



Minimum Standards for Safe Schools in Nigeria



Monitoring Report Summary
July - December 2023

Figure 1. MSSS Result Areas

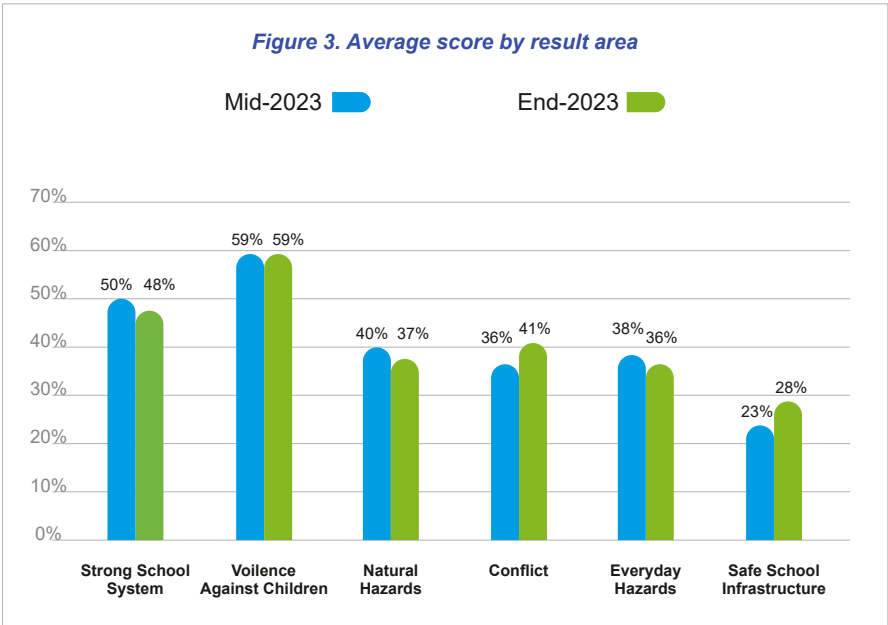
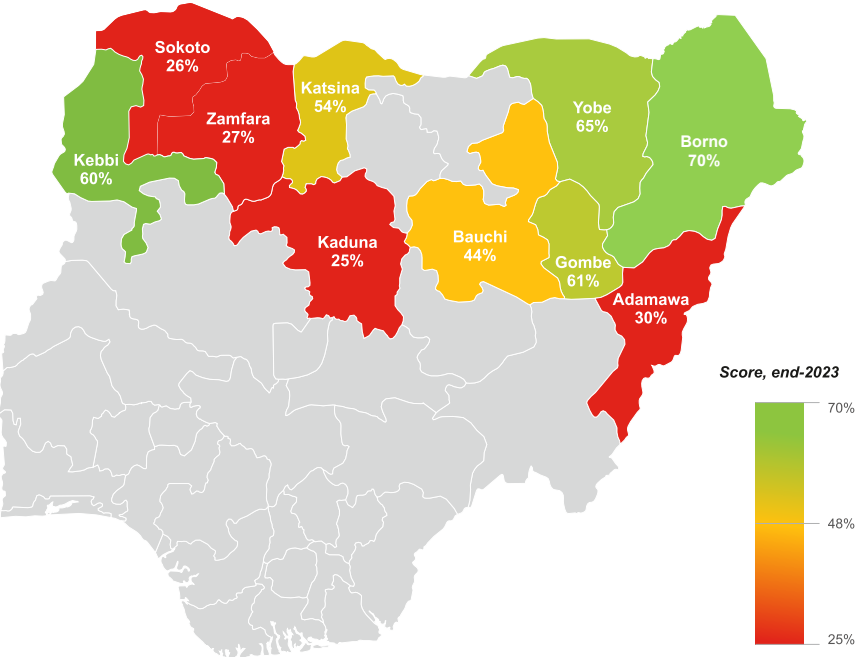
The Minimum Standards for Safe Schools (MSSS)¹ outline the minimum conditions that must be met to ensure the protection and well-being of children within school environments. Recognizing a gap in the understanding of the current status of MSSS implementation in schools, UNICEF supported the creation and execution of a monitoring tool. This tool assesses the implementation of the MSSS across six result areas within ten states. A comprehensive survey was conducted across 5,993 schools during mid-2023 (round 1), followed by a second survey (round 2)² encompassing 6,638 schools.



While existing national policies robustly support school safety, the necessary accelerated actions to address the risks posed by various hazards remain insufficient. During mid-2023, an average implementation score of 41 per cent was recorded across states in adherence to the MSSS. By the year's end, this figure saw a marginal increase to 42 per cent. However, it was observed that only 9 out of the 21 MSSS were being consistently met.

States exhibited significant variation in implementation, with Kaduna and Sokoto meeting only 5 of the standards, whereas Borno achieved compliance with 15 standards. Despite these variances, performance at the individual school level showed a universally low rate of adherence; only 17 per cent of the schools assessed met or exceeded a threshold score of at least 70 per cent of the standards fulfilled.³

Figure 2. Average score across result area by state



Schools have made strides in training SBMCs, addressing well-being, and preventing violence against children at school. However, they face significant challenges in improving infrastructure and addressing everyday hazards, with performance in these areas declining in several states. Despite minor state-level improvements, only a third of schools sufficiently meet the nutritional and WASH needs of students. Moreover, the escalating threats from climate change and insecurity highlight the urgent necessity to bolster schools' resilience against natural hazards and conflict.

The comprehensive analysis underscores a general lack of progress and stagnation in the implementation of the MSSS overall across both states and individual schools, with notable variations in specific deficiencies among states.

UNICEF's recommendations are as follows:



Urgently prioritize safe infrastructure and disaster preparedness

- Install fences, lockable gates and ramps, ensure WASH facilities are functional and accessible, and provide fire extinguishers and safety kits.
- Expand SBMC and staff training to cover their roles during conflict and natural disasters to enhance readiness and response capabilities.
- Improve observance of school building guidelines for entry and security.
- Deploy early warning systems to identify threats and enable swift, appropriate responses.



Address gaps in schools' readiness for holistic well-being support

- Transform schools into platforms for integrated service delivery (nutrition, WASH, and health).
- Implement strategies to prevent violence against children en route to/from school and at home.



Monitor, plan using evidence, and increase financing for safe schools

- Collaborate with UNICEF to make MSSS monitoring a standard practice among state governments.
- Conduct bi-annual MSSS monitoring across all schools or a representative sample in each state.
- Utilize collected data to identify gaps at the state, LGA, and school levels and provide targeted support.
- Progressively focus on schools facing the most severe challenges.
- Review and adjust federal plans and state costed implementation plans semi-annually, informed by monitoring data.

¹ Federal Ministry of Education and Education in Emergencies Working Group. (2021). The Minimum Standards for Safe Schools. Abuja: FME and EiEWG. <https://education.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Minimum-Standards-for-Safe-Schools.pdf>

² For the full methodology and results, see: UNICEF. (2024). Monitoring the implementation of the Minimum Standards for Safe Schools in Nigeria. Abuja: UNICEF.

³ A score of 70% or higher is deemed as fulfilling the MSSS because to score 70%, a school cannot have a score of 0% in more than one result area.

