

Safe and sustainable education premises: Creating a force for change

The start of the 2023 school year was marked by the RAAC crisis, which led to school closures nationwide for surveys and building work to secure sites. Crumbling concrete isn't the only concern, however. The Commons Public Accounts Committee warned in their recent annual report that the Department for Education lacks sufficient information on asbestos prevalence in schools.

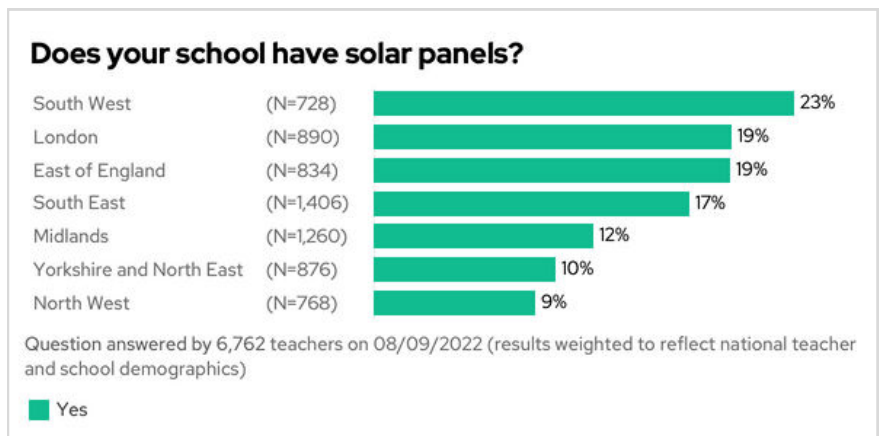
The School Rebuilding Programme, a ten-year project to fund the maintenance and rebuilding of over 500 schools, has faced delays. By September 2023, only 24 contracts were awarded - missing the forecast of 83. Only one project is complete so far, against a forecast of four.

Energy efficiency

Around **two-thirds** of schools have had boilers installed in the past twenty years, but around **15%** still have pre-1970s boilers - and this can have a huge impact on energy costs. However, some schools make money on their energy, because they have solar panels on their roof and so can sell the energy back to suppliers.

Schools in the East of England, London and the South West are more likely to be doing this; the South West is particularly ahead with **23%** of teachers saying their school has solar panels.

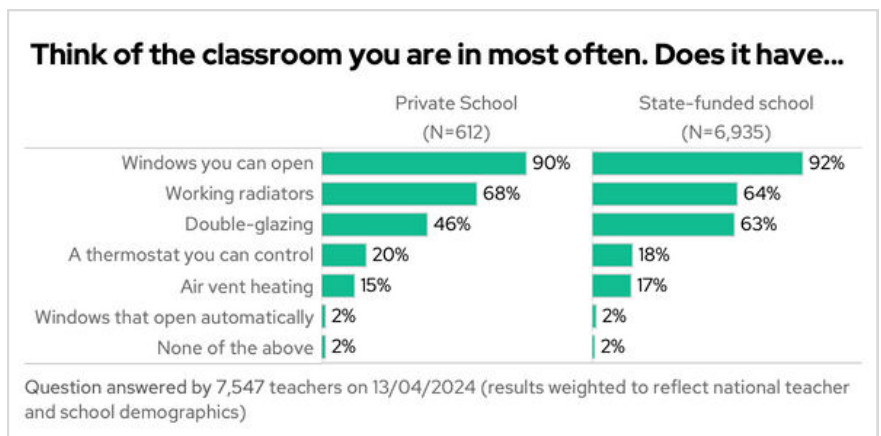
How about insulation? Around a **third** of schools do not have double-glazing. This is a rare example where the private sector comes off worse, they are **28 percentage points** less likely to have double-glazing than their state counterparts, likely due to the historical nature of their buildings



School buildings in disrepair

One in three teachers say their classroom is the area of the school most in need of repair and redecoration.

Examples of the poor condition of the school estate include a **third** of teachers reporting that they have to use a bucket to collect rain water somewhere in their building, and the same proportion reporting that they do not have a working radiator in their classroom.



Thinking of the entire school building and whether it was in a 'generally good state of repair', a **third** of headteachers said they disagreed, with **one in ten** headteachers strongly disagreeing. Students' toilets were the area heads highlighted as being in most need of repair.

