



**TOM BENNETT**  
T R A I N I N G

**In-school Behaviour Survey**  
Tom Bennett

## **Rationale**

Obtaining good data on behaviour in schools is difficult. Because of the sporadic and irregular nature of behaviour (and misbehaviour) it is difficult to observe all locations within a school simultaneously. Also, without sampling behaviours across time as well as spatially, more serious misbehaviour can be missed.

1. Observational bias means we are all prone to misunderstand what is actually happening when and where we are not.

Formally recorded school data is useful but also prone to several obvious biases:

- The quality of staff training in using recording systems
- Willingness of staff to record relevant data
- Variability in understanding about what constitutes each category or level of misbehaviour
- Openness of school culture to encourage data recording without penalty
- Quality of school categories of behaviour
- Ability to standardise different teacher responses

In short, leaders find it hard to know if teachers record misbehaviour data because they are highly capable or because they are highly incapable.

2. Some behavioural incidents require mandatory recording, accidents, incidents of racism, expulsions and suspensions. Others do not.

3. Many teachers suffer from 'behaviour fatigue'- faced with repeated misbehaviour from the same students, they begin to accept their behaviour as 'normal for them' and cease recording incidents.

4. Many other factors impinge upon the schoolteacher or leader's ability to accurately record behavioural incidents, workload being among the main issues, but also school culture.

## **The problem**

This leads to a highly unsatisfactory situation where schools have incomplete, ambiguous and unreliable perceptions of its own behaviour and culture. Staff who teach more able, better behaved classes, or who enjoy higher status or timetable privileges may perceive the school behaviour to be generally good, where less fortunate staff may perceive it to be much worse.

In these circumstances, it is much harder to accurately and effectively raise standards. If one does not know where one is, it is substantially more challenging trying to get anywhere else. Without a diagnosis, prescription is impossible.

## The solution

This survey helps schools get 'under the bonnet' of what is happening in schools by asking as many end-users of the school culture as possible what their individual experiences are, and collating that data. It asks a series of simple questions about school behaviour. The key is to ask as many people as possible in the school culture, in order to improve validity and reliability. The larger the sample, the more representative the data. *Ideally, all members of staff should be surveyed, and all students.* This is not as hard as some people think. The survey takes ten minutes.

## Factors to consider

It should be conducted:

- Anonymously, to encourage honesty and openness.
- Simultaneously (or as close to this as possible- over 24 hours, or a weekend at most) in order to ensure the data represents a snapshot of the culture at a given moment.
- Time should be allocated for this to be done: form time; assembly; a short after-school meeting. Or flexibility can be permitted to allow staff to fit it into their schedules, e.g. when they have a break or at home *only if they choose/prefer.*

## Online vs paper

This survey can be conducted extremely quickly. Analysing the data is much quicker if submitted digitally, e.g. using a simple online survey platform such as SurveyMonkey or Google docs. Or the survey can be completed manually, although this requires more administration inputting and analysing the data afterwards. However, this is not beyond the abilities of any school data manager or competent administrator/ statistician.

## Collecting the data

If the survey is taken on paper, there should be a place in an easily accessed and safe area of the school where participants can hand in their surveys anonymously, for example in a sealed container similar to a ballot box. If the survey is conducted on paper simultaneously, papers should be collected in such a way as to minimise identification of paper and author. If the survey is collected digitally, all participants should receive a personalised and anonymous survey link via email, to ensure that the participants only enter data once.

## Using the data

Survey summaries should be scrutinised by senior staff. Some of the findings may be predictable, surprising, unwelcome, or reassuring. Whatever they are, leaders should be aware that this data is self-reported, and subject to personal bias, and that some answers will be vexatious or deliberately inaccurate. It is also only one data source, and should be triangulated with all other sources of behavioural data, not least of which should be the leadership team's own experience of the school.

Nevertheless, this data is very powerful; it reveals what school stakeholders *believe* to be the case in the school behaviour culture, and those perceptions matter. They matter even

more if they map accurately onto the reality of the school culture. If the sample is large enough, leaders should understand that the data is more likely to be an accurate report of the school community's perceptions.

### **Sharing the data**

Leaders can use data to discuss possible issues in their behaviour cultures, identify weaknesses, or address staff unhappiness. It can be a key driver of school improvement.

Leaders can also share this with other school stakeholders, e.g. teachers/ all staff in order to reassure them that their experiences have been listened to and analysed. Improvement strategies can be discussed with staff at this point, promoting a school culture of openness, honesty, transparency and mutual support. Staff frequently express gratitude that their views have been accounted for.

### **Measuring improvement**

Many schools find it useful to re-issue the exact same survey to the staff at different intervals (e.g. six months, annually etc.) to find out if attitudes have changes as a result of their strategies. Improvements can be shared with staff, in order to communicate that their concerns are being addressed, and improvements are occurring. Other stakeholders e.g. governors and parents will also find this data highly interesting/ convincing.

# Appendix 1:

## All staff survey

Thank you for answering these questions. Your input will be treated seriously and will contribute to a greater understanding of the school culture, its needs, and ways we can improve.

### Questions:

Q1) Based on your own experience, can you please select the 3 most common types of misbehaviour you face in your classroom

- Answering back/questioning instructions
- Calling out (e.g. answers, wanting to go to the toilet etc)
- Daydreaming/doodling
- Disturbing other children (e.g. poking, trying to make each other laugh, passing notes, walking around the classroom)
- Eating/chewing gum
- Fidgeting/fiddling with equipment
- Late arrival
- Not facing the front
- Not having the correct equipment (e.g. pen, pencils)
- Not having the correct uniform (e.g. ties missing, scruffy uniform)
- Purposely making noise to gain attention (e.g. tapping, humming)
- Not getting on with the work they are set
- Sighing/showing signs of tiredness
- Swinging/rocking on chairs
- Talking/chatting
- Using phones

Q2) What impact, if any, do you think misbehaviour generally has on the learning of pupils in the class?

- None
- Low impact
- Medium impact
- High impact
- Don't know

Q3) On average, how much learning time is lost within each hour of teaching time when a single episode of low level disruption occurs?

- Less than 1 minute
- 1 to 5 minutes
- 5 to 10 minutes
- More than 10 minutes
- It varies too much to say

Q4) Which, if any, of the following apply to the behaviour policy in your school? Please select all that apply.

- The school's policy on behaviour helps me manage pupil behaviour
- The headteacher supports me in managing poor pupil behaviour
- The school's policy on behaviour is unhelpful
- There is a behaviour policy but it is not well-known
- There are no agreed policies on behaviour
- The behaviour policy is applied consistently throughout my school
- I use my own policy
- I use the school's policy
- I don't know the school's policy well
- None of the above

Q5) How confident do you feel in your ability to handle disruptive behaviour in the classroom?

- Very confident
- Quite confident
- Not very confident
- Not at all confident
- Don't know

Q6) On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the overall behaviour in the school?

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

Q7) On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the overall behaviour in your classes?

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

Q8) On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the overall behaviour in corridors, playgrounds and other public spaces?

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

Q8) On a scale of 1-10 how safe do you feel at school?

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

Q9) If you answered *quite*, *not very* or *not at all* in Q8), write where and when you feel *least* safe

Q10) What do you feel are the 3 most important ways in which the headteacher and senior staff in your school can promote better behaviour? Please select a maximum of 3 answers

- High expectations of pupil behaviour are clearly and regularly communicated to pupils and parents
- The headteacher and senior staff often drop in to lessons
- The headteacher and senior staff tour the school regularly
- The headteacher makes sure all staff apply the behaviour policy consistently
- Staff receive professional development in behaviour management
- Dealing with poor behaviour is discussed openly with senior staff
- The school engages with parents on behavioural matters
- School uniform rules are applied consistently
- Other
- Don't know

Q11) Are you:

- Teaching staff
- Teaching support staff
- Non-teaching staff
- Leadership (SLT/ governors/ other)
- Other

Q12) In your experience does student bullying happen

- Never
- Almost never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Very frequently

Q13) Behaviour training - do you feel that (tick each one that applies to you)

- I would like more training to manage behaviour
- Others in the school need more training to manage behaviour
- Teachers in this school are generally well trained in behaviour management
- I have been well trained by this school to manage behaviour
- I have not been well trained by this school to manage behaviour
- I have received some training in behaviour management but not enough
- Don't know

Q14) What does this school do well with regards to behaviour management?

Q15) Please use this box to record any comment you would like to make. All answers are anonymous.

Thank you for answering this survey.

## Appendix 2:

### Student behaviour survey

Thank you for answering these questions. These questions are about behaviour in your classes and school. Please be honest and help us to make things better for you, your friends and your schoolmates.

#### Questions:

Q1) Based on your own experience, can you please pick the 3 most common types of misbehaviour you see in *your* classroom

- Answering back/questioning instructions
- Calling out (e.g. answers, wanting to go to the toilet etc)
- Daydreaming/doodling
- Disturbing other students (e.g. poking, trying to make each other laugh, passing notes, walking around the classroom)
- Eating/chewing gum
- Fidgeting/fiddling with equipment
- Being late
- Not facing the right way
- Not having the right equipment (e.g. pen, pencils)
- Not having the right uniform (e.g. ties missing, scruffy uniform)
- Making noise on purpose to gain attention (e.g. tapping, humming)
- Not getting on with the work
- Sighing/showing signs of tiredness (yawning etc.)
- Swinging/rocking on chairs
- Talking/chatting
- Using phones

Q2) How much impact, if any, do you think misbehaviour generally has on the learning of pupils in the class?

- None
- Low impact
- Medium impact
- High impact
- Don't know

Q3) Roughly, how much time is lost every hour of teaching time when a misbehaviour happens?

- Less than 1 minute every hour
- 1 to 5 minutes every hour
- 5 to 10 minutes every hour
- More than 10 minutes every hour
- Too hard to say

Q4) Which, if any, of the following are true about the rules in your school? Please pick all that are true.

- The school's rules help pupils to behave
- The headteacher supports the teachers to manage behaviour
- The school's rules aren't very helpful
- There are rules but not everyone knows them
- There are no rules
- The rules always happen throughout my school
- Different teachers have their own rules
- I don't know the school's rules very well
- None of the above

Q6) On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the overall behaviour in the school?

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

Q7) On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the overall behaviour in your class?

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

Q8) On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the overall behaviour in corridors, playgrounds and other public spaces?

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

Q8) On a scale of 1-10 how safe do you feel at school?

1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

Q9) If you answered *quite*, *not very* or *not at all* in Q8), write where and when you feel *least* safe

Q10) What do you think the school should do to make behaviour better?

Q11) Are you:

Year 4- 5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13

Q12) In your experience does student bullying happen

- Never
- Almost never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Frequently
- Very frequently

Q14) What does this school do really well with regards to behaviour?

Q15) Please use this box to write any other comment you would like to make. All answers are confidential.

Thank you for answering this survey.