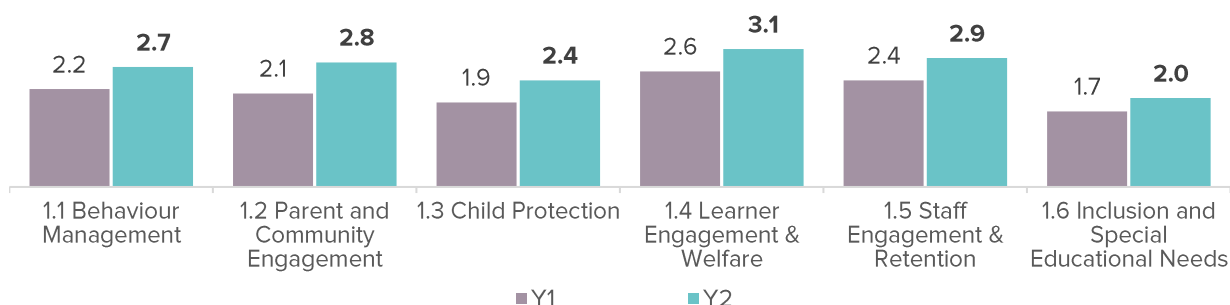**OPPORTUNITY EduFinance**

Assessment of School Culture

KEY INSIGHT: Schools make significant 'quick win' improvements in quality between first and second years of EduQuality programme

Schools making 'quick win' investments in the area of School Culture have increased the average self-assessment scores for **50% of schools**. This includes writing behaviour management policies, setting clear rules and expectations for learners, collaborating with other schools, providing extracurricular activities and even holding more frequent staff meetings. Other more challenging areas for improvement, such as the provision of an **inclusive education policy**, may be more difficult to achieve in the short-term.

Changes in School Self-Assessment Scores — AREA 1. School Culture

	1.1 Behaviour Management	1.2 Parent and Community Engagement	1.3 Child Protection	1.4 Learner Engagement & Welfare	1.5 Staff Engagement & Retention	1.6 Inclusion and Special Educational Needs
Y1	2.2	2.1	1.9	2.6	2.4	1.7
Y2	2.7	2.8	2.4	3.1	2.9	2.0

■ Y1   ■ Y2

KEY FINDING 1. Schools increased their School Culture domain scores an average of 0.5 points year-on-year (4-point scale)

These were similar results to the two other areas of quality. *Parent and Community Engagement* had the highest point increase (0.7), while *Inclusion and Special Educational Needs* started at a lower base and may take more time to achieve marked improvements.

Pathways to Excellence Annual School Self-Assessments

The Pathways to Excellence tool groups **18 education quality domains** under **3 Areas**: school culture, school management, and teaching & learning. The diagnostic tool outlines clear criteria under **four (4) levels** of quality for each domain, with Level 4 representing excellence. This enables school leader to review and mark the criteria that best describes their school, and then select the level (score) that is most aligned with their school's quality in each domain.

3 AREAS OF QUALITY:

1. School Culture

2. School Management

3. Teaching & Learning

→

1.1 Behaviour Management
1.2 Parent & Community Engagement
1.3 Child Protection
1.4 Learner Engagement & Welfare
1.5 Staff Engagement & Retention
1.6 Inclusion & Special Educational Needs

DOMAIN 1.1 BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

A Behaviour Management Policy (BMP) is written by school leadership, and teachers are trained on its contents. It should **ban corporal punishment**, define negative and positive behaviours and contain **rewards for good behaviour** and **consequences for misbehaving**. It should also be consistently enforced using a **whole school approach** and remove the burden on teachers to decide their own consequences for learners, which can be inconsistent, embarrassing and/or harmful.
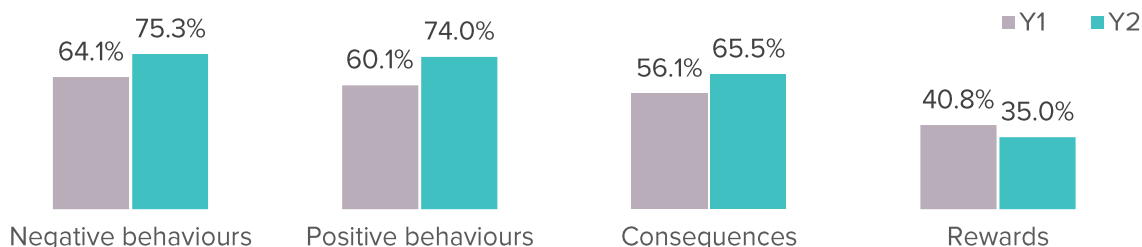
76%

Schools now have a behaviour management policy

KEY FINDING 2. **School leaders are taking more responsibility to set expectations for behaviour management. 3** out of **4** schools (76%) now report they have a written behaviour management policy in place.

In Year 2, **85%** of schools reported that **leadership** makes decisions about consequences for learners' misbehavior, up from 67% in Year 1.

Does your **written behaviour management policy** include & define the following four components?

- Negative behaviours: 64.1% (Y1), 75.3% (Y2)
- Positive behaviours: 60.1% (Y1), 74.0% (Y2)
- Consequences: 56.1% (Y1), 65.5% (Y2)
- Rewards: 40.8% (Y1), 35.0% (Y2)

■ Y1 ■ Y2

KEY FINDING 3. **School leaders are improving behaviour management policies overall to reflect best practices.** An increased number of schools in Year 2 reported their behaviour management policy now includes **definitions of negative and positive learner behaviours**, as well as **consequences** (for misbehaviour). However, fewer schools are reporting their policy includes **rewards for good behaviour.**

Using the Data

Using this data, Education Specialists can continue supporting school leaders to develop behaviour management policies, while intentionally **increasing guidance** on **explicitly including rewards for positive behaviours** in their policies.
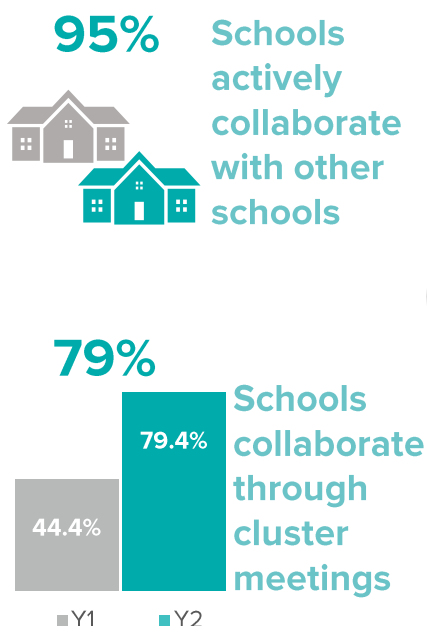
65%

Schools do not yet outline rewards for positive behaviour in their policy

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DOMAIN 1.2 PARENT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

When schools are closely connected to their communities, studies have found this translates into **greater teacher accountability, effort, and lower rates of absenteeism.**[1]

95% Schools actively collaborate with other schools

79%

79.4%

44.4%

Schools collaborate through cluster meetings

■Y1   ■Y2

KEY FINDING 4. **Schools are actively collaborating with each other**

95% of schools are now reporting **collaborations with other schools in the community.** 79% of these schools report actively collaborating via EduQuality cluster meetings, up from 44% in Year 1. This engagement in school clusters is important, as **research highlights significant increases in learning outcomes in schools that use cluster approaches.**[2]

59% of schools also report consultations between school heads, a small but positive improvement from Year 1 (53%), as **research demonstrates the importance of peer-to-peer collaboration between school heads.**[3]

Parental engagement in schools is one of the most important elements of school culture. Studies find positive impacts on **learning outcomes** when parents are equipped with information on school performance and empowered to offer feedback and hold schools accountable.[4]

KEY FINDING 5. **Schools report active engagement by parents, including offering recommendations for improvement**

In Year 2, **95%** of schools said parents were actively engaged in the school, up from 92% in Year 1. In addition, **60%** of school report PTAs now offer recommendations for school improvement, and **48%** support implementations of school goals. **Studies show participatory models of PTAs are most effective in improving test scores.** [5]

95% Schools consider parents actively engaged with the school

60% PTAs offer recommendations for school improvement
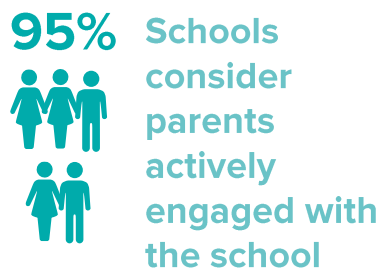
1. Gruijters et al., 2020; Day-Ashley & Wales, 2015; Mbiti, 2016
2. Nwagbara, 2014; Jacob, 2015; Adeyanju, 2016; Jung et al., 2016
3. Hallinger and Lee, 2014; Cimini et al., 2020
4. Barr et al., 2012; Andrabi, Das, and Khwaja, 2017; Baum et al., 2014; Mbiti 2016
5. Barr et al 2012

DOMAIN 1.3 CHILD PROTECTION

Pathways to Excellence **Level 3** recommends school leaders write a **child protection policy** after researching national guidelines. The policy should include a clear **code of conduct** for staff behaviour and how to respond to child protection issues. Staff should all be **trained** on the policy, and the school should also appoint a senior staff as the **Designated Child Protection Officer.**

As of Year 2, Child Protection remains the **second most frequently chosen priority** for School Development Plans, while also **scoring the second lowest (2.4)** in the area of School culture.

2.4 **School quality score in Child Protection**

CHILD PROTECTION: **Level 2 Criteria examples**
✓ Teaching staff are clear that every child has the right to be protected and corporal punishment is banned.
✓ Child protection risks have been identified in the school.
✓ The legal and national framework for child protection has been researched as part of planning a child protection policy that meets both requirements.

KEY FINDING 6. **1 out of 2 schools have a written child protection policy**

53% of schools report having a written child protection policy – representing **Level 3** in quality - with no increase over the year. However, the percentage of schools that confirm corporal punishment is still used has decreased from 11% to **7.5%**

53% **Schools have a written Child Protection Policy**

Schools say child protection is *always* a priority

91.3% 96.5%
■ Y1 ■ Y2
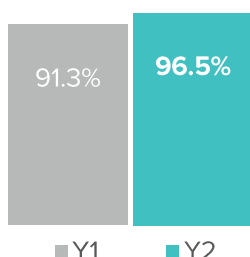
KEY FINDING 7. **Schools report Child Protection is a priority**

Survey data found **96.5%** of schools now consider child protection ***always a priority,*** an increase from 91.3% the previous year. A further **3.5%** of schools said child protection is ***often a priority.***

Using the Data

In addition to *Pathways to Excellence* guidance, Education Specialists will be delivering a workshop on **Child Protection** at the start of **Year 3**. Baseline survey data found Child Protection was new to many schools and would require time for school leaders to write and operationalize a clear, effective policy. **This data was used to inform the placement of the Child Protection workshop at the start of Year 3** to build on the work schools have already taken to improve from Level 1 (1.9) to Level 2 (2.4).

Year 3
School Leadership Professional Development: Child Protection Workshop

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DOMAIN 1.4 LEARNER ENGAGEMENT & WELFARE

Learner Engagement and Welfare is important because research finds learners make **more progress** when they feel happy, well-cared-for and fully engaged in the life of the school.[6]

Learner Engagement and Welfare had the **highest average score** under School Culture in both Year 1 and Year 2, increasing from 2.6 to **3.1.**

3.1

School quality score in Learner Engagement & Welfare

LEARNER ENGAGEMENT & WELFARE:

Level 3 Criteria examples
✓ A learner profile shows the type of learners the school aims to develop, and teachers have high expectations of all learners and motivate them to succeed.
✓ Build positive learning skills in disengaged pupils by developing a growth mindset.
✓ Strategies such as peer tutoring and friendship buddies are used to encourage pupils to help each other learn and play.
✓ Teachers run extra-curricular activities to engage learners outside of the classroom.

KEY FINDING 8. **Non-academic benefits of school are becoming widely recognized**

98% of school leaders now mention non-academic benefits to children when asked 'what are the benefits of school', up from 92% in Year 1. Additionally, the benefits that school leaders could name from Year 1 to Year 2 show significant increases. *The below graph represents open ended responses that are then categorized by data enumerators.*

What are the non-academic benefits of children attending school?

Benefit	Y1	Y2
Gain moral values/ religious beliefs	28.3%	**51.6%**
Learn discipline/ responsibility/ behaviour management	23.3%	**61.0%**
Social benefits	22.9%	**55.6%**
Devleop extracuricular skills	22.0%	**65.9%**
Develop practical skills for adult life	18.8%	**40.8%**
Become better citizens	10.8%	**27.4%**
Gain advice and care	9.0%	**29.1%**
Develop practical skills for adult life	8.1%	**6.3%**
Meet basic needs: hygiene, food	5.4%	**10.8%**
Receive safety & security	3.1%	**3.1%**
Other	0.9%	**2.2%**

6. Lindorff, A. (2020)

DOMAIN 1.5 STAFF ENGAGEMENT & RETENTION

Happy, motivated teaching teams perform better, stay longer and can enhance school reputations. Studies show that providing resources and materials helps improve **teacher performance,**[7] and mentorship is known to be effective in improving **teacher quality and motivation.**[8]

63% Provide resources & materials to teachers

6% Reduction in staff dissatisfaction

KEY FINDING 9. **Staff support and satisfaction is increasing, while teacher turnover rates remain the same.** In Year 2, **63%** of schools provided **resources and materials to teachers**, up from 49% in Year 1. Partner schools have also committed to participating in EduQuality **teacher mentorship training.**

Schools are also reporting **fewer staff being dissatisfied** (6% reduction). However, some schools continue to face staffing challenges. The teacher turnover rate in Year 2 remained at 11% on average.
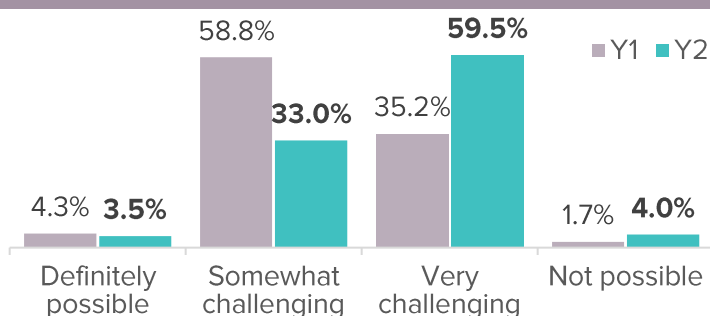
DOMAIN 1.6 INCLUSION & SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

An **inclusive environment** supports all learners to make good progress. This includes considering Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) of learners.

KEY FINDING 10. **Schools show an improved understanding of the importance of inclusion, and the challenges faced.** In Year 2, **5.4% more schools (76%)** now report inclusion of learners with special educational needs is *very important*, and a further 21% said inclusion was *somewhat important.* At the same time, 24% more schools have found inclusion of learners with special educational needs very challenging.

How challenging is it to include learners with SEND in instruction?

	Y1	Y2
Definitely possible	4.3%	3.5%
Somewhat challenging	58.8%	33.0%
Very challenging	35.2%	59.5%
Not possible	1.7%	4.0%

Using the Data

Understanding that supporting learners with special educational needs or disabilities can be challenging for schools, the EduQuality programme is developing **additional training content and resources** for our school partners to augment support and equip them with the skills needed to provide learners with a fully inclusive learning environment.

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7. Angrist et al. (2020).
8. Cimini et al. (2020).

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METHODOLOGY

As part of the EduQuality programme, Opportunity EduFinance supports school leaders in developing a **strong school culture** that prioritizes **parent, community, and staff engagement, child protection, and inclusion**, among others. Improvements or changes in these areas can be difficult to ascertain without specialized monitoring and evaluation tools, taken at multiple points in time throughout the intervention. Over the past two years, EduQuality partner schools have agreed to be sampled for these purposes. This analysis demonstrates some of the improvements that have already been uncovered across the six "School Culture" domains of quality.

Why focus on School Culture? Fostering a strong school culture has been found to result in **many positive outcomes**, including teacher quality and retention, student attendance, and learning outcomes (Endow, 2018; Day-Ashley and Wales, 2015; Allcott and Ortega, 2009). Beyond this, studies have also shown that engaging with the school community as a whole – including parents and other community groups – can lead to improved school quality, as this helps parents feel informed and empowered to provide feedback to school leadership (Gruijters et al., 2020; Andrabi, Das, and Khwaja, 2017; Baum et al., 2014; Mbiti 2016). **In short, creating a positive school culture that extends beyond the school to include the whole community is an important element of school growth.**

What was the source of data?
The School Quality and Behaviour survey (SQB) contains 114 questions in total, of which **59** are categorised as **School Culture**. The other assessment tool that was used for this analysis was the School Leadership Assessment (SLA), which contains 47 questions – of which only **2** were categorised as **School Culture.**

While the Monitoring and Evaluation team has collected over 1,000 responses to these surveys, **223** of the responses are from schools that responded in the beginning of Year 1 and at some point in Year 2. More longitudinal comparisons will be possible in coming months and years.

	Ghana	Kenya	Rwanda	Uganda	Zambia	Total
BOTH YEARS	**4**	**55**	**25**	**76**	**63**	**223**
Y1	34	93	42	110	76	583
Y2	71	83	47	350	141	694