

Ofsted research finds pupil motivation around remote education is a significant concern for parents and school leaders

Although remote education is helping to plug the learning gap during the COVID-19 pandemic, pupil engagement and motivation remains a significant challenge for schools and parents, according to a new report.

Published today, [Ofsted's in-depth study on remote education](#) finds that many schools are doing a good job of mitigating children's learning loss. But keeping pupils motivated remains a challenge, despite schools having made strides in their remote learning offers.

Nearly half of parents who responded to Ofsted's survey said that keeping their child focused on studying was a top concern, along with motivation and having enough contact with teachers. This was echoed by school leaders, with many working hard to increase pupil engagement and to find better ways for pupils and teachers to interact.

[Recent government guidance](#) has strengthened expectations around remote education. Today's report explores the challenges schools, teachers and other providers face in meeting those expectations, and looks at the solutions they are finding to make sure children get a good education while away from the classroom. Ofsted also commissioned surveys of parents and teachers' views about how their children were faring while learning remotely.

The report also finds:

- A large proportion of schools in England feel that they are doing well at mitigating children's learning loss through remote education. Three-fifths of teachers surveyed said they were confident they were providing a high-quality remote education when this was needed. However, schools are at different stages of development, and there is wide variability in the remote learning on offer.
- When developing remote education, most leaders said they focused on making sure pupils were learning what they needed to, rather than focusing on the technology. Several heads said that they expected teachers – with a little adaptation if needed – to deliver lessons as they would in person, modelling answers, questioning pupils and giving feedback as normal.
- Many school leaders do not see remote education as a barrier to curriculum delivery and believe learning opportunities, levels of pupil

engagement and expectations should be the same regardless. Several leaders were ambitious with their curriculum, arguing that its breadth and depth should not be compromised or narrowed for remote education.

- Parents and schools are concerned about children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and their engagement with remote education. Nearly two thirds of parents of a child with SEND said they had been disengaged with remote learning, compared with almost 40 per cent of parents of children without additional needs. While some special schools have adapted their remote education to support SEND pupils, such as supplying assisted reading technology, more work needs to be done to engage children with SEND.
- Leaders who participated in the research did not always regard remote provision as an entirely temporary measure. The report highlights the potential benefits of remote learning in the long term, such as providing teaching for snow days or extended periods of illness or absence, to minimise learning loss.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, said:

While remote education will help to mitigate the learning lost when children are out of the classroom, it's clear that pupils' motivation and engagement remains an issue. This, along with the pressure remote learning places on teachers and parents, is proving a real barrier to children's learning and development.

Despite the challenges, I am impressed by the flexibility and innovation shown by teachers and leaders involved in our research. I hope these insights will be valuable to schools that are still developing their own remote education offer.

'My thanks to all the teachers and school leaders across the country whose continued efforts mean that children can still receive a quality education, even in such difficult circumstances.'

From today (25 January), Ofsted is resuming monitoring inspections of schools judged to be inadequate at their previous inspection, as well as some graded 'requires improvement'. Monitoring inspections look at the progress a school is making and encourage improvement. Unlike full inspections, they do not result in a grade. Inspections will be carried out remotely by default, but we will continue to carry out on-site inspections where we have immediate concerns – for example, about safeguarding, the leadership of a school or a failure to provide education to children.

You can read more about [our monitoring inspections online](#).