

# How much abuse do teachers receive? (And other findings...)

## 1. Abuse in schools

Becky saw some figures statistics recently about abusive behaviour from parents and pupils towards teachers, but the results seemed suspiciously high! Becky simply didn't believe them, so we asked the same questions on Teacher Tapp to check. To her astonishment, a massive 39% of primary teachers and 26% of secondary teachers report that they've been subjected to verbal abuse by a parent or carer during the last academic year. This is not good.

It also raises the question of whether teachers are well equipped to communicate with parents. Half of you say you have never received training in how to do so and while some teachers on twitter quipped that they didn't feel like this was something they needed training for, perhaps they haven't yet been on the sharp end of a parent's tongue!

Verbal abuse by students seems to be part and parcel of being a teacher, particularly in schools serving more disadvantaged communities. Though we know that secondary teachers are more concerned about behaviour generally, primary teachers also receive a great deal of verbal abuse. (Perhaps it feel a little less scary coming from a 6-year-old than from a 16-year-old!)

Physical abuse, whilst not common, is meanwhile far more prevalent in primary schools, which may surprise you. One reason may be that children with serious behavioural difficulties transfer from a primary setting to the special or alternative provision sector rather than to mainstream secondary schools.

## 2. Do your classes work out as planned?

How predictable is the job of being a teacher? Suppose we asked you to sit down and think in detail about exactly what is going to happen in each lesson, how different are things likely to

work out?

Becky (with [psychology teacher Ben White](#)) is interested in how much teachers find they need to deviate from a lesson plan. Deviating from a plan isn't always easy. You need to: (1) figure out the ways that students don't know things you expected thought they did; then (2) make a judgement about where the balance of understanding in a classroom lies (e.g. would you deviate a whole class if one student didn't understand something?); and (3) have the knowledge, skills and resources to hand to switch your teaching on the spot.

When we asked you about a single lesson, we found only 1-in-5 of you deviated from your planned lesson. It was higher for those teaching in more disadvantaged settings, perhaps where prior knowledge is more patchy, and also a little higher amongst NQTs who are likely to be poorer judges of knowledge and understanding.

We also asked how many times a student asked you a question related to their learning during class. These figures seem pretty low overall. 'Responsive teaching' seems to involve the teacher proactively prompting students rather than the reverse (we'll try to ask about it this week). In most classrooms, any student will only ask a teacher something five times or less. We were surprised to learn that maths classrooms have the most proactive question asking going on, perhaps because getting unstuck on a question is pretty hard for a student to do alone.

Now thinking about how predictable teaching is as a job in general... we've been asking quite a few questions about boredom and variety and some clear differences by seniority of post have emerged. The more senior you are in the school, the more you feel variety and change is for you. Perhaps that's why you kept pursuing promotions in the first place!

Teaching feels like it should be an incredibly stimulating job compared to many, and yet one-third of classroom teachers agreed, at least a little, that they often find the school working day repetitive and monotonous. Similarly, about a third said they would like more challenging things to do in their working life.

### 3. Headteacher Talks

A stereotypical view is that headteachers are hidden in their offices and classroom teachers rarely get to speak with them. But how true is this?

On a random last week we asked all teachers if they'd had a conversation with heads. The majority of primary teachers said yes, but only 1 in 4 secondary classroom teachers had done so. The larger size of secondary schools influences this, as it's simply harder to get round everyone. Reaching a quarter of staff isn't bad though. Certainly, it doesn't suggest heads are hiding.

4. Finally, we know how much you love the daily tips, so here are last week's...

- [How to improve student focus](#)
- [Assessing the quality of student work](#)
- [Common mistakes all teachers make](#)
- [Reliability versus bias in assessment](#)
- [Our over-bloated curriculum in schools](#)
- [Ideas generation and behavioural insights](#)