SIMS

GENERATION CATCH-UP

Research into the long-term effects of the pandemic with practical ideas from school leaders on how to close the gaps

With contributions from primary and secondary school leaders and Professor Toby Salt, author, former MAT leader and deputy CEO of the National College for School Leadership.

GENERATION CATCH-UP:
THE RESEARCH

The school leader survey and interviews were carried out in the spring of 2023, in the academic year 2022 – 2023.

Since the research, pupils have moved up a year group. Pupils who are in Year 4 were in Year 3 at the time of the research, and the Year 10 pupils were in Year 9.

In some cases survey responses do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

"THE LEGACY OF COVID CONTINUES TO AFFECT CHILDREN ACROSS THE UK AND MANY ARE EXPERIENCING CHALLENGES RELATING TO THEIR LEARNING AND WELLBEING SINCE THE PANDEMIC."

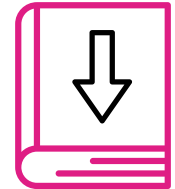Professor Toby Salt, former MAT leader and deputy CEO of the National College for School Leadership

SURVEY DATA:
THE KEY FINDINGS

96% of school leaders say learning gaps are **still having an impact** on pupil achievement 3 years on from the pandemic

70% of school leaders report **learning loss** of between six months and a year

The children worst affected by learning gaps

– 1 in 3 school leaders **(32%)** report Year 4s are worst affected and **21%** say Year 10s

41% of senior leaders say issues relating to **mental health and wellbeing** have had the greatest negative impact on pupils' learning

56% More than half (56%) of schools have planned or already put in place **targeted catch-up provision** for literacy or English

INTRODUCTION

Pupils' learning has still not recovered from the pandemic, and some pupil groups and school years have been more deeply affected than others.

To find out which children have felt the greatest impact on their education, we conducted a survey of more than 500 senior staff in UK primary and secondary schools.

The findings reveal how the pandemic has affected wellbeing, behaviour and attendance, and identifies where the learning gaps are greatest.

The survey headline is that almost all **(96%)** of the school leaders surveyed believe pandemic learning gaps are still having an impact on children's learning and nearly two thirds **(61%)** say it's a major impact.

However, there have been some very positive developments in recent years too. Despite being under intense pressure, teachers and school leaders have found innovative ways to support pupils, develop closer partnerships with families and prioritise the wellbeing of the school community.

Schools are having to adapt to the longer-term challenges which lie ahead, so we interviewed some school leaders in depth to explore the strategies they are developing to help children fill in the gaps, grow in confidence and make progress in their learning.

This report presents the results of our research and outlines some steps schools can take to alleviate the impact of the pandemic and improve outcomes for children.

> IT SEEMS THAT CHILDREN'S LEARNING IS SUFFERING FROM ITS OWN VERSION OF LONG COVID.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

- Survey completed in March 2023
- **507** school leaders surveyed
- **53%** of respondents work in secondary schools
- **41%** of respondents work in primary schools
- **6%** of respondents work in all-through schools or other schools

THE STATE OF PLAY

To form an accurate picture of the continuing impact of the pandemic, the survey asked primary and secondary school leaders to what extent they were still seeing Covid related learning gaps in their schools. These were the key findings.

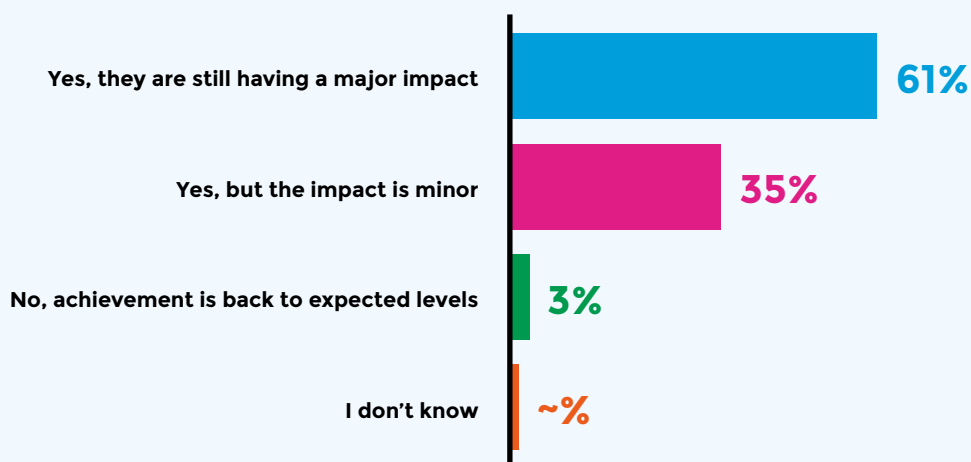**1** **Pandemic learning gaps are still affecting pupils**

- **96%** of school leaders say pandemic learning gaps are still having an impact on pupil achievement.

- **61%** of school leaders say this is a major impact.

- **3%** of school leaders say achievement is back to expected levels.

There is almost universal agreement that pupils' learning has not yet recovered from the pandemic, with nearly two thirds of schools considering it is still having a major impact on pupil achievement.

Chris Kitchen, assistant head of Ysgol Aberconwy Secondary agrees that pupils are still affected by the fallout from the pandemic disruption. *"Learning gaps are having an impact across the school. Many of the Year 7s join us with low levels of literacy and numeracy and some have reading ages of 4 or 5.*

"We're also having to support all pupils from Year 7 to Year 13 to help them access the curriculum because they have gaps in their basic skills."

Are pandemic related learning gaps still having a negative impact on the achievement of pupils in your school/trust? (n=507)

Yes, they are still having a major impact	**61%**
Yes, but the impact is minor	**35%**
No, achievement is back to expected levels	**3%**
I don't know	**~%**

2 In primary schools Year 4 has seen the worst impact

32% of primary schools say children in Year 4 are most affected by learning gaps.
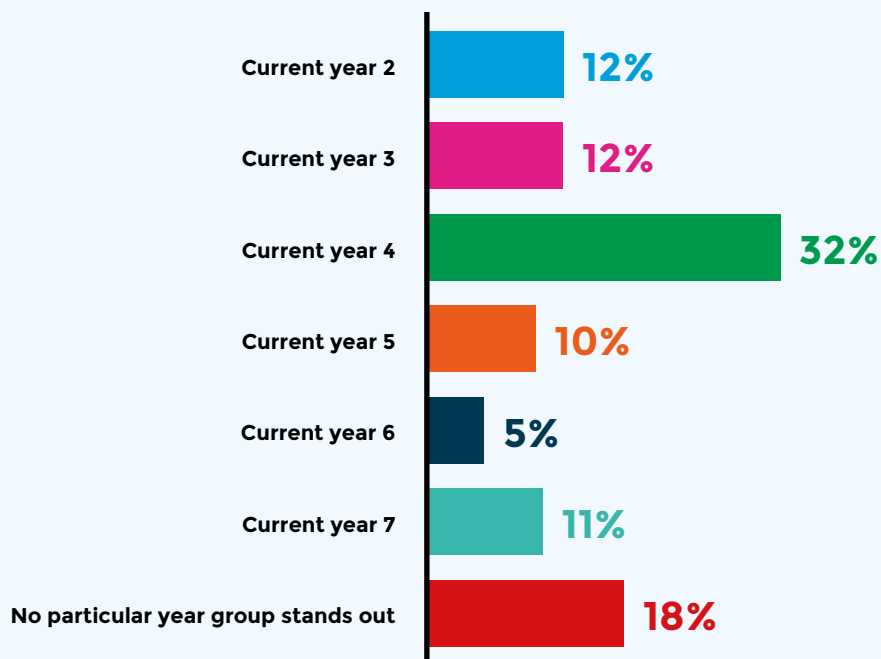
Many school leaders are finding the pandemic learning gaps are unevenly spread across their schools, with some year groups more affected than others.

Primary school leaders say that Year 4s – the children who were in Year 3 at the time of the survey – are the most affected year group.

Donna Faley, headteacher of St Thomas More Catholic Primary, a voluntary academy, identifies some of the issues for younger primary school children. *"These children have certainly felt the impact. In fact, children right from Year 4 down to Year 1 are much more affected by learning gaps than the older children who already had those early reading skills in place before the pandemic.*

"When today's Year 3 and Year 2 children were in reception and nursery, they missed out on developing key skills due to lockdowns and Covid bubble closures and this means they don't have the solid foundations for learning."

Which primary phase year group would you say is the worst affected by language gaps? (n=239)

Year group	Percentage
Current year 2	12%
Current year 3	12%
Current year 4	32%
Current year 5	10%
Current year 6	5%
Current year 7	11%
No particular year group stands out	18%

3

In secondary schools Year 10 has seen the worst impact

21% of secondary schools say children in Year 10 are most affected by learning gaps.

In secondary schools, Year 10 pupils – who were in Year 9 at the time of the survey – were highlighted as the year group most affected by learning gaps.
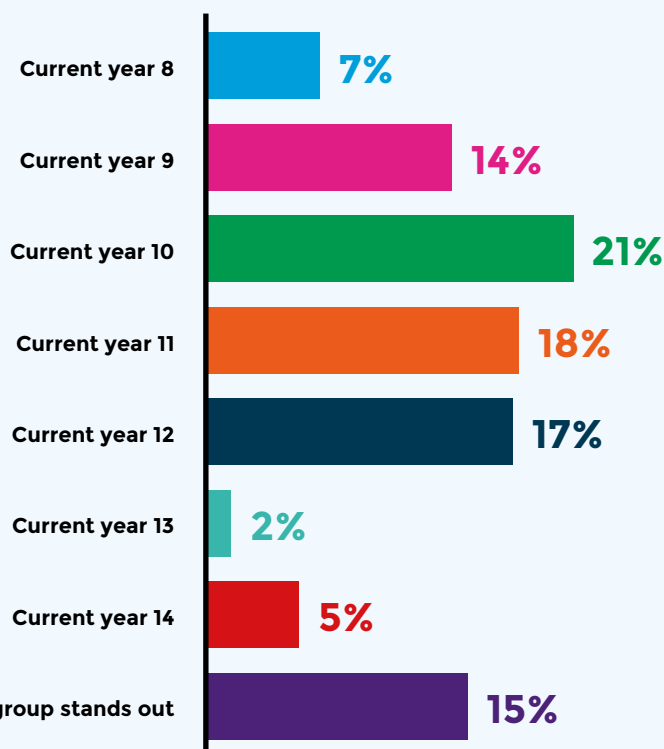
These children were in Year 6 at the start of the pandemic, and went through transition to secondary school in September 2020, which could account for some of the issues this year group is still having in accessing the curriculum.

As this cohort is at an important stage in the preparation for GCSEs, the learning gaps are a cause for concern.

However, the impact of the pandemic appears to be more evenly spread across secondary school pupils with each year group still having its own challenges, from Year 7s starting school with low literacy levels, to the older year groups feeling unprepared for their high-stakes exams.

Which secondary phase year group would you say is the worst affected by learning gaps? (n=300)

Year group	Percentage
Current year 8	7%
Current year 9	14%
Current year 10	21%
Current year 11	18%
Current year 12	17%
Current year 13	2%
Current year 14	5%
No particular year group stands out	15%

4 Pupils have lost between six months and a year of learning

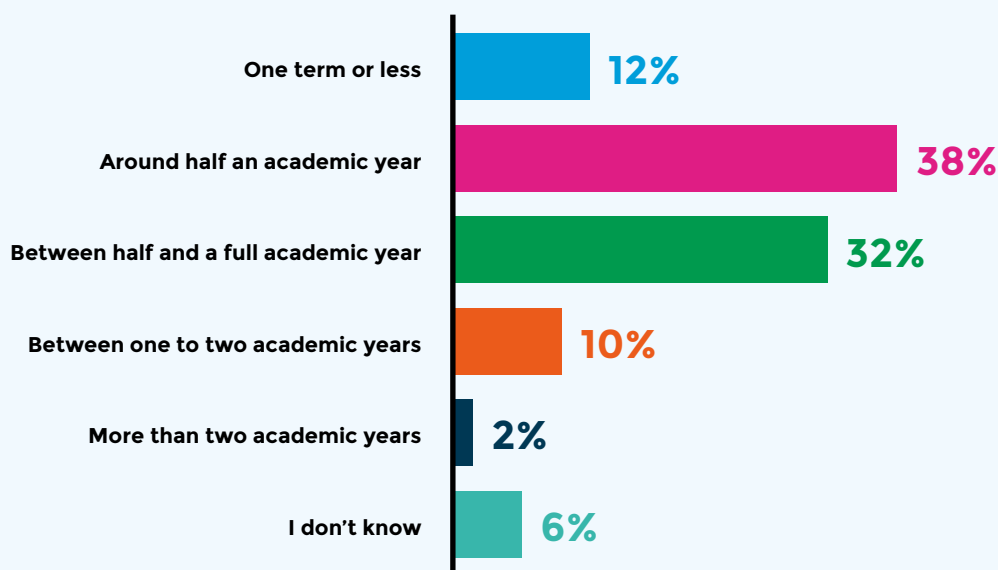**70%** of school leaders believe between half to one academic year of learning has been lost.

The survey asked senior leaders to identify how far behind their pupils are.

70% agree that around half to a full academic year of learning has been lost, while 10% feel this stretches to between one and two years.

Ieuan Price, director of digital learning at St Illtyd's Catholic High School feels the catch-up process will take even longer than the survey suggests. *"Children might need to go right through the education system to fill their learning gaps,"* says Ieuan.

"The children in Reception over lockdown missed out on all the early foundation work those teachers put in place, and if children further up in primary and secondary school lack literacy skills they will be held back in their other subjects too."

How far behind are these children from where they should be? (n=507)

Category	Percentage
One term or less	12%
Around half an academic year	38%
Between half and a full academic year	32%
Between one to two academic years	10%
More than two academic years	2%
I don't know	6%

The consensus among school leaders is that the learning gaps are still very much in evidence and it will take time, patience and expertise to get children to where they need to be. The next section examines how schools are identifying ways to target provision to ensure Generation Catch-up do not remain victims of the Covid legacy.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT GENERATION CATCH-UP

School leaders are finding ways to help the children and young people in their schools overcome the damage done to their education by the pandemic.

This section looks at what schools are doing to fill the learning gaps, prioritise wellbeing and address behaviour and attendance issues so that pupils have the best possible conditions for learning.
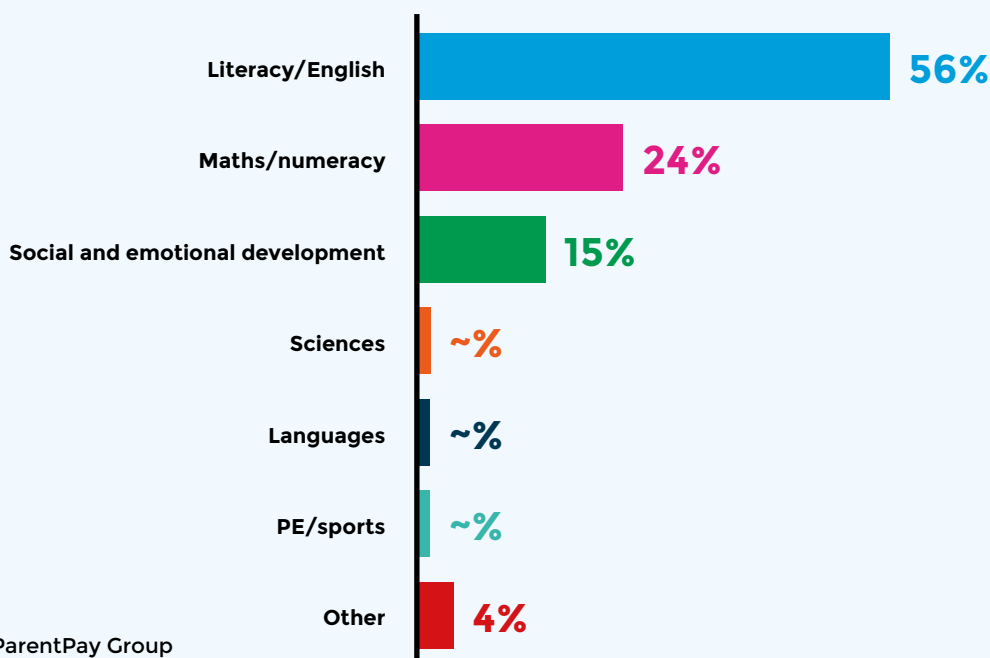
1 Building up the key skills

- **51%** of schools have already increased catch-up programmes for this academic year.

- **16%** have planned additional catch-up programmes but they are not yet rolled out.

The research confirms that schools are still actively implementing Covid catch-up programmes with two thirds increasing or planning them this year.

Only one in ten schools have already reduced their catch-up programmes or are planning to.

So where is the provision being directed?

Which of the following has been the greatest priority for targeted Covid catch-up provision in your school or trust?

Category	Percentage
Literacy/English	56%
Maths/numeracy	24%
Social and emotional development	15%
Sciences	~%
Languages	~%
PE/sports	~%
Other	4%

1 Identify targets for catch-up

The lion's share (56%) of schools' targeted Covid catch-up provision is dedicated to literacy or English.

Peter Hall, assistant headteacher at Beacon Academy explains how his school is addressing reading gaps. *"Children who are three or four years behind on reading age struggle with all subjects. We have employed some reading intervention tutors to find out exactly where pupils' stumbling blocks are on a one-to-one basis as each child has different difficulties.*

"A lack of literacy skills indicates those pupils need support in other subjects too. So for example we looked at our assessment data and identified the weakest pupils in history and geography and spotted they also had the lowest scores in reading tests.

"This enabled us to focus on those who needed the most support and monitor the interventions we put in place for them."

2 Build writing skills across the curriculum

At primary school level, children's writing was significantly impacted by the pandemic, as Donna Faley, headteacher at St Thomas More Catholic Primary, a voluntary academy, explains. *"It was very difficult to teach writing during lockdown and there are still wide gaps in writing skills.*

"To address this, our English lead is working towards the National Professional Qualification in Leading Literacy (NPQLL). We have also embedded writing across the curriculum which gives children opportunities to write at length in subjects like geography, history and RE.

"Producing longer, high quality writing has really helped with children's writing stamina."

3 Reshape the school day

Schools are also reorganising their existing staffing and timetables to deliver more targeted support as Peter Hall explains. *"Using tutor time for additional maths tuition has had a positive impact, and students really appreciate a teacher caring about them and taking time to focus on their progress.*

"It is easy for a student to feel unnoticed in a big school and that individual support is a key factor in improving students' confidence."

Helen Stone, data manager at Southchurch High School, is taking the same approach. *"There are interventions in place for Year 11. They have an extra two and a half hours a week of English, maths and science on a two-week rota in tutor time and breaktimes."*

4 Supplement in-person learning with online catch-up

Another way schools can make the most of existing resources is to use online tuition to supplement in-school learning, as Louise Pink, customer success MAT manager at SIMS and a primary school headteacher during the pandemic, explains. *"If we ran an after school catch-up programme, the chances are around half the children we invited wouldn't attend because many primary school parents wanted to collect their children at the usual time so they could get on with their evening routine.*

"However, when we tried offering online reading or maths support through recorded or live sessions which children could access at home, families worked around that and children were more likely to join in. It also gave teachers more flexibility to manage their own workload and run the catch-up classes from home if it suited their routine."

5 Balance individual and group needs

40% of schools say no single category gives most cause for concern.

37% say children eligible for pupil premium/free school meals give most cause for concern.

18% say children with SEND give most cause for concern.

While 37% of school leaders said children from disadvantaged backgrounds gave them most cause for concern, a larger proportion, 40% felt the pandemic learning gaps were having an impact across the board.

An added complication is that the patterns of need have changed as Chris Kitchen, assistant head of Ysgol Aberconwy Secondary explains. *"Our intake is diverse, we have very affluent families as well as pupils from really deprived areas and we have always focused on closing the gap. But many pupils in the middle who we were not previously concerned about have dropped behind. The pandemic has changed society."*

Having to support more disadvantaged children with a wider range of needs, the school has changed some of the interventions it uses. *"The packages we were using for English and maths were too difficult for some students to access, so we have moved to simpler yet more powerful interventions such as* SAFMEDS *for maths,"* explains Chris Kitchen.

"We haven't got the capacity to keep taking specialist maths teachers off timetable, so the other advantage of these interventions is we can train staff to deliver them easily in the knowledge that the children are getting quality support."

6 Focus on whole cohort gaps

70% of school leaders say there are still children who are not making the progress they need to.

A quarter of school leaders (26%) feel there are still far too many children who are not where they need to be.

While schools have always used interventions to support specific pupil groups, they are also exploring measures to close pandemic related gaps which are still affecting whole year groups.

Which statement best describes the situation in your school/trust? (n507)

| Statement	Percentage
There are still far too many children not making the progress they need to	26%
There are still children not making the progress they need to	44%
Most children are making the progress they need to	26%
All children are making the progress they need to	3%
I don't know	~%
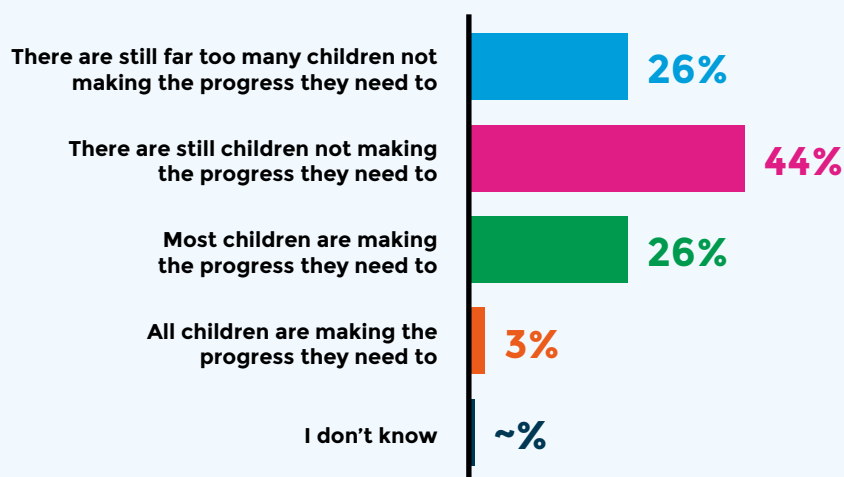
Ieuan Price, director of digital learning at St Illtyd's Catholic High School has seen a change in attitudes to learning on a whole cohort basis which needs to be addressed. *"Our younger year groups have lost some confidence in working independently and seem to need a lot more individual attention than they did before Covid.*

"To respond to this, teachers are adapting tasks into shorter chunks to help children learn more independently, and they are allocating more time in the lesson to explain new concepts."

For primary school cohorts, there is a need to embed learning more thoroughly so children can make progress as Louise Pink, customer success MAT manager at SIMS and former primary headteacher explains. *"We would ask ourselves what we felt the whole cohort was struggling with, for instance what Year 3 as a whole could not do well or still needed to work on, such as applying multiplication to real situations. This not only helps the children who are still building those skills, it benefits children of all abilities."*
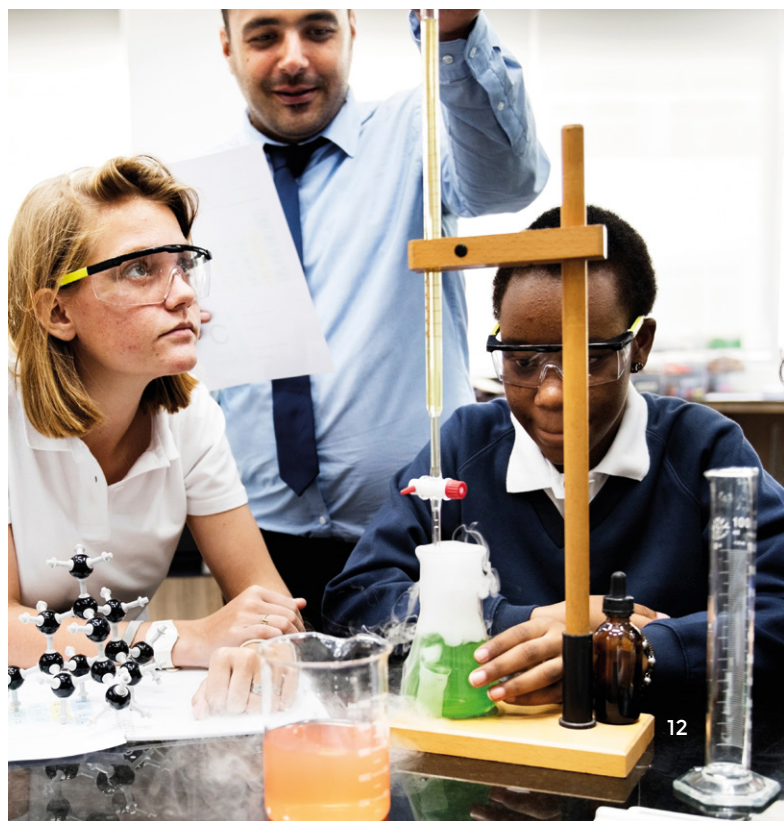
Tips from teachers and school leaders:
building up the key skills

- Use tutor and break times for targeted – and individual – tuition where possible.
- Create live or pre-recorded catch-up sessions for pupils to watch at home.
- Design interventions which can be delivered easily by non-specialist staff.
- Factor more explanation time into lessons and break tasks down into smaller chunks.
- Identify key areas where a whole year group is struggling and bolster those skills for everyone.

Scan this QR code for help and advice to reduce learning gaps and build key skills

www.ess-sims.co.uk/catchupresources
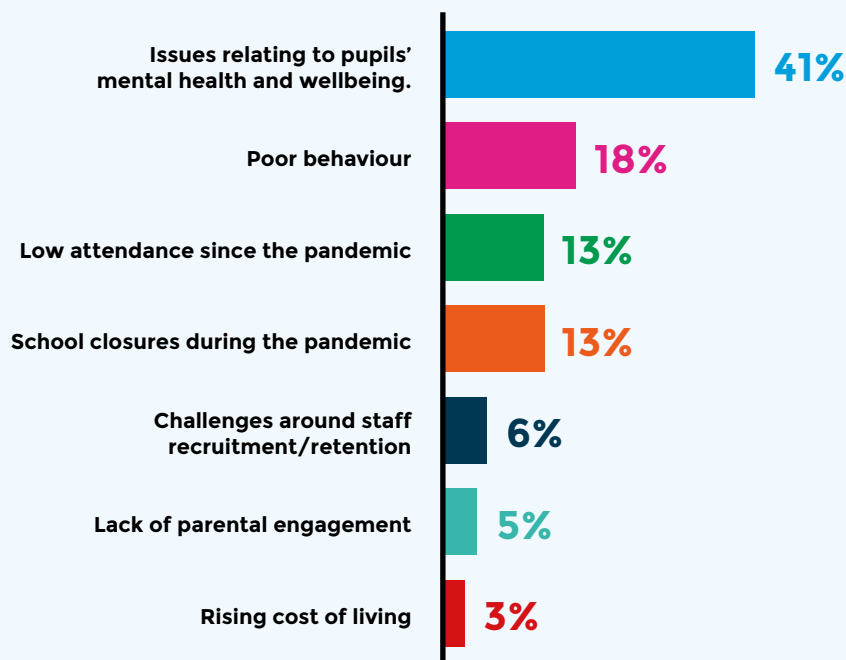
2 Improving pupil wellbeing

41% of senior leaders say issues relating to pupils' mental health and wellbeing have had the greatest negative impact on pupils' learning.

Mental health and wellbeing have a powerful influence on how pupils are performing, and school leaders are putting pupil wellbeing at the top of the agenda, having seen the damage done by the pandemic to children's confidence and resilience.

The survey confirms school leaders' concern about mental health and wellbeing as they named it the biggest factor affecting pupils' learning.

Which of the following do you feel has had the greatest negative impact on pupils' learning? (n507)

Category	Percentage
Issues relating to pupils' mental health and wellbeing.	41%
Poor behaviour	18%
Low attendance since the pandemic	13%
School closures during the pandemic	13%
Challenges around staff recruitment/retention	6%
Lack of parental engagement	5%
Rising cost of living	3%

1   Facilitate conversations around anxiety

There has been a rise in pupils' anxiety levels since the pandemic, and those levels are still high. Schools are making sure pupils have the opportunity to discuss their anxieties so they are better prepared to manage them.

Peter Hall, assistant headteacher at Beacon Academy explains. *"Many young people are more nervous than they were before the pandemic. The positive thing is we are all more open to talking about it.*

We run a counselling service here and at our sixth form site, and we buy in the services of an external charity.

"It's important to be aware of the flashpoints when more people are anxious – for instance when deadlines are approaching, or tests and exams."

2   Encourage pupils to support each other

Schools are having to put more support in place than before the pandemic, as Chris Kitchen, assistant head of Ysgol Aberconwy Secondary explains. *"We have put more staff through mental health first aid courses than ever before so they can raise awareness of the importance of wellbeing.*

"We have also opened up new resources. There are year group breakfast clubs to help pupils start the day well, and new clubs for pupils with specific needs such as ADHD are making the school a more inclusive place to be.

"Our main job is teaching, but pupils can't learn if they are struggling with their mental health."

3   Explore opportunities for external support

At primary level, children's anxiety is still manifesting itself in difficulty separating from parents in the morning, lack of resilience and low mood.

Donna Faley, headteacher of St Thomas More Catholic Primary, a voluntary academy, explains. *"Children's wellbeing and emotional mental health depends in part on how individual families approached the pandemic. Some have been very anxious about hand-washing, others have separation anxiety and sadly some children suffered bereavements.*

"I applied for our school to be part of a wellbeing project, and we now have mental health practitioners attached to our school who deliver specific pastoral support, CBT and wellbeing groups. We also have a morning nurture group which is available for any child who has difficulty separating from parents when they arrive, and some children access this daily while others dip in and out of it.

"It's important for teachers to share information and talk with each other about how a child appears to be responding to counselling or mornings in the nurture group."

4 Help children develop social skills

Being unable to socialise normally during the lockdowns is still having an impact on the way children relate to each other as Ieuan Price, director of digital learning at St Illtyd's Catholic High School explains. *"Year 7 and 8 pupils are displaying what I would describe as primary school behaviour, because they missed out on developing their social skills during the pandemic.*

There are a lot more tears, arguing and falling out than we would normally see.

"Staff are having to upskill to deal with this. They are putting aside time in the day to help pupils resolve their difficulties and helping them to learn how to deal with their emotions in these situations."

5 Identify newly vulnerable children

Helen Stone, data manager at Southchurch High School describes how her school is finding ways to identify and monitor children who are socially vulnerable. *"We are seeing children who are struggling with social skills and that is having an impact on their learning."*

"As a result, we have created a new category in our Management Information System (MIS) called watch to capture children who do not currently fall into the SEND category but who need additional support in the school setting.

"These children are supported through the Curriculum Plus programme and we have employed a member of staff to help pupils with aspects of socialising and pastoral care on an individual basis. They can also work in the Curriculum Plus hub which is their own space in the school where they can build up their skills."

6 Join up wellbeing and learning

Schools are looking at new ways to measure the impact of wellbeing on pupils' performance. Ieuan Price from St Illtyd's Catholic High School describes a new approach his school is taking. *"Pupils have always been given a current and predicted grade, and an attitude to learning grade, but teachers told us it was not giving them enough depth of information about the pupils' wellbeing. So we introduced a new set of measures called the three Rs, respectful, resilient and resourceful. Children are given a score for each of the Rs by every teacher in every subject.*

"These scores are recorded on our MIS along with attainment so our wellbeing team and our academic teaching staff can make links between a pupils' attitude and progress, and step in to support them when needed. For instance, if a pupil scores low on resourcefulness across multiple subjects, we will have a conversation with them to see how we can help."

Tips from teachers and school leaders:
improving pupil wellbeing

- Prepare for anxiety hotspots – exam season, beginning of term, school social events.
- Provide clubs, resources or spaces where pupils can support each other.
- Set up a system to identify children who are newly vulnerable or at risk of needing support.
- Report attitude to learning in more depth so pastoral and teaching staff can share information.
- Encourage teachers to share any concerns they have about a pupil with colleagues.

Scan this QR code for help and advice to help manage pupil wellbeing
www.ess-sims.co.uk/catchupresources

3 Helping pupils reset their behaviour

18% of school leaders felt poor behaviour has had the greatest negative impact on pupils' learning.

School leaders have witnessed some changes in pupil behaviour since the pandemic, and the survey identified behaviour as a key factor which is hindering pupils' learning. However, many of the behaviour issues appear to be closely linked to raised levels of anxiety or socialisation issues caused by the pandemic rather than simply poor conduct.

Donna Faley, headteacher of St Thomas More Catholic Primary, a voluntary academy, is still seeing more challenging behaviour from pupils following the pandemic.

"To help pupils back into more positive behaviour, our staff have been trained in Trauma Informed practice. It's a very specific approach to supporting children with emotional mental health needs and the ethos is 'easy on the child, firm on the boundaries.' This is helping us show children what is acceptable behaviour while improving their wellbeing and self-esteem."

1 Monitor incidents closely

To reduce the impact of poor behaviour on learning, it is important to monitor patterns of behaviour so they can be addressed immediately, as Helen Stone, data manager at Southchurch High School explains. *"Behaviour issues can escalate rapidly so we record all incidents across the school and review them on a weekly basis. We look at incidents and see if there are links to particular classes, teachers or times of day and this is reported to the pastoral team and SLT.*

"The head of year might ask me to look at the data around a specific child to see if there are any personality clashes with teachers, or peer to peer conflict so we can address individual cases promptly and get the child back on track."

Professor Toby Salt emphasises the need to monitor behaviour patterns. *"It is useful to look for themes and issues at all levels – year group, school and trust. If there is an uptick in racist incidents, homophobia or bullying, school leaders need to know about it quickly so they can nip it in the bud.*

"Having accurate information about trends in behaviour is important for informing decisions about the best paths of action to take, whether the issue is addressed in a whole school assembly, tutor time or as part of the curriculum."

2 Work with parents to boost resilience

Children have become less resilient since the pandemic which is affecting their behaviour and making it harder for them to deal with everyday challenges. As a result, some parents want to be more involved in the intricacies of their child's school life.

"We also get a lot of parents stepping in and wanting to talk to us about issues they would previously have trusted us to deal with," explains Chris Kitchen, assistant head of Ysgol Aberconwy Secondary. *"We sometimes have hour long meetings to talk about friendship issues or why a child has moved maths set, something which wouldn't have happened a few years ago.*

"Where parents want this level of involvement we support them, but we also try to rebuild their trust in us by backing up the decisions we make with evidence and pupil data. We work alongside parents with the ultimate aim of helping children become more independent."

Professor Toby Salt suggests many parents still expect the level of instant communication they received during the pandemic. *"Parents want to be more closely involved than previously which is good, but it can be time-consuming for schools to communicate frequently with parents.*

"Some schools are keeping in regular contact with parents using simple, online reporting with positive news about behaviour, rewards and progress. It's an effective way to engage parents but also to shift the responsibility over the pupil for their behaviour and achievement.

"Digestible and friendly communications via texts such as 'just to let you know Charlie has moved up a reading level' or 'Alex helped a friend at breaktime' motivate parents to be partners in their children's education."

Tips from teachers and school leaders:
helping pupils reset their behaviour

- **Assess behaviour management training programmes to see which best suits the pupils.**
- **Record information about behaviour incidents and use it to spot any patterns.**
- **Monitor trends in behaviour across a year group, school or trust.**
- **Use behaviour data to make decisions about how to remedy issues and measure their success.**
- **Involve parents in helping children become more responsible and resilient.**

Scan this QR code for help and advice to manage behaviour

www.ess-sims.co.uk/catchupresources

4 Raising attendance levels

13% of school leaders say low attendance since the pandemic has had the greatest impact on pupils' learning.

While low attendance levels were by necessity a feature of the pandemic years, school attendance has still not recovered to pre-pandemic levels.

Meanwhile each day of school missed is increasing learning gaps and hindering progress.

1 Make pupils feel welcome

Peter Hall, assistant headteacher of Beacon Academy describes how his school is tackling the attendance issue. *"Pupils are taking more days out of school than before Covid and there may be a feeling that they can take more time away from school to recover from any illness, and therefore lost learning is becoming more of an issue."*

Peter describes how balancing a tough stance on attendance with a softer approach can be effective.

"We remind pupils of the value and importance of being at school. We point out that they are missing out by not coming in, but we also welcome them back at the gate every day and show them we're really pleased to see them. The overall message has to be positive – yes, you missed yesterday but it's still better you are here today and we can help you make progress."

Ieuan Price, director of digital learning at St Illtyd's Catholic High School also recognises the importance of making pupils feel welcomed. *"It's important to see the patterns in attendance so you know who is normally on time and who is late or missing a lot of school. We try to find out why they are struggling to get in rather than berating them for it straight away. We don't want to put them off coming to school."*

2 Show parents the importance of attendance

The pandemic has understandably changed people's attitudes towards taking time off for illness and this is having an impact on how families approach school absences. Ieuan Price, director of digital learning at St Illtyd's Catholic High School explains. *"Pupils are taking more time off for each illness because people are more wary about spreading infections and making others ill. It has become much more acceptable to keep children at home for very minor conditions, and now more parents are working from home they are able to keep children off school. As a result, we rarely have a full cohort of classes.*

"Looking at patterns of attendance is important, and we hold weekly meetings with the deputy head to review the data and see where attendance is dropping or picking up so we can address the worst cases.

"Our school has taken on two new family engagement officers who go out into the community and meet families of low attendance to talk to them, find out what the issues are and build back their confidence. There have been big improvements with some individuals."

The research has highlighted the strength of the links between wellbeing, behaviour and attendance, and the need for all these to be in a good place so a child can learn.

Each of the strategies school leaders are using will ensure children want to be at school, building positive connections with their friends and teachers so they can fill the learning gaps left over from the pandemic.

Tips from teachers and school leaders: attendance levels

- **Give pupils a positive welcome when they return to school so they will feel better about returning.**
- **Encourage pupils to see the value of school by showing them how much learning they might miss.**
- **Visit parents of pupils with low attendance and talk to them about their concerns.**
- **Reassure pupils and parents who have health concerns that school is a safe environment.**
- **Monitor attendance data so any changes or drops in attendance can be acted upon.**

Scan this QR code for help and advice to improve attendance

www.ess-sims.co.uk/catchupresources

CONCLUSION

Any disruption to schooling is bound to have a negative impact on a child's progress, but the long months of lockdowns and restrictions have had far-reaching effects on the education of a generation.

School leaders are in agreement that all the elements which contribute to a child's learning including their wellbeing, behaviour and attendance are still being affected by the pandemic three years after it first struck.

However, the overall message is positive. Teachers are acutely aware of the challenges their pupils face and they are adapting their approaches to make sure individual needs and whole-cohort gaps are addressed. As a result, their pupils are building on the skills they need to access the curriculum and move ahead in their learning.

Over the years pupil wellbeing has taken on a growing importance, but the pandemic has put mental and emotional health in the spotlight more than ever before. Schools are demonstrating every day that wellbeing is not simply a nice to have, it is a fundamental part of a child's school experience. New thinking and inclusive approaches are helping children manage anxiety and build positive relationships.

Good behaviour is key to learning, and school leaders are getting pupils back into the right frame of mind for school with patience and understanding.

By monitoring behaviour incidents and keeping a close eye on patterns and trends, schools are able to take action quickly on poor behaviour while encouraging pupils to build their compassion and resilience.

While it is taking time for attendance levels to recover from the pandemic, schools are tackling the root cause of poor attendance by helping pupils and families understand the value of being in school.

Careful observation of attendance figures helps schools pinpoint which children are having difficulty getting into school so they can find out why. Positive reinforcement works well when teachers show pupils they are pleased to see them in their classes.

The pandemic caused deep pockets of long-term damage to a generation of children, but the outlook is starting to look brighter. As the school leaders in our report have demonstrated, so much can be achieved by working together to get pupils back on track with their wellbeing, independence and learning.

SIMS

SIMS management information system (MIS) from ESS (part of ParentPay Group) is trusted by thousands of schools. As the UK's leading MIS, SIMS provides key insights for leaders into all aspects of school life, be it measuring attainment, tracking absences or monitoring interventions, greatly simplifying school management.

To find out how SIMS can help your school address the long-term effects of the pandemic, please contact info@ess-sims.co.uk

Scan this QR code for help and advice to support your pupils' progress

www.ess-sims.co.uk/catchupresources

Contributors

With thanks to our contributors. The schools which took part all use SIMS for their school data management and pupil progress tracking.

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