



OXFORD SDG  
IMPACT LAB

# Relational Trust & Engagement

## Trust-Building Mechanisms between Schools and Economically Disadvantaged Families

### INTRODUCTION

This report asks what existing stakeholder survey, policy and outcome data suggest about conditions supporting or constraining relational trust at School A, within Trust A, and the potential implications for economically disadvantaged pupils and families. We hope to contribute to the wider discussion of the barriers that may prevent student and family engagement.

### LITERATURE

- Survey completion and school event attendance should not be treated as a complete account of parental engagement. (Harris and Goodall, 2008)
- Two-way communication and whole-school approaches are important in facilitating parental engagement. Practical barriers to (Goodall and Vorhaus, 2011).

### METHOD

- Stakeholder survey analysis
- Documentary analysis of school policies
- Analysis of Pupil Performance and Attainment data

| Item (abbreviated)              | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | All schools | Gap* |
|---------------------------------|------|------|------|------|-------------|------|
| Q15 Respect / equal treatment   | 7.9  | 7.9  | 8.0  | 8.0  | 7.8         | +0.2 |
| Q5 Encouragement to read        | 7.4  | 8.0  | 5.5  | 8.0  | 7.0         | +1.0 |
| Q8 Adult to discuss worries     | 5.7  | 6.0  | 5.8  | 6.3  | 6.7         | -0.4 |
| Q7 Teachers listen in lessons   | 6.1  | 6.1  | 6.2  | 6.2  | 6.5         | -0.3 |
| Q2 Teachers help me do my best  | 6.1  | 6.2  | 6.1  | 6.2  | 6.7         | -0.5 |
| Q12 Feeling safe                | 6.9  | 6.9  | 6.8  | 6.8  | 7.0         | -0.2 |
| Q18 Physical / mental wellbeing | —    | 5.9  | 6.2  | 5.8  | 6.1         | -0.3 |
| Q16 Next-step information       | 6.6  | 5.9  | 5.8  | 6.4  | 6.6         | -0.2 |
| Q19 Satisfaction with clubs     | —    | —    | 5.9  | 6.1  | 6.4         | -0.3 |
| Q20 Participation in clubs      | —    | —    | 4.3  | 4.2  | 5.0         | -0.8 |

### SURVEY FINDINGS

- Parents and staff reported relatively positive experiences, while students were less positive about aspects of support. This suggests that institutional intentions and adult perceptions may not always align with students' lived experiences.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Supplement survey data with accessible two-way engagement processes e.g. group/one-to-one discussions
2. Develop a proportionate approach to student status disaggregation to enable safe and purposeful disadvantage comparisons

### CONCLUSION

- Our findings highlight the value of two-way communication practices between schools and families to promote inclusion and diversity of voices.

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Full Report



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