

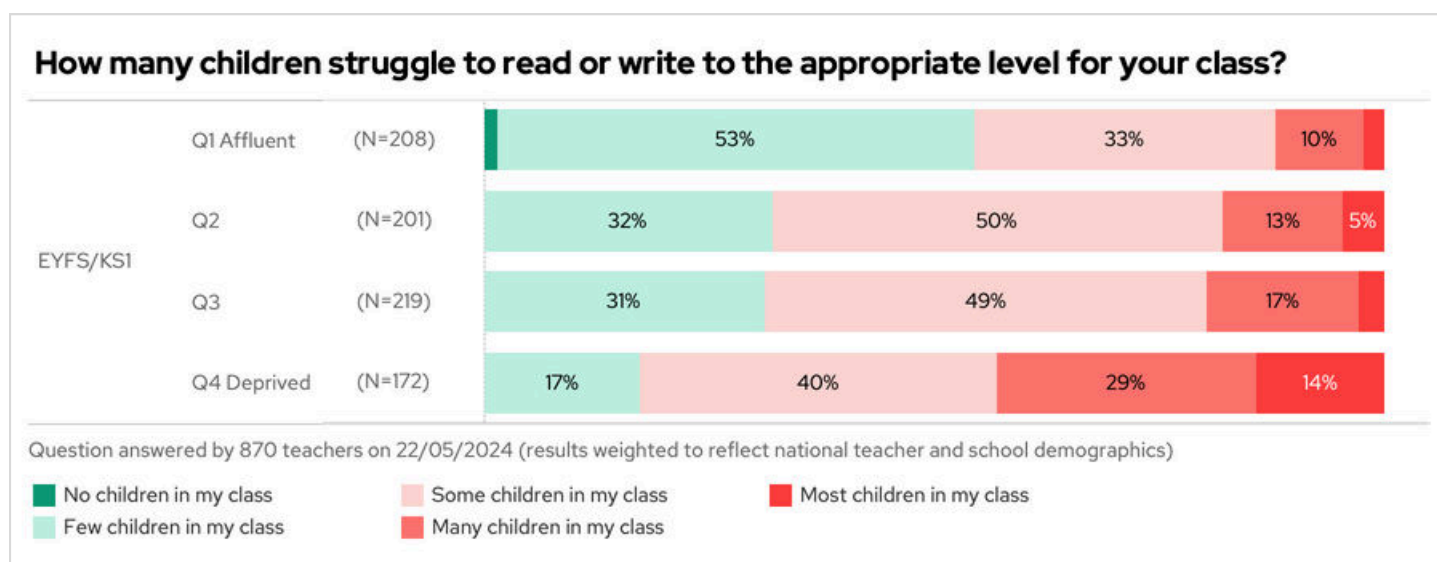
Making the early years work for all

Early years education is crucial in a child's education journey. In 2021, a new framework and the Reception Baseline Assessment were introduced to schools and nurseries. The new assessment was designed to replace the (now optional) KS1 SATs and will be used to measure progress between the start and end of primary school. The pandemic disrupted access to both school and pre-school education. Consequently, concerns have been raised regarding children's lower exposure to social situations, thereby reducing language acquisition and school readiness.

Ready for school

In February this year (2024), **80%** of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that new pupils were not as "school-ready" as pupils before the pandemic. **95%** of EYFS/KS1 teachers say they are seeing emotional and behavioural issues that they attribute to lockdown learning and the pandemic.

In 2024, **one in four** teachers of KS1/EYFS in the most deprived state-funded schools said "most" or "all" of their pupils struggle to read or write to the appropriate level for their class. Immediately after the pandemic in 2021, this figure was **one in three**.



Behaviour challenges in the early years

As with children of all ages, teachers tell us that pupil behaviour in the early years is becoming more challenging. In 2019, **53%** of EYFS/KS1 teachers had removed a child for misbehaving that term; our most recent 2024 survey reveals that figure is now **70%**.

The physical challenge of working with young children is particularly acute: **56%** of EYFS/KS1 teachers have been hit or punched by a pupil this academic year – a figure that drops to **31%** for KS2.

