



meeting	EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING SELECT COMMITTEE		
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REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Keele University survey – pupils’ attitudes to school life

Purpose of Report

1. This report presents the findings of the Keele survey of pupils’ attitudes 2003 - 2004.

Information and Advice

Background

2. The Keele survey is a well established survey conducted by Keele University into pupils’ attitudes to school life. This is a national survey and schools can opt into the survey in order to gather the views of pupils as part of their self-evaluation process. In Nottinghamshire the LEA promotes the survey and encourages schools to make use of it by providing matched funding for schools to pay for the costs of the survey. The survey is for secondary schools only.
3. The purpose of the survey is to seek to identify those factors which are associated with pupils’ positive attitudes to their school experiences. Research indicates that pupils’ attitudes to school and the quality of their relationships with teachers are important indicators of a school’s likely effectiveness.
4. The survey asks pupils a series of questions through a questionnaire. The questions are grouped into five categories as follows:
 - the level of pupils’ satisfaction with school life
 - the quality of pupil-teacher relationships
 - the perceived extent of parental support for pupil learning
 - the influence of the peer group
 - the level of pupils’ commitment to learning.

Keele University suggest that together the five categories can be taken as a proxy for pupils' overall experience of school.

5. The 2003-2004 Keele survey was undertaken by 22 secondary schools in Nottinghamshire with 5,672 questionnaires being analysed. The Nottinghamshire outcomes are compared to the findings from the survey nationally.

The main findings of the Keele survey in 22 Nottinghamshire secondary schools

6. The findings from the survey show that in all aspects of school life covered by the survey, the response Nottinghamshire pupils is very similar to the response of pupils nationally.
7. **Satisfaction with school experience:** In Nottinghamshire schools, 43% of pupils consider they have a positive relationship with school and this is in line with the national figure of 44%. 87% of pupils are happy at school (the same as the national figure) although only 38% say they actually enjoy school which is in line with the national figure of 39%.
8. **Relationship with teachers:** Most (70%) pupils in the Nottinghamshire schools feel they get on well with their teachers and this is similar to the national figure of 71%. 78% of pupils say that their teachers encourage them and 79% say they are praised for hard work. However only 61% of pupils judge that discipline is good, which is slightly lower than the national figure of 64%.
9. According to 65% of pupils, most teachers use a variety of teaching methods to help them learn and just over half (53%) say that teachers are prepared to take the time to discuss progress with individual pupils and advise them of ways of improving. Of some concern is the low proportion of pupils (44%) who feel that they could seldom or never take their problems to a teacher with only 13% feeling that they could always do so. These figures are however in line with the national picture and would also reflect the age of the pupils and possible peer pressure.
10. **Parental support for learning:** Most pupils feel they are well supported by their parents and/or carers with 88% indicating that they are given support at home with their homework. A significant number (87%) of pupils have access to a computer at home with 79% having access to the internet.
11. **Peer Group influence:** The influence of other pupils in the school is not always seen as helpful and 33% of pupils claim they have been approached by other pupils to truant from school. The majority of pupils (82%) say they enjoy group work although 43% (compared with 39% nationally) consider that there is frequent (daily) disruption to

lessons. Bullying is rare with only 8% of pupils seeing bullying as a regular problem in the school.

12. **Pupils' commitment to learning:** Most young people give responses which indicate a positive attitude to the work done in school. In line with the national figure, 86% of pupils suggest that their work is important to them with 76% saying they work as hard as they can.

Other areas of analysis

13. **Homework:** According to 82% of the pupils in the Nottinghamshire schools surveyed, homework is set regularly each week by most teachers but 22% of pupils see homework as pointless and 45% see it as boring.
14. **Study support and extra curricular activities:** In line with the national figures, 39% of pupils take part in extra-curricular activities and 71% indicating they have the opportunity to take part in additional learning activities outside normal curriculum time. As expected, participation in extra-curricular activities is highest in the early years of secondary school.
15. **Use of time out of school:** 21% of pupils spend more than four hours per day watching television or videos and 17% (lower than the national average of 20%) have a part time job of more than 5 hours per week.

Overall judgements

16. Overall, the responses in the five categories show that girls' attitudes are more positive than those of boys and that there is a decline in attitude between years 7 and 9 (key stage 3) followed in some cases by a slight recovery in year 11. This pattern is found nationally and is supported by other national research.

What happens to the findings?

17. Each school that participates in the survey receives a detailed analysis of all questions and schools use the information to help them plan improvements. The new Ofsted school inspection framework expects schools to take account of pupils' views and this survey provides additional information for this purpose. The overall analysis of all participating schools forms an important part of the LEA's audit for its Education Development Plan and for its plans for supporting school improvement.

Statutory and Policy Implications

18. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, personnel, Crime and Disorder and those using the service. Where such implications are material,

they have been described in the text of the report. Members' attention is however drawn to the following:-

Financial Implications

19. The LEA part funds the survey, contributing matched funding to each school that is involved in the survey.

Equal Opportunities Implications

20. Individual schools received detailed analysis about pupils' attitudes and perceptions of school life and this will inform their policy on equal opportunities.

Implications for Service Users

21. The detailed analysis provided for all participating schools is a valuable self evaluation tool.

RECOMMENDATION

22. That the committee note the contents of the report and identify any areas for further study or scrutiny.

PAM TULLEY

Director of Education

Background Papers Available for Inspection

Nil.

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