

How Pupils View the Educational Environment in Basic School

The Thermometer 2006-2007 - national results



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Key figures from the Thermometer

This report is concerned with central issues which can be used as indicators of the quality of the educational environment for pupils in the Danish basic school – as perceived by the pupils. The report has been based on extracts¹ from DCUM's electronic mapping tool/questionnaire, the Thermometer. The Thermometer is targeted at pupils in the basic school's 4th-10th grade and at the junior-school pupils², i.e. the 0th to 3rd grade. The replies have been harvested during the school year 2006-2007. The Thermometer for this period contains replies to various questions from app. 45,000-56,000 pupils with respect to the 4th-10th grade and in the environment of 15,880-19,350 from the junior-school pupils. Some questions received more and others fewer responses – this fact has been specified in connection with each question or topic.

The report comprises key figures as to how pupils experience the educational environment within the following topics:

- General satisfaction with the school and the class
- The class and the classmates
- Bullying
- Conflicts
- The class teacher
- The lessons and the teaching
- Stress
- Settings 1: premises, arrangement, aesthetics and outdoor areas
- Settings 2: ergonomic features and indoor climate
- Activity facilities
- Health og general well-being

The junior-school pupils' responses to the various topics have been described in separately marked sections with the heading: What's the opinion of the junior pupils? Some topics do not feature any data from junior school which is owing to the fact that the 'talking' questionnaire designed for the junior-school pupils comprises no questions related to these topics.

With this report DCUM wishes to publish central figures collected from the Thermometer which is continuously being expanded by responses from the pupils. The purpose has, in part, been to establish visibility and to create debate on the national figures and results with respect to how pupils experience their educational environment and, in part, to encourage further investigations – locally, regionally or nationally. It should be stressed that the figures do not reveal anything about the individual schools as to the rating of their educational environment (REE), their performance or their condition; it is rather about the totality of pupil responses for the school year 2006-2007.

1 The report solely comprises selected questions and answers from the Thermometer. The topics included have been chosen as representing the most central for the period – central because the replies/figures indicate quality, problem or imply attention in the educational environment of the pupils. Hence, this report neither comprises nor comments upon all questions, replies and figures harvested from the Thermometer.

2 The Thermometer for the national basic school consists of two different modular questionnaires: a 'talking' questionnaire targeted at the 0th-3rd junior-school grades, and another questionnaire targeted at 4th-10th grade.

DCUM has commented the figures of the report, partly for facilitating the reading, and partly for reasons of putting the figures into perspective and encouraging to debate. There may, however be differing attitudes, other ways of reading and interpreting the figures; and, hence, DCUM does not pretend to monopolise the assessment of the values and pointers represented by the figures. Figures will be figures, and they cannot on their own enounce the truth about the condition of the educational environment in Denmark. Figures may represent pointers, and it is precisely such pointers that DCUM has wished to put into focus with this report, for purposes of:

- Meeting a demand for knowledge about the overall national picture
- Establishing a basis for an ensuing debate about the quality of the pupils' educational environment
- Establishing a basis for a closer investigation into the quality of the pupils' educational environment
- Encouraging continued curiosity and initiative in the various players and stakeholders of the basic general education in Denmark.

On www.termometeret.dk, you can read more, albeit in Danish only, and here you can also test the Thermometer.

On www.dcum.dk/dcum/in_english, you can read more about educational environment in Denmark.

General satisfaction with the school and the class 4th-10th grade

The general pupil satisfaction with the educational environment of their school provides an overall cue with respect to the shape of the educational environment. The general satisfaction survey is followed by topical questions of exhaustive character as to the various constituents of the educational environment. In this report, three questions from the Thermometer have been selected as indicators of the general pupil satisfaction in the 4th-10th grade.

1. Do you like your school?

58,498 pupils answered the question.

86% of the pupils reply that they like their school, while 14% of the pupils reply that they do not like their school.

To like your school can span a variety of issues; nonetheless, the question indicates whether the individual pupils, by and large, feel comfortable at their school – i.e. beyond their own age group, classmates, their own teachers, etc. Thus, it may also concern the pupils' general knowledge of the staff, the physical framework and how the pupils move around in the school (indoors as outdoors), and, finally, the general well-being of the pupils and their sense of belonging in school.

By far the majority of the pupils like their school. Yet, a relatively high percentage, 14%, do not like their school. This signifies that there are pupils who, for some reason or other, do not thrive in school.

2. Do you like your teachers?

58,497 pupils answered the question.

75% reply that they like their teachers, while 23% reply that they like one or a few of their teachers, whereas 2% do not like any of their teachers.

The teachers play a decisive role in the educational environment, i.e. with respect to both the learning and well-being of the pupil. Hence, it is important that there is a good relationship between pupil and teacher.

It gives food for thought that as many as 23% reply that they (only) like one or a few of their teachers since the pupils will frequently have up to five different teachers attached to their educational programme. The important factor, however, is that there is at least one teacher whom they like and feel comfortable with.

3. Do you feel secure in your class?

58,456 pupils answered the question.

92% of the pupils reply that they feel secure in their class.

This is very positive since security is an important factor in a good educational environment focussed on learning and well-being.

8% of the pupils state that they do not feel secure in their class. When this percentage is converted into concrete pupils, viz. 5,174 pupils, it appears to be a large number because security is so closely linked to well-being and learning. Whether the lack of security is permanent or periodical should be subjected to closer examination by the individual school.

What's the opinion of the junior-school pupils? ... about their general satisfaction with their school and their class

Between 19,337 and 19,359 pupils have replied to the following questions via the talking version of the Thermometer.

1. Do you like going to school?

75% of the pupils in the oth-3rd grade like going to school – as reported in the school year 2006-2007. 22% of the pupils answer 'now and then' while only 2% do not like going to school. Thus, the situation appears to be quite positive, although it should be noted that 22% like going to school only occasionally.

2. How do you get on with your teachers?

83% of the pupils get on well with their teachers, 15% fairly well, while 2% of the pupils do not get on very well with their teachers. Once again, the picture emerging as to the pupils' general satisfaction with their relations to junior-school teachers is an overall positive one.

3. Do you like your class?

88% of the pupils reply that they like their class. 10% like it fairly well, while 2% of the pupils reply that they do 'not really' like their class. Yet again, a mainly positive picture of the pupils' general satisfaction with the class they attend.

The class is the primary social frame of reference for the individual pupil. It is therefore important that the individual pupil experience a good identification with and a sense of belonging to his or her class. Consequently, it should be noted that, in total, 12% of the pupils are 'not quite happy' about their class. This is an issue which ought to be subjected to closer examination in order that it be rectified as soon as possible.

The class and the classmates

4th-10th grade

Being part of a comradeship is a decisive factor for the individual pupil's sense of belonging; for the individual pupil's well-being and personal development; and for the development of social competences. The concept of comradeship is, in this connection, not the sense of friendship, but rather an indication as to whether the individual pupil is part of a class community. Comradeship/community does not represent any stable unit in a class, however. It will vary as minor comradeships/communities branch out within the framework of the main class community. We selected three central questions from the Thermometer for elucidating how pupils in the 4th-10th grade experience their class and their classmates.

1. Do you feel left out of the class comradeship?

55,507 pupils answered the question.

68% of the pupils reply that only seldom or never do they feel left out of the class comradeship. 26% of the pupils feel left out of the class comradeship once in a while, whereas 6% feel left out frequently.

The 26% feeling occasionally left out of the comradeship do not really constitute an alarming number. It may rather be construed as expressing the fact that comradeship is not at stake in everyday life. Nonetheless, this should not prevent a continued attention to the fact that 25% of the pupils reveal that, for periods at a time, they feel left out of the comradeship. This may constitute a problem as it may signify an expression of mal-adjustment – and a subsequent risk of an unhealthy educational environment.

The 6% who always, or most of the time, feel left out of the comradeship will require a closer attention. Being left out may mean several things: that of experiencing being allocated a negative role (e.g. scapegoat; the one always being made fun of by everybody else; or the one who is always chosen last or avoided by the others in connection with group/team work) or otherwise being neglected. It might be worth considering whether such pupils are really being left out? What is their actual role in the social hierarchy existing in the class? What can be done, in class, to constructively ensure that those pupils experiencing isolation be let into the comradeship again?

2. Do you think your class speaks rudely among each other?

55,509 pupils answered the question.

79% of the pupils do not think that the class speaks rudely among each other – anyway only seldom or once in a while. 21% of the pupils find that the class speaks rudely among each other.

That 21% - the equivalent of app. every fifth pupil – consider their language to be rude is a very high percentage. This may entail unnecessary conflicts and a sense of insecurity in the class, perhaps making it legitimate to be 'picking at' each other in negative ways.

3. Does your class have any rules for how to behave towards each other?

Between 36,152 and 55,488 pupils answered questions related to rules.

65% of the pupils answer yes to the question about rules for behaviour in class, while 14% ans-

wer no, and 21% do not know whether they have rules for how to behave towards one another in their class. 90% of the pupils believe that they mostly or always comply with the rules, while 38% of the pupils find that their fellow classmates break the rules daily or almost daily.

With respect to the aspect of having rules for social behaviour in class, this is ambiguous for the 4th-10th grade pupils. They experience a distinction between personal compliance with the rules and how others comply. Where there are social rules in a class, it is important that everyone is familiar with such rules and that these make sense for the pupils in the daily social activities of the class.

What's the opinion of the junior-school pupils? ... about their class and their classmates

Between 18,733 and 18,748 pupils answered the questions below in the talking version of the Thermometer.

1. Do you have any good friends among your classmates?

94% of the pupils answer yes, 5% are in doubt, while only 1% answer no to having any friends in their class.

It is positive that such a large number of basic-school pupils have good friends in their class. This will contribute to establishing a good spirit of solidarity and a sense of security in the class, and it will instil a liking for attending school.

2. Do you think your class speaks rudely among each other?

40% of the pupils answer no, 50% answer that they, sometimes, speak rudely to each other in class, while 10% answer that they frequently find the tone in class to be rude.

When the pupils answer that they frequently speak rudely to each other, we assume that this is actually perceived as being rude and thus not just as an accepted and a bit 'peculiar' way of speaking to one another. In addition, it seems to be a very early stage of schooling for so many, half the pupils, to experience the tone to be rude – albeit only sometimes. How often is “sometimes” in this connection? In which connections is rude language used? And how does this affect the pupils? Basic-school pupils are quite capable of participating in discussions about language and the tone among themselves and also of establishing a set of social ground rules for conversion into everyday practice. An early focus on the importance of the way people associate and speak to each other may contribute to creating a healthy and secure educational environment.

3. Does your class have any rules for how to behave towards each other?

93% of the pupils answer that their class has rules setting out how to behave towards one another in the class. 96% of the pupils answer that they mainly comply with the rules while experiencing that 93% of the others (their classmates) comply with the rules.

Thus, ground rules for social behaviour is very widespread in basic school; and apparently, they work as intended.

Bullying 4th-10th grade

The experience of being bullied in school is a central indication as to whether there is a good or bad educational environment – mentally and socially. Bullying is offensive and has vital consequences for the individual pupil involved in the bullying as for the pupils on the fringes. Bullying has an adverse effect on the conditions of community and fellowship, and it is a sign of an unhealthy class culture where well-being and learning will have unfavourable conditions. Hence, we elected to include ten questions from the Thermometer to elucidate how pupils in the 4th-10th grade experience bullying.

1. Have you, within the last 2 months, been bullied by anyone from your own class?

56,118 pupils answered the question.

17% state that, within the last 2 months, they have experienced being bullied one or more times by someone from their own class, while 83% declare not to have been bullied. When converted into concrete numbers of pupils, this means that, during a period of 2 months in the school year 2006-2007, 9570 of those asked have experienced being bullied by someone from their own class – this is an unacceptably high number of pupils being subjected to bullying in their class.

2. Have you, within the last 2 months, been bullied by anyone from another class?

56,118 pupils answered the question.

When it is a question of bullying among pupils from different classes, 15% of the pupils state that they have experienced being bullied – against 85% not having been bullied - by anyone from another class. Probably, such bullying will primarily occur during breaks; and, hence, it may be particularly difficult for adults to spot.

On the basis of the available data, we cannot decide whether the same pupils have experienced being bullied by pupils from their own class as well as by pupils from another class. In reality, it might be that there are even more pupils being bullied in school than the 17% and 15%, respectively, indicated by the thermometer figures.

3. Have you, within the last 2 months, participated in bullying one or more pupils?

56,117 pupils answered the question.

16% of the pupils state that they have personally participated in bullying one or more fellow pupils, while 84% state that they have not participated in bullying other pupils. In practice, the percentage signifying the number of pupils participating in bullying might be higher since there is a risk that some pupils may not be aware of having participated in bullying. However, a percentage of 16 does tend to indicate a certain consciousness as to one's actions. If the pupils are aware of the influence of bullying and of the consequences of bullying, it is alarming that so many pupils have made bullying a part of their school-life reality. Thus, any action to abolish bullying should be centred on roles and responsibilities in a social community as well as on how to develop other feasibilities of action other than bullying when the issue in play is community positions.

Regardless whether the pupil is exposed to bullying by someone from his or her own class or from other classes, these figures are by far too high, which is unacceptable. Being a victim of bullying is highly offensive and also a symptom of an unhealthy social environment void of security, tolerance and trust among the pupils. The answers demonstrate the importance of an ongoing effort to abolish bullying in order that bullying never become a natural element of everyday school life.

4. Do you think that bullying takes place in your class?

56,109 pupils answered the question.

52% of the pupils answer that bullying takes place in their class. This need not signify any bullying directly involving themselves, but that they witness the bullying occur. It is staggering that more than half the pupils experience bullying in their classes. Thus, bullying exerts an influence on far more pupils than those directly involved. This will affect the entire class culture by putting normal ways of being together out of action. Bullying may terrorise the class culture and destroy the prerequisites for a healthy educational environment. It is therefore important to define the scope of bullying in order to prevent it and initiate actions aimed at turning a negative social and cultural spiral

5. Have you, within the last 2 months – on your own or together with others – done anything to prevent a pupil from being bullied?

56,116 pupils answered the question.

40% of the pupils answer yes to having done something - within the last 2 months - to prevent a pupil from being bullied. This shows that, on the one hand, quite a lot of bullying is taking place and, on the other, that there are actually some pupils who try to intervene and prevent the bullying. The figures do not however, reveal whether the attempts to stop the bullying were successful – or whether, in other cases, prompt adult action cancelled out the need for pupils to take action.

6. Have you, within the last 2 months, felt tempted to intervene when you have witnessed a pupil being bullied – but without doing so?

56,115 pupils answered the question.

As many as 42% say that, within the last 2 months, they have felt like intervening when witnessing a pupil being bullied – but did not do so. Finding the reason for this will require a closer investigation; however, one bid may be that you do not intervene because you fear being bullied yourself, that you will not 'blow the whistle'; that you do not know how to intervene; that you know others will be sure to intervene; or that you believe intervening to be of no avail. Whichever the reason, there is a perceptible potential among the pupils themselves: They are favourably disposed towards participating in the prevention of the bullying. This is a positive potential, albeit not one entailing that the responsibility for intervening in the bullying lies with the pupils themselves. The responsibility lies with the adults in the school, and the action will have to take place in co-operation with pupils and parents.

7. Will the class teacher take action if somebody in your class is being bullied?

56,116 pupils answered the question.

89% of the pupils reply that their class teacher will definitely or maybe take action should somebody in their class be bullied. 11% of the pupils do not think that their class teacher will do anything if someone is being bullied. The two percentages represent a glaring dichotomy: Trust versus distrust.

8. Do you think that your class teacher knows if anyone in your class is being bullied?

56,115 pupils answered the question.

75% of the pupils believe that their class teacher definitely or maybe will know if anyone in the class is being bullied. 24% of the pupils answer that they do not believe that their class teacher knows about it.

The class teacher constitutes a key figure in the social life at school and in class. Hence, the figures reveal much about the trust between pupils and class teacher. The fact that there is doubt as to whether the class teacher is aware that someone in class is being bullied indicates that bullying can be difficult to detect or to take so seriously as to take action or intervene with regard to the bullying. A precondition for class teacher intervention with respect to bullying is that he/she is aware that bullying is taking place in the class.

9. Have you, within the last 2 months, experienced a feeling of being bullied by a teacher attached to your school?

56,028 pupils answered the question.

As many as 16% of the pupils answer that, within the last 2 months, they have experienced a feeling of being bullied by a teacher. This is indeed an unduly and unacceptably high number. 84% of the pupils answer no to the question of having been bullied by a teacher.

It is conceivable that there is some doubt as to the meaning of the concept of bullying; and it should therefore be further investigated what these figures cover. Yet, this does not change the fact that, in the school year 2006-2007, every sixth of the pupils participating in the survey has experienced a teacher's action to be so negative that they themselves have chosen to characterise it as bullying. Whatever the essence and reason, the pupil has a right to and an opportunity of a secure everyday school life as well as a sound educational environment; and this has, in this case, been violently prejudiced.

The teacher plays a very decisive role with respect to the class culture, including the feeling of security and trust, which is generated – be that in the class or the school in general. Bullying of pupils should not occur, neither from teachers nor from other members of the staff.

10. Are there rules against bullying at your school?

56,028 pupils answered the question.

61% of the pupils state that they know that their school does not condone bullying and that there are rules/plans of action in this respect. It is a positive sign that so many pupils know about it.

It is DCUM's recommendation that the schools develop an anti-bullying strategy requiring the active participation of management, teachers, parents and pupils and, further, that such a strategy will have a visible and active impact on the everyday life of the school. This entails an anti-bullying strategy which is conveyed into tangible actions in everyday life, it needs to be known by everyone, and it should be revised once annually: Do we actively apply the strategy in our everyday life at school? Are our initiatives working? What are the tangible results? Can we do better? The existence of rules as such will not make any difference; nonetheless, the fact that there are rules indicates that those involved have ventured to deal with a difficult issue.

What's the opinion of the junior-school pupils? ... about bullying

Between 18,400 and 18,443 pupils answered the following questions in the talking version of the Thermometer

1. Does anyone in your class tease you and make you upset?

45% of the pupils in junior school answer that sometimes someone from their own class teases them in a way that upsets them. 7% of the pupils answer that this happens frequently. Thus, 52% in all experience teasing which makes them upset.

2. Does anyone from another class tease you and make you upset?

39% of the junior-school pupils answer yes to the question of sometimes or often being teased by someone from another class in a way which upsets them.

We did not directly pose the question of bullying in junior school. It is, however, our opinion that the question about being teased in such degrees as to be distressing does encompass what in some cases may be experienced as bullying. Even though it may not always be characterised as bullying, it is the duty of the adults around the pupils, who experience being teased in such ways, to take action and remedy the situation.

When 52% of the pupils in junior school experience being teased by someone from their own class, and when 39% experience teasing by somebody from another class in such a way that they get upset, this is a sign which the adults around the pupils must take seriously. There is an obligation towards the pupils requiring that these issues be taken in hand.

The figures do not reveal whether those pupils being teased by someone from their own class are the same as those being teased by somebody from other classes. Therefore, the effect of the aggravated teasing which can be characterised as bullying may involve more pupils than those recorded here.

(continued on page 14)

What's the opinion of the junior-school pupils? ... about bullying (continued)

3. Do you think that you have yourself participated in teasing someone to such a degree that they got upset?

30% of the pupils answer 'yes sometimes' or 'yes, often' to this question. 24% are in doubt.

4. Does your class teacher help if anyone in the class has problems?

As many as 92% pupils answer yes to this question which indicates that basic-school pupils place great trust in the adults. This may mean that, with regard to basic school, most schools turn a high pedagogic focus of attention towards social well-being, fellowship, and security for the pupils – in their own class and across classes.

5. Have you experienced teasing by a teacher in a way which made you upset?

91% of the pupils in junior school have not experienced this, while 9% answer that they sometimes or often have tried being teased by one of their schools teachers in a way that upset them.

These figures indicate that there is a need for constantly working with the social thriving and non-thriving in junior school. Bullying needs to be taken seriously with respect to the bullying taking place between pupils as well as those instances where the pupils experience teacher participation in the bullying.

Conflicts 4th-10th grade

It should be expected that everyone will, to some degree, experience conflicts in their everyday school life. However, when conflicts becomes too far-reaching; repetitive; are not solved satisfactorily; or comes to cast a shadow over friendships and good social relations, then this may be an expression of mal-adjustment and a negative social educational environment where it becomes difficult to concentrate on co-operation and proficiency. This is why – with respect to the 4th-10th grade pupils – we have included two of the Thermometer's questions about conflict in this report.

1. How often do you experience conflicts (= disagreements, quarrels, etc.) in school?

50,375 pupils answered the question.

59% of the pupils answer that they frequently experience conflicts in their school, while 41% answer that they seldom experience conflicts in school. Conflicts *per se* are not necessarily a negative sign, but in phrasing the question this way, we assume that the pupils experience the conflicts as disturbing and, hence, negative.

2. Do you think that conflicts in class/in school are solved in a good way?

50,186 pupils answered the question.

70% of the pupils experience that conflicts in school/class are solved in a good way, whereas 29% of the pupils experience that such conflicts are seldom solved in a good way.

These figures do not reveal whether conflicts are solved by the pupils themselves; through adult action; or simply burn themselves out. The figures indicate that there is a relatively high level of conflict in school and, further, that such conflicts are not always solved satisfactorily or adequately. This may, periodically, exert a negative influence on the educational environment. In any case, the individual school/class should make further investigations into what lies behind these figures. For instance: Which conflicts are the pupils experiencing? Why is it that they are not satisfactorily solved? What can be done to obtain a better culture of conflict handling?

The class teacher 4th-10th grade

As previously mentioned, the class teacher plays a key role in the pupils' everyday school life. It is the class teacher who is assumed to know the class and the individual pupil best; and it is the class teacher who is responsible of co-ordinating the collaboration with the parents. Therefore, the relations between the pupil and the class teacher are of considerable importance for the social well-being of both the individual pupil and the class in general. We have selected two questions from the Thermometer representing pointers of the 4th-10th grade pupils' qualitative experience of the relationship with their class teacher.

1. Do you think your class teacher contributes to ensuring the well-being of everyone in your class?

45,438 pupils answered the question.

82% of the pupils answer that they believe that their class teacher contributes to ensuring the well-being of everyone in class, while 18% answer that their class teacher does not contribute with much.

This question is a central one since it offers a pointer as to whether the pupils see their class teacher as a safe and trust-inducing person. The class-teacher function incorporates that of delineating the framework and the direction of an accommodating class culture with room for each and everyone. The class teacher's approach in connection with the handling of the various everyday situations, considerations and conflicts as well as planned and spontaneous activities plays a decisive role in the social well-being, the tone, the values and the unwritten codes in class.

2. If you need help, will your class teacher then provide it?

45,393 pupils answered the question.

75% of the pupils answer that, should they need it, they can obtain help from their class teacher; while 12% answer that they do not think they can get help from their class teacher if they need it. Another 12% answer 'don't know' to the question. Thus, every 4th pupil is uncertain as to whether he or she can obtain help from their class teacher.

Even though the majority of pupils have confidence in their class teacher, there is a considerable number who are not confident that their class teacher will help them in case they need it. We cannot know whether this is due to the fact that the pupils have previously felt let down when they have asked their class teacher for help, or whether they have not actually needed help. Likewise, the answers neither reveal whether the pupils desire or lack help nor what such help is concerning – this could be e.g. about learning, about social or personal issues. But this is not decisive. What is decisive, however, is whether the individual pupil feels secure in school and whether he or she has an adult to turn to for help should they need it.

What's the opinion of the junior-school pupils? ... about their class teacher

Between 15,889 and 15,912 pupils answered the questions below in the talking version of the Thermometer.

1. Do you think your class teacher contributes to ensuring the well-being of everyone in your class?

98% of the pupils in junior school experience that their class teacher contributes to ensuring the well-being of everyone in their class.

2. If you need help, will your class teacher then provide it?

88% of the junior-school pupils answer that they can obtain help from their class teacher should they need it. 9% doubts whether they can get help from their class teacher. What this doubt covers could obviously be a matter for investigation, but the reason may simply be that the pupils have not experienced a need for help and therefore do not know whether they can get it.

Thus, the picture emerging with respect to the junior-school pupils' relations to their class teacher is a very positive one.

The lessons and the teaching 4th-10th grade

Obviously, the pupils' perception of their educational environment also encompasses the relationship between learning and well-being in school. Hence, we need to include the framework for and the relations within teaching as such, the educational organisation and the perspective of learning. In this report, we selected to include three questions from the Thermometer representing pointers as to how the 4th-10th grade pupils experience the intellectual and professional challenges facing the individual pupil – as well as the physical framework with respect to levels of tranquillity/noise in the education.

1. Are you bored during lessons?

51,431 pupils answered the question.

28% of the pupils say that the lessons are boring them; 50% says that they are bored sometimes; while 22% says that they are seldom or never bored during lessons.

What this boredom covers cannot be determined from the answers; and therefore this should be elucidated by way of dialogue with the pupils of the individual school. Do the pupils find that the teaching takes place in a boring way? Does it have to do with the subject or the topic? Does the lesson offer the pupils too little opportunity for being active? Or is it that there is something else, e.g. recreational activities, which is more attractive? Regardless of reason, 28% (more than every 4th pupil) is by far too many pupils who are bored and who may therefore not have enough challenges in their learning and potentials.

2. Do you think the teaching takes place in an orderly setting as to noise levels?

51,339 pupils answered the question.

38% of the pupils answer that, always or mostly, the teaching takes place in satisfactorily quiet settings. Another 38% answer that only sometimes does the teaching take place in satisfactorily quiet settings, whereas 24% of the pupils answer that only seldom or never does the teaching take place in satisfactorily quiet settings.

Thus, approximately every 4th pupil states that there is not a satisfactorily quiet setting for the teaching. This figure ought to encourage to active action for purposes of reducing the level of noise during lessons. Lack of quiet surroundings has a direct negative impact on the pupils' learning, their focus and concentration, and their well-being, stress levels etc.

3. Do you believe that you are learning something in school?

51,338 pupils answered the question.

80% of the pupils answer that they always or mostly learn something in school. 15% of the pupils answer that sometimes they learn something, whereas the last 5% of the pupils answer that they seldom or never learn something in school.

Considering the fact that every 4th pupil is either bored during lessons or does not experience the necessary quiet when the teaching takes place, it should be deemed a positive thing that by

far the majority of pupils experience that they do learn something in school. On the other hand, it is a cause for anxiety that every 5th pupil does not experience that he or she learns enough – or only learns something once in a while.

What's the opinion of the junior-school pupils? ... about the lessons and the teaching

Between 17,379 and 17,415 pupils answered the following questions below in the talking version of the Thermometer.

1. Are you bored during lessons?

As many as 62% of the pupils in junior school experience being bored during lessons – either sometimes or frequently.

2. Do you believe that you are learning something in school?

96% of the junior-school pupils answer that they learn a great deal in school, only 3% answer that they do not learn much.

When 62% of the junior-school pupils answer that they either frequently or sometimes feel bored during lessons, it is interesting to notice that as many as 96% answer that they learn a great deal in school. More elaborating questions could be focusing on what the pupils expect to learn in school, and how they actually interpret the expression “being bored”.

Stress

4th-10th grade

Stress may encompass a wide range of different factors, and therefore the below data are not sufficiently adequate to represent an explicit stress analysis. We have selected three questions from the Thermometer where the responses indicate whether the pupils in the 4th-10th grade experience being stressed due to homework and the amount of homework, and, further, whether the individual pupil has, in total, too many chores – in school and in pastime activities.

1. Do you think that you have too much or too little homework?

44,774 pupils answered the question.

64% of the pupils say that they find the amount of homework reasonable. 31% of the pupils say that they have too much homework; and 5% says that they have too little homework. We cannot know what these figures actually cover – e.g. whether the 31% find that they have too much homework because they do not like to do their homework or because they are too busy with other things in their pastime; or because they in fact find it difficult to do their homework – due to problems related to the learning process. The figures give rise to closer investigation.

2. Do you feel stressed on account of your homework?

44,774 pupils answered the question.

However, that 27% of the pupils answer yes to frequently feeling stressed on account of their homework does suggest that there are certain problems connected with getting their homework done. 49% of the pupils say that they sometimes feel stressed on account of their homework, a fact which may be owing to various circumstances e.g. the overlapping of major tasks/chores, homework congesting in certain periods, or that some types of homework are more difficult to deal with than others. 24% of the pupils say that they never feel stressed on account of their homework. Thus, the experience of homework amount and stress effect on the pupils varies considerably.

3. Do you think you have too many chores?

44,691 pupils answered the question.

81% of the pupils answer that only sometimes or never do they have too much to do (school and pastime in total). The answers indicate that a stress condition is not permanent – at least for the majority of the pupils. There are, however, 20% of the pupils who answer that, in all, they have too much to do. What this encompasses, and what it will take to bring down the stress level should be uncovered in co-operation with the individual pupil and the parents.

Settings 1: premises, arrangement, aesthetics and outdoor areas 4th-10th grade

Settings 1 contains questions revealing the pupils' perception of the general physical and aesthetic educational environment in school, i.e. premises, arrangement, aesthetics and outdoor areas. The 11 questions from the Thermometer listed below have been selected because they represent the 4th-10th grad pupils' most significant responses.

46,321 pupils answered the following questions:

What's your opinion of:

1. - your classroom?
2. - the spaciousness in your classroom?
3. - the interior arrangement of your classroom?

48% of the pupils answer that their classroom is fairly alright and 20% answer that their classroom is not alright. Only 30% of the pupils find their classroom to be quite alright, while 2% answer 'don't know'.

46% of the pupils answer that the spaciousness in their classroom is fairly alright and 18% answer that the spaciousness is not alright. 34% find the spaciousness to be quite alright, while 2% of the pupils answer 'don't know'.

48% of the pupils answer that the interior arrangement of the classroom is fairly alright and 21% find the interior arrangement to be not alright. Only 28% of the pupils think that the interior arrangement is quite alright, while 3% answer 'don't know'.

Thus, about one fifth of the pupils find the classroom, the spaciousness and the interior arrangement to be not alright. A little less than half the pupils deem these physical/aesthetic conditions of their classroom to be fairly alright.

The picture emerging from these responses indicate that it could be advantageous to make an effort to change the classroom arrangement. It would appear evident to do so in close co-operation with the pupils.

What's your opinion of:

4. - the number of rooms or places allocated for group work?
5. - the interior arrangement of group rooms or places for group work?

The answers to these two questions are almost identical. In total, one fifth of the pupils answers that neither the number of rooms/places for group work nor the interior arrangement of such rooms/places are alright. App. 44% of the pupils answer that the physical and aesthetic frames for group work are only fairly alright. Thus, a little less than half the pupils are fairly satisfied with this.

*What's your opinion of:***6. - the facilities provided for storing outdoor clothing, personal effects etc.?**

26% of the pupils answer that the facilities provided for storing your outdoor clothing, personal effects etc. are not alright. 6% of the pupils answer that they do not know whether such facilities exist. This means that app. every third pupil is either dissatisfied with or does not have the possibility for storing clothes and other personal effects.

Having to constantly worry about whether, where – and if – one's clothes and personal stuff are kept in a safe place will generate a fundamental insecurity and confusion in everyday life. Lack of such facilities and security or dissatisfaction with existing facilities may give rise to unnecessary conflicts, disturbances and disorder.

*What's your opinion of:***7. - your school's toilet facilities?**

As many as 49% of the pupils do not find their school's toilet facilities acceptable. Only 15% of the pupils answer that the toilet facilities are quite alright.

It gives cause for concern that so few are satisfied with the toilet facilities of their school. It is significant that half the pupils are so dissatisfied with the toilet facilities. It would be worthwhile to investigate whether the dissatisfaction is owing to lack of cleaning, bad smell, lack of toilet paper, no partitions between toilets, lack of soap and/or towels, fear of teasing, etc. What will be needed in order to put right the toilet facilities? Which models of solution are available here and now? How can the pupils be involved in solving the problem?

If unsanitary toilet facilities mean that the pupils either avoid using the toilets or hurry too much when using the toilet, this may not only constitute a health hazard, it could also affect concentration and hence learning.

*What's your opinion of:***8. - the number of places/areas with peace and quiet?**

30% of the pupils think that the number of places where they can find peace and quiet is not alright. Only 16% of the pupils have answered quite alright.

Apparently, it can be difficult to find a place in school where the pupils can be left in peace and quiet should they need it. Tranquillity contributes to ensuring concentration in learning and educational processes, but a moment of peace and tranquillity during breaks may also be desirable. This is not to say that tranquillity is a necessity for everybody and at all times. Satisfactory tranquillity is an individual experience, but precisely the opportunity of finding a tranquil place is important in this connection.

What's your opinion of:

9. - your school's playground?

10. - the schoolyard?

11. - the school's playing fields and/or other outdoor activity areas?

26% of the pupils answer that their school's playground is quite alright, whereas 22% – app. every fifth pupil – do not find their playground alright.

30% of the pupils answer that their schoolyard is quite alright, whereas 18% - close to every fifth pupil – do not find their schoolyard alright.

Finally, 39% of the pupils find their school's playing fields and other outdoor activity areas to be quite alright, whereas 16% - app. every sixth pupil – do not find their school's playing fields and other outdoor activity areas to be alright.

On the whole, the pupils' answers concerning the physical and aesthetic frames indicate a rather lukewarm satisfaction with the outer frames for the everyday school life of the pupils. It goes without saying that these conditions should be subjected to closer investigation in the individual schools - with pupil involvement as to the clarification of any dissatisfactions as well as to suggestions for remedying the situation.

What's the opinion of the junior-school pupils?**... about settings 1: outdoor areas, premises, arrangement, and aesthetics**

Between 15,730 and 15,813 pupils answered the following questions in the talking version of the Thermometer.

Do you think that ...

1. - the school playground is good?

2. - you have good playing fields? – the schoolyard is a nice place to be?

3. - there are outdoor areas where it's nice to be?

61% of the pupils answer yes to finding their playground alright; 24% find it average, whereas 11% are not satisfied with their playground. 4% are undecided.

63% answer yes to finding their playing fields good ones; 18% find them average, 12% of the pupils deem their playing fields to be bad; and 7% answer 'don't know'.

67% of the pupils think that their schoolyard is a nice place to be while 22% answer 'alright'. 7% of the pupils do not think that their schoolyard is a nice place to be, while 3% answer 'don't know'.

92% of the pupils answer that there are outdoor areas where it is nice to be.

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Thus, the aggregate picture of the junior-school pupils' experience of their school's outdoor areas is, by and large, a positive one – perhaps they may also be the most frequent users of the various outdoor areas of their school.

Do you think that ...

4. - your classroom is a nice place to be?

5. - there is enough space in your classroom?

6. - you have a say in deciding what your classroom should look like?

- you have enough room for you stuff – e.g. coats, spare clothes and other stuff?

94% of the pupils find their classroom a nice place to be. 13% of the pupils answer that their classroom is too cramped; and 18% answer that they do not have satisfactory room for their own stuff. 63% of the pupils in junior school answer that they do not have any influence on how their class room should look – nonetheless, it seems that most pupils are quite satisfied with their classroom. Yet, the answers may indicate a problem as to spaciousness in class and having room for personal effects.

Do you think that ...

7. - there are enough areas where you can be left in peace and quiet?

8. - the toilets in your school are alright?

62% of the pupils answer yes to having enough areas where they can be left in peace and quiet, while 38% answer no to this question. These percentages indicate that, on an equal footing with the 4th-10th grade pupils, the junior pupils could probably need more areas of tranquillity in their school.

Likewise, the junior pupils' satisfaction with toilet conditions is not particularly high. 60% of the junior-school pupils answer that the toilets in their schools are not alright, whereas 40% of the pupils think they are alright.

The figures speak for themselves: In general, the toilets in our schools are not up to standards. As previously mentioned, this may constitute a health hazard for the pupils, and it should be investigated how the toilet facilities of the individual school may be improved.

Settings 2: ergonomic features and indoor climate 4th-10th grade

Settings 2 encompasses questions elucidating how pupils perceive the conditions with respect to ergonomic features and the indoor climate of their school. Once again, we have selected those questions from the Thermometer where the responses have offered significant pointers as to the 4th-10th grade pupils' opinions with respect to certain aspects of the physical educational environment.

Do you find the following conditions in your classroom to be alright or not alright ...

1. - the chairs you use?
2. - the feasibility of adjusting your chair?
3. - the feasibility of adjusting your table?

43.060 elever har besvaret spørgsmålene.

25% of the pupils, i.e. every 4th pupil, experience that the chairs they use in school are not alright. When 34% of the pupils find the feasibility of adjusting their chair to be 'not alright' this might be either because the chair is not adjustable or because the options for doing so are too few. The same may be the case for those 27% of the pupils who, likewise, experience the feasibility of adjusting their table to be 'not alright'. The majority of the pupils are satisfied with their chairs and tables; but, nonetheless, it is still every third or fourth pupil who might benefit from improved chairs and tables in school.

How often do you experience problems with the following:

4. - the classroom temperature is either too low or too high?
5. - high sounds and noise?
6. - clutter?
7. - bad smells?
8. - cleaning?
9. - ventilation and airing?

42,975 pupils answered the questions.

35% of the pupils experience fluctuations in temperature in school – daily or almost daily. This may give rise to concentration problems as well as health problems.

44% of the pupils experience problems as to high sounds and noise in school – daily or almost daily. The individual school should enter into dialogue with the pupils as to the specific reasons for this; but where the levels of noise and high sounds are experienced as being problematic this will exert a negative impact on the educational framework and on the pupils' social life in school. It would be beneficial to involve the pupils into a dialogue and a co-operation for purposes of improving the noise levels in their school.

34% of the pupils experience problems with clutter and 28% experience problems caused by bad smells. Once again, the individual schools should make closer investigations into the bad smells in questions; and, likewise, they should uncover the issue of clutter. It should be possible to find solutions for improving the indoor climate as to the subject of smell and clutter.

45% of the pupils experience problems with the cleaning; and 38% experience problems with ventilation and airing. Satisfactory cleaning and airing are prerequisites for a healthy indoor climate and for a sound educational environment with respect to health and safety. When almost half the pupils find the level of cleaning to be unsatisfactory, this should give rise to further reflection at the individual schools. The same is relevant for airing where more than one third of the pupils experience problems on a daily basis. Together, a thorough daily cleaning and airing will not only contribute to minimising risk of infection, it will also result in improved well-being for everyone who is daily subjected to the school's indoor climate.

What's the opinion of the junior-school pupils? ...about settings 2: ergonomic features and indoor climate

Between 14,287 and 14,318 pupils answered the following questions in the talking version of the Thermometer.

How is...

1. - your chair to sit on?
2. - your table to sit at?

69% of the pupils answer that their chair is good; 21% answer that their chair is alright; and 10% answer that their chair is not good to sit on. The answers with respect to tables correspond roughly with those dealing with chairs. Here 73% of the pupils answer that their table is good, 20% that it is average, and 7% that they do not sit well at their table. Thus, the majority of junior-school pupils are quite satisfied with their chairs and tables.

Do you think that ...

3. - it is too cold in your classroom?
4. - it is too hot in your classroom?
5. - there is too much clutter in your classroom?
6. - there is dirty in your classroom, or in other areas of your school?
7. - there is a bad smell in your classroom, or in other areas of your school?

40% of the pupils answer that sometimes it is too cold in their classroom, while 44% answer that sometimes it is too hot in their classroom. This may indicate that there are problems with temperature fluctuations in the classroom and that it could be worthwhile to investigate what can be done to remedy the situation. Too marked fluctuations will affect the pupils' concentration ability and their general well-being.

58% of the pupils do not think that there is too much clutter in their classroom, whereas 41% do find their classroom to be too cluttered. Thus, opinions differ in this matter – and maybe this also goes for how the term “clutter” should be interpreted.

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41% of the junior-school pupils answer that sometimes there is a bad smell in their classroom or in other areas of their school. This is a higher percentage than was the case for the other grades. Be that as it may, in both cases the figures indicate that problems with bad smells are widespread; and, hence, this should be subjected to further investigation – maybe in connection with the feasibility of airing and with the issues of clutter and fluctuations in temperature, respectively.

Activity facilities 4th-10th grade

The concept activity facilities should be interpreted as the pupils' feasibilities for physical activity in their everyday school life. Daily physical activity contributes to ensuring a certain variation and balance in the pupils' activities, focus and use of their body. Physical activity can be displayed through physically active breaks or through varied work forms where the pupils need not necessarily sit still on a chair in order to perform a task. When moving around becomes legitimate, and when the frames are up to form, this may mean increased tranquillity and concentration among the pupils – also when sedentary activities are required.

This report has selected two questions from the Thermometer representing pointers as to the 4th-10th grade pupils' satisfaction with the opportunities for physical activity offered by their schools.

1. Does your school offer an opportunity for physical outdoor activity?

43,962 pupils answered the question.

39% of the pupils find that there are but few opportunities for physical outdoor activities. 61% of the pupils seem to be satisfied with the opportunities for physical outdoor activities. However, a relatively large number of pupils – more than every third – find the opportunities unsatisfactory.

2. Does your school offer an opportunity for physical indoor activities?

42,960 pupils answered the question.

As many as 54% of the pupils find the opportunities for physical indoor activities to be too few. Thus, more than every second pupil is not satisfied with the conditions for physical indoor activities. This should give rise to the individual schools entering into a dialogue with the pupils as to what the dissatisfaction actually covers, what the need for physical indoor activities actually is, and what can be done to satisfy this need.

It is of decisive importance for a healthy educational environment that the pupils have an opportunity for physical activity in school. Whether the pupils make use of the opportunities for physical activity will depend on several factors – e.g. whether there is an incentive for physical activity;

whether everyday life leaves room for it; accessibility; age group; etc. Thus, the individual school should obviously enter into a dialogue with teachers and pupils about the opportunities for physical activity as well as about whether the pupils actually make use of the opportunities for physical activity – and whether this takes place within the framework of the ground rules agreed upon.

Health and general well-being 4th-10th grade

The health and general well-being of the pupils will depend of a variety of factors and influences – and, naturally, the school is only one of the places where the pupils spend their time in the course of a day. Taking the bearing as to how the pupils experience their general health and well-being may provide the school with a point of departure in the evaluation of the individual pupil's health and well-being in the educational environment of the school. Health and general well-being exerts an influence on how pupils learn and thrive in school. In connection with the educational environment it is therefore important to focus on how the pupils' health and general well-being is experienced in the school's environment and contexts as well as on what can be done by the school to improve the standards of the pupils' health and well-being.

For purposes of elucidating the pupils' perspective we selected three questions from the Thermometer for the 4th-10th grade covering the aspect of health and six questions concerning general well-being.

How often do you have...

1. - a headache?

2. - a stomach ache?

3. - pain in your neck, back or shoulders?

45,180 pupils answered the questions.

20% of the pupils frequently experience headaches, 11% frequently experience stomach aches, while 22% of the pupils frequently experience pains in their neck, back or shoulders.

The reasons why a large number of pupils experience health problems can be manifold, e.g. bad posture, bad indoor climate, social/psychical problems, inactivity, wrong diet – or perhaps something entirely different lying outside the school's educational environment? Whatever the reason, health-related problems do play a role with respect to the pupils' ability to concentrate in school, their zest for professional challenges and their social reserves. This may very well be a vicious circle where physical symptoms are intensified by the consequences they have for the individual pupil's general satisfaction with the school, the teaching and the classmates. In this connection, it is obviously important to investigate each individual case in order to find the reason behind and where the vicious circle has started.

45,116 pupils answered the following six questions.

How often within the last 2 months have you ...

1. - been in a really good mood?

2. - felt fit?

95% of the pupils experience being in a good mood and feeling fit most of the time or for a major part of the time. This is a positive pointer with respect to general well-being. Obviously these figures will fluctuate since an endless range of factors influence our mood and general well-being.

3. - have you been unhappy?

Being in a good mood and feeling fit are important pointers for the degree of well-being. Whereas being unhappy is quite another matter. Being together in communities and entering into more or less close relations will obviously entail the experience of being unhappy, happy again etc. from time to time.

20% of the pupils answer that they are unhappy quite often. This should not be overlooked because it may span various important aspects such as e.g. mal-adjustment in class, among the classmates, at home, professional issues or other things which should be subject to closer examination.

4. - have you felt lonely?

16% of the pupils answer that they frequently feel lonely, and 8% even answer 'most of the time'.

The figures show that not everybody feels part of a community. In general, being part of a community is, in fact, considered a basic constituent with respect to learning and thriving in school. Precisely because the school is a social community the experience of feeling lonely may be aggravated if you are outside. As previously mentioned, the class is the fundamental community in basic school. If the pupils experience loneliness here, this may be a sign of an unhealthy educational environment, socially and mentally; or there may be something else relating to the surroundings of the pupil in question which should be subjected to further investigation.

5. - have you felt tired and not being up to the mark?

6. - have you found it difficult to concentrate for longer periods at a time?

App. 16% of the pupils frequently experience feeling tired and not being up to the mark as well as finding it difficult to concentrate.

There may be many reasons for this – reasons which may not necessarily or not at all have to do with the educational environment, but nevertheless has an effect on the individual pupil with respect to both commitment and the class community. Thus, tiredness, low spirits, lack of concentration in one or more pupils may have an impact on the educational environment as well as on learning and thriving.

What's the opinion of the junior-school pupils? ... about health and general well-being

Between 15,603 and 15,665 pupils answered the questions below in the talking version of the Thermometer.

Have you often had...

1. - a headache?

2. - a stomach ache?

3. - pain in your neck, back or shoulders?

9% of the pupils answer that they frequently have a headache, while 38% has a headache sometimes. 8% answer that they frequently have a stomach ache, while 37% have a stomach ache sometimes. 9% of the pupils answer that they frequently experience pain in neck, back or shoulders, while 32% experience pain in neck, back or shoulders sometimes.

It seems that relatively many pupils answer that they have headache, stomach ache or pain in neck, back or shoulders – we cannot know whether they are the same pupils. We are not in a position to determine whether the figures and answers above gives an expected or normal picture of the general physical health of the pupils or whether this health condition is rooted in problems having to do with the school's physical frames and indoor climate or whether entirely different factors are in play here. Undoubtedly, there are various causes, but with respect to an evaluation of the educational environment, the staff of the school – maybe the health-care staff – could initiate a closer investigation of the connection between the general health condition of the pupils and the physical frames of the school.

Are you often...

4. - in low spirits or unhappy?

5. - tired and feeling unfit?

6. - in a really good mood?

7. - feeling happy and fit?

15% of the pupils answer that they are often in low spirits or unhappy; and 26% answer that they are often feeling tired and unfit. Since a relatively large number of pupils state that they are often sad or in low spirits, it would be advantageous to pay attention to this. The fourth of the pupils often being tired and unfit may not be able to concentrate on the teaching; and, hence they may disturb or not benefit satisfactorily from the teaching and the comradeship.

However, a different picture emerges when as many as 92% of the junior-school pupils seem to be often in a good mood, and as many as 94% happy and fit. It is a positive sign that by far the majority of the pupils feel really comfortable in school. This may make it easier to tackle areas of the educational environment where the pupils are less satisfied.

Is fairly well good enough?

The Thermometer contains many pupil responses as to the various factors of the educational environment; and new responses continue to come in. With this report, DCUM has examined some of the most central aspects and pupils' perspectives on the educational environment in the Danish basic school as reported for the school year 2006-2007.

The national results draw a nuanced and comprehensive picture of how the pupils experience their educational environment. In some areas, such as bullying, language and tone, security in class/school, noise and disturbances, spaciousness, interior arrangement of class rooms, toilet conditions, cleaning and airing, there is definitely room for improvements.

In other areas, such as general satisfaction, trust in the class teacher (especially positive with respect to junior-school pupils), health and general well-being, the experiences and attitude of the pupils draw a more positive picture – yet, there is still room for doing even better.

The objective of releasing the national results and sketching a national overview of the educational environment of the pupils is, among other things, to provide the schools with a possibility for comparison. The individual school, having used the Thermometer for mapping the educational environment, can use this report as a mirror and place its own results opposite the national picture of basic school in the school year 2006-2007.

Whether the educational environment is bad, average, good or excellent will have to be determined by the individual school. The best method is achieved by including the pupils at every stage of the evaluation of their educational environment. The first stage of the educational environment evaluation is the mapping: How do the pupils experience the educational environment of their school? The next stage will be the evaluation of the results, perhaps with an elaboration of partial results for closer investigation through dialogue with the pupils. Then a plan of action should be prepared for purposes of improving those elements of the educational environment which are causing problems; and, finally, the last stage would be to follow up on the plan of action – with concrete actions as with evaluations.

The educational environment is constantly undergoing changes. Hence, it is important with a systematic and organised work approach. A healthy educational environment is not a given thing, but it is important for the pupils with respect to their thriving, learning and well-being in school. A healthy educational environment is also beneficial to the staff of the school. Thus, the educational environment is not an isolated matter – it is an entity which influences and can be influenced. It is therefore worthwhile to strive for a good educational environment.

All in all, the report leaves the impression that the educational environment of the pupils is fairly well, but absolutely not good enough. Some schools may indeed demonstrate better results than those described here, as other schools will not have difficulties in recognising themselves in the key figures of the report. Certainly, there are elements of the educational environment which, according to the pupils' responses, are positive; but the overall standard should be described as 'fairly well' – and that is not good enough!

There is much to be done, and here the schools can doubtless inspire each other with ideas, actions, organisation, etc. But there are also many factors which could be subjected to further investigation – nationally as on the individual schools. DCUM hopes that the many partial conclusions can be applied for stimulating curiosity and the desire for a debate and new actions among all those having an interest in basic school – especially pupils, parents, teachers, principals and politicians.

The DCUM website, www.dcum.dk or http://www.dcum.dk/dcum/in_english, provides knowledge, inspiration, concrete material and tools for working with educational environments.

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