

**NSPCC response to indicators of a school's contribution to well-being
(Ofsted and the Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2008)**

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Introduction

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) is the UK's leading charity specialising in child protection and the prevention of cruelty to children. The NSPCC aims to end cruelty to children by seeking to influence legislation, policy, practice, attitudes and behaviours for the benefit of children and young people. This is achieved through a combination of service provision, lobbying, campaigning and public education.

The NSPCC believes that, given the will, all cruelty can be prevented. In order to achieve this, it is vital that all children, whatever their needs, have a range of services that are flexible and offer them support and protection. The NSPCC has a large number of services in the UK and the Channel Islands which aim to:

- Prevent children being abused by working with parents and carers in vulnerable families to improve their knowledge and skills in safeguarding, and giving children and young people someone to turn to through the provision of our Listening Services.
- Protect vulnerable children and young people from abuse by providing direct services in a number of settings, including schools and young people's centres. We also protect them by providing Listening Services for adults to ensure they have someone to turn to with their concerns; by ensuring that abused children and young people are identified and effective action is taken to protect them, and by working with young people and adults who pose a risk to children and young people to reduce the risk of abuse.
- Help children and young people who have been abused overcome the effects of abuse and achieve their potential.

In drawing together this response, we have consulted with NSPCC education specialists working in England. NSPCC education specialists provide training and advice to teachers on a wide range of child protection related areas. Their aim is to help school staff identify signs of possible abuse and give children the skills they need to protect themselves. They do this in a number of ways such as providing independent counselling, advice and support for children and young people and giving them the confidence to seek help. They also provide school staff with the opportunity to talk to a trusted professional about child protection concerns in confidence.

General comments

The NSPCC welcomes the development of indicators of for how schools contribute to children's well-being.

Some schools have long recognised that they have a role in supporting young people's broader social, emotional and physical development and in particular the role that a child's well-being plays in fulfilling their educational potential and promoting their educational attainment. However, evidence from NSPCC Education Advisers suggests that some schools have not embraced the concept of supporting the 'whole child' through their pastoral care, ethos, teaching, curriculum and activities beyond the school day. With all schools becoming extended schools by 2010, offering a range of activities such as childcare, access to targeted and specialist services and parenting support, it is important they should be supported and monitored and evaluated through having a clear set of indicators for how they should be contributing to pupil well-being.

The Government's proposals for a 21st Century school are highly ambitious and represent a significant cultural change in the role of schools in society and how and by whom services for vulnerable children and their families are delivered. This will take time and commitment to achieve. Teachers and other school staff will need support, training and resources if the vision proposed is to become reality. This must include time and resources for teaching and pastoral staff to share information and positively collaborate with other schools and agencies in their area. It will be especially important to provide these things to support children who are moving from primary to secondary school which is known to be a time when both children and parents can need support to adjust to such a major change in a child's life.

Schools should receive guidance about involving children in identifying what they would like and what would help them, which can include things such as involving them in developing discipline policy, also schools councils and other methods of genuinely involving children in decision making in the school and listening to children. This is in line with Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Children which states that a child who is capable of forming his or her own views should be afforded the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting them.

Schools should also receive guidance on how to evaluate success in promoting pupil well-being. This should include specific guidance on how to gather views from children and young people on how they think well-being has either improved or decreased and how their views have been used to change the school environment or services provided in the school.

The NSPCC has developed a set of safeguarding standards for schools which underpin an interactive web-based safeguarding quality improvement tool. The tool is designed to help schools to audit and improve their own safeguarding performance, including pupil well-being, and helps them to demonstrate this within the relevant schools inspection process. We have

extensively consulted with schools in developing the standards and are currently piloting the tool. We would welcome the opportunity to share our learning and expertise with Ofsted, as this may be helpful for both for the development of school-level well-being indicators and to help schools with evaluating their duty to promote pupil wellbeing.

Response to specific questions

Q1. Do you agree with this view of schools' accountability for well-being?

| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--------------------------|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | X | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments

Yes. We agree with the accountability of schools for well-being as set out on page 9 of the consultation document.

Schools play a consistent and critical part in a child or young person's life and their ethos should be supportive and responsive to individual children – their learning styles and abilities, and their personal circumstances. They should also provide support services to maintain children's well-being and be able to support parents and carers in promoting children and young people's well-being.

Schools as a whole, rather than individual teachers, should be accountable for promoting children and young people's well-being. They should be held accountable for their ethos, the implementation of their discipline and bullying policies, their provision of personal, social, health and economic education and for how well the work with other agencies and how successful their 'extended services' are in meeting children's needs.

It is important that schools receive the necessary resources and support to enable them to promote and achieve improved well-being for children and young people in school.

Q2. Do you agree that a 'well-being profile' for the local area should be made available to schools and inspectors?

| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|----------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments

Yes. A 'well-being profile' for the local area should be made available to schools. This will provide schools with useful information about specific challenges facing the local area where the school is situated. The information should be presented and used sensitively and not be used to stigmatise schools.

Q3. Do you agree about the use and limitations of indicators?

| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--------------------------|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments

Yes. Some of the proposed indicators are based on a child or young person's perception of their well-being. This can be very difficult to quantify or analyse and for this reason we agree with paragraph 18 which states that the indicators should be used alongside other evidence when investigating and evaluating the well-being of children and young people and the school's contribution to it.

Q4. Do you agree with this approach to the publication of the indicators?

| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--------------------------|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments

Yes. It would be very useful for local authorities and voluntary sector services to be able to benchmark a school's contribution to promoting well-being within a local area. This could then be used to ascertain the contribution a school makes in promoting well-being on a year-by-year basis.

However, the indicators will need to be contextualised with the well-being indicators for the local area as a whole and not just for the school and young people to avoid the indicators being misinterpreted or misconstrued.

The published indicators should be seen as an opportunity to promote collaboration between schools to share best practice and knowledge rather than a source of competition between schools. It will also be information that will be used by parents to choose a school; for this reason, we advocate a 'value-added' approach to the tables so that parents can assess this data realistically.

Q5. Are these the right indicators relating to quantified outcomes?

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|--|----------------|--|--|---|--|
| Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> | Agree x | Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> | Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|----------------|--|--|---|--|

Comments

The current indicators outlined on page 12 of the consultation document will provide a limited amount of information about a school's contribution to well-being. Although they do not directly address the issues around well-being they are the only consistent and quantifiable measures currently available. The proposed indicators are imperfect measures of well-being and more appropriate measures should be developed that can be used consistently across schools.

The indicators should be used alongside other information from the school including:

- The number of fixed-term exclusions
- The number of behaviour incidents
- The number of bullying incidents
- The level of pupil absences and lateness and responses to these.
- The pastoral systems accessible to all children and young people
- The provision of personal, social, health and economic education
- The promotion of positive behaviour and relationships through policy and practice understood by students and modelled by teachers and other staff.
- The safety of children and young people going to and from school as well as in school.

This information should be equally weighted with perception data on how safe a child or young person feels within the school and access to support services.

Q6. Will the items listed in paragraph 26 yield appropriate indicators of pupils' well-being and the school's contribution to it?

| | | | | | |
|--|----------------|--|--|---|--|
| Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> | Agree x | Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> | Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> | Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|----------------|--|--|---|--|

Comments

The list under paragraph 26 includes appropriate indicators of pupils' well-being and the school's contribution to it. We particularly welcome the inclusion of children and young people feeling listened to and knowing who approach if they have a concern. We consider this to be a vital element in promoting children and young people's well-being and keeping them safe.

However, there are a number of gaps. We welcome the inclusion of pupils' experience of bullying and recommend that this includes a measure of the extent to which children and young people experience bullying, both from other children and from teachers and other staff, as well as how the school deals with incidents of bullying.

We recommend the inclusion of a number of further indicators, namely that each school:

- Has teachers who know what to do if a child or young person discloses abuse and where to refer a child or young person if they are in need or are being abused
- Is represented on the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- Is represented on the Children's Trust Board
- Has a peer support scheme

Q7. Do you agree with the approach set out above?

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments

Yes. It is important that data is collected in a consistent way to help schools plan support services and extended school services for children, young people and their families.

Schools who do not commission surveys of children, young people and parents will need particular support in implementing methods of collecting data.

Q8. Do you agree that an accreditation system as proposed above would be appropriate?

| | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
| | | | | | |

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|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

Comments

Yes.

Q9. Do you agree that, where appropriate, for example in post-16, school-level survey of pupils and parent perceptions should be brought together with other surveys such as Tellus and the FfE to avoid duplication?

| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|----------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| x | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Comments

Yes, providing this process collates the information required to ascertain a school's contribution to promoting the well-being of children and young people. Schools should not be required to produce duplicated data.

It would be useful if the Tellus survey included questions which do not change from year to year and which are completed in the same schools on a regular basis. This would produce consistent comparative data which could generate a clear picture about how children and young people's well-being is developing in England.

**For further information, please contact: Emily Arkell, Policy Adviser – Safeguarding
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