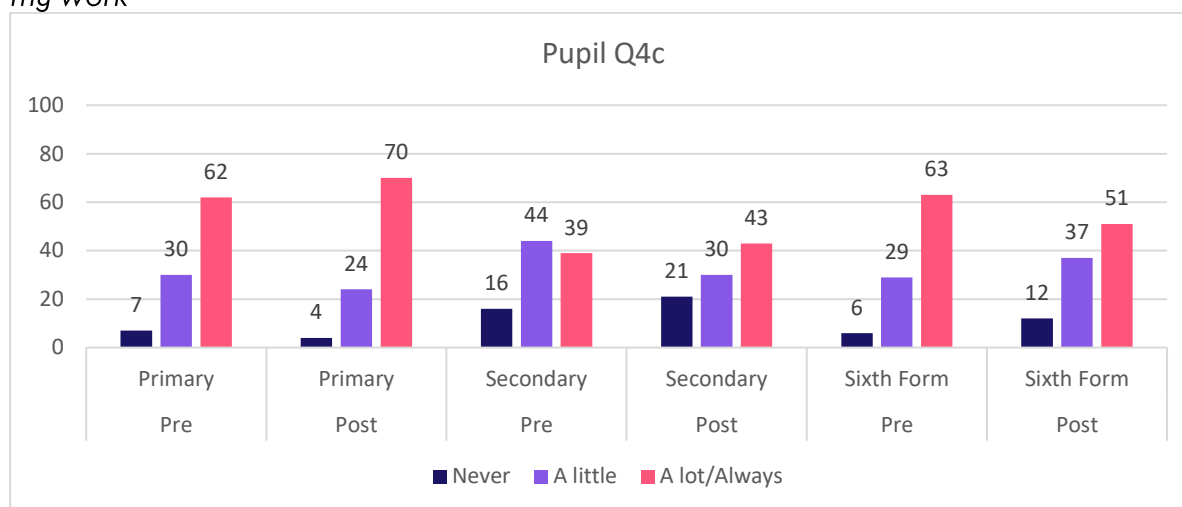


Figure 4c shows pupil responses by school type, showing that a significant percentage of secondary pupils overall feel less supported in their work compared with primary and sixth form. However, primary and secondary school pupils show a decrease in negative responses compared to sixth form pupils who show an increase in feeling unsupported in their work from baseline to final.

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



I feel safe at school

Figures 5a, 5b, 5c show the percentages for pupil responses at baseline and final for the overall pupil sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type in answer to the question 'I feel safe in my school'.

Figure 5a shows over a quarter (27%) of pupils responded negatively to feeling safe at school at baseline, this decreased to just under a fifth (19%) of pupils overall at final.

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

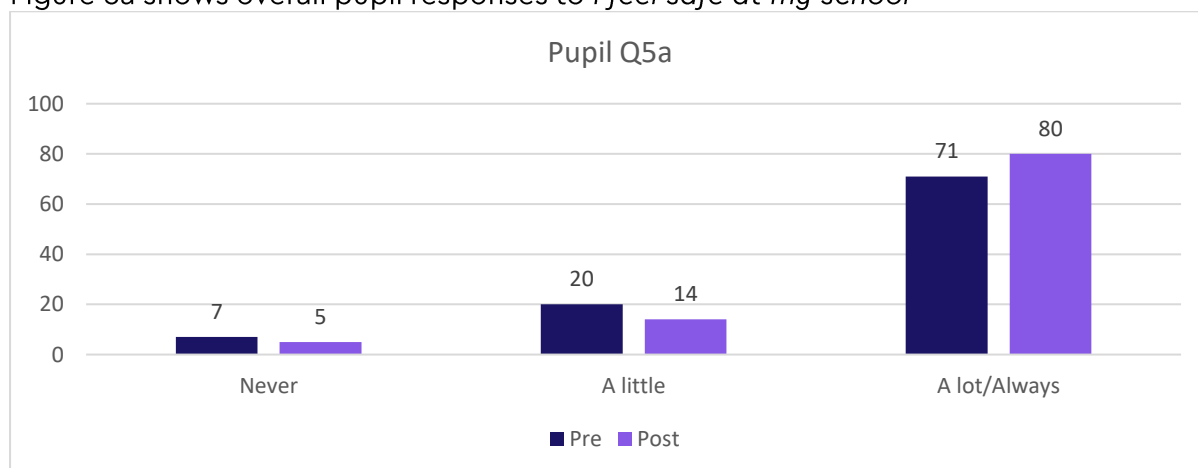


Figure 5b shows that pupil negative responses by gender and by SEND status decreased overall, that male pupils feel slightly less safe in their school than female pupils. Just over a quarter (28%) of SEND pupils respond negatively compared to non-SEND pupils (16%) indicating they felt 'never' or 'a little' safe in their school at final.

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

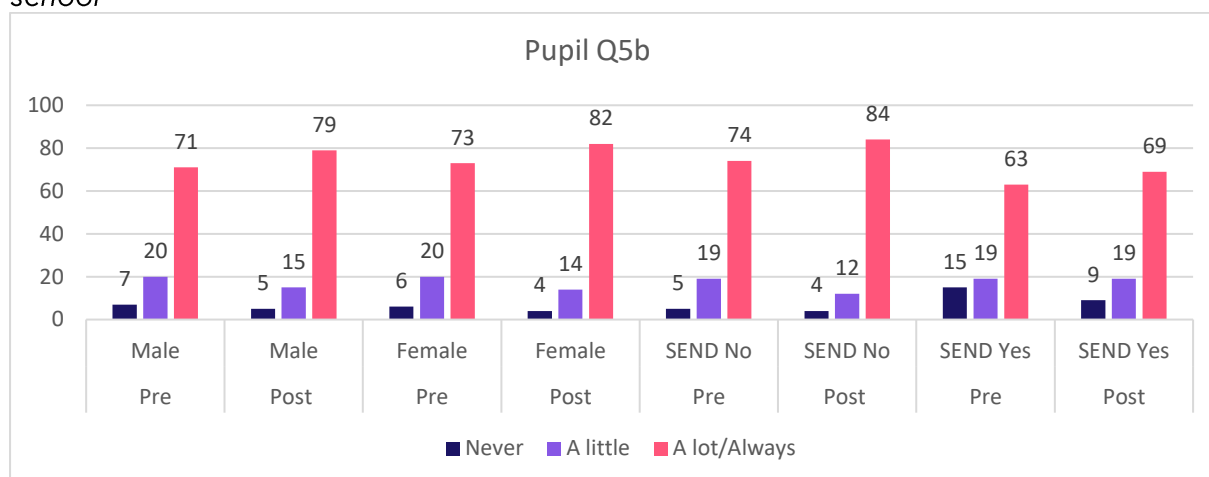
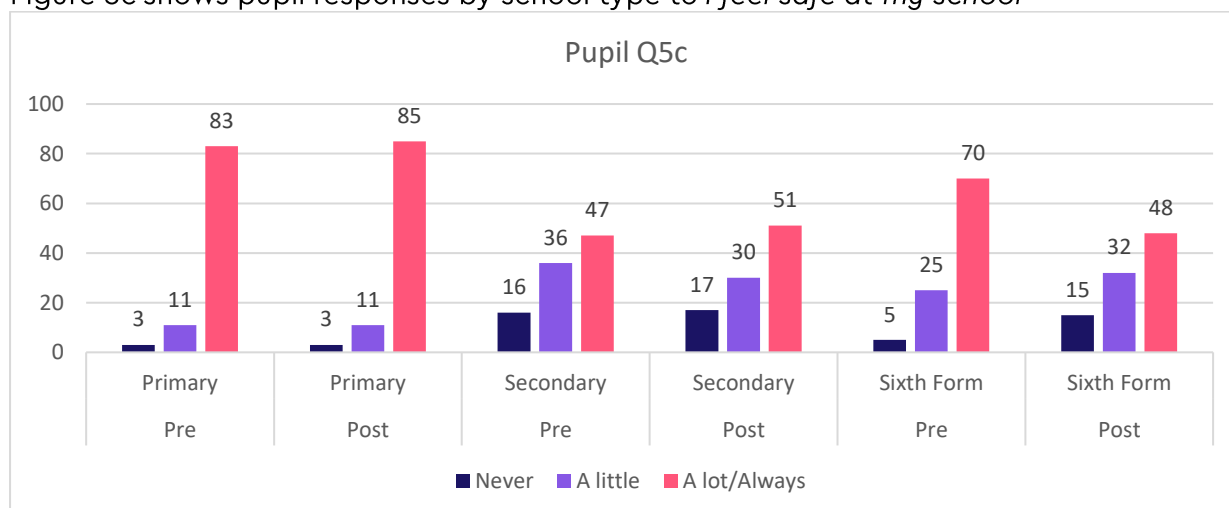


Figure 5c shows a significant percentage of secondary school and sixth form (47%) pupils respond negatively to feeling 'never' or 'a little' safe in their school compared to primary schools (14%) whose response remained unchanged from baseline to final.

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



I feel lonely at my school - reverse coded

Figures 6a, 6b and 6c show the percentages for pupil responses at baseline and final for the overall pupil sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type in answer to the question 'I feel lonely at school'.

Figure 6a shows overall a slight decrease in pupil responses from baseline to final, with 10% of pupils feeling lonely at their school 'a lot' or 'always'.

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

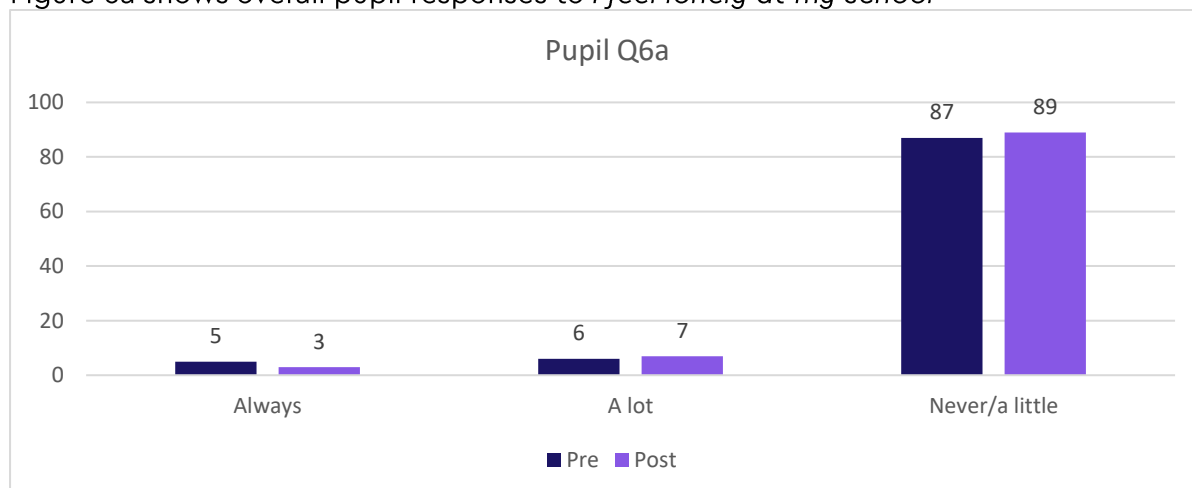


Figure 6b shows low percentages in answer to the question of feeling lonely, male pupils show a decrease overtime and are slightly less likely to feel lonely at their school a lot' or 'always', compared to female pupils whose responses showed a slight increase in feeling lonely 'a lot' or 'always' overtime. Non-SEND pupil (8%) responses increased slightly but remain lower compared to SEND pupils (14%).

Figure 6b shows pupil responses by gender and by SEND status to *I feel lonely at my school*

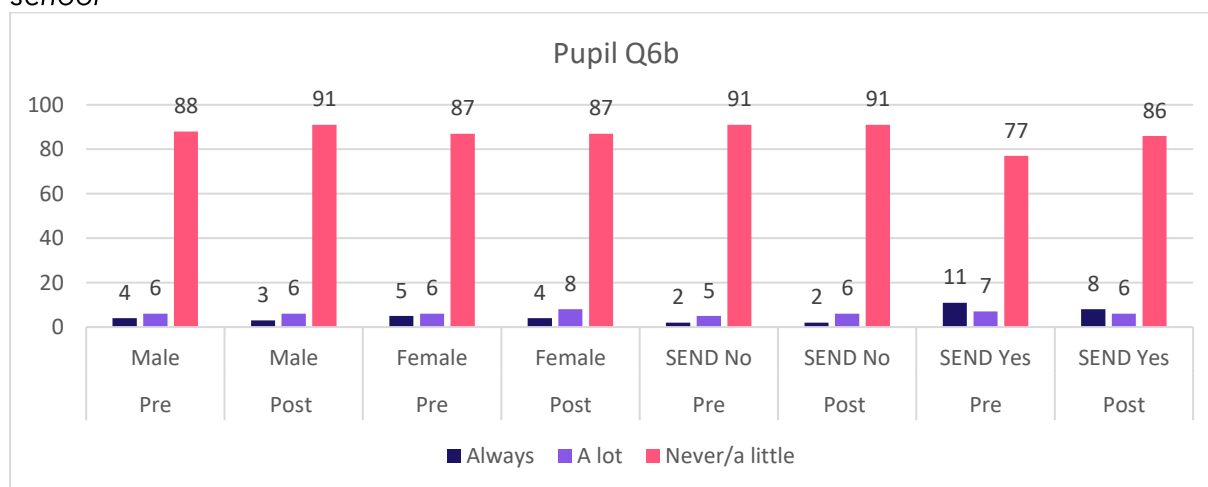
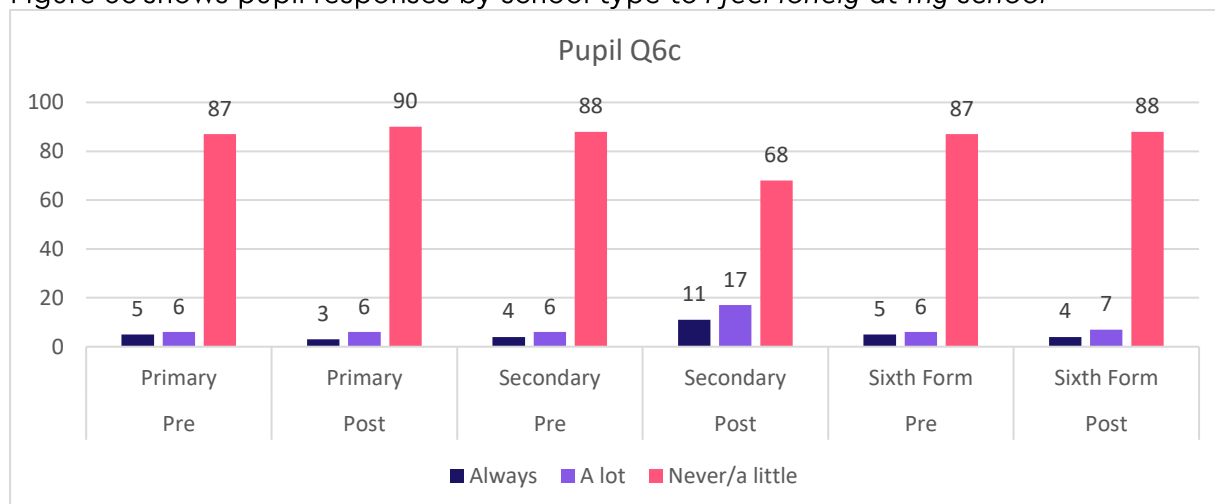


Figure 6c shows pupil responses remain barely changed and show around 9-11% of primary and sixth form pupils feel lonely 'a lot' or 'always' compared with over a quarter (28%) of secondary school pupils at final.

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



People at my school are friendly to me

Figures 7a, 7b and 7c show the percentages for pupil responses at baseline and final for the overall pupil sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type in answer to the question 'People at my school are friendly to me'.

Figure 7a shows overall, a small decrease in negative responses for pupils with nearly a fifth (19%) responding negatively to the question indicating that they felt people at their school were friendly to them 'never' or 'a little'.

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

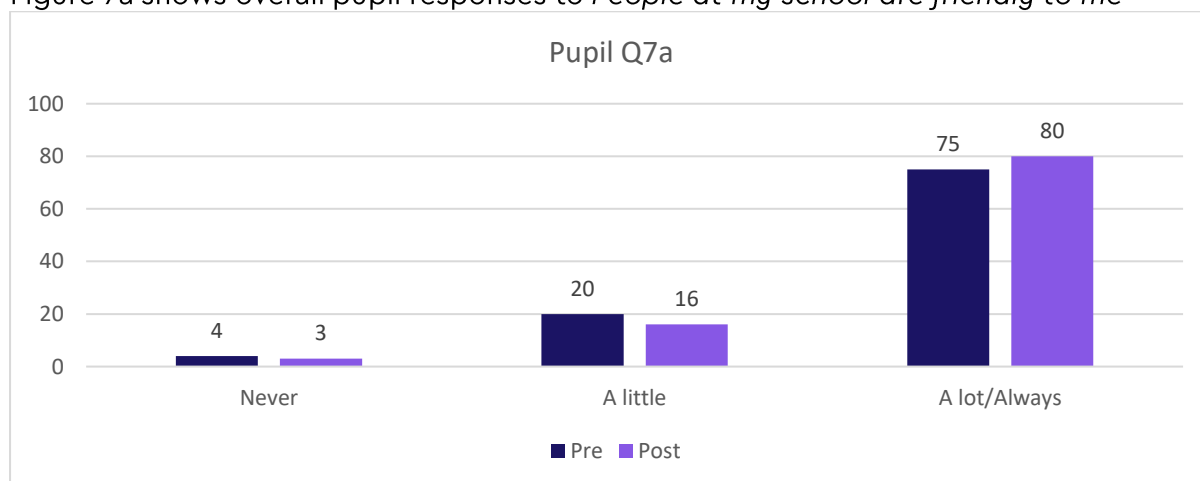


Figure 7b shows negative response by gender and by SEND status decreased over time in response to the question. Slightly more female pupils compared to male pupils responded negatively that people at their school were not friendly to them. SEND pupils responded more negatively compared with non-SEND pupils.

Figure 7b show pupil responses by gender and by SEND status to *People at my school are friendly to me*

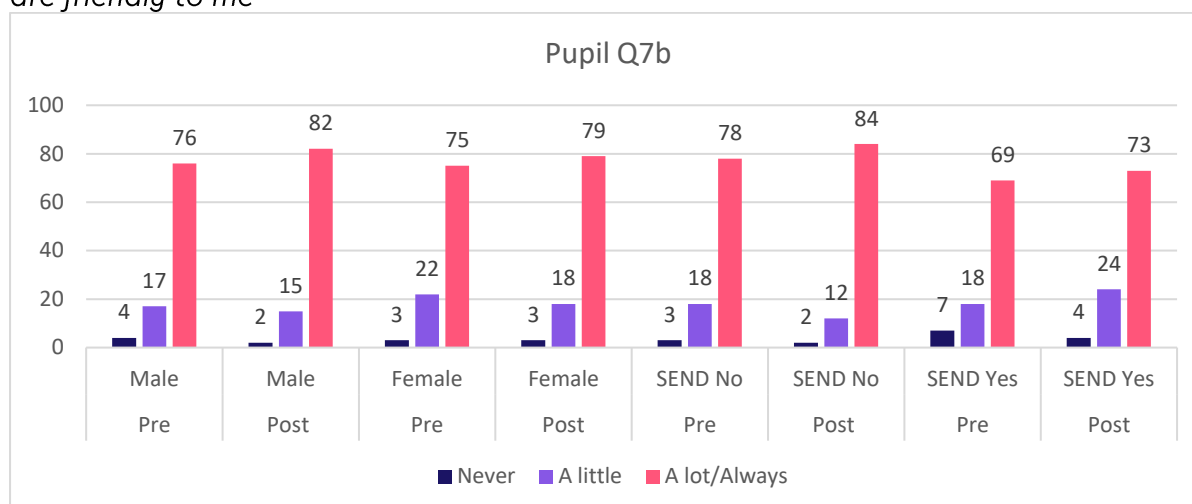
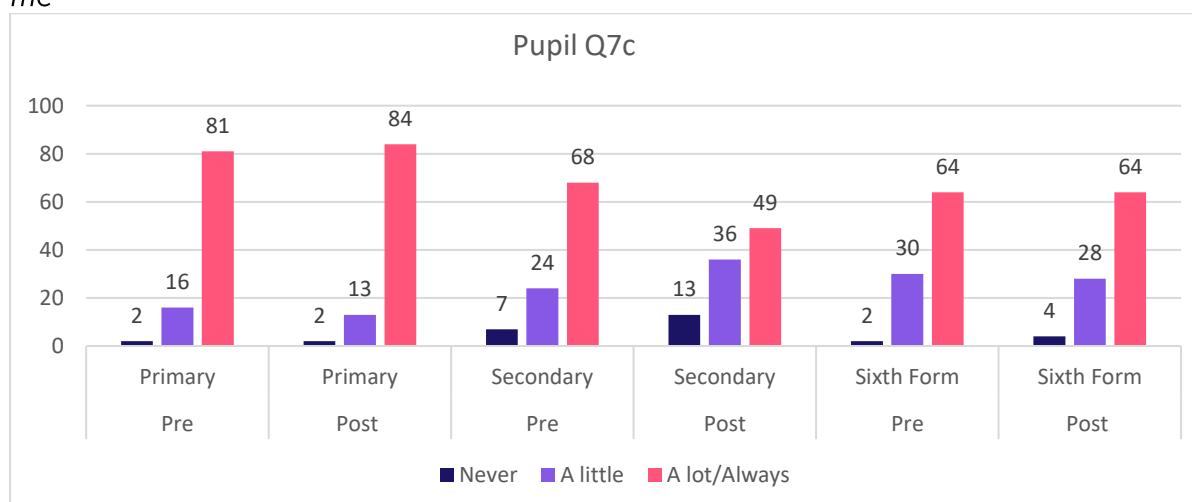


Figure 7c shows primary school pupils show a small decrease and responded less negatively compared with secondary and sixth form pupils sixth form pupils. Secondary school pupils' responses increased with nearly half of secondary school pupils (49%) responding negatively, whilst sixth form pupil (32%) responses remained unchanged over time.

Figure 7c shows pupil 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

Figures 8a, 8b and 8c show the percentages for pupil responses at baseline and final for the overall pupil sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type in answer to the question 'There is an adult at my school that I can talk to if I have a problem'.

Figure 8a shows a decrease in negative responses for pupils overall from just over a quarter (26%) to just under a fifth (19%) of pupils responding negatively to the question.

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

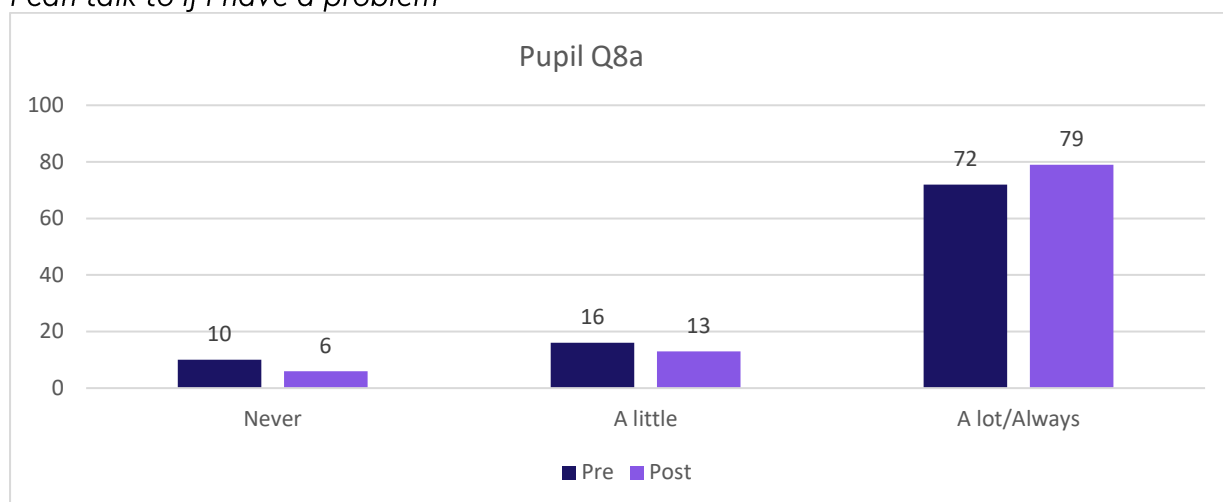


Figure 8b shows a small decrease in negative response for male, female and non-SEND pupils, however, SEND pupils negative responses increased slightly from baseline to final in response to the question. Slightly more female pupils than male pupils respond negatively at final in response to the question. Non-SEND pupils responded more negatively compared with SEND pupils at baseline, however, nearly a quarter (24%) of SEND pupils responded negatively to the question 'a little' or 'never' compared with 17% of non-SEND pupils at final.

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

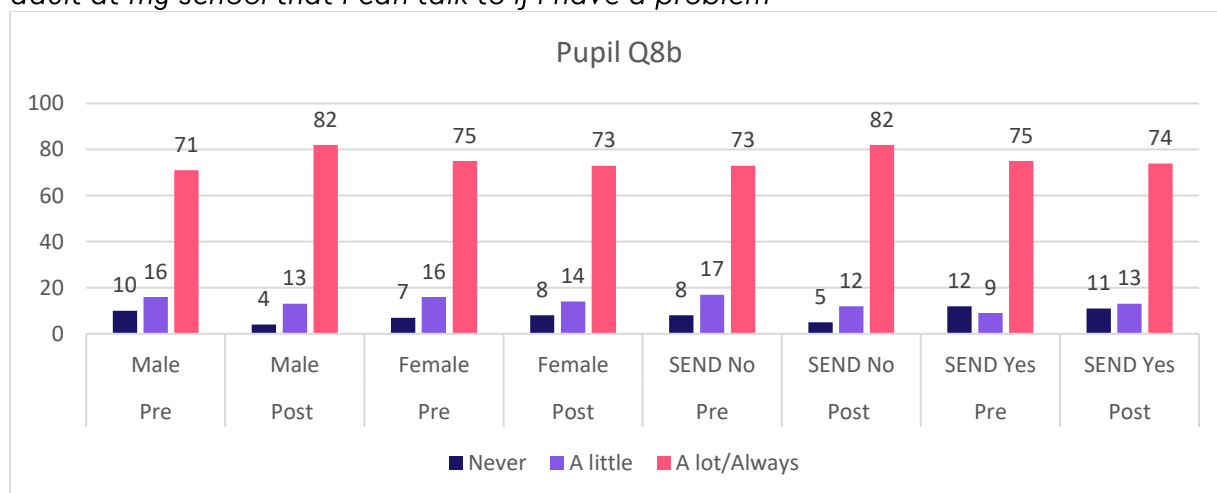
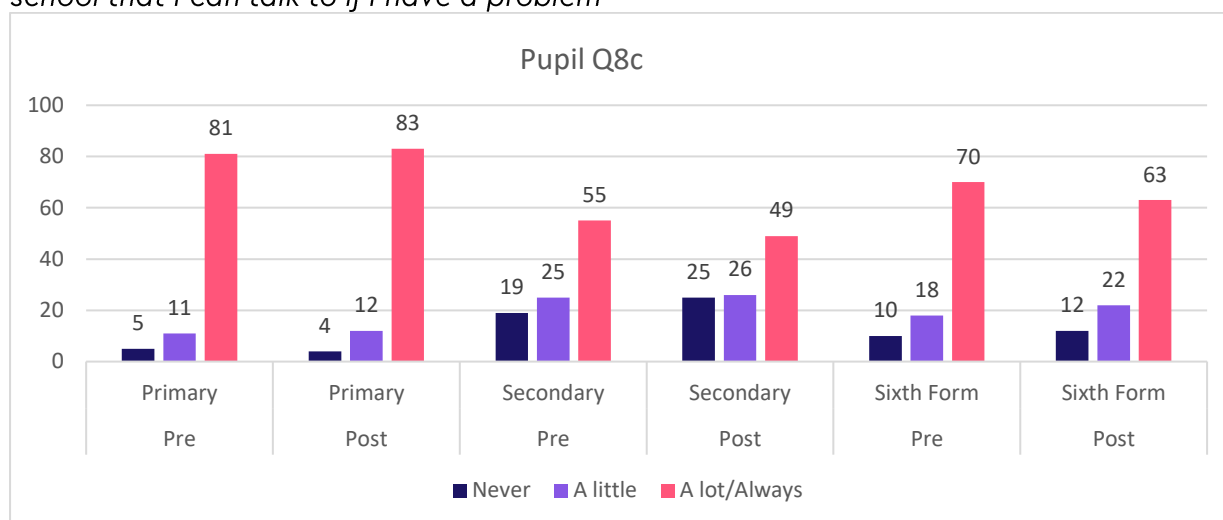


Figure 8c shows primary school pupils responses remained unchanged, whilst secondary and sixth form pupil negative responses increased from baseline to final in response to the question. Just over half of secondary school pupils (51%) responded negatively to the question 'a little' or 'never', compared with 34% of sixth form pupils and 16% of primary school pupils.

Figure 8c shows 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 include in school and classroom activities

Figures 9a, 9b and 9c show the percentages for pupil responses at baseline and final for the overall pupil sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type in answer to the question 'I feel included in school and classroom activities'.

Figure 9a shows a small decrease in responding negatively 'a little' or 'never' for pupils overall from 24% to 19% in response to the question.

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

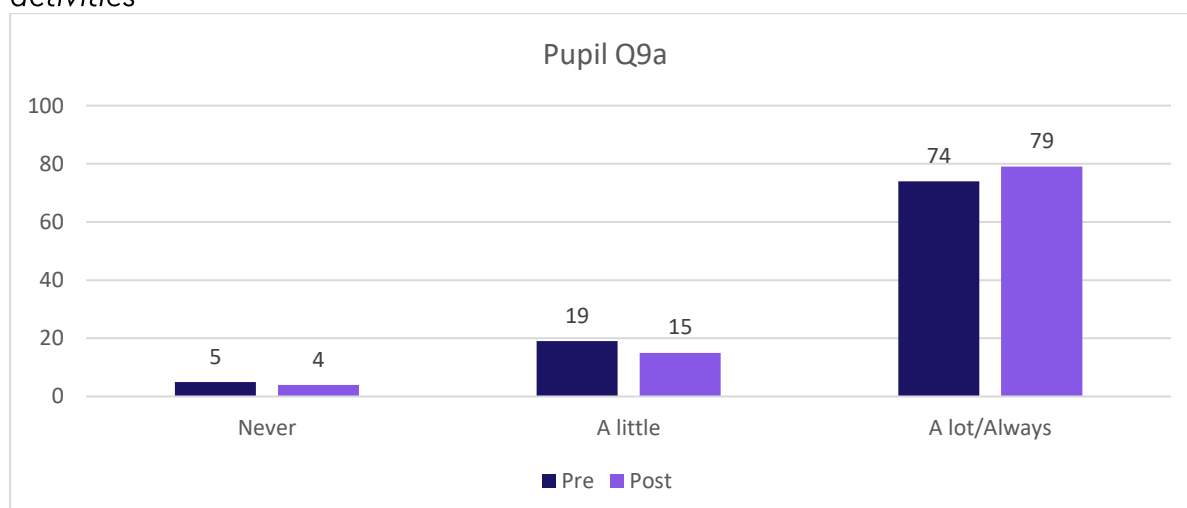


Figure 9b shows decreases in negative responses for all groups from baseline to final by gender and by SEND status. Female pupils respond more negatively 'a little' or 'never' to feeling included in classroom activities compared with male pupils. SEND pupils respond more negatively compared to non-SEND pupils to feeling 'a little' or 'never' included in classroom activities.

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

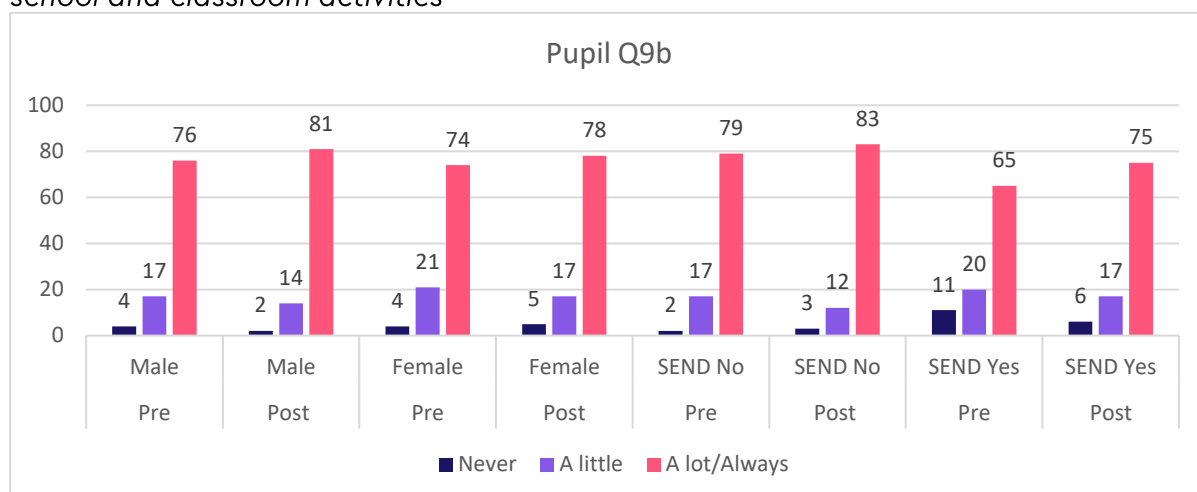
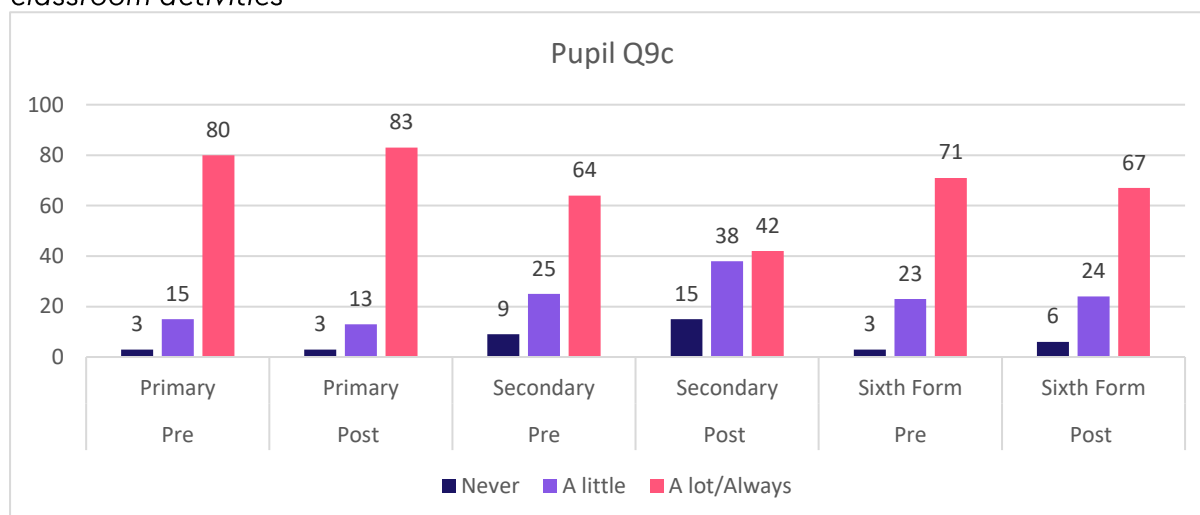


Figure 9c shows a slight decrease for primary school pupil negative responses, whilst secondary and sixth for pupil negative responses 'a little' or 'never' increased from baseline to final. Secondary school pupils reported a significant increase in negative responses to feeling included in classroom and school activities 'a little' or 'never' at final in answer to the question.

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



Other pupils like me the way I am

Figures 10a, 10b and 10c show the percentages for pupil responses at baseline and final for the overall pupil sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type in answer to the question 'Other pupils like me the way I am'.

Figure 10a shows a small decrease of 3% in overall pupils responding negatively to the question from baseline to final.

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

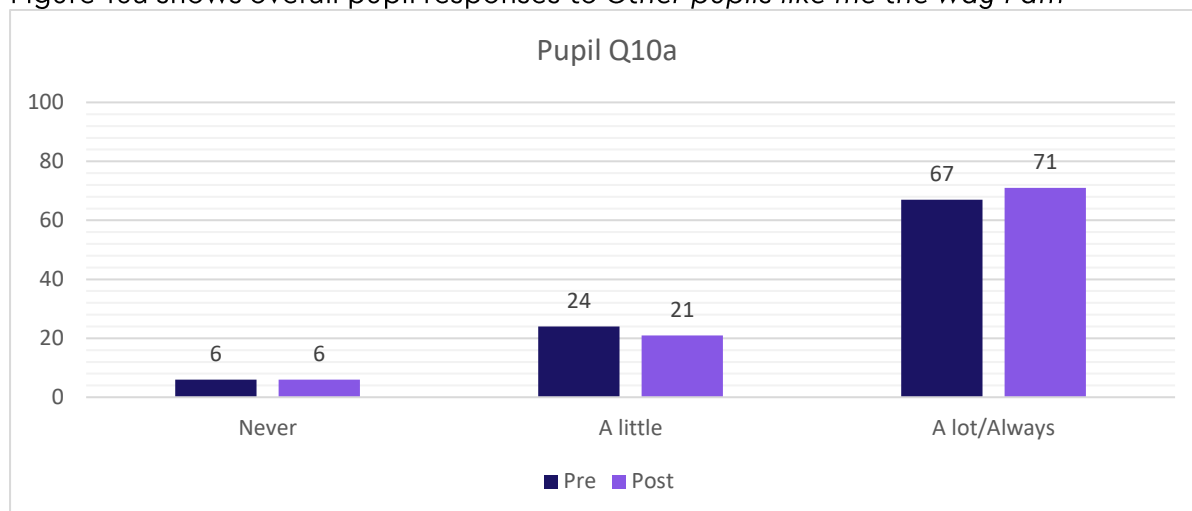


Figure 10b shows a decrease in female, non-SEND and SEND pupils negative responses, male pupils negative responses remained unchanged between baseline and final in answer to the question 'other pupils like me the way I am'. 27% of male and female pupils respond 'a little' or 'never' to the question. 33% of SEND pupils compared with 22% of non-SEND pupils responded negatively 'a little' or 'never' to the question.

Figure 10b shows pupil responses by gender and by SEND status to *Other pupils like me the way I am*

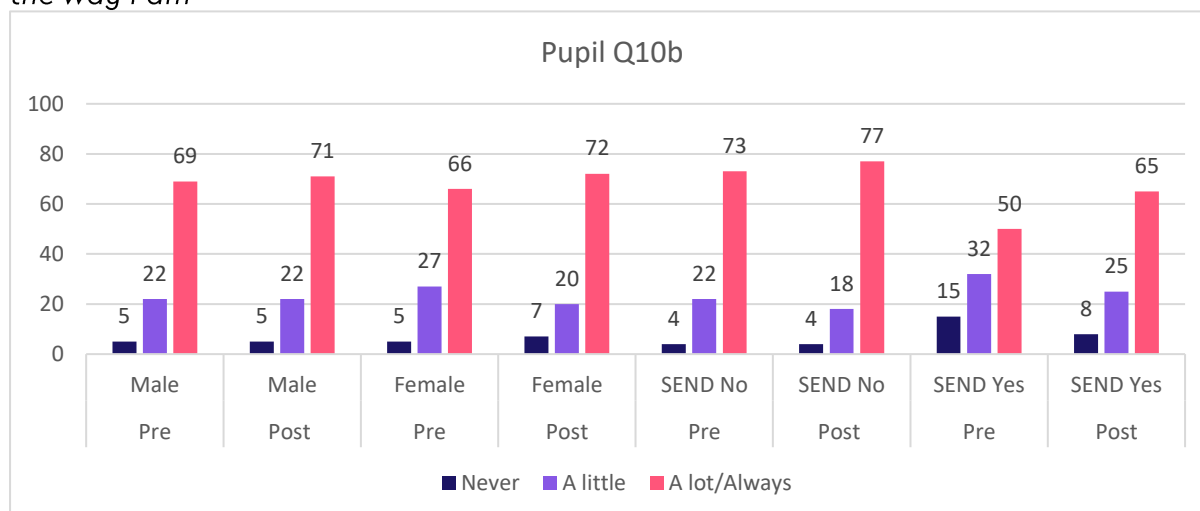
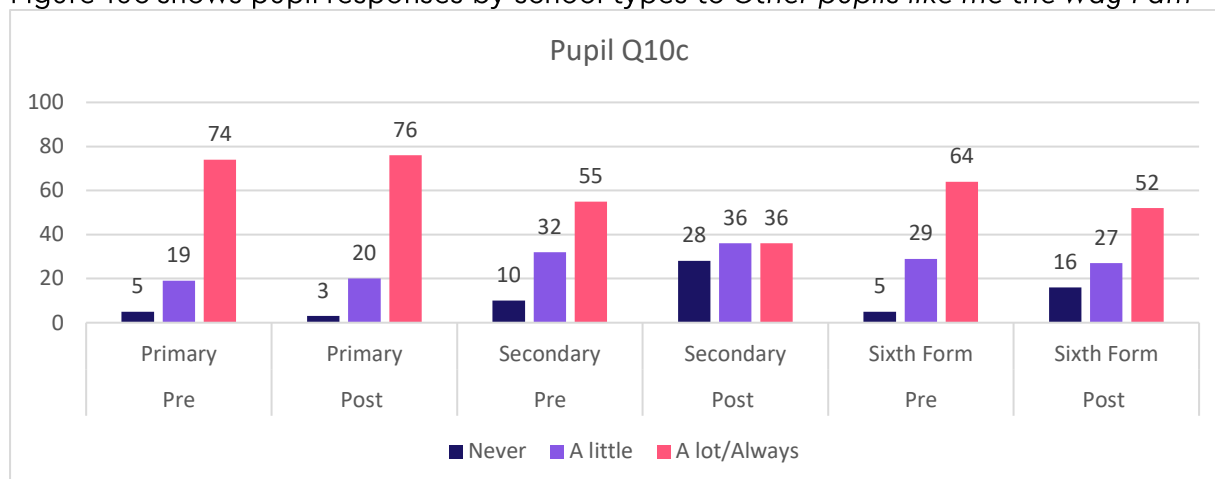


Figure 10c shows a slight decrease in primary school pupils' negative response, whilst both secondary school and sixth form pupils reported increases in responded negatively 'a little' or 'never' to the question, with a significant percentage of secondary school pupils (66%) responded negatively over time.

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



Teachers at my school respect me the way I am

Figures 11a, 11b and 11c show the percentages for pupil responses at baseline and final for the overall pupil sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type in answer to the question 'Teachers at my school respect me the way I am'.

Figure 11a shows a small decrease in overall pupil negative responses from baseline to final in answer to the question.

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

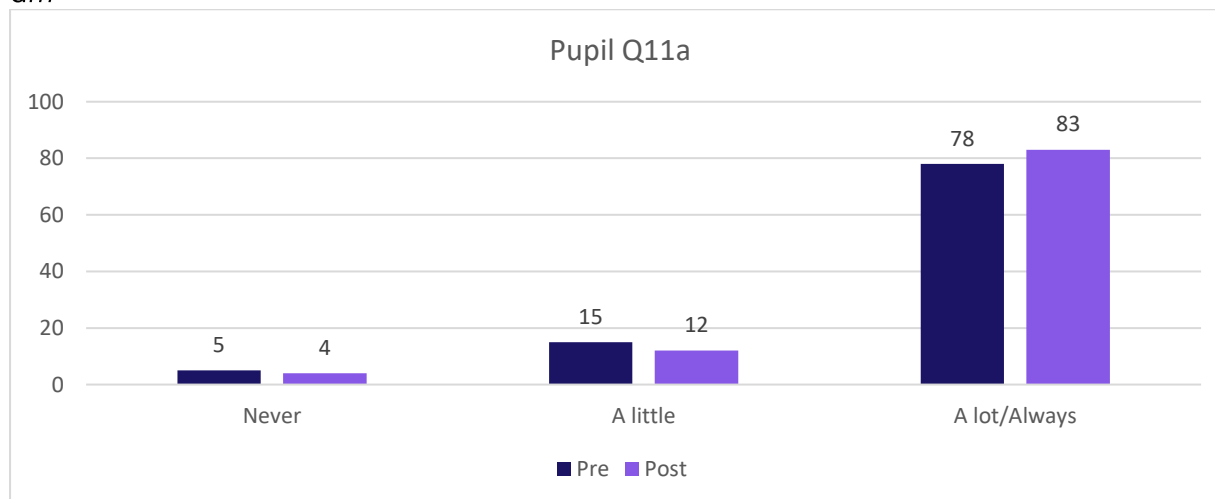


Figure 11b shows small decreases in negative responses for female, non-SEND and SEND pupils whilst male pupils reported an increase in negative responses from baseline to final in answer to the question. Male pupils responded more negatively 'a little' or 'never' compared to female pupils. SEND pupils responded more negatively 'a little' or 'never' that teachers at my school respect me the way I am compared to non-SEND pupils.

Figure 11b shows pupil responses by gender and by SEND status to *Teachers at my school respect me the way I am*

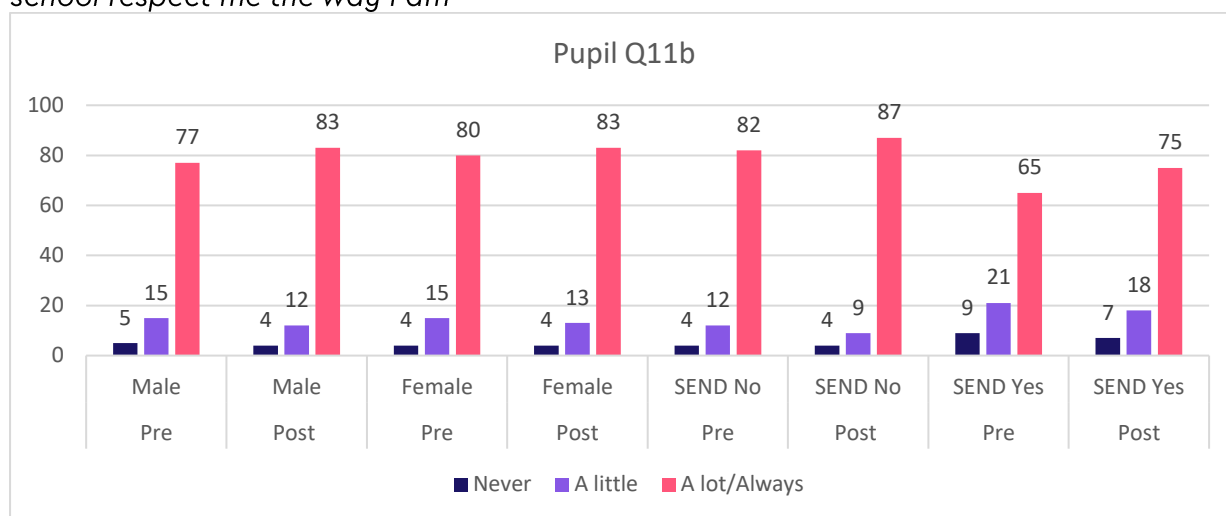
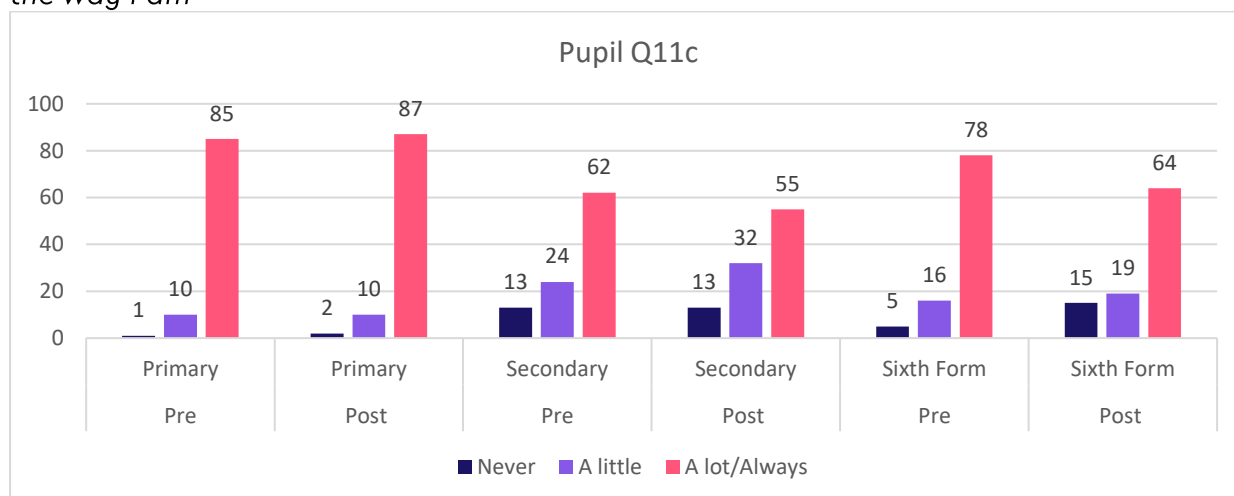


Figure 11c shows nearly half of secondary school pupils (45%) respond negatively 'a little' or 'never' in response to the question at final compared to primary school pupils (12%) with just over a third of sixth form pupils (34%) responding negatively at final in answer to the question.

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



Teachers at my school treat pupils fairly

Figures 12a, 12b and 12c show the percentages for pupil responses at baseline and final for the overall pupil sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type in answer to the question 'Teachers at my school treat pupils fairly'.

Figure 12a shows a decrease of 7% in overall pupil negative responses from baseline to final in answer to the question.

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

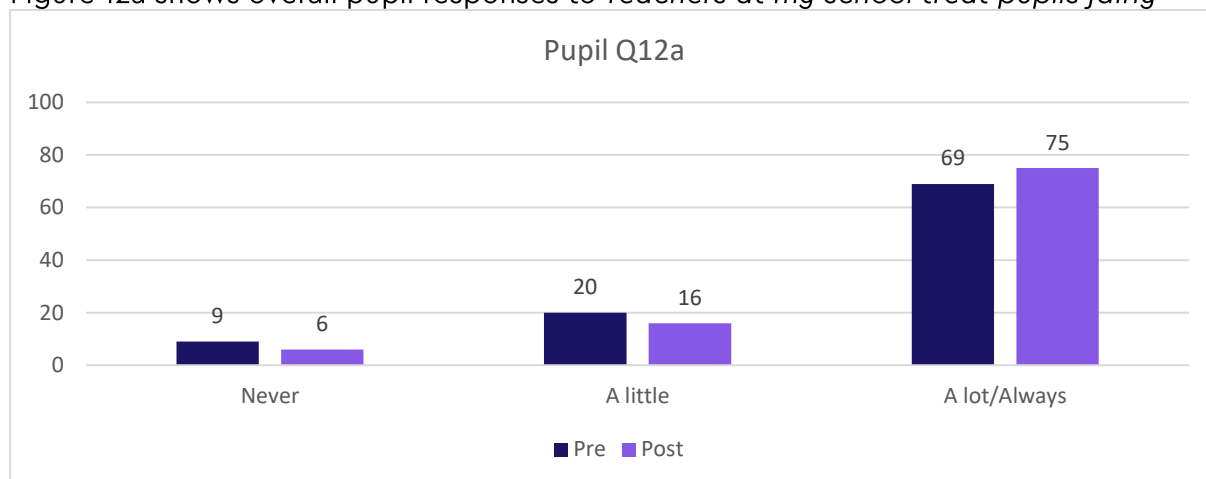


Figure 12b shows decreases of between 5-8% in negative responses 'a little' or 'never' for male, female and non-SEND pupils whilst SEND pupils report higher percentages with a slight decrease from 30-29%. Male and female pupils report similar percentages of responding negatively 'a little' or 'never' whilst 20% of non-SEND pupils respond negatively compared to 29% of SEND pupil negative responses to the question.

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

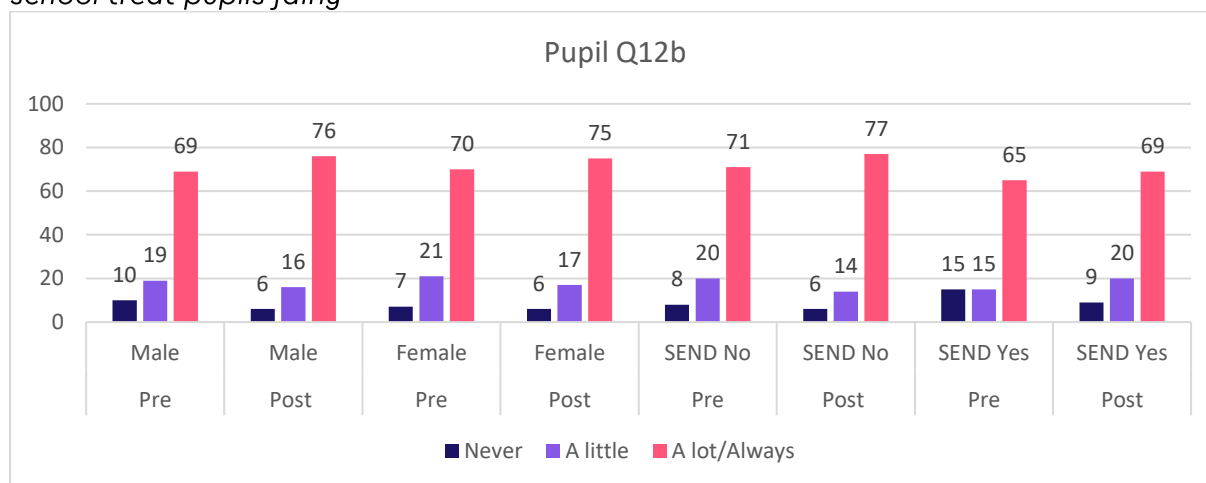
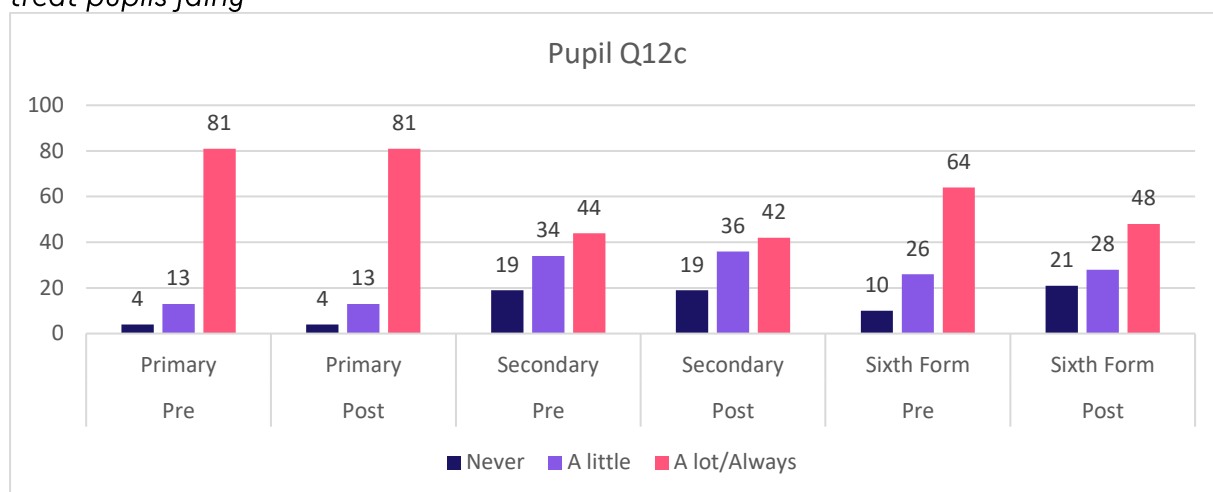


Figure 12c shows primary school pupils responses remain unchanged (17%) whilst a significant percentage of secondary school (55%) and sixth form pupils (49%) respond negatively 'a little' or 'never' to the question.

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



I am happy to be part of my school

Figures 13a, 13b and 13c show the percentages for pupil responses at baseline and final for the overall pupil sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type in answer to the question 'I am happy to be part of my school'.

Figure 13a shows a decrease from 23% to 19% of pupils responded negatively 'a little' or 'never' to the question.

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

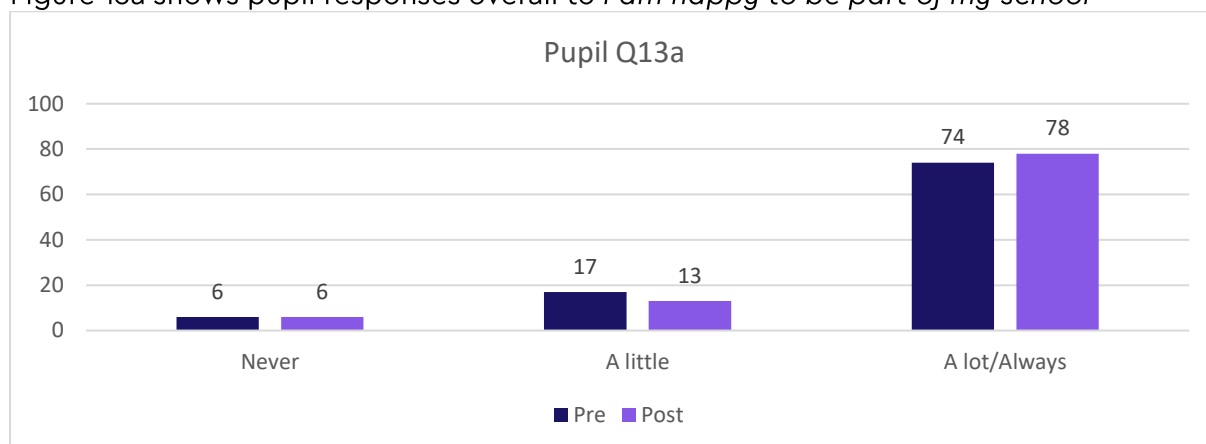


Figure 13b shows negative responses decreased for male, female and non-SEND pupils with less than a fifth responding negatively 'a little' or 'never' compared with SEND pupil responses which remained unchanged (31%) from baseline to final in answer to the question.

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

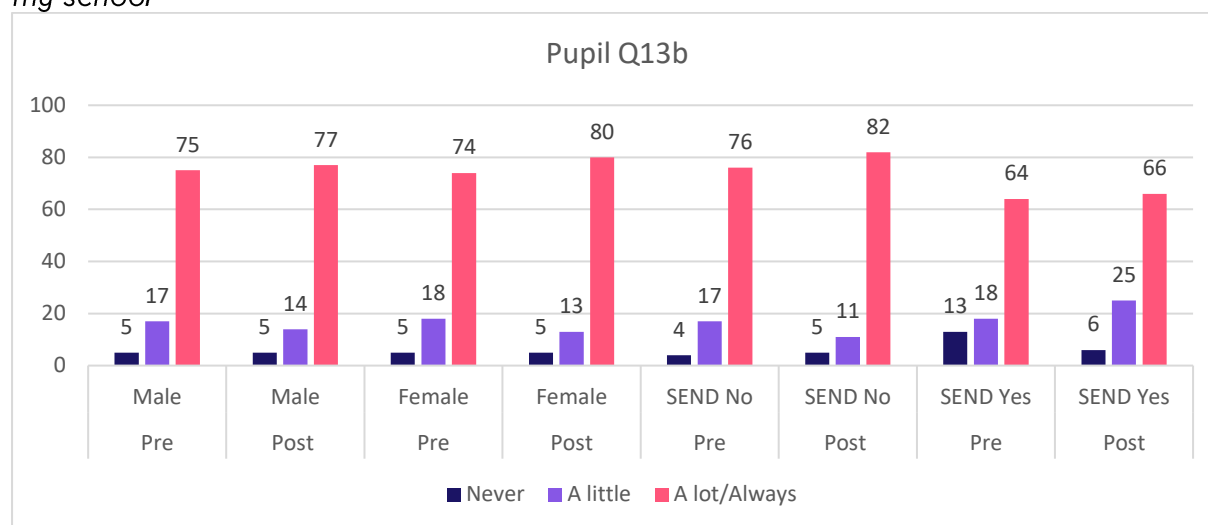
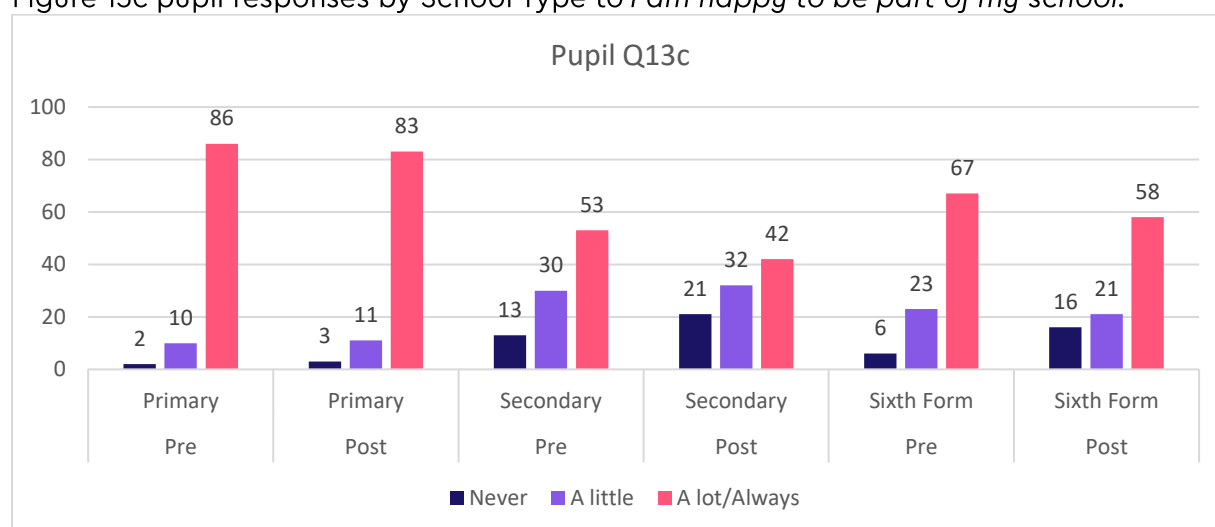


Figure 13c shows that pupil responses by school type increased for all, with more than half of secondary pupils (53%) responding negatively 'a little' or 'never' to the question at final compared with sixth form pupils (37%) and primary school pupils (14%).

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



PARENT/CARER QUESTIONNAIRE

DEMOGRAPHICS

Tables 2a and 2b provide a demographic breakdown for pupils of parent/carers that completed the questionnaire by the overall sample, by their child's gender, by their child's SEND status and by their child's school type.

Table 2a shows parent/carers by overall sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type

Baseline	Total		Gender		SEND	
			Males	Females	Non	Yes
	Total	435	218	211	330	73
			(50%)	(49%)	(76%)	(17%)
	Secondary	196	111	85	153	38
		(46%)	(57%)	(43%)	(77%)	(20%)
	Primary	233	107	126	194	35
		(54%)	(46%)	(54%)	(84%)	(15%)

Table 2b shows parent/carers by overall sample, by pupil Gender, by pupil SEND status and by pupil School Type

Final	Total		Gender		SEND	
			Males	Females	Non	Yes
	Total	366	190	166	276	55
			(52%)	(45%)	(75%)	(15%)
	Secondary	248	142	101	190	38
		(68%)	(57%)	(41%)	(77%)	(15%)
	Primary	118	48	65	86	17
		(32%)	(41%)	(55%)	(73%)	(14%)

PARENT/CARER QUESTIONNAIRE: FINDINGS

Parents/carers were asked to think about their oldest child in school when completing a seven-item questionnaire, 435 parents/carers participated in completing the questionnaire at baseline; and 366 parent/carers participated completing the questionnaire at final, providing responses in relation to their child's sense of belonging and how parents/carers feel about their child's school community. All question

response were on a four-point Likert scale ranging from never (1), a little (2), a lot (3) or always (4), responses of 'a lot' and 'always' were collapsed to create a score for positive feelings of school belonging. The data was cleaned to remove any corrupt or incomplete responses, additionally any data that contained blank, don't know or prefer not to say was not included in the final analysis

The findings are presented as percentages, rounding up to the nearest number for results 0.5 and above.

Parents and carers completing the questionnaire were asked to respond to the following questions: -

1. Your child feels like they belong at their school
2. There is someone at school that your child can talk to if they have a problem
3. You feel that your child is included in school activities
4. You feel your child is supported in school
5. You feel you have a good relationship with your child's school
6. You feel a part of your child's school community
7. You feel the school listens to you

Parents/carers were also given 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'*

Your child feels like they belong at their school

Figures 14a, 14b and 14c graphs show the percentage of parent/carers responses at baseline and final in response to the question *'Your child feels like they belong in their school'* for the overall sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type.

Figure 14a shows a small decline in the overall parent/carers negative responses from baseline 28% to 25% at final.

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

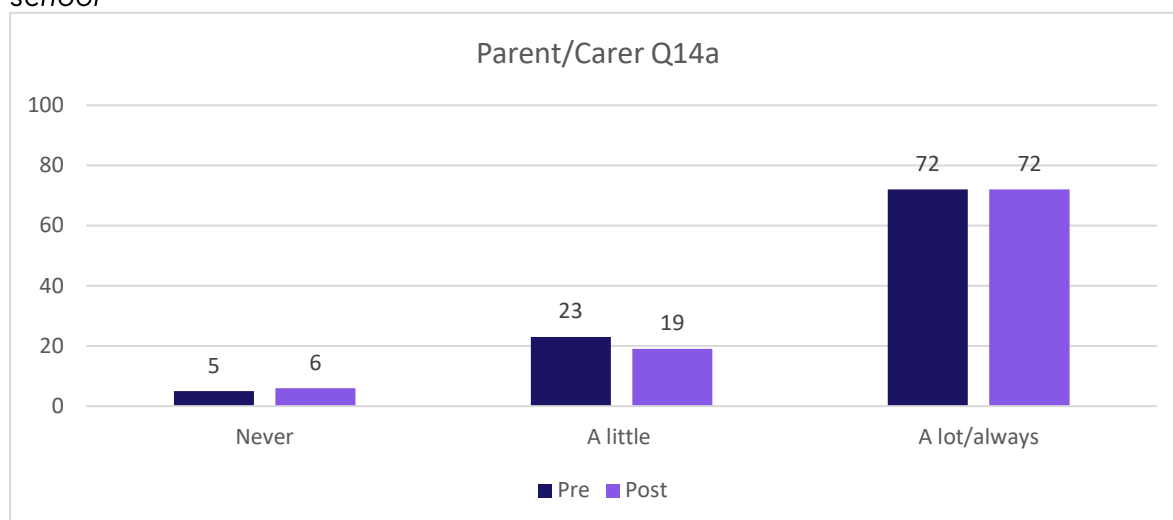


Figure 14b shows the percentage of parent/carer responses by Gender and SEND status, parent/carer responses show a small decline in negative responses from baseline (male 31%, female 25%) to final (male 27%, female 23%). Parent/carer responses for pupils with non-SEND status also saw a small decline in negative response from baseline (23%) to final (20%), however, parent/carer responses for pupils with SEND status increased by 11% from baseline to final with nearly half (49%) of parent/carers responding negatively at final.

Figure 14b parents/carer responses by gender and by SEND status to *Your child feels like they belong at their school*

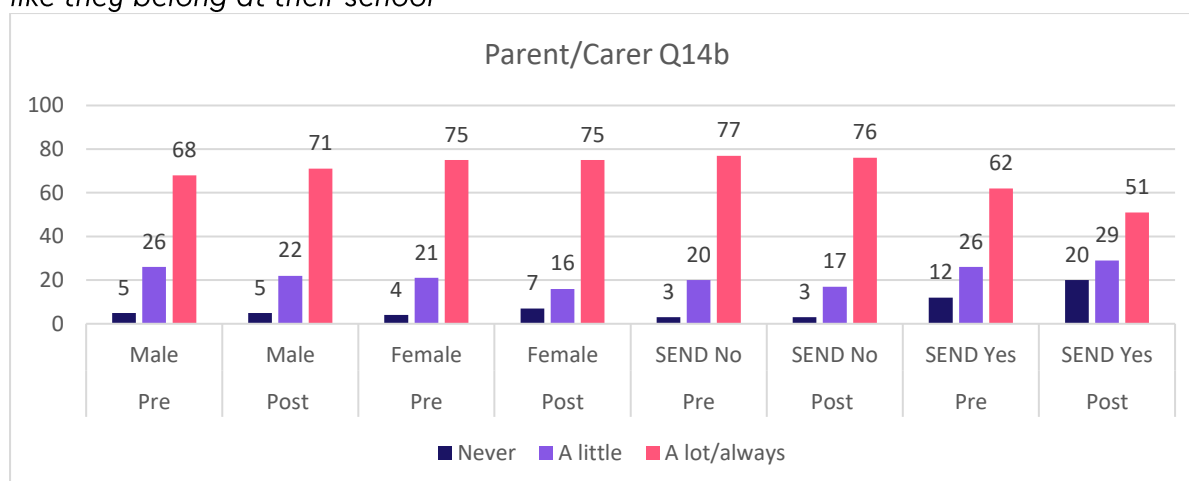
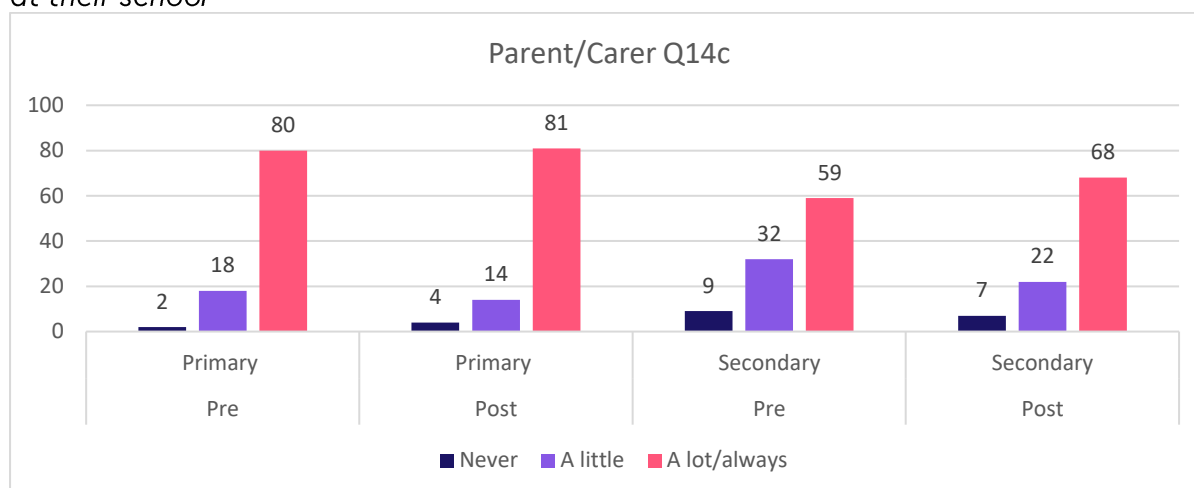


Figure 14c shows a small decline in negative responses for primary school pupils from baseline (20%) to final (18%). However, parent/carer responses for secondary school pupils show a significant decrease from baseline (41%) to final with 29% of parent/carers responding negatively to the question.

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



Your child knows who they can talk to if they have a problem

Figures 15a, 15b and 15c graphs show the percentage of parent/carer responses at baseline and final in response to the question 'There is someone at school that your child can talk to if they have a problem' for the overall sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type.

Figure 15a shows that a third of the overall parent/carer (33%) responded negatively at baseline compared to just over a quarter of parents/carers (26%) responding negatively at final.

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

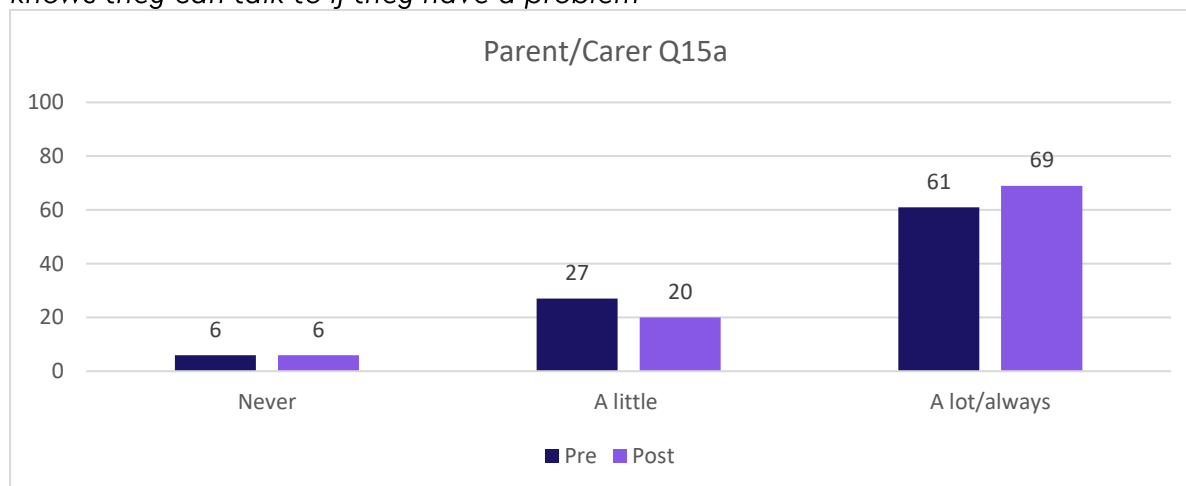


Figure 15b shows the percentage of parent/carer responses by gender and SEND status, parent/carers of male pupils show a significant decrease in negative responses from baseline (37%) to final (27%). Whilst there was a slight decline from baseline (27%) to final for parent/carers responses of female pupils (26%). Similarly, parent/carers of non-SEND pupils show a significant decrease in negative responses from 32% at baseline to 22% at final, with parent/carers of SEND pupils show a small decrease in negative responses from baseline (39%) to final (37%).

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

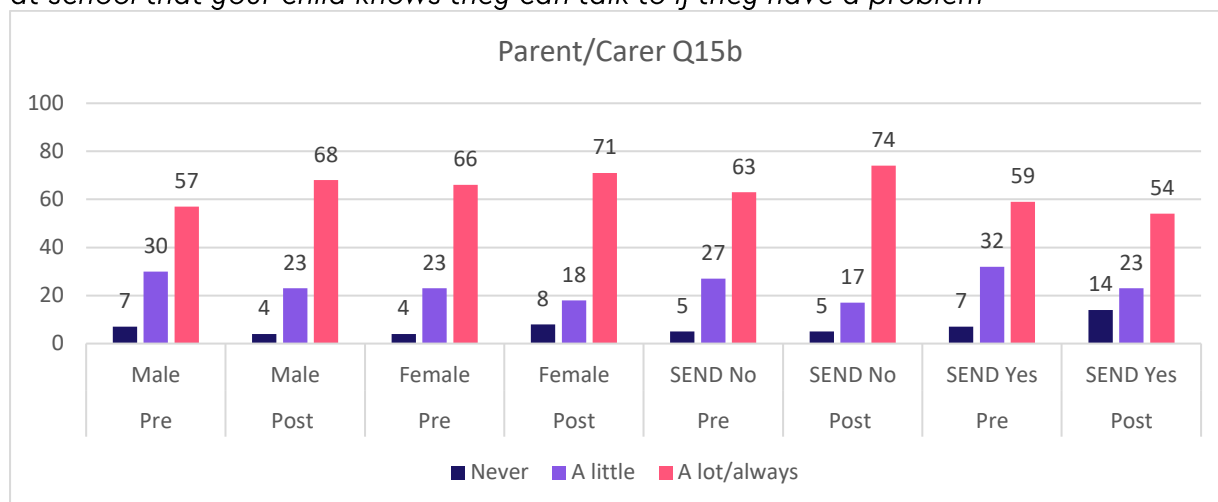
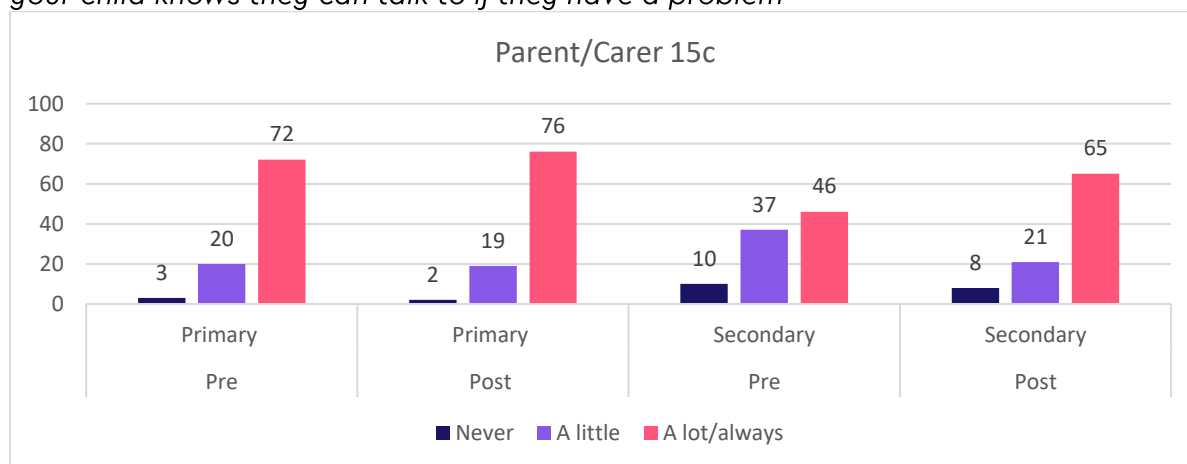


Figure 15c shows a small decrease in negative responses from parent/carers of primary school pupils from 23% at baseline to 21% at final in response to the question. However, parent/carer negative responses have significantly decreased for parents of secondary school pupils from nearly half of parents responding negatively at baseline (49%) to just over a quarter of parent/carers responding negatively at final (29%).

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



Your child feels included in school activities

Figures 16a, 16b and 16c graphs show the percentage of parent/carer responses at baseline and final in response to the question 'You feel your child is included in school activities' for the overall sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type.

Figure 16a shows the overall parent/carer responses remained unchanged from baseline to final with 21% of parents/carers responding negatively to the question.

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

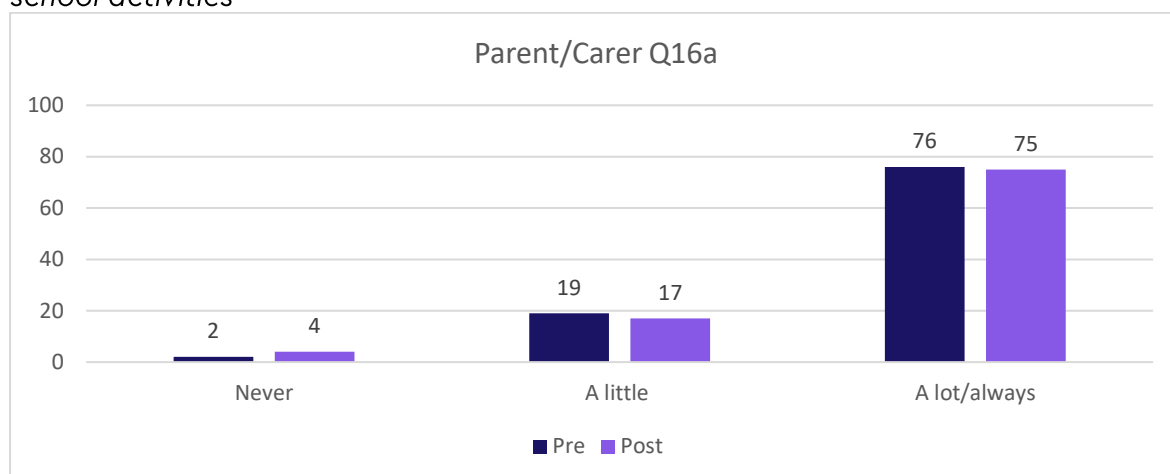


Figure 16b shows the percentage of parent/carer responses by Gender and SEND status, the responses are mixed with parent/carers of male pupils responding more negatively from baseline (22%) to final (26%) and parent/carers of female pupils responding less negatively from baseline (21%) to final (16%). Parent/carer responses for pupils with non-SEND status reported a slight decrease in negative response from baseline (19%) to final (18%), whilst parent/carers of pupils with SEND status responded more negatively compared with non-SEND parent/carers from baseline (28%) with nearly a third responding negatively at final (31%) in response to the question.

Figure 16b parents/carer responses by gender and by SEND status to *You feel that your child is included in school activities*

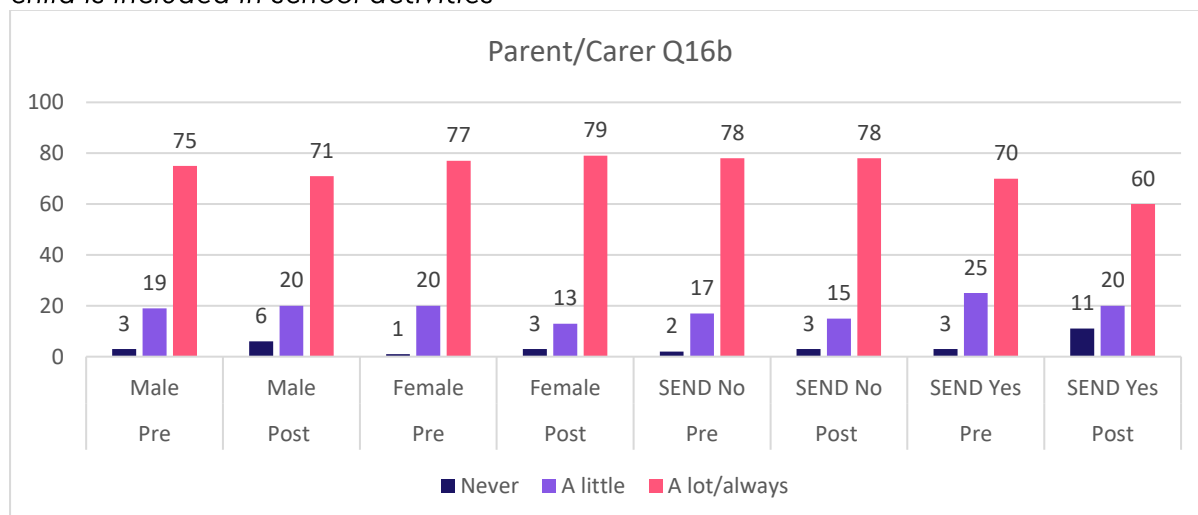
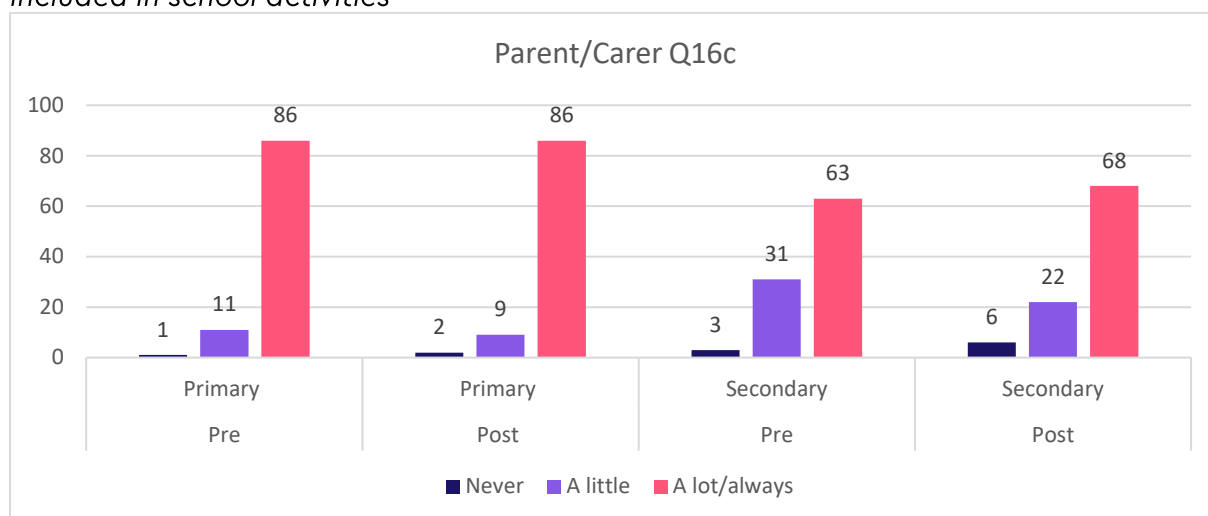


Figure 16c shows the negative responses for parent/carers of primary school pupils remained relatively low with slight decrease from 12% at baseline to 11% at final. However, secondary school parent/carers responded less negatively with just over a quarter responding 28% negatively at final compared to over a third responding negatively at baseline (34%).

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



You feel your child is supported in school

Figures 17a, 17b and 17c graphs show the percentage of parent/carer responses at baseline and final in response to the question '*You feel your child is supported in school*' for the overall sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type.

Figure 17a shows that overall parent/carer responses were slightly less negative at final (21%) compared with 25% negative responses at baseline.

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

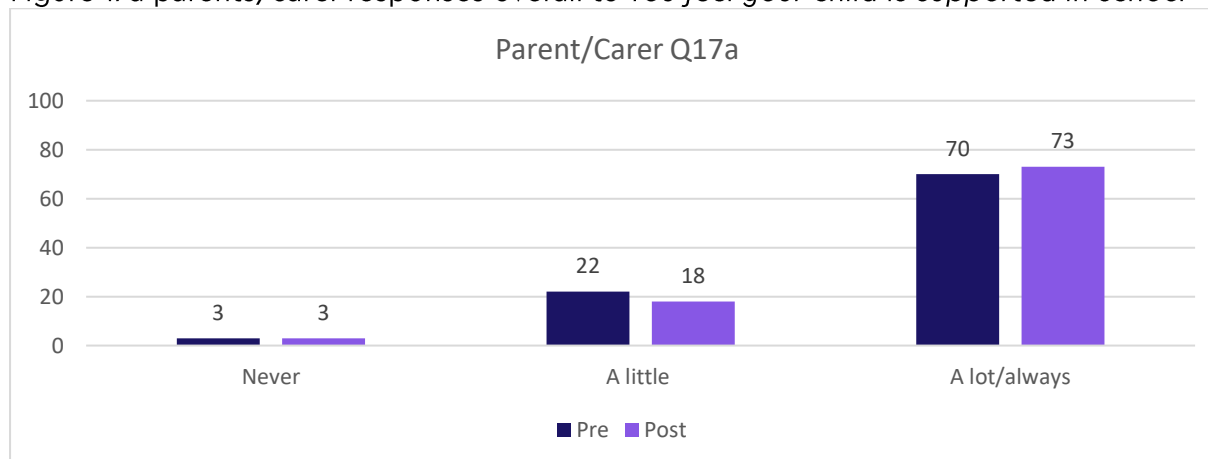


Figure 17b shows the percentage of parent/carer responses by Gender and SEND status, the responses show an 8% decrease in negative responses for parent/carers of male pupils between baseline (31%) and final (23%) compared to parent/carers of female pupils who responded less negatively overall, but slightly more negatively from baseline (19%) to final (21%). Parent cares of non-SEND status pupils responded slightly more negatively from baseline (20%) to final (21%), however, parent/carers of SEND status pupils responded significantly less negatively at final (28%) compared with baseline responses of 41%.

Figure 17b parents/carers responses by gender and by SEND status to *You feel your child is supported in school*

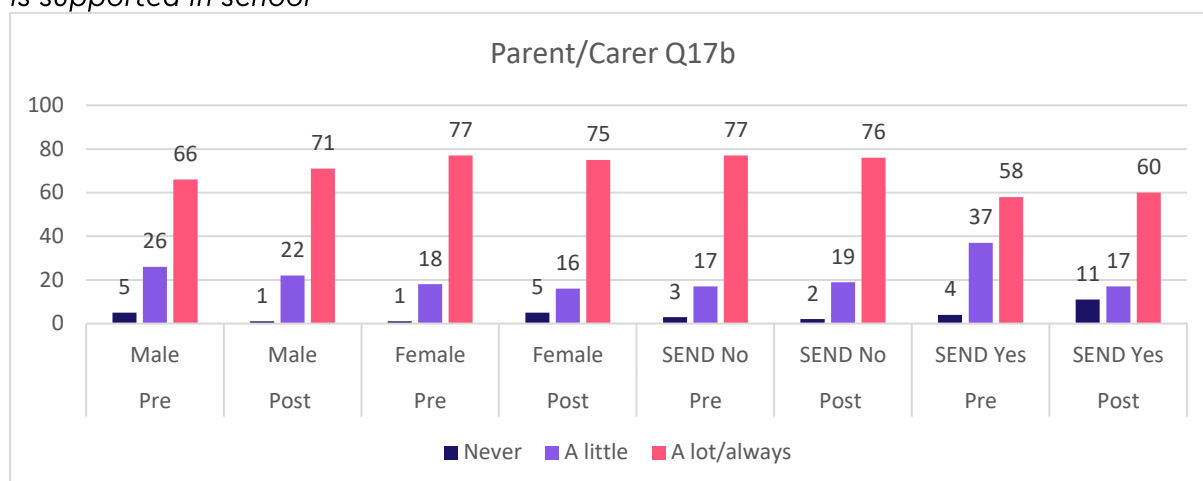
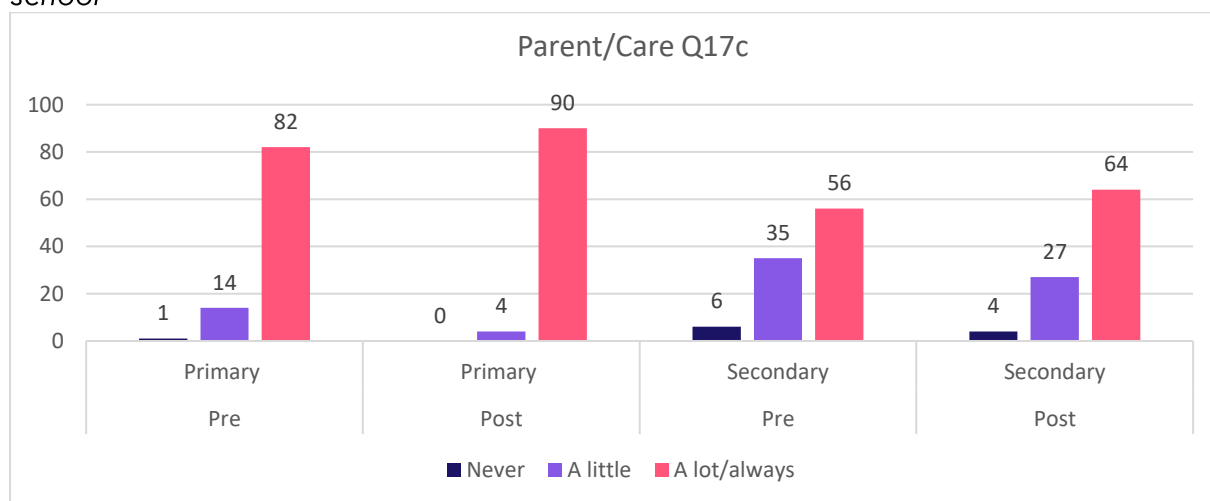


Figure 17c shows parent/carers of primary school pupils respond less negatively than parent/carers of secondary school pupils, the graph shows a significant decrease in primary school parent/carers responses from baseline (15%) to final (4%), however, secondary school parent/carers reported a 10% decrease in negative responses from baseline (41%) to final (31%).

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



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

Figures 18a, 18b and 18c graphs show the percentage of parent/carers responses at baseline and final in response to the question 'You feel you have a good relationship with your child's school' for the overall sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type.

Figure 18a shows that overall parent/carers responses remained almost unchanged with a slight increase in negative response from baseline (26%) to final (27%).

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

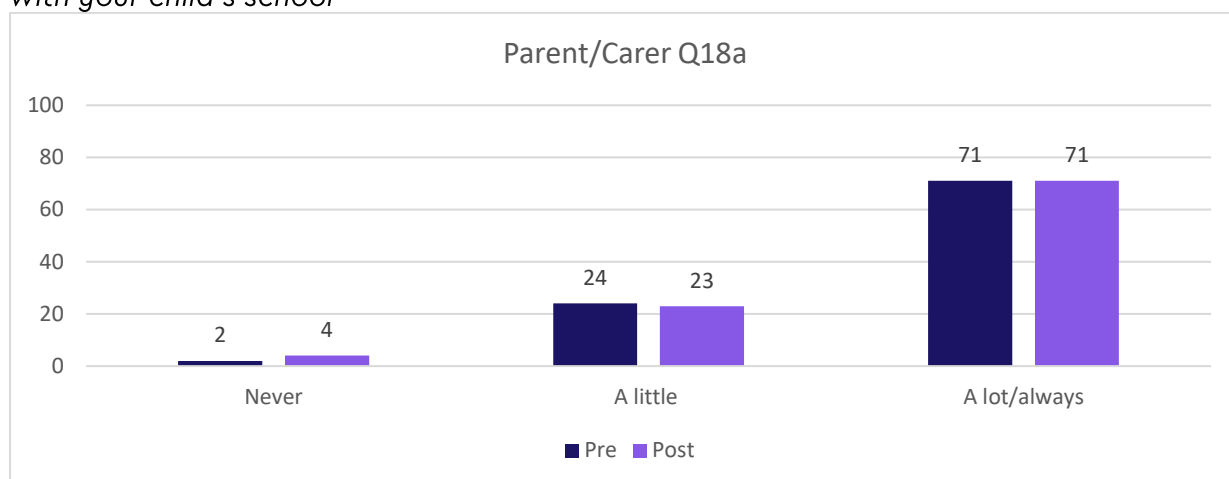


Figure 18b shows the percentage of parent/carer responses by Gender and SEND status, the responses show that parent/carers of male pupils responded less negatively at final (27%) compared with baseline (30%), however, parent/carers of female pupils responded more negatively from baseline (23%) to final (28%). Parent/carers of non-SEND and SEND status pupils responded slightly more negatively at final compared with baseline with nearly a quarter parent/carers of non-SEND pupils (23%-24%) and two fifths of parents of SEND pupils (39%-40%) responding negatively to the question.

Figure 18b parents/carer responses by gender and by SEND status to *You feel like you have a good relationship with your child's school*

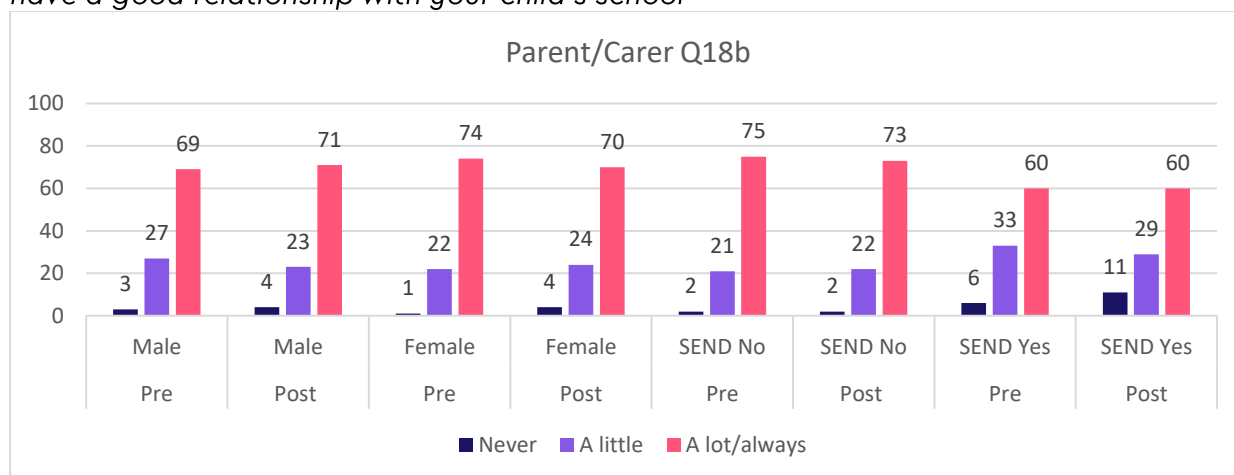
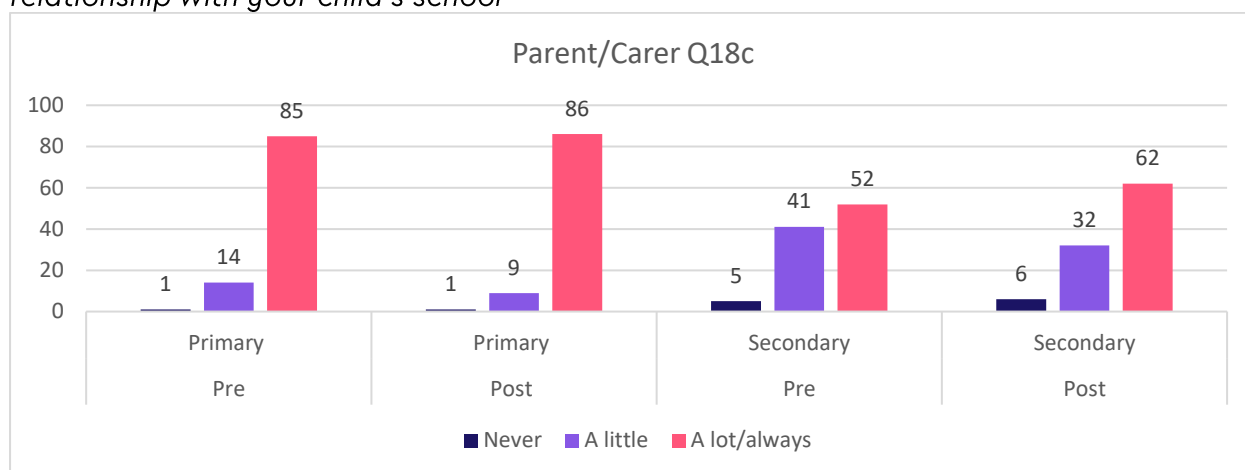


Figure 18c shows parent/carers of primary school pupils respond less negatively than parent/carers of secondary school pupils, both parent/carers of primary school and secondary school pupils respond less negatively from baseline to final. 10% of primary school parent/carers respond negatively at final compared with 15% at baseline. However, nearly half of secondary school parent/carers responded negatively at baseline (46%) compared with nearly two fifths (38%) at final in response to the question.

Figure 18c parents/carer 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 19a, 19b and 19c graphs show the percentage of parent/carer responses at baseline and final in response to the question 'You feel a part of your child's school community' for the overall sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type.

Figure 19a shows the overall parent/carer negative responses decreased from a third (33%) at baseline to a quarter of parent/carer responding less negatively at final (25%).

Figure 19a parents/carer responses overall to *You feel part of your child's school community*

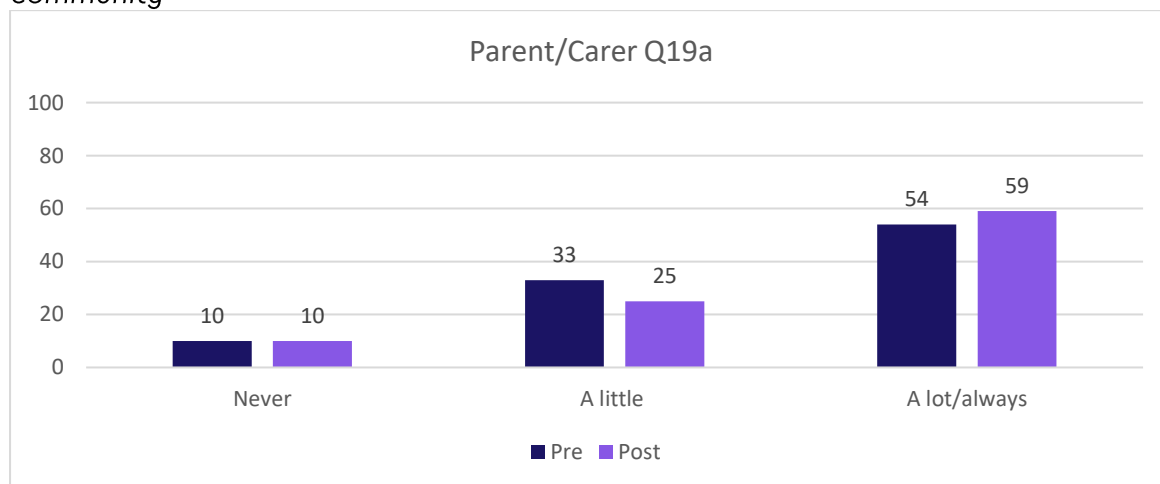


Figure 19b shows parent/carer responses by Gender and SEND status, parent/carers of male pupils and female pupils responded less negatively between baseline and final with responses for parent/carers of male pupils decreasing from 45% to 37% and responses for parent/carers of female pupils decreasing from 42% to 35%. Parent/carers of non-SEND status pupils reported a smaller decrease from baseline to final (39%-35%) however, responses for parent/carers of SEND status pupils showed a significant decrease in negative responses from 51% at baseline to 37% at final in response to the question.

Figure 19b parents/carers responses by gender and by SEND status to *You feel part of your child's school community*

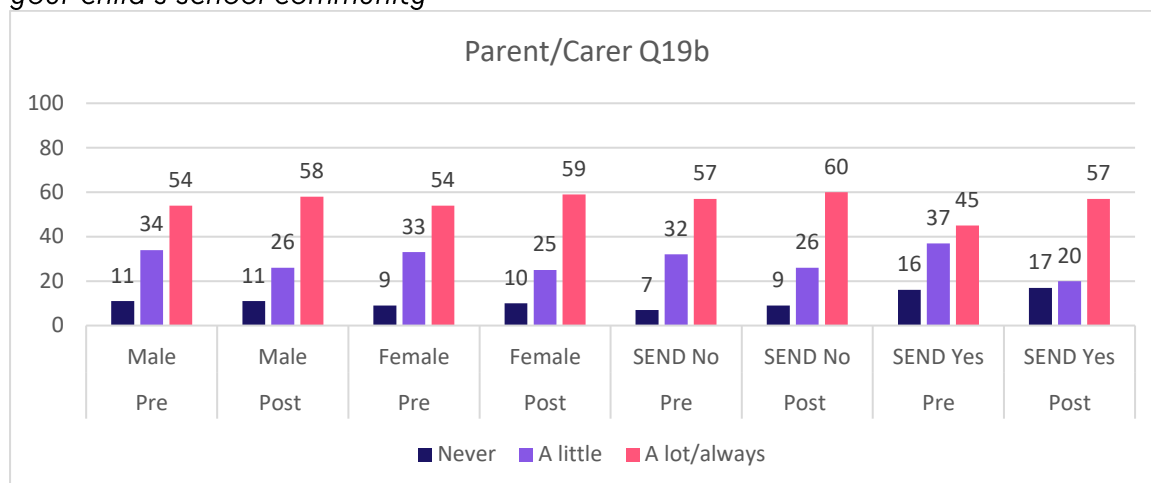
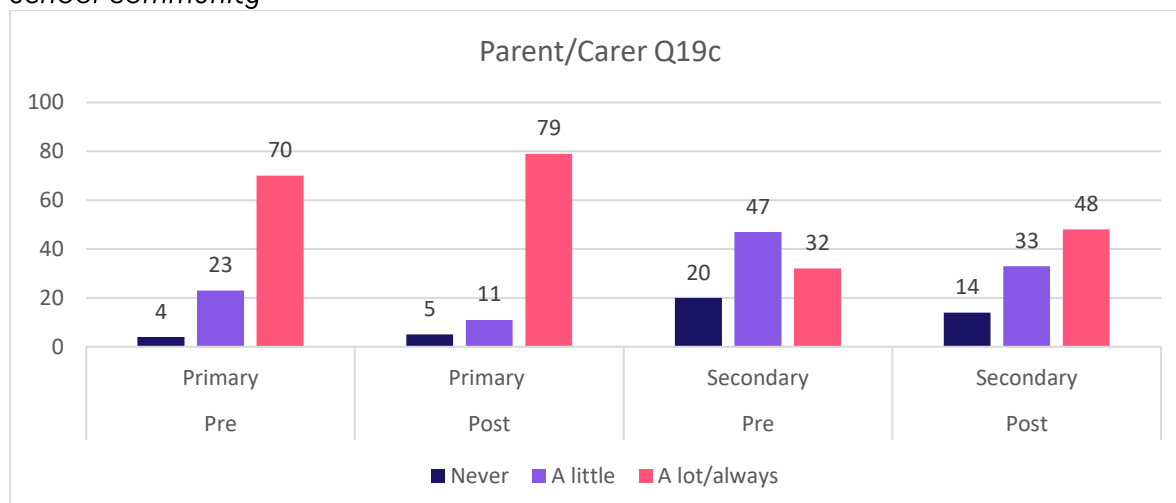


Figure 19c shows parent/carers of primary school pupils respond more positively overall compared to parent/carers of secondary school pupils. The graph shows that primary school parent/carers responded 11% less negatively at final. However, whilst responses for secondary school parent/carers showed a significant decrease in negative responses from baseline (67%) to final (47%) these responses were significantly higher compared with responses from primary school parent/carers in response to the question.

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



You feel the school listens to you

Figures 20a, 20b and 20c graphs show the percentage of parent/carers responses at baseline and final in response to the question 'You feel the school listens to you' for the overall sample, by Gender, by SEND status and by School Type.

Figure 20a shows the overall parent/carers responses remain almost unchanged with nearly a third of parent/carers responding negatively at baseline (30%) and final (29%).

Figure 20a parents/carers responses overall to *You feel the school listens to you*

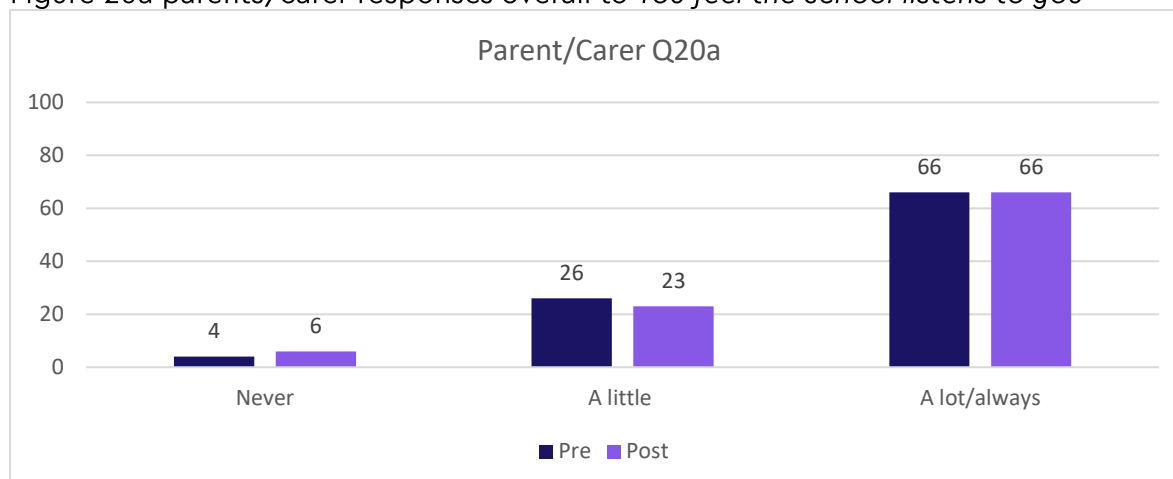


Figure 20b shows the percentage of parent/carers responses by Gender and SEND status, parent/carers of male, female and non-SEND status pupils show a small decrease in negative response between baseline with just over a quarter responding negatively. Parent/carers response for pupils with SEND status show a greater decrease in negative response reducing from 42% at baseline to 34% at final in response to the question.

Figure 20b parents/carers responses by gender and by SEND status to *You feel the school listens to you*

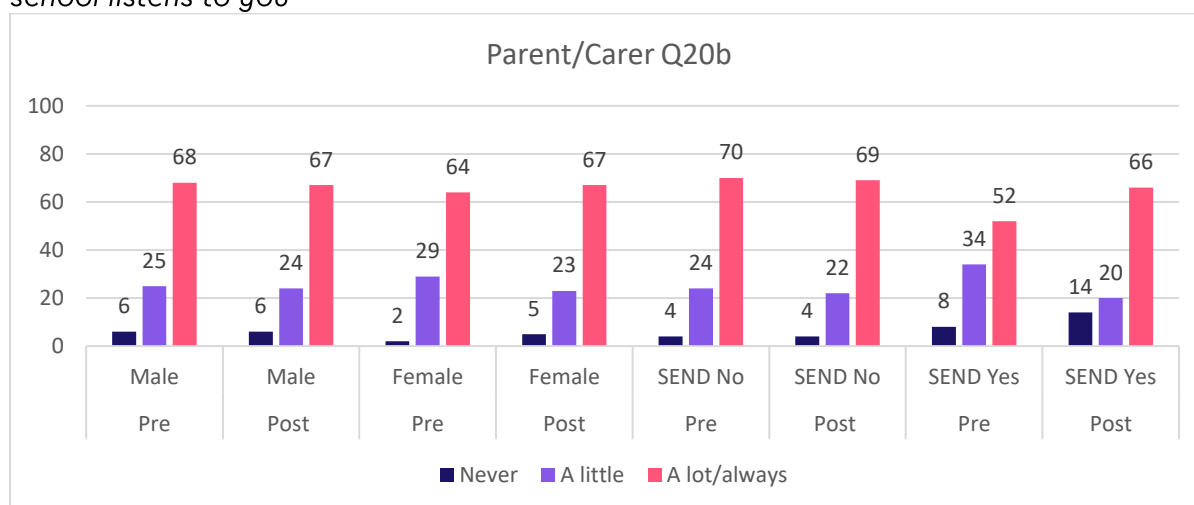
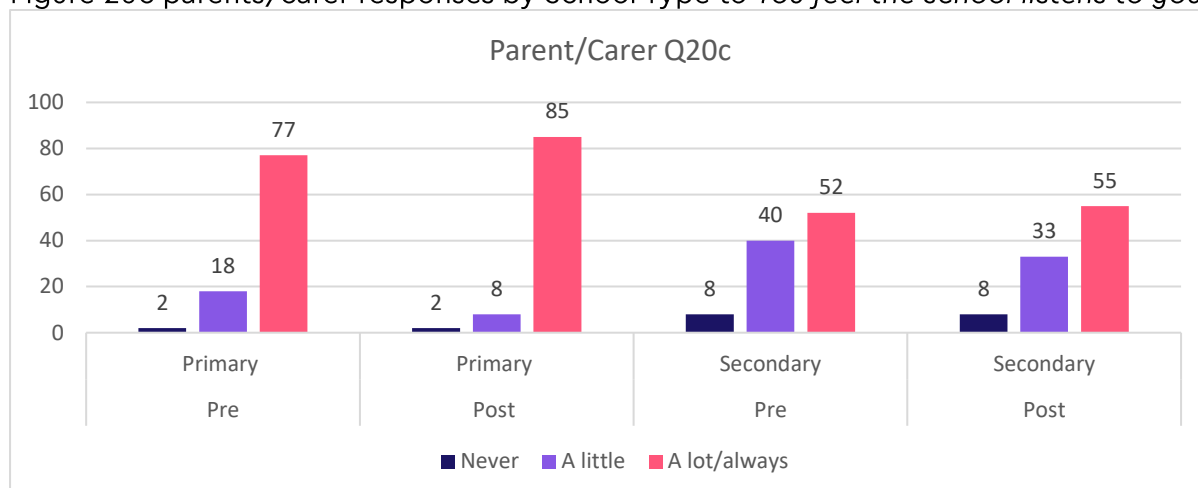


Figure 20c shows parent/carers of primary school pupils respond significantly more positively compared to parent/carers of secondary school pupils. Parent/carers negative responses for primary school decreased from 20% at baseline to 10% at final. Whilst response for parent/carers of secondary school pupils remain higher these also decreased from baseline (48%) to final (41%).

Figure 20c parents/carers responses by School Type to *You feel the school listens to you*



Parents/carers comments

Giving parents/carers an opportunity to express their experiences and understanding of school belonging is imperative to grow current knowledge. 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 36 parents/carers from one mainstream secondary school in north-west London responded to the statement.

Data reported as to what helps foster a sense of belonging consisted of two themes (1) satisfaction, and (2) support.

Satisfaction: Some parents/carers felt satisfied with their children's experiences of belonging at the school saying, *'I am very happy with Hendon School. I have two children there I'm pleased with everything'* and *'I feel like that the school is actually taking care of their students and very serious about belonging and I'm very happy with that'*, whilst others expressed gratitude towards the school's approach to addressing concerns, *'I think school is good at listening and addressing any concerns we may have. Thank you'*, and for their dedication, *'Thanks a lot for your hard work'*.

Supportive: Parents/carers shared how supportive the school is towards their children, *'school x is the only school in x that genuinely upholds its core values, creating an environment where children feel safe, valued and well supported'*, and in addition, supporting pupil aspirations, *'my daughters teachers and the school staff can give better future to my daughter'* and supporting parents/carers initiatives, *'I totally support the school's decision to become smart phone free, thanks for that'*. Many parents/carers identified what reduced a sense of school belonging within the school. Four main themes emerged, (1) teacher-pupil relationships, (2) parent-teacher relationships, (3) school environment, and (4) curriculum.

Teacher-pupil relationships: Parents/carers expressed concerns about the quality of pupil-teacher relations at their school. Concerns included invisibility, *'my child has been a very good student with good grades since Y7 but sometimes they feel intimidated by some teachers, they are not allowed to speak, they don't feel seen'*, inconsistency with

approach, *'actions are only followed up by certain members of staff. The others don't care'*, inequality and gender inequality, *'form tutors are pointless and do little to support the children or to ensure equality'*, *'he expressed that he often feels upset because he believes that girls are given more attention and priority than boys in school'*, and finally, unfairness around discipline, *'other children may be the issue but my child gets detention for trying to explain its not them'*, *'line up is a really unfair of punishing kids that have not misbehaved. School should not be like the military, punish those that need to separately and treat them like young adults'*.

Parent-teacher relationships: Parents/carers remarked on the quality of parent-teacher interactions and the impact on belonging. Several parents reported feeling a sense of disappointment and the emotions felt as a result of their experiences at the school, *'this is not the experience I thought my child would have'*, *'it was very disappointing and sad situation'*, *'I am really suffering sometimes'*. Poor communication was reported frequently by parents/carers, one example was around academic results, *'I want to know the result of my child's assessments'*, another example was a 'generic' approach experienced, *'I think it is important that the school listens more to parents and understand issues from the parents' perspectives than putting every parent in the same jacket. Yes, parents may all behave in similar manner but definitely there are individual differences, circumstances and issues'*, to poor information given to the families, *'very often there is a lack of information or people at school don't have the correct information as well'*, *'my child is happy and knows who to talk to in school but communication with parents could be better'*. One parent/carer reported the school being unavailable to parents and pupils, *'the school ignores important messages and concerns raised by either students or parents'*. Some parents/carers made specific requests to the school, such as offering more initiatives to all pupils to promote belonging, *'create a space of announcements so students can share new activities'*, *'more inclusive after school activities for those with special needs'*, for permanent teaching staff in place, *'more teachers, less supplies teachers'*, and for an increased sense of safety among pupils, *'more attention needs to be paid to the safety of the children'*.

School environment: Responses by parents/carers demonstrated the school environment does not promote a sense of school belonging among its community for example, there is a lack of encouragement *'I don't feel that my child is in an encouraging and supportive environment'*, *'I feel that we are not supported'*, *'Incentivise students to participate in the clubs and create inter competition between them'*. Some parents/carers revealed bullying behaviour experienced by their children, *'My son is years 9 and 7 they get bully by year 11 boys but no-one is supporting them or even some teachers are treating them differently but no-one do anything and always blaming my kids'*, *'There is bullying happening in your school, affecting many students, including my son... therefore I believe your school has a serious problem with bullying in the classroom and during breaks'*. Disability discrimination was reported by one parent/carer, *'In Summer 1, my son had Kew garden trip. I paid for the trip and we were under the impression the whole time he is going for the trip. But few days before the trip his teacher send an email top us and saying your child cant come to the trip unless an adult from his home come and support him... my son has a EHCP'*.

Curriculum: Some parents/carers reported that the curriculum offered at school did not promote school belonging for pupils, such as addressing individual academic needs

'more homework', and not offering current best-known practices, 'the school's headteachers don't consider best practices already available in other schools from the borough but bring in outdated ideas. It is not an innovative school, where students make the most of available technology and resources', and in addition missed experiences due to disability, 'at the end my child couldn't go to the trip because school was refusing to take him. It was very disappointing and sad situation for special need child'.

Parents/carers comments comparison

Only one school provided parents/carers comments at baseline and final, with 31 and 36 parents/carers respectively. They had the opportunity to share their perspectives on the following statement at these time points, *'The survey is anonymous but if there is anything you would like the school to know about 'belonging' please include below'.*

Parents/carers reported a sense of satisfaction and being supported by their school at both time points. However, the comments reported about what reduced a sense of school belonging at baseline remained at final data collection point, such as pupils not being heard or feeling invisible, inconsistencies of teacher-pupil relationships, and a lack of inclusivity (unfairness, inequality and disability discrimination). Parents/carers shared that their relationships with teaching staff remained the same at baseline and final for example, poor communication was reported at both time points, but in addition, teachers being unavailable and a sense of disappointment was felt at final audit data collection. School climate remained problematic at both time points with parents/carers reporting bullying, minimal encouragement by staff to nurture pupil engagement and disability discrimination. Parents/carers reported the curriculum presenting the same barriers at baseline and final, for example, school belonging education, however, individual academic needs not being met were reported at final audit data collection

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 247 teachers/staff completed the questionnaire at baseline; this consisted of 145 (59%) primary school teacher/staff, 50 (20%) secondary school teacher/staff with 52 (21%) who responded 'prefer not to answer' in response to school type. A total of 182 teacher/staff completed the questionnaire at final; this consisted of 133 (73%) primary school and 28 (15%) of secondary school teacher/staff and 21 (12%) who responded 'prefer not to answer' in response to school type.

The questionnaire contained six questions that examine teacher/staff-pupil relationships. Questions were responded to on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from never = 1, a little = 2, a lot = 3 and always = 4, a lot and always were collapsed to give positive belonging scores. Some responses given were don't know or prefer not to say, these are not included in the final analysis.

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.

The findings will examine and report on teacher/staff responses at baseline and final for the overall sample and by School Type. The findings are presented as percentages, rounding up to the nearest number for results 0.5 and above.

Pupils in your school have a sense of belonging

Figures 21a and 21b graphs show the percentages for teacher/staff responses overall and by school type at baseline and final in answer to the question 'Pupils in your school have a sense of belonging' by overall sample and by school type.

Figure 21a shows that for overall responses teacher/staff 12% responded negatively at baseline this increased slightly to 14% at final in answer to the question.

Figure 21a shows teacher/staff responses overall to *Pupils in your school have a sense of school belonging*

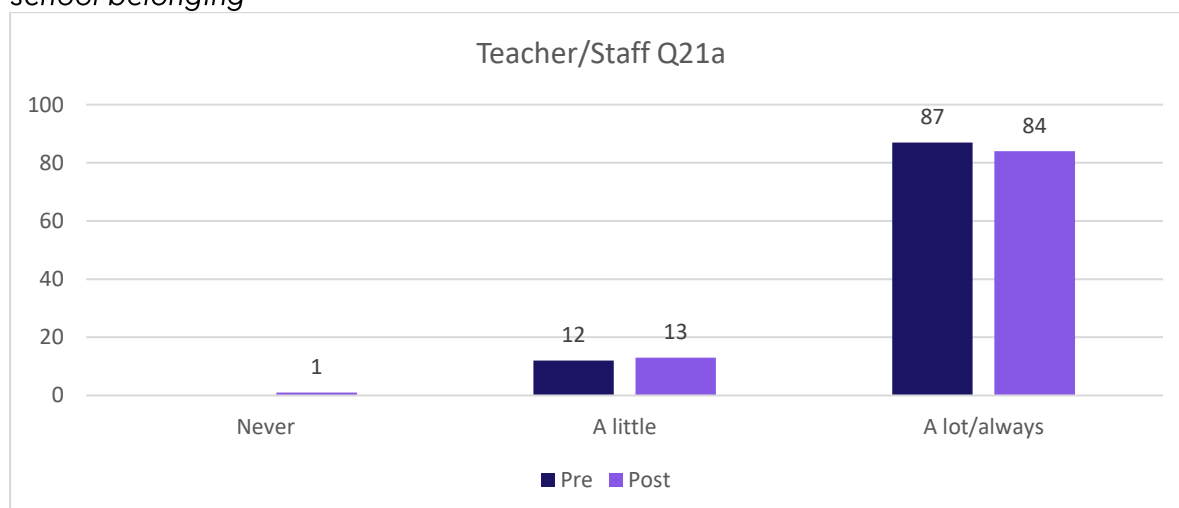
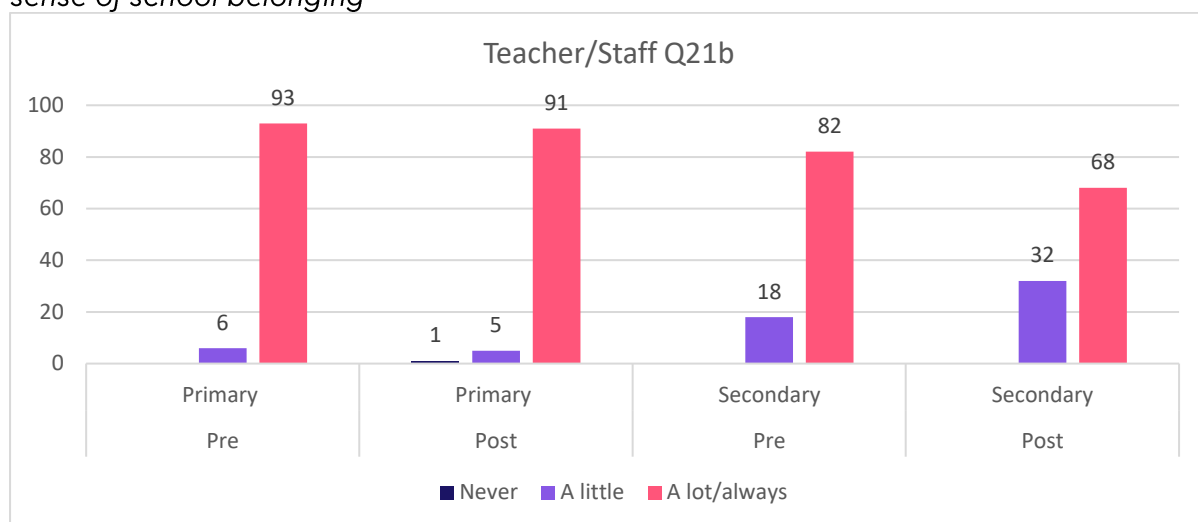


Figure 21b shows that teacher/staff responses remained unchanged at 6% for baseline and final, however there was a significant increase in negative responses for secondary school teacher/staff from 18% at baseline to 32% at final in answer to the question.

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



You feel that pupils are included in classroom activities

Figures 22a and 22b graphs show the percentages for teacher/staff responses overall and by school type at baseline and final in answer to the question 'You feel that pupils are included in classroom activities'.

Figure 22a shows that for overall teacher/staff responses were more negative at final increasing from 7% to 12% at final in response to the question.

Figure 22a shows teacher/staff responses overall to *You feel that all pupils are included in classroom activities*

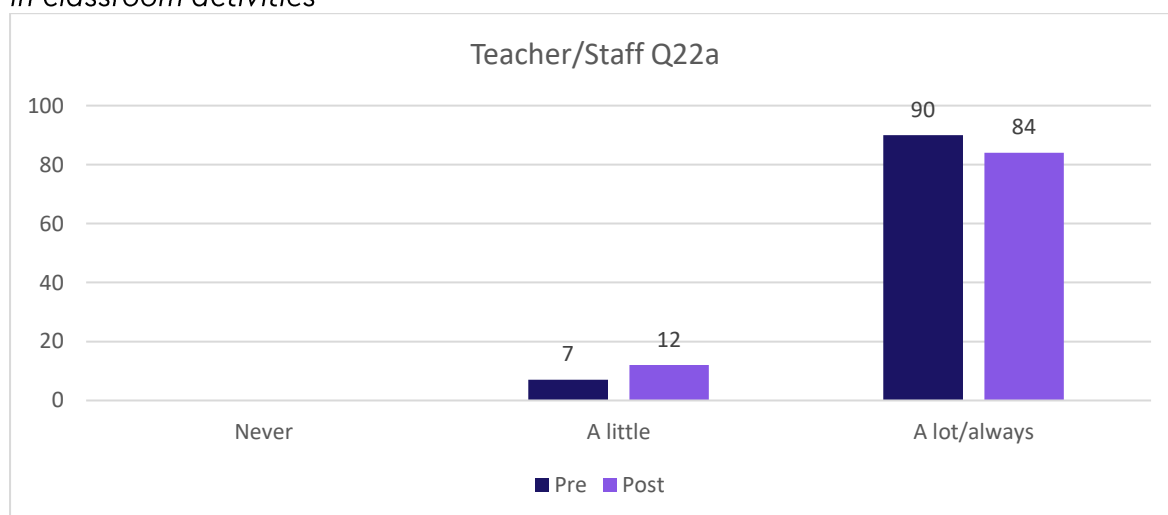
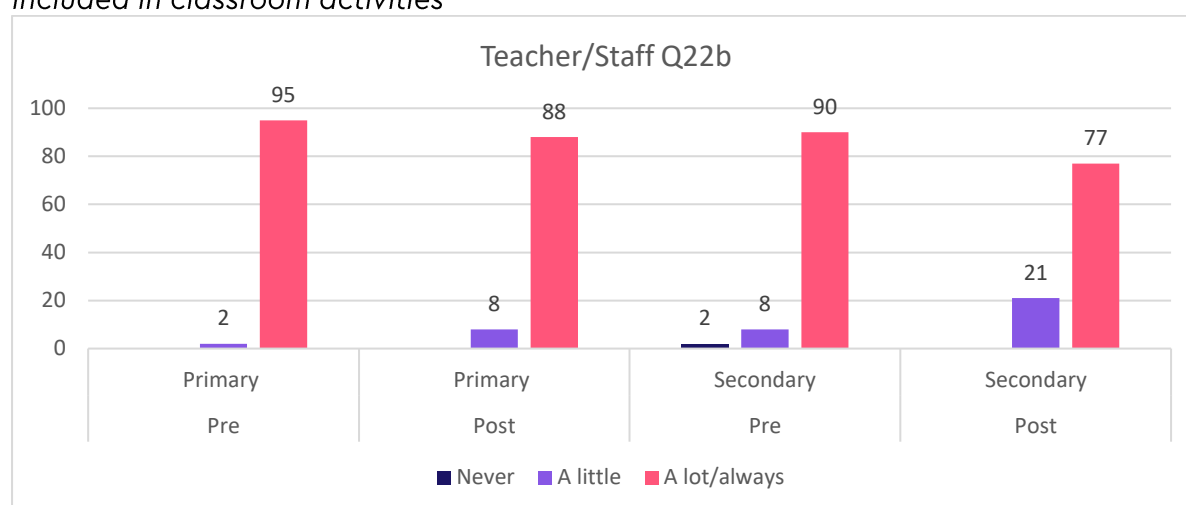


Figure 22b shows that teacher/staff responses by school type were more negative at final for both primary and secondary schools. Primary school responses increased from 2% to 8% at final. Teacher staff response and secondary school responses were much more negative overall increasing from 10% to 21% at final in answer to the question.

Figure 22b shows 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

Figures 23a and 23b graphs show the percentages for teacher/staff responses overall and by school type at baseline and final in answer to the question 'you feel that pupils are generally welcome to join in school activities'.

Figure 23a shows that for overall responses there was a slight increase in negative responses from 6% to 7% at final in answer to the question.

Figure 23a shows teacher/staff responses overall to *You feel that pupils are generally welcome to join in school activities outside the classroom*

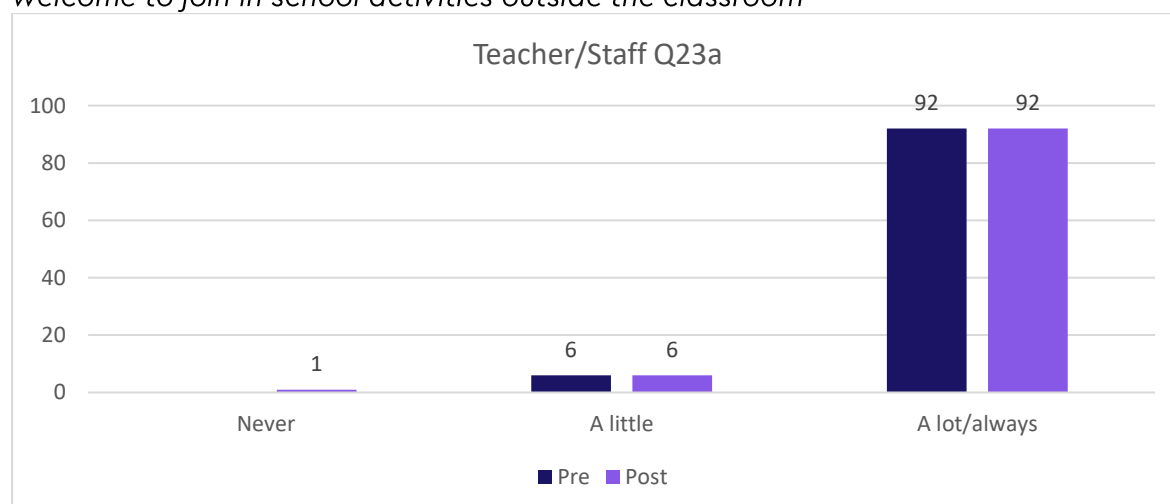
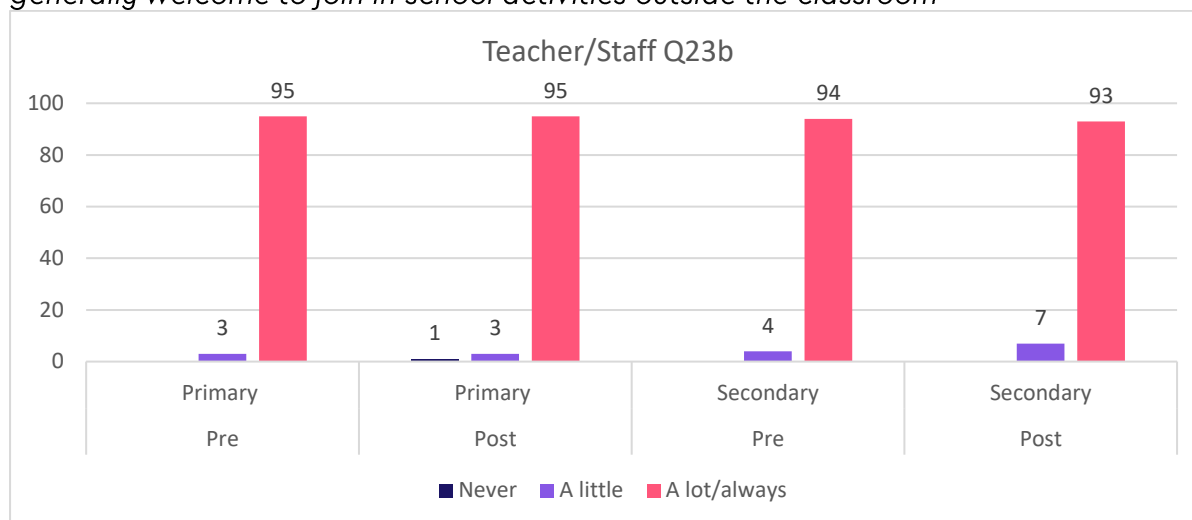


Figure 23b shows a slight increase in negative teacher/staff responses from baseline to final, primary school teacher/staff show and increase from 3% baseline 4% final whilst secondary school teacher/staff responses were slightly more negative increasing from 4% to 7% at final in answer to the question.

Figure 23b shows 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 24a and 24b graphs show the percentages for teacher/staff responses overall and by school type at baseline and final in answer to the question 'You feel connected to your pupils'.

Figures 24a shows that for overall responses teacher/staff respond more negatively at final (11%) compared to baseline (5%) in answer to the question.

Figure 24a shows teacher/staff responses overall to *You feel connected to your pupils*

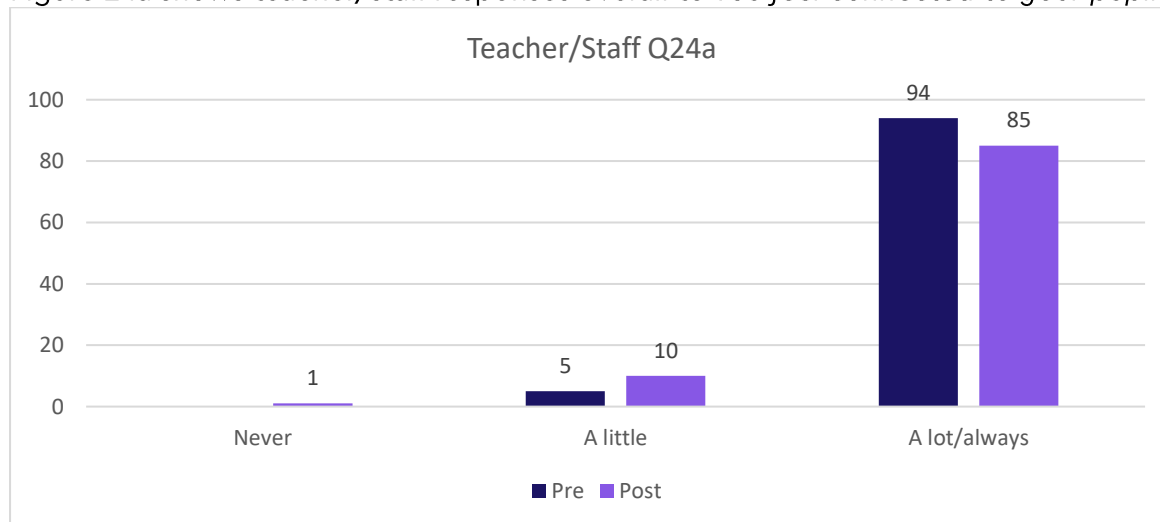
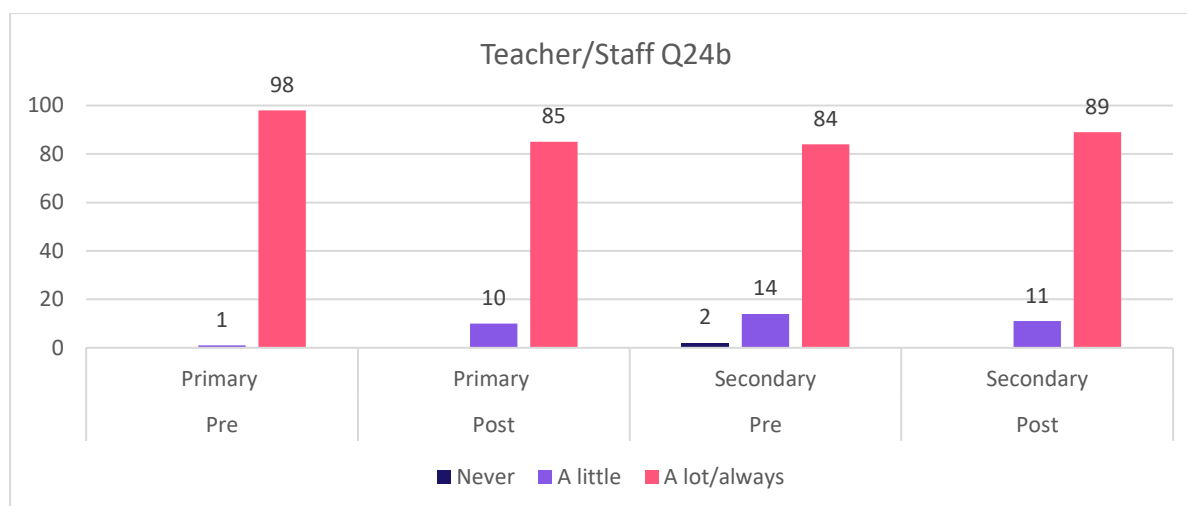


Figure 24b teacher/staff responses by school type are mixed, primary school teacher/staff responded more negatively over time, showing an increase in negative responses from 1% at baseline to 10% at final in response to the question, however, secondary school teacher/staff responses show a small decrease in negative responses from 16% at baseline to 11% at final.

Figure 24b shows teacher/staff responses by School Type to *You feel connected to your pupils*



You feel connected to the schools' values

Figures 25a and 25b graphs show the percentages for teacher/staff responses overall and by school type at baseline and final in answer to the question 'You feel connected to you schools' values'.

Figure 25a shows that for overall teacher/staff responses there was an increase in negative responses from 8% at baseline to 13% at final in answer to the question.

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

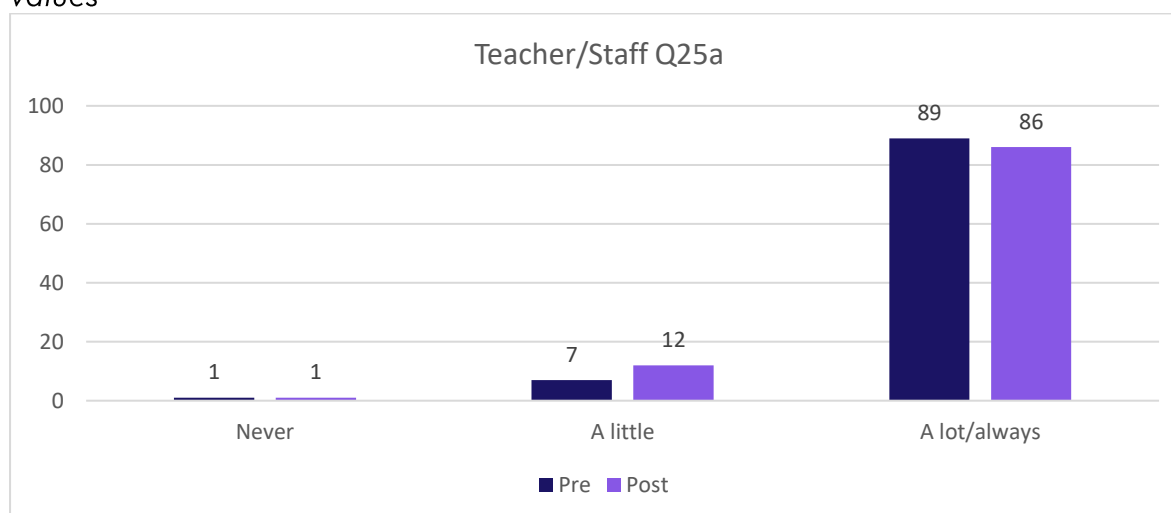
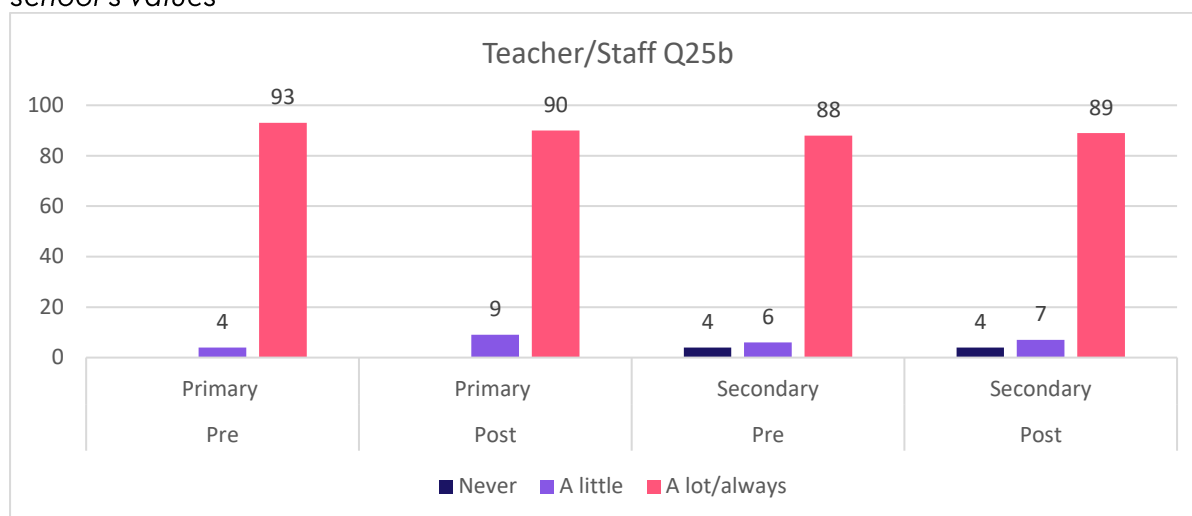


Figure 25b shows an increase in negative responses by school type, primary school teacher/staff responses show an increase from 4% at baseline to 9% at final, secondary school teacher/staff negative response are overall higher with a slight increase from 10% at baseline to 11% at final in response to the question.

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



You feel that pupils are treated fairly in school

Figure 26a and 26b graphs show the percentages for teacher/staff responses overall and by school type at baseline and final in answer to the question 'Pupils are treated fairly in school'.

Figure 26a shows that for overall teacher/staff responses, there was an increase in negative responses from 7% at baseline to 13% at final in answer to the question.

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

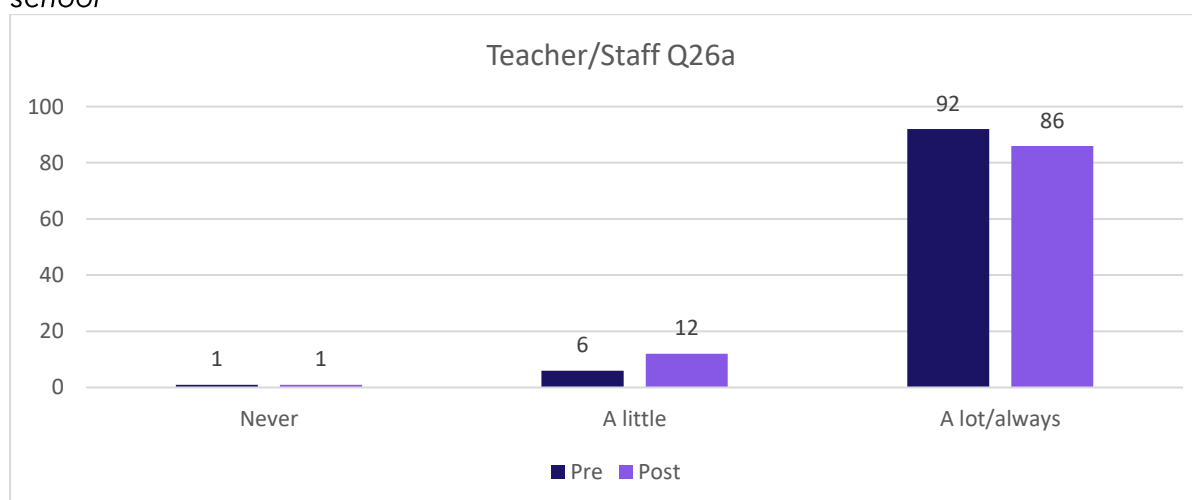
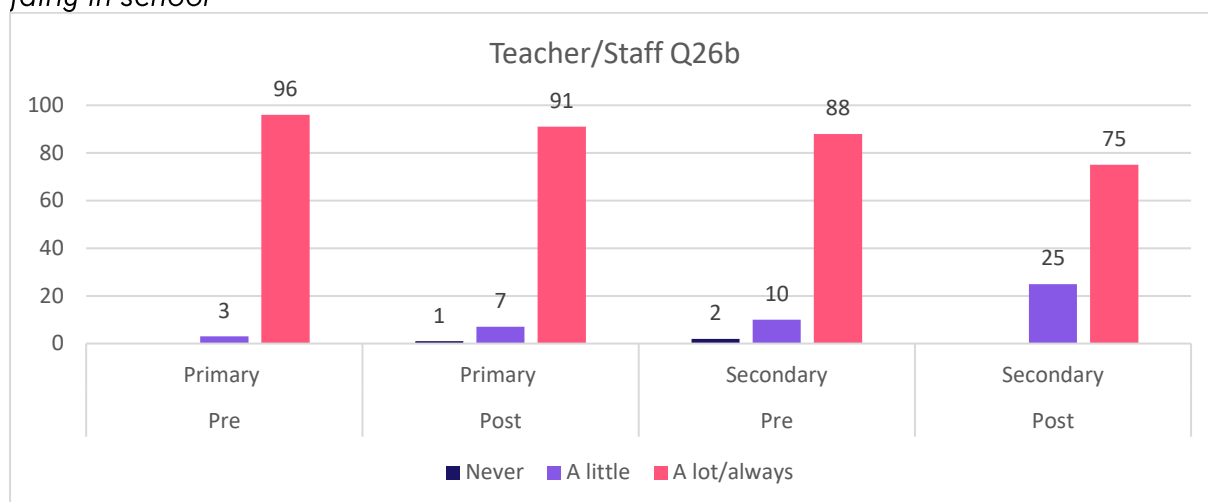


Figure 26b shows an increase in negative responses by teacher/staff by school type with primary school teacher staff responses increasing from 3% at baseline to 8% at final, however, increases in secondary teacher/staff negative responses were more significant increasing from 12% at baseline to 25% at final in response to the question.

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



Teacher/staff comments

Within the survey, teachers/staff were invited to expand on their understanding of belonging among pupils at their school. 182 teaching staff from 10 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 five main themes, (1) school climate with six subthemes, (2) teacher-pupil relationships with seven subthemes, (3) pupil relationships, (4) diverse curriculum and (5) extracurricular activities with two subthemes.

School climate: Teachers/staff reported the school climate helped nurture a sense of school belonging for pupils, this theme consisted of six subthemes (1) welcoming, (2) safety, (3) fairness/equality, (4) happiness, (5) values, and (6) family feeling. Teachers/staff shared that the school environment was welcoming, '*pupils are welcomed by members of staff at different points*', '*everyone is always warm and welcoming especially of new students*'. One staff member reported the importance of school being a place a safety for some pupils, '*school is one of main places our pupils feel safe*'. Teachers/staff observed the facial expressions of their pupils arriving at school as an indicator of belonging, '*I think the faces of the crowds of children that gather at the school gates in the morning, and the smiles that leave in the afternoon, speak volumes for how safe and comfortable the children feel at X*', '*children enjoy school, they come through the gates smiling every day*'. Fostering fairness and equality towards pupils by teachers/staff is reported to influence belongingness, '*All pupils are equal*', '*I think that on the whole, we try and treat pupils fairly and to ensure that we are inclusive to everyone*', '*I think our belonging is very good and we aim to include all to ensure we are equal and fairly treated*', '*they are treated fairly at every stage of their learning and feel comfortable being themselves in school*'. Teachers/staff highlighted the importance of making pupils feel valued, '*it is an all-inclusive school that fosters a strong sense of belonging. Children feel supported, and valued*', '*we work hard to provide for and support all pupils so that they feel they belong and are valued*', '*the school has great policies, incentives, and activities to promote everyone's feeling of belonging and being valued*'. Some teachers/staff shared their schools

worked hard creating an atmosphere that had a 'family feeling', *'I can recall many instances of pupils being kind and considerate to one another, in and outside the classroom. By doing this, they create a sense of family', 'most pupils consider school as their second home', 'we try to create a family environment to support pupil belonging'.*

Teacher-pupil relationships: Teachers/staff reported positive interactions with pupils helped to increase school belonging, this theme consisted of seven subthemes (1) support/encouragement, (2) promoting autonomy, (3) caring connections, (4) small gestures, (5) visibility, (6) pupil voice, and (7) inclusion for pupils and parents. Teachers/staff reported the support given to their pupils created cohesion, *'it feels like a real community - where people do their best to help each other'*. Promoting autonomy was reported as an outcome of having positive teacher-pupil relationships, *'school x sense of belonging for pupils allows children to not only academically develop but also to personally develop', 'people are confident to take on responsibilities'*. Teachers/staff reported facilitating caring and nurturing connections, *'staff try really hard to be curious and make connections'*, and the lasting impact it has on pupils, *'I feel that one of our strengths as a school is the relationships we create and nurture with our children. Even once children have moved on from your year group there remains a connection'*. Schools are very busy places and teachers/staff highlighted the impact of making small gestures on feeling a sense of belonging at school, *'every day I notice so many thoughtful things that staff do to try to help pupils develop a sense of belonging, Those that feel valued and like they belong are with staff that take the time for those smaller conversations', 'finding ways to notice the small things that might make a difference to individual children'*. Two teachers/staff reported having pupil names and photos in specific areas at school helped to promote pupil visibility, *'names are displayed where they can put their coats', 'photos are displayed in corridors and stairs of trips they have been on during the term'*. Teachers/staff reported being available to listen to pupils and facilitating opportunities for their involvement at school, *'the staff work very hard in ensuring that all children are listened to, have a voice and enjoy school', 'I believe we strive to do our best to ensure that children are happy in school and we observe and report where we see children may present as being unhappy/quiet/disengaged and we listen to them when they feel they want their voice to be heard'*. Many responses reflected the importance of inclusion for both pupils and their parents, *'at our school, we create an inclusive environment where all pupils feel they belong—for example, new students are paired with buddies, warmly welcomed by staff, and supported by their peers from the very start', 'we work hard to include all pupils and parents. We have lots of positive relationships and this is frequently commented on by staff, pupils and parents', 'as a school I feel we go above and beyond to include all pupils as best we can', 'the school staff - both teaching and support staff - work hard behind the scenes to try and encourage all students into lessons and to join in the school community'*.

Pupil relationships: One teacher/staff member reported how pupils not liking school provided an opportunity for connection with peers, *'most pupils have a sense of belonging, some find this through the school but many find this in opposition to the school and this is what they bond over'*.

Diverse curriculum: Teachers/staff reported offering an inclusive curriculum that is representative of their school communities helped nurture belongingness, *'we take in the consideration of the children and their home lives, their cultures and religions and*

as a school we show respect and celebrate them', 'diversity is celebrated and promoted throughout all curriculum areas'.

Extracurricular activities: Teachers/staff shared the impact of offering extracurricular activities at their schools to help foster belonging and mindset growth for all pupils, the theme consisted of two sub-themes, (1) optional and (2) mandatory. Some teachers/staff reported extracurricular activities offered were optional at their school, *'lunch club is a nice idea to make children feel included', 'a wide range of after school club / before school club activities are offered to encourage greater participation from all children to develop their sense of belonging', 'children get so many opportunities to participate in lots of activities both curriculum and non-curriculum focused',* whilst other teachers/staff shared initiatives provided by their schools are mandatory for all pupils, *'the school participates in many initiatives and is a hub of happiness and inclusiveness. All our pupils are involved without exception', 'I feel our school ensures all the children are included in various activities that enhances their sense of belonging'.*

Having a strong sense of belonging at school is whether pupils feel accepted, supported and included by their peers and members of staff. The teachers/staff revealed barriers present at school which prevent or have a negative impact on belonging. Five main themes emerged from the data (1) difference discrimination, (2) teacher-pupil relationships with three sub-themes, (3) curriculum with three sub-themes, (4) teacher wellbeing, and (5) belonging is continuous work with two sub-themes.

Difference discrimination: Teachers/staff reported pupils with disability are excluded from participating in events outside of the classroom, *'physically Disabled pupils were not included in the Year 8 school trip',* sanctioned in school because of their specific presentation, *'some disabled pupils are punished for incidents related to their disability',* or challenging pupils not given the appropriate care, *'all children are different and sometimes the difficult children should be treated with care by all adults from support staff to SLT'.*

Teacher-pupil relationships: The relationship between pupils and staff is critical to nurturing a sense of belonging at school, however some teachers/staff reported negative interactions at their schools and its impact. This theme consisted of two sub-themes (1) lack of connection and (2) disengagement. A lack of connection between teachers and pupils was reported, *'pupils can find it hard to feel like they belong when staff that work with them don't get to know them',* and in addition, how school disengagement may start, *'they have little input on what happens in the school. There are not many things that encourage their participation'.*

Curriculum: Teachers/staff reported issues with the school curriculum affecting belongingness, this theme consisted of three sub-themes (1) reflect diversity, (2) inconsistency and (3) increased knowledge on belonging. Having a curriculum that represents the school community makes pupils feel significantly more included and some teachers/staff reported this was not reflected at their school, *'the current curriculum needs to reflect diversity',* and *'the resources and literature used could be updated to reflect our diverse community'.* Teachers/staff reflected on the importance of being consistent with measures implemented right the way through the school, *'...needs to be more consistent: activities and approaches could be more consistent across the school.* Pupils understanding of what belonging means is crucial and two

teachers/staff highlighted and questioned current levels of understanding, *'this is something that can be quite intangible and I feel that while pupils may not profess to a sense of belonging they may not be aware of how much they belong until end points such as term ends or leaving celebrations where they are able to reflect on time passed and experiences shared', 'I would like to know if those pupils who say they do not belong feel that they have no sense of belonging anywhere'.*

Teacher wellbeing: Teachers/staff reported the reciprocal effects of their sense of belonging in school and how this translates to pupils' sense of belongingness, *'belonging for pupils will flourish when belonging for staff is embedded', 'no inclusivity and staff well-being affects the welfare of students'.*

Belonging is continuous work: Teachers/staff shared their acknowledgements towards nurturing belongingness in schools is a continuous process for members of the school community. Teachers/staff highlighted the continued hard work involved, *'we work hard at this aspect of school life but it is something to continue to strive to improve', 'it continues to be what we strive for'.* One staff member shared the difficulties of implementing and nurturing school belonging as the academic year progresses, *'the end of the year is tricky for everyone due to tiredness, etc. This makes children's emotions become drastic and so can be tricky',* whilst another teacher shared the importance of having the time to capture moments of success, *'we need to celebrate those moments, congratulating those special pupils more often. I, for one, am very proud of our pupils who instinctively uphold our school's sense of belonging every day'.*

Teacher/staff comments comparison

Teaching staff provided comments at baseline and final audit responding to the question, 'Do you have anything you'd like to tell us about your school's sense of belonging for pupils?'.

Teachers/staff reported many themes remaining at baseline and final, for example with interpersonal relationships, pupil voice, support, fairness, mutual respect and inclusion are all reported at both time points. An additional theme reported at final data collection was happiness. For school climate, safety and leadership are reported at baseline and final with two additional themes at final, these are school values and a 'family feeling'. The curriculum continued to represent diversity of schools at both time points, however, extracurricular activities reported being made optional or mandatory by final audit. Many comments by teachers/staff revealed similar barriers to having a sense of belonging at baseline and final audit time points such as disability discrimination, diversity not reflected in the school curriculum and pupil disengagement. However, at final, additional themes to the barriers of fostering belonging included a lack of communication between teaching staff and pupils, inconsistencies within the curriculum, reduced teacher wellbeing, and the difficulty with implementing school belonging during the busy academic cycle.

BM 360 SCHOOL AUDIT TOOL

As part of the Belonging Matters programme, the BM 360 School Audit Tool was developed as a way for schools to assess and reflect upon aspects of their school belonging work. Participating schools were asked at baseline and final to complete the BM 360 Audit Tool, rating each item in the four categories as to whether they fully met, partially met or have not yet met the criterion at baseline, 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 action plan is specific to each schools needs and allows them to focus on specific items within the four categories to develop and foster feelings of belonging practices in their schools with a particular focus on SEND pupils.

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)

11 schools provided baseline and final data, this is evaluated and presented in this report.

OVERVIEW OF FINAL RESPONSES FOR EACH OF THE CATEGORIES

The final audit was completed by 10 of the participating schools. The 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.

Responses for each audit item by schools at final:

- 1.1 shows nine schools at fully met, whilst one school no chosen category.
- 1.2 shows seven schools at fully met, two schools at partially met, whilst one school no chosen category.
- 1.3 shows eight schools at fully met, whilst two schools at partially met.
- 2.1 shows nine schools at fully met, whilst one school at partially met.
- 2.2 shows eight schools at fully met, one school at partially met, whilst one school no chosen category.
- 2.3 shows all ten schools at fully met.
- 2.4 shows four schools at fully met, four schools at partially met, whilst two schools no chosen category.
- 3.1 shows seven schools at fully met, two schools at partially met, whilst one school no chosen category.
- 3.2 shows eight schools at fully met, whilst two schools no chosen category.
- 3.3 shows five schools at fully met, whilst five schools at partially met.
- 3.4 shows three schools fully met, six schools at partially met, whilst one school no chosen category.
- 3.5 shows eight schools at fully met, one school at partially met, whilst one school no chosen category.
- 4.1 shows all ten schools at fully met.

- 4.2 shows seven schools at fully met, two schools at partially met, whilst one school no chosen category.
- 4.3 shows five schools at fully met, four schools at partially met, whilst one school no chosen category.
- 4.4 shows six schools at fully met, two schools at partially met, whilst two schools no chosen category.
- 4.5 shows five schools at fully, whilst five schools at partially met.
- 4.6 shows eight school at fully met, one school at partially met, whilst one school no chosen entry.

Table showing responses by schools at final:

	S1	S2	S3	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11
1.1	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM		FM	FM
1.2	FM	FM	PM	FM	FM	FM	FM		FM	PM
1.3	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	PM	PM
2.1	PM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM
2.2	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM		FM	PM
2.3	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM
2.4	FM	PM	PM	FM	FM	PM	FM		FM	PM
3.1	FM	FM	PM	FM	FM	PM	FM		FM	FM
3.2	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM		FM	FM
3.3	FM	FM	FM	FM	PM	PM	FM	PM	PM	PM
3.4	PM	FM	PM	FM	PM	PM	FM		PM	PM
3.5	FM	FM	PM	FM	FM	FM	FM		FM	FM
4.1	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM
4.2	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	PM	FM		FM	PM
4.3	FM	FM	PM	FM	FM	PM	FM		PM	PM
4.4	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM		PM	PM
4.5	FM	FM	PM	FM	PM	FM	FM	PM	PM	PM
4.6	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	PM	FM		FM	FM

SUMMARY FINDINGS FROM THE AUDIT TOOL

1. Creating an inclusive environment

1.1

Participants reported their school values helped foster a sense of belonging, 'we work hard to have a welcoming environment with reference across the school of our school values (REACH) and these expectations to be respectful, ready to learn and safe. Children remember these' and 'inclusive values are reflected in staff wellbeing initiatives, shared responsibilities, and opportunities for growth (e.g., developing lead practitioners, mentoring ECTs, and coaching)'. One school included their vision as being important, 'our school vision – "Our Identity, Our World, Our Voice, Our Future" – is lived out daily and underpins our inclusive approach'. Participants reported how staff model these inclusive values every day, 'staff model inclusive values through restorative approaches, trauma-informed language, and culturally responsive pedagogy', and how reward systems help incentivise pupils to uphold these values, 'positive

recognition systems (Bronze, Silver, Gold levels) uplift children who go above and beyond'.

Participants shared the administering surveys across the whole school community helped capture, develop and improve belonging in their schools, *'school carried out pupil surveys and received data on how children feel like they belong during different parts of the school day. Used this data to create a policy on greeting expectations and shared the data with all staff', and 'surveys from parents, staff and pupils'.*

Further elaboration on how creating a welcoming environment was vital and included the importance of the school entrance, *'the first point of call is our reception and part of our action has been to make this area feel more welcoming'* and visual displays being scattered around the school, *'we have a prominent display board in our middle hall and where assemblies are held and this is changed frequently to raise awareness and promote inclusion', 'class displays and corridor boards reflect the rich cultural, linguistic, and neurodiverse makeup of our school'*. Other participants shared the importance of creating a positive atmosphere that radiates warmth and respect, *'the focus of our belonging targets was making sure all felt welcomed and included', and 'visitors to our school frequently comment on the warm, welcoming atmosphere created by both staff and pupils. They often highlight how approachable, friendly, and respectful everyone is, noting the genuine sense of community that is felt from the moment they arrive', 'families feel welcomed into school and have reported increased trust due to the positive relationships developed with leaders and teachers' and 'we have had children join our school after they have heard how inclusive we are'.*

Participants reported how they foster belonging among pupils with disabilities, *'pupils with SEND are visible and celebrated members of our community – featured in roles of responsibility, performances, and reward systems' and 'we have ensured every child on the SEND register has a pupil profile shaped by the child and family voice'.* Furthermore, some of the adaptations required were shared such as *'we adapt our environment and make adjustments for our pupils needs to foster inclusion. Staff are thoughtful and organise the classroom being aware of individual sensory needs, e.g. lighting, temperature. They might provide individual workstations with low arousal and less stimulating display. We are providing quieter spaces for children'.*

Participants mentioned the importance of the school curriculum representing and reflecting diversity to promote the feeling of belonging, *'faith celebrations and inclusion themes are part of our assemblies and classroom curriculum/PSHE. Some children have talked in assembly or in class about their faith. We signpost different faiths in our newsletter and Instagram' and 'we explicitly teach and celebrate diversity, inclusion, and equity through our curriculum, assemblies, displays, and interactions, fostering a strong sense of belonging'.* In addition, some participants shared how putting on different events helped to create an inclusive environment, *'restarted wellbeing committee, help multiple staff socials for eid, eoy bbq and culture day', 'we mark key events such as Black History Month, Neurodiversity Celebration Week, Refugee Week, and Anti-Bullying Week with whole-school activities and child-led contributions'.*

Participants reported staff training being implemented to inform practice around creating an inclusive environment, *'staff receive CPD around neurodiversity, trauma-informed practice, and behaviour as communication, strengthening inclusive*

responses', 'staff CPD and meetings held where creating sense of belonging discussed', and the importance of managing transitions carefully both between year groups, 'transition plan has been carefully planned to ensure all children feel a sense of belonging when undergoing transition to new classrooms and teachers' and where there are complexities, 'we have supported complex cases with multi-agency input, clear communication, and successful transitions, ensuring families feel heard and valued'.

1.2

Many participants reported school how pupils, parent/carers and staff feel comfortable to share concerns and ideas that help foster a sense of belonging. Schools reported listening to their pupils as a way in which they gleaned thoughts and concerns, *'we encourage pupils to share their voice and thoughts, for example Friendship Ambassadors making short films or pupils presenting assemblies or in class', and 'children know who to go to for help and feel confident their voice will be heard. This is evidenced by feedback gathered during wellbeing surveys and safeguarding reviews'.* In addition, pupil surveys was another method used to provide this information, *'student surveys, reestablishing the box which is an anonymous student voice tool and revamping our prefect and student voice programme has also given more of a voice to pupils', 'Regular pupil voice surveys, school council meetings, and class reflections allow children to raise concerns, suggest changes, and share ideas—e.g., pupils influenced playground resource purchases and the layout of learning spaces'.* Some participants shared the impact of using pupil voice to nurture belonging, *'staff are noticing and reporting positive classroom behaviour for children sharing really thoughtful ideas when perhaps ordinarily they might hold back in answering class questions', 'there is a sense more children are putting their hand up to participate in assemblies'.*

Participants shared an abundance of initiatives that enabled opportunity for parental engagement, *'we have invited parents in for more regular feedback forums, included cultural snacks and invited them at different times of the day to ensure we get more engagement. We moved coffee mornings to sip and chat afternoons, right before break time to ensure more parents were able to come right before collecting their children', 'weekly parent coffee mornings, parents have been invited to join playtimes, WAHMS coffee mornings, SEND coffee mornings, Multicultural evening and Winter Fayre, Parents invited in to read with the children every morning, parents in class to take part in Oracy Day debates', and 'parents and pupils are suggest 'lets talk' questions in the office suggestion box'.*

Participants reported the importance of staff feeling empowered to create change, *'staff contribute to the School Improvement Plan through termly consultation and feedback loops.*

staff are further empowered by being involved in a lot of decision making for whole school initiatives and an open-door policy has been maintained', 'staff are empowered to lead areas of strength (e.g., SEND, phonics, ECT mentoring, reading, mental health)', 'practitioners are valued and supported with personalised coaching and leadership development', to be given opportunities to provide feedback 'staff have also had more of a chance to feedback during school improvement plan meetings and during QET cycles', 'wellbeing surveys for staff with clear action taken based on results' and

have regular check-ins *'weekly briefings and regular 1:1s or check-ins with SLT give staff a forum for raising questions or concerns'*. Furthermore, participants expressed the positive impact of openness between Senior Leadership Team and staff *'open door policy for staff to come and speak to SLT whenever they need', 'leaders are visible, approachable, and responsive—this year, workload adjustments and CPD pathways were co-designed based on staff feedback'*.

Many schools reported facilitating events that represented their diverse communities *'we promote our community being stronger because of its differences. Small things like wearing a Rainbow lanyard, changing our School x newsletter title into Pride Flag colours throughout June etc is a small visible sign of inclusion', 'our curriculum reflects their identities (e.g., texts in reading and RHE units that affirm different cultures, family structures, and neurodiverse ways of thinking)'* and in addition, one school detailed the positive impact on its community *'to further strengthen our sense of belonging and celebrate our diverse school community, we organised a whole-school International Evening in honour of our Patron Saint, St Joseph. Families from across the school were warmly invited to take part by bringing traditional cuisine, wearing cultural dress, and sharing food and drink together. It was a joyful and vibrant celebration that showcased the rich heritage of our school, where over 30 languages are spoken and cultures from around the world are represented. The event was a powerful reflection of unity, inclusion, and pride in our multicultural identity'*.

1.3

Participants reported that having regular meetings by SENCO teams reinforced behaviour expectations and maintained consistency among teaching staff, *'SENCO has continued to remind staff of behaviour as communication in inhouse staff meetings', 'HOY and SENCO reiterate these adjustments to teaching staff'*. Furthermore, consistency of language being used by staff is important *'Neuro-Affirming Practice: All staff understand that behaviour is communication. This is reflected in the language we use (e.g., "What's happened to you?" vs "What's wrong with you?") and the fact that we seek to understand the cause of behaviour, not just the outcome', 'staff across the school use consistent routines and shared language, supporting children's sense of safety and predictability. This consistency builds trust and reduces anxiety, especially for neurodiverse pupils', 'everyday expectations are now part of the schools' daily language from pupils and staff. There will continue to be 're-launches' every term as a reminder'*.

Participants shared the importance of staff training around behaviour to help foster belonging *'the CAMHS training was useful helping staff to think about attachment styles and needs', 'we have further embedded behavioural support this year by signing up for Trauma Informed, Attachment Aware training and by holding in-school CPD around becoming emotionally regulated', 'CPD has taken place on positive behaviour management and will continue to be a focus next year' and being supported too 'staff have been supported in modelling the language of the Zones'*.

Several participants shared the adjustments made to accommodate different needs of pupils attending their schools *'Reduced timetables, tailored timetables additional intervention and literacy sessions have all been adopted alongside regular measures' 'children with SEND or SEMH needs have adapted behaviour plans and personalised support strategies that prioritise emotional regulation and co-regulation' and 'to*

ensure all children feel included and supported in managing their emotions, we have worked closely with our EDI coordinator to embed the Zones of Regulation across the school. This approach is now clearly visible and actively used in every classroom, providing a consistent framework for children to identify, understand, and regulate their feelings' and finally, 'pupils with additional needs can access the system equitably with adaptations (e.g., more frequent check-ins, visual timetables, safe spaces)'.

Some participants acknowledged how negative incidents are captured as opportunities for growth 'mistakes are treated as learning moments: children reflect, repair and reintegrate with adult support and dignity', 'adults don't "ban" or isolate children after behaviour incidents. Instead, there is a focus on restoring relationships, setting clear expectations again, and re-establishing connection'.

2. Whole school data, policies and training

2.1

Participants reported feedback is collected from pupils, parents/carers and staff via surveys, 'made use of the belonging matters surveys this year to implement change and plan to continue to do so', 'staff, student and pupil surveys have been adopted this year', 'pupil questionnaire reinstated' and 'wellbeing surveys for staff'. However, the frequency of survey data collection around a sense of school belonging varied with some schools reported data collection happening once a year, 'parents are surveyed annually and invited to feedback through structured events (e.g curriculum evenings, SEND reviews, reading mornings)', 'our Senior Leadership Team takes a proactive and reflective approach to school improvement by regularly gathering and analysing data from a range of sources, including annual parent surveys, staff feedback, and pupil voice', whilst other schools reported data collection at different points during the academic year, 'we have used the data from the ABA audit surveys in the Autumn term and data from Rights Respecting Surveys to create a follow up belonging survey in the spring term', 'a whole school, stakeholder-wide audit was conducted twice this year and will be done termly going forward', 'we conduct pupil voice surveys at least termly, focusing on areas such as inclusion, relationships, safety, identity, and wellbeing' and 'we continue to do termly staff, parent and pupil surveys'.

Some participants reported specific improvements yet to be actioned as a result of the feedback obtained through survey data collection, 'As a result of the survey, we are looking to further develop communication for parents for example creating a safeguarding team email address that can be easily found on the website' and 'We are looking at ways we can further support and include our families with disabilities. Currently our assemblies are held in the middle hall which means stairs might be a barrier for some families attending assemblies or meetings eg if they have a family member in a wheelchair or need a buggy'. However, many participants shared actions implemented across the whole school community with examples reported for pupils, 'this has meant reevaluating use of trips, student voice, student lunches and rewards policy', 'regular pupil voice with pupils', 'how pupil leadership opportunities are distributed more fairly across year groups', 'pupil parliament- with representatives from each year group'; for parents, 'we have highlighted a greater need for better communication', 'eleven parents indicated they would like to help develop our Belonging and Anti-bullying work which is fantastic. We will offer a meeting in the Autumn term'; and for staff, 'we have adopted a "you asked we responded" based on

these. For staff, this has included looking at the marking cycle and calendar to see how PPE's and learning observations are spaced out to manage workload', 'this information directly informs our School Improvement Plan, which currently prioritises improving attendance through a relationship-based model. By identifying patterns and listening to the needs of our community, SLT has implemented targeted actions', 'feedback directly influenced refinements in workload expectations, increased opportunities for career development (e.g. coaching, subject leadership), and a more transparent approach to behaviour systems and support', 'weekly staff meetings. Open door for staff to meet SLT. Wellbeing helpline number attached to all briefing' and 'the latest staff one is how we can support them by reducing/simplifying the marking policy'.

2.2

Schools monitor data and feedback very closely to be alert of pupils at risk of not feeling like they belong at school. Regular meetings to discuss data is a vital element for its prevention, *'children are raised in weekly staff briefing and CPOMS- staff record small changes in behaviour/observations and are through in recording', 'weekly inclusion meetings to support whole school community with open cases, early help and light touch' and 'the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has continued to closely monitor attainment and progress data, regularly analysing trends across different pupil groups to ensure targeted support'.* Participants shared the use of CPOMS to record data with one school adding 'lonely' as a new category, *'we have now added Lonely as a category on our CPOMS to monitor more specifically for next year'.* Pupil absences are an indicator of not having a sense of school belonging, therefore attendance is another crucial item to monitor, *'we monitor attendance (currently 95.70%)'.* *'We know this is working well because attendance of some children is improving' and 'attendance is carefully managed in collaboration with the Education Welfare Officer, with swift action taken to address any concerns.'*

Participants reported systems in place for vulnerable pupils and their families including those with disabilities, *'we work closely to support children and families. This might include children for whom this is not their first primary school and have had a lot of change, have medical needs or diagnosed or undiagnosed SEN, SEMH etc', 'SEND and EAL families in particular have had additional 1:1 opportunities to reflect on their child's experience of belonging' and 'regularly checks on vulnerable pupils. Staff kept in the loop on pupils that need that extra care'.*

Participants reported a wealth of interventions to enhance inclusion such as playground games, *'playground games intervention delivered by member of staff who has been trained by S&L therapist - supports with socialising with a range of children, as well as turn taking and giving/receiving instructions' and before and after school clubs, 'the school continued with Magic Breakfast for all children and offered free places at the school's breakfast club', 'additional interventions have been put in place, such as the girls' after school football club'.* Feedback from data informed setting up other initiatives to promote belonging at school, *'zones of regulation and additional sensory spaces were expanded in response to feedback from neurodiverse pupils and parents', 'curriculum adjustments (e.g., representation in texts, role models, case studies) came from feedback showing not all children saw themselves reflected' and 'feedback from families led to more regular newsletters, translation support, increased face-to-face communication, and SEND-focused workshops'.*

2.3

Safety of pupils is of the upmost importance within schools therefore many participants reported frequent monitoring and observation in place, *'we foster relationships between key adults and children e.g. class teachers or TAs might have daily check-ins or 1:1 to go through the day or week depending on need'* and paying particular attention to specific areas known where pupils may feel unsafe, *'we might monitor/check-in any trigger points from the day for a LAC', 'lunch time monitors in areas children feel unsafe' and 'staff redeployment in different areas. Peer mentors/buddies have been deployed these areas'*. Furthermore, participants reported increased observations for pupils known to be struggling, *'we might do a daily check-in for a child who reports bullying or friendship difficulties to ensure things are dealt with quickly rather than holding onto things at home or a situation building. We have used weekly check-in time to help a child with fixed thinking to support and challenge thinking', 'we employed non-teaching staff for corridor walks and a refocus room to help support our struggling pupils'*.

Steps to enhance pupils' sense of belonging and reduce isolation and disconnection is reported by many participants with support measures being implemented. One school reported all its pupils have a named trusted adult, *'we have made sure that every child knows who they can turn to if they are feeling worried or overwhelmed. Each pupil has a trusted adult in school they can go to for support'*. Other participants mentioned the support provided in the playground, *'adults wear hi-vis jackets at break times, to locate staff easily', 'safe areas selected in the playground for children to go to, to draw attention to staff'* whilst other participants shared support provided in the classroom *'we have also created calm, quiet spaces where children can take a break if they need time to settle or reflect', 'SEND now have 2 hubs in the school; one for pupils who are dysregulated and need support, and one for those who need a quieter space to work' and 'The Learning Mentor Wellbeing Practitioner supports children for 1:1 in the Nurture room'*.

Schools reported offering alternatives for pupils such as clubs that are available before, during and after school, *'we have increased lunch time activities- these offer opportunity to be connected to an activity in the first instance. In turn this more naturally gives space to help a connection develop by common interest', 'We run free breakfast clubs, after school clubs, sensory circuit breakfast clubs, art club at lunch time'*. Three schools reported the impact on pupils by offering additional provisions: one school reported noticing increasing connections among pupils *'we have noticed some children who were attending our lunchtime provision for children who might have been finding the playground overwhelming or lonely earlier in the year are having more connected playtimes in the playground'*; one school reported implementing technology to practice communication skills, *'sometimes children might use an ipad to record peers and this has been helpful to gain confidence and talk to peers'*; one school reporting a reciprocal effect of support that enables openness towards others, *'a new EAL pupil who was coming to lunch club regularly now supports a FA and is often helping in the support shed. Another new pupil who was finding relationships at lunchtime difficult has a folder of drawing materials in the support shed'*.

2.4

Participants reported policies are reviewed regularly, *'our policies are regularly reviewed and updated with input from the entire school'*, *'Policies are discussed in faculties, feedback is given to extended leadership team who then report back to SLT'* with some participants sharing more details about ensuring input from entire school, *'from the ASD Outreach Audit it was suggested we could include how we accommodate sensory needs in our policies and make reference to verbal/non-verbal children, risk assessment for epilepsy added'*, *'marking policy written with staff to ensure buy in and wellbeing was well-considered'*, *'we have started to work with student focus groups to write student friendly policies'*. Two participants reported staff meetings being scheduled to discuss the topics of belonging *'belonging matters staff meetings have taken place'* and policy review *'several staff meetings have taken place to discuss policy'*. Schools reported that staff training directly affected their practice to further enhance belonging *'staff have made changes to their practices as a result of CPD'*, *'the three hours Partnerships in Neurodiversity for Schools (PINS) ADHD training was a good opportunity for whole staff to share ideas around our practice. This provided a reflective space and was really useful- lots of staff feedback on how helpful it was'*. Two schools reported reviewing their induction process to ensure the concept of belonging is understood and embedded into school life *'we have reviewed induction with the dsl and belonging and building inclusive classrooms will become a part of our inset programme'*, *'induction plans for in-year joiners and new joiners in place'*. A culture of inclusive practice was reported by some participants with additional measures in place for pupils with disabilities *'SEND and EAL families in particular have had additional 1:1 opportunities to reflect on their child's experience of belonging'* and different backgrounds *'curriculum adjustments (e.g., representation in texts, role models, case studies) came from feedback showing not all children saw themselves reflected'*, *'whole school text exploring different cultures and backgrounds'*.

3. Fostering positive relationships

3.1

Participants reported their leadership teams modelling positive interactions set a precedence for all members of the community to adopt, *'the leadership team actively models warmth, empathy and fairness in all interactions—with children, staff, and families'* and *'the leadership team supports wellbeing and professionalism for staff as well, recognising that adults who feel respected and encouraged are best placed to do the same for children'*, and in addition, the consistency with language used among all staff to maximise positive relationships, *'our shared language around behaviour and emotional regulation (e.g. "connection before correction") is reflected consistently from SLT through to support staff'*. Two participants gave insight into expectations of behaviour and respectful interactions, *'staff understand that respectful, encouraging relationships are non-negotiable at school x'* and *'high expectations for behaviour go hand-in-hand with a culture of kindness and curiosity, not control'*. Furthermore, one participant shared the reinforcement of expectations is required, *'these expectations are consistently reinforced through regular reminders during weekly staff briefings and induction procedures for new staff'*.

Many participants shared their leadership teams offering training to develop the necessary skills to promote respectful interactions, *'there has been further CPD throughout the year around being calm and consistent adults, and we have signed up for TIAA training to further supplement this. We have organised twilight sessions that*

will centre the PACE+ approach also' and 'CPD on trauma-informed practice, emotional coaching, attachment, and neurodiversity has equipped staff with the tools to respond empathetically—even in challenging situations'. Furthermore, this training is mandatory both as a new starter, 'this is part of induction, CPD, and daily practice' and at the start of each new academic year, 'The Senior Leadership Team continued to ensure that all staff are clear on expectations around respectful interactions by sharing the staff handbook and key policies at the start of each academic year'. One participant reported on the importance of allocating time for staff to reflect their practices, 'staff have access to ongoing coaching, reflection spaces and pastoral support to help sustain emotionally intelligent responses'.

Participants reported that maintaining respectful and positive interactions with pupils daily required a great deal of extra work and dedication, *'systems such as staffed regulation zones, planned check-ins, and pastoral support ensure staff have time to build relationships with pupils who need it most' and 'timetables include time for restorative conversations, sensory breaks, or pre-emptive interventions—avoiding the need for purely reactive discipline'.*

3.2

Participants reported nurturing peer relationships both outside of the classroom during playtimes, *'whole school focus on positive playtimes and using kind words', 'whole school focus on positive playtimes and using kind words' and more generally around school, 'play assemblies which celebrate positive play and draw attention to how to treat others'.*

Schools reinforced fostering positive behaviour in various ways with examples such as through their curriculum, *'weekly PSHE lessons, focusing on relationships and scenario-based tasks for children to reflect on. Word of the Week which children explore 'each week in assembly and worship team present slides on this word each week', school assemblies 'assemblies to embed friendships, anti-bullying and respect' and via workshops, 'psychologist to plan anti-racism workshops and explore meaningful ways to foster belonging and inclusivity throughout the school'.*

Nearly half of the participants reported staff given opportunities to consolidate learning around fostering good relationships among pupils at their schools, *'staff members have received further ELSA training to enhance emotional support for pupils', 'trainee teachers are supported through regular coaching, ensuring they are well-equipped with the resources and skills needed to contribute positively to our inclusive school culture' and 'staff have taken part in a range of professional development opportunities, including the Trauma Informed Schools training'.*

3.3

Participants reported their schools offering leadership roles within their peer groups, *'pupils given opportunities to participate and lead activities in the school' and 'number of leadership opportunities has increased', however some participants expanded on the specific opportunities available, 'pupils across all backgrounds and abilities take on meaningful roles: School Council reps, Collective Worship Leaders, Playground Buddies, and Wellbeing Champions are selected not just by academic achievement, but by care, empathy and relational strengths', 'leadership opportunities are*

intentionally diversified—children with SEND, EAL or SEMH needs are included in buddying and mentoring roles with support, ensuring representation and strengthening their sense of agency' and 'leadership roles have expanded to include Reading Champions and Environment Monitors, responding to children's suggestions and interests'.

Participants reported their schools using structured programmes such as buddy systems and peer mentoring to strengthen positive relationships. Buddy systems in place reported older pupils looking after younger pupils in their schools, *'reception pupils are paired with Year 5 or Year 6 buddies, who support them with reading, play, and transitions into school life—creating early positive relationships and modelling of respectful behaviour', 'operating on a rota during lunchtime play, the buddies have played a key role in helping younger pupils develop social skills, resolve minor conflicts, and feel more included during unstructured times' and 'year 6 pupils lead activities during breaks and lunchtimes, supporting younger peers through structured games and relational modelling'.* Some schools simply mentioned buddy systems initiatives operating in their schools, *'buddy system already in place' and 'we successfully continued the B's Buddies, a peer support initiative led by a group of 10 trained Year 5 pupils'.*

Some schools shared details of how they support pupils taking on leadership roles, for example facilitating debriefing spaces for these individuals, *'pupils regularly reflect on the effectiveness of buddying and mentoring schemes through circle times, surveys and School Council discussions',* and how staff continually observe suitability of pairings and temperaments *'staff observe interactions and adjust pairings or support based on pupil needs and dynamics', 'based on pupil voice and staff observations, we've adapted mentoring to include quiet pairings for pupils who prefer calm, structured support rather than high-energy play'.* One participant reported specific training given to pupils who take on leadership roles, *'the new cohort for next year has received training through the PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) programme, equipping them with the skills to support younger children in our Early Years setting',* whilst another participant shared how the mentoring programme facilitates empowerment within their school community, *'the peer mentoring program has been further rolled out to include Year 6 pupils' Guardian Angels to work with Key Stage one pupils. Their presence has not only supported the younger children but also empowered our Key Stage 2 pupils to take on leadership and mentoring roles, strengthening relationships across year groups'.*

3.4

Participants reported schools working very hard to help parents/carers feel involved and feel like they belong in the school community. Schools offer many initiatives such as regular coffee mornings, *'weekly parent coffee mornings' and workshops, 'we have run weekly parent workshops that have increased engagement with many parents although we still remain 'hard to engage with' for some families', 'continued annual parent workshop and weekly tea and coffee morning after celebration assemblies', 'parents have been invited to join playtimes, WAHMS coffee mornings, SEND coffee mornings, Multicultural evening and Winter Fayre'.* In addition, some schools share the types of workshops offered to parents/carers, *'workshops across the year have included phonics, maths, reading, emotional regulation, and SEND support', 'we offer a range of accessible opportunities for parents to engage with school life, such as online*

safety workshops, reading breakfasts, and coffee mornings with the Educational Psychology Service'. Three participants reported how their schools communicate information to parents/carers such as offering regular checking-in opportunities and newsletters, 'we try to keep families close by offering to meet or check in regularly. This helps to stop any problems growing. We know we need to sustain a positive relationship over time, and we try our best to listen and show empathy rather than fixing. We might drop an email at the beginning or end of term and offer to link up at the beginning of the next term for example', 'regular and accessible communication includes weekly newsletters, texts, translated messages, Instagram updates, and face-to-face drop-ins—ensuring all families, including EAL or digitally limited households, stay connected to school life', and 'regular newsletters keep families informed about curriculum updates, events, and our half-termly EDI themes'. Schools collected feedback from parents/carers and two participants highlighted its importance in initiating change, 'we know these things work well from survey feedback, F2F feedback and sometimes thank you emails too', 'parent voice is invited through surveys, informal feedback, and SEND reviews—and changes (e.g. clearer communication, more social opportunities) are made in response'.

Participants reported opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in the daily school schedule, *'parents invited in to read with the children every morning, parents in class to take part in Oracy Day debates, parents invited in for Jump into Book programme- a workshop designed to support parents know how to effectively read with their children at home', 'parent-child events (e.g. Stay and Read, Creative Mornings, Cultural Celebration Days) foster shared joy', 'parents are seen as co-educators. Staff encourage families to be active participants in their child's learning and wellbeing journey' and supported in setting up their own initiatives, 'smartphone Free childhood parent/carer initiative supported. The parent group has set up a QR code and WA group. There are 50 parents who have joined the SFC WhatsApp Group and 49 p/c have signed the SFC parent pact'.*

Parents/carers of those pupils with disabilities are targeted by schools for additional support and engagement with three participants reporting enhanced provisions to promote belonging, *'families of children with SEND or safeguarding vulnerabilities have regular, structured meetings with the SENDCo or Pastoral Team', 'parent engagement for high-needs SEND families has increased significantly, with families reporting that they feel "listened to, not judged", and 'we place particular emphasis on supporting parents of children with SEND through targeted workshops and information linked to the local offer'.*

Participants reported schools putting on social events to help foster belonging, *'our school social events like summer BBQ or school events like class assemblies, performances, sports day, whole school dance, summer exhibition or transition meetings, parents meetings, EYFS, KS1, KS2, curriculum meetings etc are well attended' and 'events like Black History Month showcases, Refugee Week, Eid & Christmas celebrations, and International Food Days invite families to share their culture and values with pride', however, one school observed parental engagement diminishes as the child moves up the school, 'it seems to be more popular amongst Year 7 parents rather than older pupils'.*

3.5

Many participants reported their schools partnering with the local community to promote belonging, some examples include, *'we have made a strong link with the local library this year and pupils in years 3 and 4 participated in a collaboration making penguins as a sign of community and unity to display in a library exhibition twinned with central library in Ukraine'*, *'our PSHE co-ordinator links with Community Police and they have delivered safety talks'* and *'children take part in projects that connect them to the local area and broader community values—such as Harvest collections for local food banks, charity drives, and intergenerational work with local care homes or places of worship'*. Two schools shared how these connections with the local community brought happiness to the elderly generation, *'pupils have also taken part in fundraising events for local charities, and our choir brought joy to residents at the Pines Care Home'* and *'as part of the Sparkle intergenerational project, Year 4 pupils visit their 'grandfriends' to build connections across generations'*.

Participants reported their schools had good partnerships with external providers to optimise support available to all families, *'the SENDCo and Pastoral Team work in close partnership with external professionals and ensure families understand and access support with dignity'*, where necessary, staff help complete referrals with families (e.g. to Hackney Ark, MASH, or housing support)' and *'links with the Hackney Learning Trust, SACRE, and local education providers extend our network and enrich provision for children and families'*.

4. School activities

4.1

Participants reported schools generally having high expectations for all their pupils, *'our expectations are simple and understood- be safe, be ready to learn, be safe'* and *'children are taught to value effort, resilience, and challenge through our language, displays, assemblies, and classroom culture'*, with one school sharing their school motto, *'our school motto is 'Be the Best you can'*. Participants reported teaching staff facilitated and promoted high aspirations, *'teachers ensuring they set clear expectations of children and adapt lessons to accommodate different needs'* and some of which required staff training *'Support staff are trained to promote independence, reinforce high expectations, and scaffold learning—not simply provide task completion help'* and *'Lots of CPD and marketplace opportunities to ensure that all students are supported with high expectations'*. Schools shared adjustments made to accommodate different pupils needs, for example *'we have a soft start to the day and sometimes a child might leave earlier or later to support their success'*, *'the dinner hall might be overwhelming for some children and an alternative room might be used'* and *'a child might be collected from a different staircase or quieter staircase at busy times'*.

Participants reported their schools closely monitoring pupils and offering adaptive teaching methods to accommodate best learning, *'staff observe pupils and identify learning preferences for children. These can be informal observations or more formal observation supported by additional professionals e.g. EP'* and *'teaching observations are positive and show evidence of adaptive teaching'*. Some schools shared specific adaptations in place, *'we support verbal and non-verbal children with ALS boards, prologo 2, widget, visual timetables, now and next, checklists, symbols supported e.g. my turn, your turn, staff symbols on lanyards and simplified language'* and

'adaptations include: pre-teaching, visual scaffolds, sentence stems, reduced cognitive load, personalised learning goals, and access to assistive tools or sensory support'.

Schools reported offering arrangements for pupils with SEND to foster inclusion in all areas of school life, *'we try to support our SEN children to attend residentials eg School Journey. We might need to think about pre-visits, seeing photos beforehand, attending for a day, a few days or maybe stay with a relative etc.'*, *'teachers routinely adapt lessons to ensure access and challenge for all pupils—including those with EHCPs or emerging needs'*, and high expectations remained regardless of disability, *'children with SEND are included in the full breadth of the curriculum and wider school life, with support focused on removing barriers, not lowering the bar'*, *'learning walks and observations show that staff maintain high expectations for pupils with SEND, using adaptive teaching and targeted support to ensure access to learning. As a result, pupils with SEND are maintaining good progress across subjects, with notable improvements in confidence and engagement'.*

4.2

Many schools offer a curriculum that reflects diverse cultural perspectives and histories, *'our humanities faculty has recently changed curriculum to include more diversity. All faculties have displays that are culturally diverse and reflective of student population'* and *'our curriculum is intentionally designed to reflect a wide range of cultural perspectives, identities, and global contexts—particularly in subjects like History, RE, English, and PSHE/RHE'*. Examples given by schools show the breadth of work undertaken, one participant sharing the following details, *'our curriculum reflects the rich diversity of our school community and is carefully structured using our EDI book spine to ensure progression and meaningful discussion. Pupils regularly explore themes such as ethnicity, disability, neurodiversity, and gender equality, which has helped them develop a deeper understanding of themselves and others'.*

Participants reported staff training on different methods of teaching, *'extensive CPD on adaptive teaching. Generative learning is on school development programme'* and how best teaching practices are regularly reviewed for pupils *'Qet cycles have included best practise to show collaborative learning, this is done regularly every half term'*, *'ongoing as part of the curriculum reviews'* and *'clearly yearly and termly overviews highlighting the progression of learning throughout the years'*, and for pupils with disabilities, *'focus group on work scrutiny for students with SEND and best practise shared as teaching tips amongst departments and faculties'* and *'planning includes specific strategies for pupils with SEND, EAL, or SEMH needs—tailored to both their access needs and their interests'.*

4.3

Participants reported the importance of pupil involvement in designing learning content, *'we know that our pupils are actively involved in shaping their learning experiences through our enquiry-based curriculum, which is guided by the school's pedagogical toolkit'* and how this information is collected from pupils, *'some faculties ask pupils for post unit feedback through surveys and google forms to ask them what they enjoyed what they learnt what they think they need more support on'*, *'as part of pupil voice in the Belonging surveys and in the curriculum reviews, pupils can express elements of their learning they enjoy or dislike and which methods are best to support them'*, and

'students are asked for their opinions. Each teacher has a student panel each year, where staff can receive anonymous feedback from the students'.

A wealth of data was reported by participants as to specific types of learning and engagement provided, examples included learning centred being around reflective practices, *'lessons use role-play, storytelling, group discussion, and reflective journaling to help pupils explore identity, perspective, and interpersonal dynamics'*, *'RE lessons and collective worship provide regular opportunities for moral reasoning, reflection, active listening, and respectful dialogue, helping pupils build empathy and values-based decision-making'*, *'circle times are regularly used across year groups to address relational issues and build community understanding'*, roleplaying *'teachers use role-play in all year groups to explore conflict, difference, and empathy—whether through drama, PSHE, or English'*, *'pupils act out scenarios, explore multiple viewpoints, and reflect on how emotions and decisions impact others'*, and journalling *'pupils are regularly encouraged to reflect on their feelings and actions through journaling or class discussions'*, *'pupils regularly contribute to discussions around these questions, helping to steer the direction of enquiry and making their voices central to the learning process'*.

Participants reported making space for pupil wellbeing to promote maximum engagement by all pupils, *'emotional check-ins, zones of regulation, and morning routines provide daily space for children to tune into their own emotional states and build self-awareness'*, *'emotion coaching and regulation strategies are embedded across the school'* and the importance of staff modelling wellbeing, *'staff modelling healthy emotional expression and supporting children to do the same'*, *'staff use consistent, calm language that helps pupils name and regulate their emotions rather than act them out'*.

4.4

Participants shared the integration of social-emotional learning into their school curriculum, for example one participant shared opportunities for pupils to reveal their feelings, *'sometimes tasks give children the opportunity to share with their teacher their thoughts and feelings or sense of their authentic selves'*, whilst another participant reported small gestures facilitate relationship-building, *'we know that children learn a lot from the small things we do and how important all the little unconscious details we give can make a difference'*. Two participants revealed the impact of rewarding pupils who model good behaviour towards their peers and whole school community, *'Pupil of the Day' initiative gives children the opportunity to receive meaningful compliments from their peers and teachers, which has had a noticeable impact on self-esteem, peer relationships, and classroom morale'*, *'weekly certificate assemblies celebrate not only academic effort but also the way pupils demonstrate our core school values, reinforcing positive behaviour and self-worth'*.

4.5

Many schools provided extensive details of the extracurricular activities offered at their schools, for example one participant listed high energy clubs available, *'Spanish, boys football, girls football, gymnastics, athletics, street dance, cricket, netball, Kung fu, junior journalists, dodgeball, musical theatre, dance, gymnastics, dodgeball, musical theatre...'* whilst one participant shared low energy clubs available, *'sessions use role-*

play and reflective journaling to explore the 'Wednesday Word' and Gospel values, encouraging pupils to think deeply about empathy, kindness, and respect'.

Many schools shared opportunities for pupils with SEND, *'pupil voice is regularly gathered to ensure that clubs reflect their interests and respond to evolving needs. Recent additions have included mindfulness and sensory art, driven by feedback from SEND and pastoral teams', 'opportunities for leadership (e.g. Eco Champions, Reading Ambassadors, Sports Leaders) are available to all pupils, including those with additional needs', 'event days or activities targeted at certain pupils (particular social backgrounds or SEND)'. Participants reported staff supporting and accommodating pupils with SEND for maximum participation, 'children with EHCPs or SEMH needs are supported to attend clubs with trained adult support, visual timetables, and pre-teaching of routines', 'tutors support pupils with SEN eg keeping the lesson at the same time, developing communication, or learning to play an instrument backwards', 'activities are adapted where needed (e.g. quieter rooms, smaller groups, sensory-friendly resources) to ensure meaningful participation', and 'club leaders are briefed on individual needs and supported by SENCo or Pastoral staff to make appropriate adaptations'.*

Participants reported many potential barriers for pupils attending extracurricular activities and how the schools meet these challenges. One example is transport issues, *'where appropriate, the school supports with transport arrangements or ensures that activities are held on-site and accessible, particularly for families who face barriers due to mobility'*, another example is money constraints, *'all pupils have access to enrichment opportunities, regardless of income or circumstance—subsidies and pupil premium funding are used to remove cost barriers', 'participation in extracurricular activities is tracked by pupil group (SEND, PP, EAL, etc.) to ensure equity and representation', and finally an example where pupils feel reluctant to attend 'pupils who may be hesitant or isolated are personally invited or paired with a buddy to build confidence and ensure inclusion'.*

Two participants shared future planning around extracurricular activities at their schools for the next academic year, *'we have reviewed shortages in our extra-curricular activities and are streamlining them with the SDC lead. Plans to make them more accessible are in place for the new coming year', 'we are hosting a "Freshers fair " in Sept 2025 to advertise all the extracurricular groups with a focus on supporting SEND and EAL students'.* The importance of having accessible extracurricular activities to help foster belonging is widely known with two participants adding this understanding and impact here, *'staff understand the role extracurriculars play in boosting wellbeing, confidence, and sense of belonging—especially for neurodiverse pupils or those with low self-esteem', 'these practices have contributed to a calm, respectful school culture where children feel safe, supported, and connected to one another'.*

4.6

Many participants reported details of systems in place to ensure smooth transitions for all pupils especially between year groups, *'children meet their new teachers and visit their new classrooms several times before the end of the year to reduce fear of the unknown', 'we place great importance on ensuring that all pupils feel supported during key transition periods. Recent transition days provided valuable opportunities for pupils*

and parents to meet their new teachers and explore their new classrooms ahead of the next academic year. This helped to ease anxieties and build familiarity' and 'we run transition sessions for all our pupils, not just those with SEND, especially for key transition times, i.e. to us in Rec, Rec to KS1, KS1 to KS2, KS2 to year 7'.

Participants reported the adjustments in place for pupils with SEND during transition times, *'pupils with SEND have personalised transition plans that include key information about learning, communication, regulation strategies, sensory needs, and social preferences', 'pupils who need additional help during these transitions (e.g. sensory sensitivities, separation anxiety, confusion around routine) are supported with now/next boards, transition objects, calm entry routines, consistent adult key workers, travel buddies or pastoral support during transport arrangements' and working with specialist staff and parents/carers for optimal understanding of needs, 'the SENDCo liaises directly with receiving schools to ensure clear, proactive communication about pupils' needs and strengths', 'our SENCO met individually with parents of children with special educational needs to offer reassurance and discuss tailored support'.*

Participants reported pupil-centred planning being implemented at their schools to help pupils during transition times, *'these plans are co-created with families and external professionals and shared with new teachers or settings in advance', 'person-centred annual reviews and transition meetings ensure the pupil's voice is central', 'teachers meet to pass on academic, pastoral and SEND information in detail. Pupil passports, EHCPs, and provision maps are reviewed and updated' and 'transition books, meet the teachers and classroom, ISPs, regular meeting with outside agencies, e.g. SALT, RNIB, personalised resources to meet the needs of the children'.*

COMPARISON BETWEEN BASELINE AND FINAL AUDITS

Overall, schools reported the highest improvements in category 1, creating an inclusive school culture, between baseline and final, whilst category 3, fostering positive relationships, reported the lowest improvements between baseline and final.

Table reporting baseline and final audit items for each school:

Table showing school audit responses at baseline:

	S1	S2	S3	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11
1.1	FM	FM	PM	PM	PM	PM	FM	FM	FM	PM
1.2	PM	PM	NMY	PM	NMY	FM	FM	FM	PM	NMY
1.3	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	PM	PM	PM
2.1	NMY	PM	PM	PM	NMY	NMY	FM	PM	PM	PM
2.2	PM	PM	FM	NMY	PM	PM	FM	FM	NMY	PM
2.3	FM	FM	FM	NMY	FM	NMY	FM	PM	PM	NMY
2.4	PM	PM	NMY	FM	FM	NMY	PM	FM	PM	PM
3.1	FM	FM	PM	FM	FM	PM	FM	FM	PM	PM
3.2	FM	FM	FM	FM	PM	PM	FM	FM	PM	PM
3.3	FM	FM	PM	FM	NMY	PM	FM	PM	NMY	PM
3.4	PM	PM	PM	FM	PM	PM	FM	FM	PM	NMY
3.5	PM	FM	NMY	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	PM	PM
4.1	FM	PM	FM	FM	FM	PM	PM	FM	FM	PM

4.2	FM	FM	PM	PM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	PM
4.3	FM	PM	NMY	NMY	PM	NMY	PM	FM	NMY	NMY
4.4	FM	FM	PM	FM	PM	FM	FM	FM	PM	PM
4.5	PM	FM	PM	FM	PM	PM	FM	PM	PM	PM
4.6	PM	FM	FM	FM	FM	PM	FM	FM	FM	PM

Table showing school audit responses at final:

	S1	S2	S3	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11
1.1	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM		FM	FM
1.2	FM	FM	PM	FM	FM	FM	FM		FM	PM
1.3	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	PM	PM
2.1	PM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM
2.2	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM		FM	PM
2.3	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM
2.4	FM	PM	PM	FM	FM	PM	FM		FM	PM
3.1	FM	FM	PM	FM	FM	PM	FM		FM	FM
3.2	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM		FM	FM
3.3	FM	FM	FM	FM	PM	PM	FM	PM	PM	PM
3.4	PM	FM	PM	FM	PM	PM	FM		PM	PM
3.5	FM	FM	PM	FM	FM	FM	FM		FM	FM
4.1	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM
4.2	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	PM	FM		FM	PM
4.3	FM	FM	PM	FM	FM	PM	FM		PM	PM
4.4	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM		PM	PM
4.5	FM	FM	PM	FM	PM	FM	FM	PM	PM	PM
4.6	FM	FM	FM	FM	FM	PM	FM		FM	FM

1. Creating an inclusive school culture

1.1: All schools showed this item at fully met with improvements made to their school environment that facilitated a welcoming atmosphere and adhering to their school values from baseline to final audit.

1.2: Seven schools showed this item at fully met with improvements made between baseline and final audit. Parental engagement remained low for one school whilst further embedding of initiatives was required in another school.

1.3: Eight schools showed this item at fully met with improvements being made to fostering positive behaviour between baseline and final audit. Consistency and continued focus on belonging work required further attention by two schools.

2. Whole school data, policies and training

2.1: Nine schools showed this item at fully met with improvements reported on leadership feedback data between baseline and final audit. Fully utilising survey data to implement change required further attention by one school.

2.2: Eight schools showed this item at fully met with improvements reported on monitoring feedback between baseline and final audit. Further embedding and observation required further attention by one school.

2.3: All schools showed this item at fully met with improvements made to monitoring times of day when pupils may feel unsafe from baseline to final.

2.4: Four schools showed this item at fully met with improvements made to reviewing of policies and training between baseline and final audit. Many audit points remained at partially met with schools reporting further work on embedding inclusivity in their policies.

3. Fostering positive relationships

3.1: Seven schools showed this item at fully met with improvements in fostering positive relationships between staff and pupils led by leadership team between baseline and final audit.

3.2: Eight schools showed this item at fully met with improvements reported around encouragement of empathy and teamwork among pupils between baseline and final audit. One school reported training requires further development.

3.3: Five schools showed this item at fully met with improvements made for more pupils to have opportunities to take on leadership roles in structured programmes between baseline and final audit. Three schools reported further opportunity will be introduced in the next academic year.

3.4: Three schools showed this item at fully met with improvements made to parental involvement in their school communities between baseline and final audit. Further work on bringing together those hard-to-reach families was reported by the other schools.

3.5: Eight schools showed this item at fully met with improvements made to partnerships with local communities outside of school between baseline and final audit.

4. School activities

4.1: All schools showed this item as fully met with improvements reported of staff setting high aspiration for all pupils between baseline and final audit.

4.2: Seven schools showed this item at fully met with improvements made to reflect cultural differences in school curriculum between baseline and final audit. Two schools reported this item needed more attention in their next curriculum review.

4.3: Five schools reported this item at fully met with improvements made to giving pupils a voice in their learning experiences between baseline and final. Other schools reported some progress but required more focus on training and learning.

4.4: Six schools reported this item at fully met with improvements to integration of social-emotional learning into the curriculum between baseline and final audit. Two schools reported further planning and work to be implemented in the next academic year.

4.5: Five schools reported this item at fully met with improvements to the variety of extracurricular activities offered at school between baseline and final audit. Some schools reported increased accessibility required attention.

4.6: Eight schools reported this item at fully met with improvements made to ensuring seamless transitions at different school stages between baseline and final audit.

The breakdown below of improvement for each category for each of the participating schools between baseline and final audit is as follows:

School 1:

Category 1: Creating inclusive environment- completely improved.
Category 2: Whole-school data, policies and training- improvements made.
Category 3: Fostering positive relationships- improvements made.
Category 4: School activities- completely improved.

School 2:

Category 1: Creating inclusive environment- completely improved.
Category 2: Whole-school data, policies and training- improvements made.
Category 3: Fostering positive relationships- completely improved.
Category 4: School activities- completely improved.

School 3:

Category 1: Creating an inclusive environment- improvements made.
Category 2: Whole-school data, policies and training- improvements made.
Category 3: Fostering positive relationships- improvements made.
Category 4: School activities- improvements made.

School 5:

Category 1: creating an inclusive environment- completely improved
Category 2: Whole school data, policies and training- completely improved.
Category 3: Fostering positive relationships- one regression.
Category 4: School activities- completely improved.

School 6:

Category 1: Creating an inclusive environment- completely improved.
Category 2: Whole school data, training and policies- completely improved.
Category 3: Fostering positive relationships- improvements made.
Category 4: School activities- improvements made.

School 7:

Category 1: Creating an inclusive environment- completely improved.
Category 2: Whole school data, training and policies- largest improvements.
Category 3: Fostering positive relationships- slightly improved.
Category 4: School activities- improvements made.

School 8:

Category 1: Creating an inclusive environment- completely improved.
Category 2: Whole school data, training and policies- completely improved.
Category 3: Fostering positive relationships- completely improved.

Category 4: School activities- completely improved.

School 9:

Category 1: Creating an inclusive environment- incomplete.

Category 2: Whole school data, training and policies- incomplete.

Category 3: Fostering positive relationships- incomplete.

Category 4: School activities- incomplete.

School 10:

Category 1: Creating an inclusive environment- improvements made.

Category 2: Whole school data, policies and training- completely improved.

Category 4: Fostering positive relationships- improvements made.

Category 4: School activities- slightly improved.

School 11:

Category 1: Creating an inclusive environment- improvements made.

Category 2: Whole school data, training and policies- improvements made.

Category 3: Fostering positive relationships- improvements made.

Category 4: School activities- improvements made.

CASE STUDIES

Schools were invited to share case studies of effective practice developed whilst undertaking the Belonging Matters programme. A case study could describe a small-scale project or be offering a range of activities and events the school facilitated as part of a whole-school approach to fostering belonging.

Schools completed a Belonging Matters Case Study template to evidence their belonging work. The template consisted of five sections; details of each section will follow. Under the title, 'Context of your belonging work', schools were asked to provide basic background information about their school and where the need for the proposed intervention originated, 'Desired outcome of project' requested schools to share what they hoped to achieve, 'Action(s) taken' invited schools to share activities implemented with pupils, staff, parents, or wider community as part of the intervention, 'Impact' invited schools to share the positive outcomes for the school, learners, staff, parents, or wider school community, and finally, 'Learning' invited schools to share any advice they would give to other schools who are wanting to foster a sense of belonging.

Eight schools submitted one case study whilst one school submitted eight case studies.

TOPICS OF CASE STUDIES CAPTURED BY 10 PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

1. Offering a wider variety of afterschool clubs to all pupils.
2. Support parent voice and their implementation of a Smart phone free initiative
3. Celebrating difference
4. Welcoming reception environment
5. Pupil voice and develop communication skills
6. Training Friendship Ambassadors
7. Develop Young Carer support initiative
8. Self-esteem and confidence programmes- Hero Self

9. Greenwich PINS
10. Targeting 4 groups
11. Spaces for pupils with needs, staff CPD, changes in suspensions and exclusions.
12. To have a wider variety of afterschool clubs for all pupil
13. Open playgrounds, coffee mornings, guest speakers, open classrooms, fairs and evening events, parents and pupils reading
14. To create an inclusive, supportive and welcoming environment.
15. Child S with complex needs and wanting to increase their participation in classroom and school life
16. Support vulnerable pupils and new joiners.

OVERVIEWS OF EACH CASE STUDY

School 1 is situated in an area of high deprivation and around 80% of their pupils are in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM). The school submitted one case study. To foster belonging, the school wanted to offer a wider variety of afterschool clubs. The action undertaken to develop this intervention was as follows. The school council asked pupils what clubs they would like to be offered one of which was a football club. The school partnered with a local football team who delivered the sessions to pupils along with arranging tournaments and matches. The school ensured a variety of afterschool clubs were offered. Families with known vulnerabilities were targeted and where possible, funding was made available to pupils. The impact of this initiative reported 100 pupils attending after school clubs each week, 70% of whom fell under the Pupil Premium category. The school shared pupil enjoyment of attending after school clubs, the most popular being Lego and Art clubs. The school will continue to inquire about clubs their pupils would like at school. School 1 reflected on the ease and speed of facilitating this initiative to help pupils feel connected, *'it's more than just a place they go to learn...the teams and clubs help them feel part of a community'*. However, targeting of certain families and the offer of funding and/or free provision is important for fostering belonging.

School 2 is an inner London primary school with a diverse range of economic and social backgrounds with around 13.49% of their pupils receiving Pupil Premium. The school submitted eight case studies.

Case study one shared a smartphone free initiative proposed by a group of parents/carers from the school. Parents/carers received support from the school to raise awareness of the Smart Phone Free Childhood Network. The desired outcome was to support parents/carers voice and encourage opportunity for parents/carers participation. The school met parents/carers and allocated a space in school they could use for meetings. Awareness of the initiative was put in the newsletter and meetings organised with already established parent groups (Parents Association and Friends of School 2). Funding was made available to hold workshops for pupils and parents. The workshops provided an opportunity for parents/carers to share their stories, and *'this led to a strong sense of connection and community'*. The workshops enabled pupils to share their learning such as other ways of screen-free opportunities for connection. One of the shared insights was the use of PowerPoint and Whiteboards as taking away opportunities for teacher-pupil connection.

Case study two focused on celebration of difference and the school put on an event called 'everyone belongs'. It was an informal event to celebrate all the families at school. The event was promoted in the newsletter and on their Instagram. Families were invited to wear traditional clothes, bring their favourite family foods and share their creative talents such as a musical performance. The pupil Friendship Ambassadors made a belonging film for the event which showed conversations about school belonging by pupils in the playground. The impact of the evening helped to foster community and belonging. Advertising it on Instagram fostered communication and inclusivity to so many more parents/carers. The event supported building and strengthening relationships with staff and families being able to talk in a more relaxed environment. The school recommends offering opportunities to celebrate their communities and *'remembering actions like inviting, welcoming, accepting, being known, being present, being involved, contributing something that helps promote feeling respected and valued'*. Case study three shared the importance of having a welcoming and inclusive first point of contact at school. The school wanted to encourage pupils into the playground and make the office reception more comfortable. The Senior Leadership Team greeted families at the start and end of the school day and implemented a soft start to the day to ease transitions from home to school environment. The physical appearance of the reception space was improved by painting a blossom tree on one of the walls and class photos were hung on the branches. Other actions included a new rug, a picture book rack, 'let's talk' suggestion box, a leadership board, and a better social seating arrangement. The impact was very positive with pupils having conversations about the class photos which promoted further conversations about past experiences from previous academic years. Parents/carers reported having the SLT visibly present each day helped build connections such as being more approachable and feeling an increased sense of safety. The school expressed their learning as follows, *'change does not need to be costly, and relatively small to make a difference to school community'*. Case study four reported on an initiative to increase pupil voice and develop communication skills at the start of joining the school. The school invested in the Oracy programme, the Voices 21 programme and set about becoming a Rights Respecting school. The desired outcome was threefold; to help pupils speak with confidence and become effective listeners, increase collaboration between parents/carers and school, and develop a culture where pupils are interested and curious. Actions undertaken was Oracy training given to staff, administering surveys to identify specific needs, Let's Talk questions on weekly newsletter and establishing and nurturing links with other schools. The impact reported from the Let's Talk initiative helped prompt pupils to ask questions and share their thoughts and feelings. The school reported better engagement by pupils including interactions feeling more enjoyable and enabled a sense of fun around questions. The school highly recommends investing in Voices 21 to help belongingness as it increased pupil expression and influenced their relationship to learning and to each other. Case study five initiated training a new cohort of Friendship Ambassadors to maintain inclusion and anti-bullying work in the school. The desired outcome was to become a host school for the Diana Anti-Bullying Award training and promote/enhance anti-bullying initiatives in place such as pupil voice, promoting peer support and loneliness recorded on CPOMS. Being a host school provided an opportunity to meet other schools, and on the day, the atmosphere was described as a 'buzz feeling' within the school environment. The impact of training new Friendship Ambassadors saw collaboration between the younger and older Friendship Ambassadors. It provided an opportunity to the older ambassadors to reflect on how their confidence increased and

their growth in leadership skills. A support shed was created as a place for some quiet space along with providing a place of purpose and a place to look after too. The learning reported by the school was seeing the Year 6 Friendship Ambassadors confidence grow and watching how this motivated the younger Friendship Ambassadors. However, it warns other schools that the Friendship Ambassador role can be overwhelming especially for pupils with SEND so it is imperative that schools provide regular check-ins and reassurance when mistakes happen. Case study six captured the Belonging Matters action plan helped motivate the school to provide a framework to build and develop support for Young Carers. The desired outcome was to establish a Young Carers group. The school conducted a pupil survey to identify numbers and staff received Imago training. Actions included Young Carer termly meetings, all pupils to receive mentoring from a wellbeing practitioner and Young Carers to be discussed in meetings. Pupils who had Friendship Ambassador roles delivered assemblies and showed a film they made. Young Carers were given opportunities to create artwork and make a podcast. The school reported connections improving between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and how the Young Carer podcast promoted pupil voice. The school wanted to share the high numbers of Young Carers currently attending schools, and the numbers were much more than previously known. The initiative helped the school reflect on sibling carers, and particularly the understanding around having a neurodiverse sibling. The school reported the use of focus groups *'is instrumental in supporting connectedness between groups. Encourages pride in identity'*. Case study seven reported the school being involved in a pilot programme called Hero Self. Hero Self provides self-esteem and confidence coaching to pupils at school. The desired outcome was for pupils to have the tools to influence feelings, thoughts and behaviours that lead to increased wellbeing. Actions undertaken by the school to initiate participation was initial meetings to discuss programme and consideration of pupil profiles and involvement of pupils diagnosed, undiagnosed, those pupils masking and pupils who were managing in school but whose parents were struggling with home behaviours, new joiners and pupils for whom English is an additional language. Confidence coaching taught pupils how to use self-talk phrases as positive triggers when feeling overwhelmed, *'looping through and managing self-doubt to build positive pathways'*. The impact reported helped to increase confidence among participating pupils when speaking and strengthen connections between each other. The learning to be shared to other schools is as follows, *'providing 30-minute consistent space for SEL and group learning is valuable for connection and wellbeing. Children practicing thoughts is powerful and lifelong impact'*. Case study eight captured the school making an application to Greenwich PINS to be part of a national pilot programme to increase understanding around neurodiversity in primary schools. The desired outcome was to improve the educational experience for these pupils and to upskill staff so support, relationship building and trust remain at the forefront of all interactions. The school reflected on their community and upon acceptance to the programme a bespoke package was sent out by the PINS project team to the school. Many actions were taken and included staff training and music therapy offered to pupils for a period of 24 weeks. The impact reflected the synchronicity between PINS and Belonging Matters work. Fostering adaptive methods to nurture communication provided multiple ways in which neurodiverse pupils learn and engage. Staff reported time given for *'reflection rather than fixing'* was invaluable. The learning experience was motivating for all staff and enabled increased thinking around the language used at school. They emphasised the importance of having space to reflect, *'space to reflect could help change one small*

response that could make a big difference', especially with so many families needing support who may not reach the CAMHS threshold.

School 5 resides in an area of high deprivation in inner London and whose Christian ethos is *'Love your neighbour as yourself'*. Currently, 32% of pupils have English as an additional language and 23% of pupils are with SEND. The desired outcome of the project was to ensure every pupil feels safe, seen and valued as individuals with unique strengths, stories and identities. The school hoped to strengthen all relationships such as being more welcoming and trusting and the embedding to be long-lasting, *'...not individual moments of connection, but systems that continually foster belonging in years to come'*. Actions taken involved opening up the playgrounds during playtimes to parents/carers to promote connection, regular themed coffee mornings with guest speakers to increase a sense of community, parents/carers invited to observe learning in the classrooms to increase transparency, different events and fairs such as hosting a Heritage fashion show celebrating identity and inclusion, and an initiative called Jump Into Books Together where parents/carers shared the experience of reading together. Positive outcomes included increased parental engagement with more families attending school events. Parents/carers felt more comfortable to talk with members of staff as trust and partnership began to grow between home and school. Improved attendance and participation in parents/carers workshops were reported suggesting their stronger investment in school life. Advice to be shared is as follows, *'these efforts have helped cultivate a shared culture of belonging- one where families feel not just welcome at the door, but truly part of our school community'*.

School 6 is an inner London school where 69% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals, the percentage of Pupil Premium pupils in Year 6 is 95%, pupils with SEND make 36% of pupils on role and 65% of pupils have English as an additional language. The desired outcome was to create an inclusive, supportive and welcoming environment, *'to ensure school is not just a place of learning but a safe haven where everyone feels valued, respected and connected'*. Actions undertaken to implement the work started with a whole staff meeting to brainstorm ideas and to achieve universal alignment with the vision of fostering belonging. Open mornings for parents/carers to gather their input through discussion feedback forms. Welcome buddies and welcome packs were given to new families joining the school and visual displays created around the school that celebrated diversity and belonging. An audit was completed to ensure the school curriculum and extracurricular activities reflected the needs of pupils. Regular coffee mornings were held to strengthen parents/carers relationships and playground leads were introduced at Key Stages 1 and 2 to promote inclusion and positive interactions. A 'Speak Up' initiative was launched to encourage pupil voice. The impact reported was significant and far reaching. The whole school community reported increased connection, acceptance, trust, collaboration and involvement. The advice to be shared is as follows, *'...start by engaging all stakeholders- pupils, staff, parents and the wider community- in the process of defining what belonging means to them. This ensures that initiatives are meaningful and relevant to the specific context of the school'*.

School 7 is situated in a London borough of social and economic deprivation where 35% of pupils speak English as an additional language and over 30 different languages and cultures make up the school community. The desired outcome was to give support to the most vulnerable pupils and in-year new joiners. These pupils face challenges of integration, communication and emotional wellbeing. The school aimed to provide a

better structured admissions process and for all pupils to feel a sense of inclusion. Actions implemented included having welcome meetings for parents/carers to enable smooth transitions and a mini-induction checklist to enable consistency. A buddy system and regular check-ins were introduced along with collecting feedback from new joiners so to improve understanding and approaches. Staff received CPD belonging training to maximise how to foster a sense of belonging for every pupil. The impact reported pupils having increased confidence and engagement with improved wellbeing, whilst staff reported gained greater awareness and skills. Parents/carers reported increased trust and participation whilst the school reported a stronger sense of community and improved attendance. The learning is focused on starting with a whole school approach, *'we believe that belonging shouldn't be a side project, it needs to be a shared value, reflected in staff attitudes, school policies and daily practice'*. The school suggest starting with a small, manageable initiative such as a buddying system then check to see it is embedded after two weeks, six weeks and ongoing.

School 8 is a diverse school located in London. The school identified the inclusion for pupils with complex needs required work and provided the formation of developing an initiative. The desired outcome was to increase participation of a non-verbal child in the classroom and in school life. The school wanted to improve the child's access to learning and play-based activities. The actions undertaken included working closely with the child's family and external professionals to ensure consistency. Extracurricular activities introduced adult-supported access for the pupil that included weekly tennis and piano lessons that were tailored to their interests and sensory needs. Staff received Makaton training and routines were adapted to spend more time engaging in play-based learning with peers supported by the same adult. The reported impact for the pupil was active participation in structured activities with improvements noted in confidence and visibility. The pupil recorded increased attention and engagement during lessons. Makaton training enabled staff to better understand and respond to the pupils' needs and reported a sense of being better equipped to support non-verbal pupils. The school shared their experience of how making small and targeted changes can have a profound impact on a pupil's sense of inclusion. Staff training and partnership with families and external professionals are vital. The school gave the following advice, *'we encourage other schools to start small, listen closely to the needs of their pupils, and celebrate every step forward'*.

School 9 has a wide catchment area of 56 primary schools with an increasing number of in-year admissions through fair access arrangements. Ethnic minorities make up 42.8% and the percentage of pupils with SEND is 13.6%. The desired outcome was for all pupils to feel belonging at school and to measure impact of new initiatives such as a new school vision and consistency with staffing. Action was reported for pupils with SEND and their needs in terms of belonging. Two SEND hub rooms were created for de-escalation and a quiet space with staff deployed to oversee both spaces, whilst having the aim of getting pupils back into lessons when they are able so *'working on a time in policy rather than a timeout policy'*. CPD training for staff given and this included conversations around their own feelings towards belonging and using pictures of the current Year 11 pupils to reinforce the journey of belonging. To encourage future aspirations was a new school approach, *'reach higher shine brighter'* enabled pupils to have a renewed focus. The behaviour policy was adjusted with focus on reducing exclusions and suspensions. The impact reported pupils with needs as having spaces to go and people to talk to. Staff and pupil relationships improved as spaces for

conversations were created and suspensions and internal truancy reduced. The advice to other schools follows, *'be brave. If change is necessary then do it. A sense of belonging is needed by all so don't miss anyone out. Have conversations- find out what is needed not just what you think.'*

School 10 has a percentage of 54.67% of children receiving Free School Meals. It is situated in a highly deprived area of London. The school reported many pupils returning home after the end of day to play on their devices due to limited opportunities available. The desired outcome was to have a wider variety of afterschool clubs available to pupils and for more pupils to be able to attend them. The first action undertaken was asking the school council what afterschool clubs' pupils would like to attend. Surveys were sent to pupils to obtain this data. The school provided clubs free of charge to increase accessibility. A wide variety of clubs were offered and certain families with known vulnerabilities were targeted. To increase pupils with SEND attending school, a free SEND sensory circuit breakfast club was set up. The impact of this initiative had the desired effect with 118 pupils attending most of whom being Pupil Premium pupils. The SEND breakfast club helped these pupils transition from home to the classroom therefore reducing absenteeism. The school shared the ease of setting up this project and the speed of its impact especially by making it a free provision. The school share the following words, *'...its more than just a place they go to learn, and the teams and clubs help them feel part of a community'*.

School 11 has 22.3% of pupils with SEND and 68% have English as an additional language with over 64 languages spoken in the school. The desired outcome was to launch activities using a House system and targeting four specific groups of pupils; pupils with EAL, autistic pupils, pupils with hearing impairments and pupils who are asylum seekers. The action for EAL pupils was to produce a buddy training programme and run listening campaigns on belonging and in addition, school booklets for these families and using technology for translation purposes during lessons. Pupils with SEND including pupils in HARP and PDS provisions, a motto of *'see the ability not the disability'* was put in place. An anti-discrimination day is timetabled in for 2026 and the listening campaigns focused on understanding what belonging means for these pupils. Whole school actions included charity and social events based within the schoolhouses to create a collective sense of belonging. Impact reported increased belonging via data collections. Pupils with EAL and their families felt more supported and welcomed with continuous feedback in place for improvements. The school was awarded School of Sanctuary which reflects pupils' sense of feeling like they belong at school. The buddy training implemented to students supporting those in the HARP and PDS provisions has been successful, and the students feel confident in these supportive roles. Mentoring and CPD sessions on belonging continue. The learning based on the school's experience of implementing initiatives is focused on deciding the priorities collectively as a school. Their advice follows, *'Be realistic. We want everyone to feel that they belong. It is a journey. We use the data to open up discussions and identify our priorities...engage all stakeholders- it needs community buy-in'*.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

A summary of the findings is presented as follows, we look at key changes in responses for each questionnaire, by overall sample, for gender, for SEND status and for school type.

PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

Pupil responses by overall sample

Responses for overall pupil sample show that from baseline to final pupil responses were less negative in response to the vast majority of the questions with only question 3 'I feel different from most other pupils' reporting a slightly increase in negative response (31-33%). However, two questions in particular for overall pupil sample show a significant decrease in negative responses these were question two 'most of my teachers at school are interested in me' decreased from 49% to 38%, and question 4 'people in my school support me in my work' decreased from 43% to 32%.

Pupil responses by gender

Male and female pupil responses from baseline to final show decreases in the majority of questions for negative responses, however, male pupils responded more negatively at final to question 3 'I feel different from most other pupils' increasing from 32% to 36%, male pupils also responded more negatively to question 11 'teachers at my school respect me the way I am' increasing from 20% to 26% at final. Female pupils responded slightly more negatively than male pupils to question 6 'I feel lonely at my school' increasing slightly from 11% to 12%.

When comparing male and female pupil responses to the questions, scores are generally similar in response with some exceptions, overall male pupils respond more negatively to questions three and 11 (as above), and overall female pupils respond more negatively to questions seven 'people at my school are friendly to me', question eight 'there is a teacher or adult at my school I can talk to if I have a problem' and question nine 'I feel included in school and classroom activities'.

Pupil responses by SEND status

Findings for non-SEND status pupils show decreases in negative responses from baseline to final for all but two questions, Q3 and Q6 which report slight increases in negative response from 26% to 28% and from 7% to 8% respectively.

Findings for pupils with SEND status are encouraging as negative responses decreased from baseline to final for all questions. However, whilst this is positive it must be noted that negative responses for SEND pupils compared with non-SEND pupils are generally higher overall, this is particularly noticeable for question one and question three, SEND pupils negative responses were nearly twice that or more compared to non-SEND pupils, with 41% of SEND responded negatively compared to 21% non-SEND pupils to question one and for 47% of SEND pupils responded negatively compared to 28% of non-SEND pupils for question three.

Pupil responses by School Type

Pupil responses by school type show that secondary school and sixth form pupils are much more negative than for primary school pupils overall. The findings show that negative responses for primary school pupils decreased from baseline to final for all questions except question 13, 'I am happy to be part of my school' which increased slightly from 12% to 14%.

Secondary school pupils' responses are mixed with approximately 50% of secondary school pupils responding negatively to the questions. Additionally, the majority of questions reported increases in negative responses with question nine 'I feel included in school activities' showing a significant increase in negative responses from 34% at baseline to 53% at final and question 10 'Other pupils like me the way I am' also showing a significant increase in negative responses from 42% at baseline to 66% at final. However, questions one, 'I feel like I belong at my school' (53-44%), question two, 'most of my teachers are interested in me' (68-57%), question four 'people at my school support me in my work' (60-51%) and question five 'I feel safe in my school' (52-47%) all show decreases in negative responses.

Sixth form pupil responses for all questions show an increase in negative responses from baseline to final with a significant increase in negative responses to question 12 'teachers at my school treat pupils fairly increasing from 36% at baseline to nearly half of sixth form pupils (49%) at final.

Two questions from the BM pupil questionnaire stand out with regards to the pupil responses, question two 'most of my teachers at my school are interested in me' scored the greatest negative responses across all groups with an overall range between 34-57% at final, indicating that pupils feel their teachers are not interested in them. In contrast question six 'I feel lonely at my school' reported the lowest negative responses across all groups with an overall range between 8-28% at final, indicating that on average 10% of pupils reported feeling lonely with the exception of pupils at secondary school where responses were nearly three times higher.

PARENT/CARER QUESTIONNAIRE

Parent/carer responses by overall sample

Parent/carer overall sample show mixed response to the seven questions, with percentage of responses ranging from 24-40%. Decreases in negative response were reported for question one 'your child feels like they belong at school' (28-27%), question two 'there is someone at school that your child can talk to if there is a problem' (33-28%), question four 'you feel your child is supported in school' (25-24%) and question six 'you feel a part of your child's school community' (43-40%).

Parent/carer responses by gender

Similarly, parent/carer response for pupils by gender show mixed results across all seven questions from baseline to final, parent/carers of male pupils tended to respond more negatively (range 23-41%) to all seven questions compared to parent/carers of female pupils (range 20-39%).

Parent responses by SEND status

Parent/carer responses by SEND status were equally mixed across the seven questions, showing that responses for parent/carers of non-SEND pupils ranging from 18% to 35%, were generally much less negative compared to parent/carer responses of pupils with SEND ranging from 28% to 49%. Parent/carers of pupils with SEND show a significant decrease for question six 'you feel a part of your child's school community' from 53% to 42% at final.

Parent responses by school type

Parent/carer responses by school type show that overall parent/carers of primary school pupils respond generally more positively (range 4-21%) to all questions compared with parent/carers of secondary school pupils (range 29-47%) at final. Parent/carers of primary school pupils reported decreases in negative responses to nearly all questions with the exception of question one 'your child feels like they belong at their school' which reported a slight increase (1%).

Parent/carers of secondary school pupils reported decreases in all negative responses from baseline to final with three questions showing significant decreases, question one 'your child feels like they belong at their school' decreasing from 41% to 29%, question two 'there is someone at school that your child can talk to if they have a problem' decreasing from 47% to 29% whilst the most significant decrease overall was for question six 'you feel a part of your child's school community' decreasing from 67% to 47%.

Two questions stand out in relation to parent/carer responses for all groups, question five 'you feel you have a good relationship with your child's school' showed an increase in negative responses across all groups, whilst question six 'you feel a part of your child's school community' parent/carer responses were more negative for overall sample, by gender and for non-SEND pupils from baseline to final.

TEACHER/STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

Teachers and Staff provided responses for overall sample and by school type to six questions from baseline to final, with overall responses reporting more negatively across the six questions at final. Similarly, teacher/staff responses by school type for primary and secondary school also reported increase in negative response across the six questions, with the exception of question four 'you feel connected to your pupils' showing secondary school teacher/staff responses were less negative (16-11%) at final.

Percentages for the overall teacher/staff sample in answer to the six questions ranged from 7-13%, teacher/staff for primary school pupil percentages ranged from 4-10% compared with teacher/staff for secondary school pupil percentages ranging from 7-32%.

COMPARISON ACROSS QUESTIONNAIRES

Sense of belong at school

All three questionnaires asked participants about pupil sense of school belonging, the findings show that for overall sample responses by pupils and by parent/carer are similar with negative responses of 28% and 27% respectively, however, by comparison teacher/staff report 14% responded negatively to the question. Additionally, responses by school type show that primary school pupils and parent/carers of primary school pupils' responses are similar (23% and 21% respectively) however, primary school teacher/staff show 6% responded negatively to the question. The findings also show that nearly half of secondary school pupils (44%) do not feel they belong at their school, whilst 31% of parent/carer responded their child did not feel like they belonged at their school, whilst 32% of secondary school teacher/staff reported that pupils in their school do not have a sense of belonging.

There is someone I can talk to if I have a problem

BM Pupil questionnaire and the parent/carer questionnaire asked questions about pupils having someone to talk to in school if there was a problem, the findings show that for responses by overall sample, by gender, by SEND status and by primary school parent/carer responses were more negative than by overall pupil responses, however, parent/carer response for secondary school pupils (29%) were nearly half that compared to secondary school pupil responses (51%) to the question.

Feeling supported in school

Parent/carers and pupils also responded to the question about pupils feeling they were supported in school, pupils tended to respond more negatively to the question for overall sample (32%) compared to 24% of parent/carers, Pupil responses by school type show that 51% pupils responded negatively compared to 31% of parent/carers. However, parent/carers of pupils with SEND status and SEND pupils responded similarly with 33% of parent/carers compared with 31% of pupils reporting negatively to feeling supported.

Comparisons of qualitative findings for parent/carer and teacher/staff

Looking at the qualitative responses, some common themes have been identified by both parents/carers and teachers/staff as to what reduces a sense of school belonging. These findings suggest that future work is required in schools to strengthen these areas.

Teacher-pupil relationships were highlighted as a concern with both reporting a lack of connection, one comment by a parent/carer, *'my child has been a very good student with good grades since Y7 but sometimes they feel intimidated by some teachers, they are not allowed to speak, they don't feel seen'*, a similar comment by a member of teaching staff, *'pupils can find it hard to feel like they belong when staff that work with them don't get to know them'*.

A lack of communication was another theme reported by teachers/staff and parents/carers to reduce belonging in their schools. Parents/carers expressed little information being shared, *'very often there is a lack of information or people at school*

don't have the correct information as well', 'my child is happy and knows who to talk to in school but communication with parents could be better', whilst teachers/staff reported little communication in terms of time given to pupils to explore belongingness, 'I would like to know if those pupils who say they do not belong feel that they have no sense of belonging anywhere'.

Treating pupils with disability unfairly was one theme highlighted by both parents/carers and teachers/staff. Parents/carers reported *'In Summer 1, my son had Kew garden trip. I paid for the trip and we were under the impression the whole time he is going for the trip. But few days before the trip his teacher send an email top us and saying your child cant come to the trip unless an adult from his home come and support him... my son has a EHCP',* whilst one teacher/staff reported a similar exclusions happening in their school, *'physically Disabled pupils were not included in the Year 8 school trip'.*

Teachers/staff and parents/carers reported similar issues around the school curriculum affecting belongingness such as inconsistencies with activities and approaches, for example, a comment by a member of teaching staff, *'activities and approaches could be more consistent across the school'* and a similar comment by a parent/carer, *'It is not an innovative school, where students make the most of available technology and resources'.*

A lack of encouragement was reported by parents/carers and teachers/staff, for example, one parent/carer shared the following, *'I don't feel that my child is in an encouraging and supportive environment',* whilst one teacher/staff member reported a similar picture, *'they have little input on what happens in the school. There are not many things that encourage their participation'.*

360 BM SCHOOL AUDIT TOOL

The Belonging Matters 360 Audit Tool was completed by 10 participating schools at the beginning and the end of the programme. The Audit Tool enabled schools to focus on four key components that influence a sense of belonging among pupils these being, (1) creating an inclusive environment, (2) whole school data, policies and training, (3) fostering positive relationships, and (4) school activities. Each key component contains different items for schools to use to reflect and assess their current state of belonging practice. Nearly all items related to each component were completed at baseline and final (See Tables), with schools deciding whether they had Not Met Yet (NMY), Partially Met (PM), or Fully Met (FM) each item.

Nearly all participating schools on the Belonging Matters 360 programme reported maintaining or improving their belonging practices. Overall, schools reported the greatest improvements made on all items in category 1 'creating an inclusive environment', whilst the least improvements made on items in category 3 'fostering positive relationships'. The Belonging Matters 360 School Audit Tool has been immensely valuable in guiding schools to disseminate their current belonging practices which enabled the implementation of initiatives to increase a sense of belonging among their pupils. Some schools reported no changes between the start and end of the programme, therefore slight adjustments to these items may be considered in the future.

SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF CASE STUDIES

Schools were invited at the end of the BM 360 programme to submit case studies to evidence the impact of their belonging work. A whole range of projects and initiatives were designed, developed and implemented to help foster a sense of belonging. Each school demonstrated commitment and diligence to create an inclusive environment. Schools reported that implementing initiatives are both cost efficient and with careful planning can be fitted into a busy school schedule. These case studies demonstrate how small changes can make a big impact on the whole school community. In addition, they promote reflection and discussion among stakeholders, pupils, parents/carers and staff, so the focus on proposed projects are meaningful, manageable and relevant. For pupils, the initiatives facilitated connection with the school, for example, the availability of extracurricular clubs promoted inclusion and feeling a sense of pride towards their school. For parents/carers, the initiatives promoted trust, engagement and communication which enabled growth of an authentic partnership between home and school. For staff/teaching staff, being involved in decision making about what belonging looks like, helped to bring belonging central to the school community. Staff training on belonging is crucial for consistency, and in addition, scheduled meetings in place to check the curriculum is representative of nurturing a culture of belongingness.

CONCLUSION

The overall aim of the Belonging Matters (BM) Programme is to strengthen and enhance pupils' sense of belonging within school, particularly for those groups who are identified as more vulnerable including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The Belonging Matters 360 Audit Tool guided schools to focus on four key components which are designed to foster and enhance a sense of belonging among pupils' creating an inclusive school environment, enabling through data the development and implementation of school policies and training to support school belonging, the strengthening of teacher-student relationships and promotion of positive peer interactions, in addition to pupil engagement in school activities.

Through the use of questionnaires, the programme sought to examine school belonging and inclusion from three perspectives, that of pupils, parent/carers and teacher/staff, the findings provide a valuable insight across the different perspectives.

The findings from the BM pupil questionnaire responses are encouraging and show that the programme had a positive impact for the overall pupil sample across the majority of questions from baseline to final. Whilst responses for pupils with SEND status are generally lower than those for pupils overall, the findings for SEND pupils show that the programme had a positive impact with SEND pupils reporting positive improvement across all questions at the end of the programme.

Parent/carers responses are mixed; however, at the end of the programme they report more positively that their child feels like they belong at school, that there is someone to talk to if they have a problem and they feel their child is more supported in school. Parent/carers of SEND pupils responses tend to be less negative overall compared with those of SEND pupils.

Teachers/staff tend to respond more positively overall compared to pupil and parent/carer responses. However, secondary school teacher/staff responses are not as positive as primary school teacher/staff. However, a promising finding is that secondary school teacher/staff feel more connected to their pupils at the end of programme.

The findings by school type show that responses for primary school pupils, parent/carers and teacher/staff generally tend to be more positive than those responses for secondary schools, the level of responses for secondary schools are particularly concerning with approximately 50% of pupils responding negatively, and highlight the need to focus on them more, as a sense of belonging can be protective factor against other issues such as bullying and wellbeing.

The BM 360 Audit Tool results show how valuable the audit tool is in enabling and guiding schools on the four key components to enhancing a sense of belonging in school. This has been achieved through the dissemination of current practices and implementation of initiatives thus increasing a sense of belonging amongst pupils. All participating schools are able to track their progress and for those who completed the programme these schools showed systematic improvements, reporting either partially or fully meeting the criteria for all four categories at the end of the programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the Belonging Matters programme:

- To extend the programme to all schools nationally
- To ask schools to commit to a minimum of two years, collecting data at baseline and interim in the first year, with further data collection in a second or third year for final data collection, allowing for the programme to become more embedded in schools.
- To consider focusing on secondary schools and secondary school pupils
- To consider the addition of wellbeing questionnaires for pupils and teachers, this would highlight further the impact of the belonging programme.

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