

Parents' evenings, parking collisions and two other fascinating findings from this week

1. How dangerous is your staff car park?

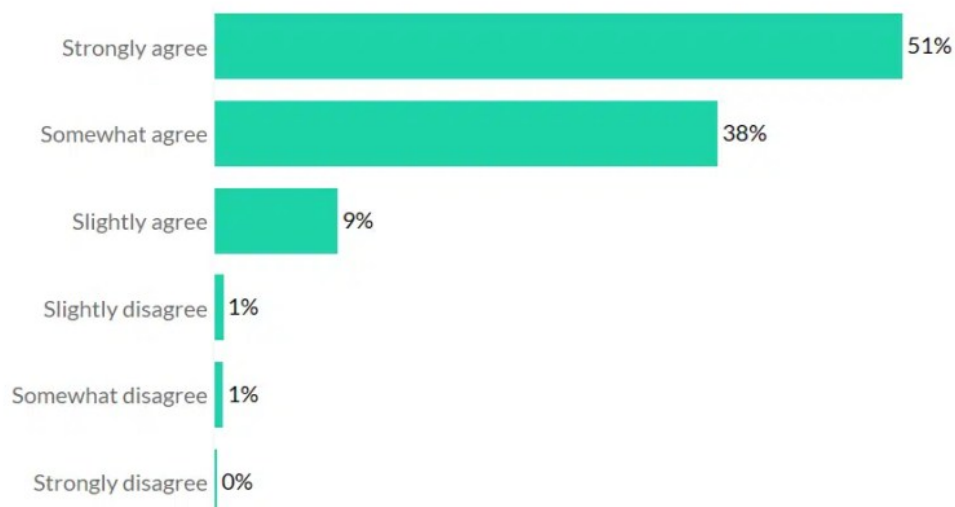
A Tapper got in touch who was horrified that a massive 11% of you have had a minor accident whilst in or near the staff car park!

The concerned Tapper wanted to investigate further - did these victims have access to a staff car park, or are they limited to parking on the street? We checked, and your responses show that the teachers involved in these accidents nearly all get to park in a staff car park. With time in the car park sandwiching the working day, this could be a sign that teachers are starting and ending the day too tired and stressed - and it's a risk to their personal safety.

2. How much autonomy do schools give their teachers?

Did you notice us asking a LOT of questions about teacher autonomy this week? The focus turned out to be appropriate as your responses show that autonomy is something you care a LOT about.

It is important to me that my school allows flexibility for me to run my classroom in the way that I want

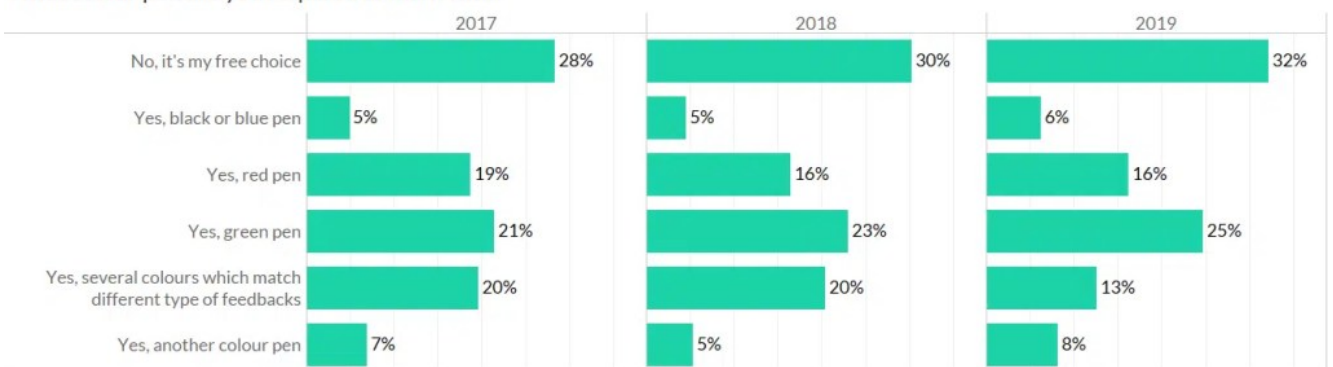


Question answered by 4,838 teachers on 12/11/2019
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

A staggering 98% of you feel it important your school allows you flexibility to run your classroom in accordance with your own judgment. With teachers providing a nearly uniform endorsement of autonomy, you can't help but wonder where the ambivalence of the 2% stems from...

One idea is that the statement we offered for appraisal included some elements that were too ambiguous - for example, 'run my classroom in the way that I want' could be interpreted as advocating for teachers to operate as lone rangers without centralised assessment or behaviour management systems. As that can a huge challenge for individual teachers, it's understandable why some may come out in disagreement with the statement - though it is notable that not one of you 'strongly' disagreed with it!

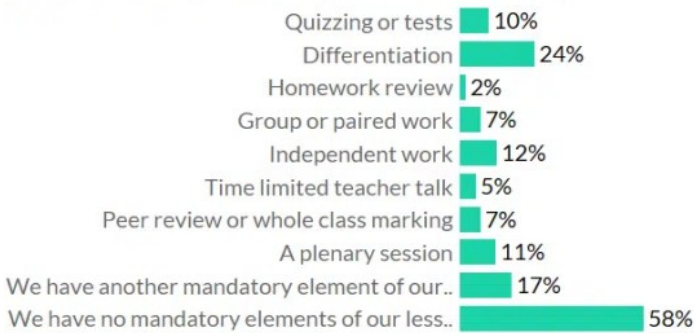
What colour pen are you required to mark with?



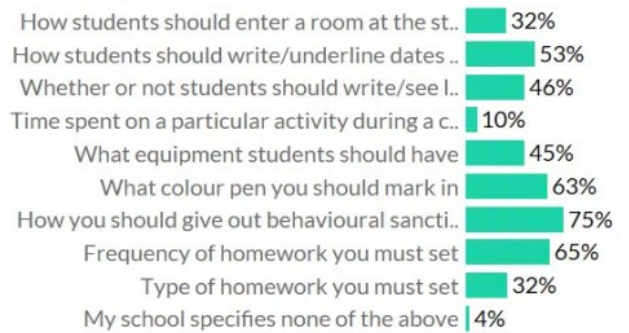
Responses: 1,133 (27/11/2017); 2,218 (03/12/2018); 4,743 (14/11/2019)

With autonomy so important to so many of you, we have some new findings that promise progress. The number of you with agency to mark in whatever colour you please has increased by just 4% since 2017. That's not great progress, but the number of you at the mercy of multicoloured marking policies has decreased by 7 percentage points. These shifts hint at a subtle sea change in professional autonomy, with teachers slowly getting more of it.

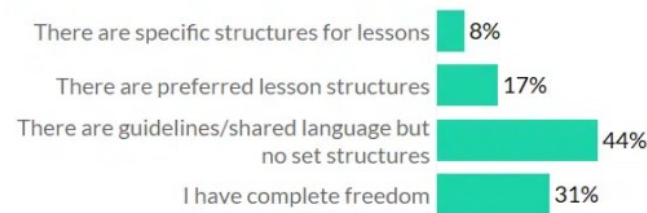
Does your school have a mandatory lesson structure that requires you to include any of the following? (Tick all that apply)



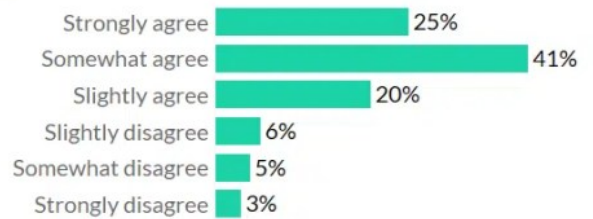
For which of the following does your school specify rules (tick all that apply)?



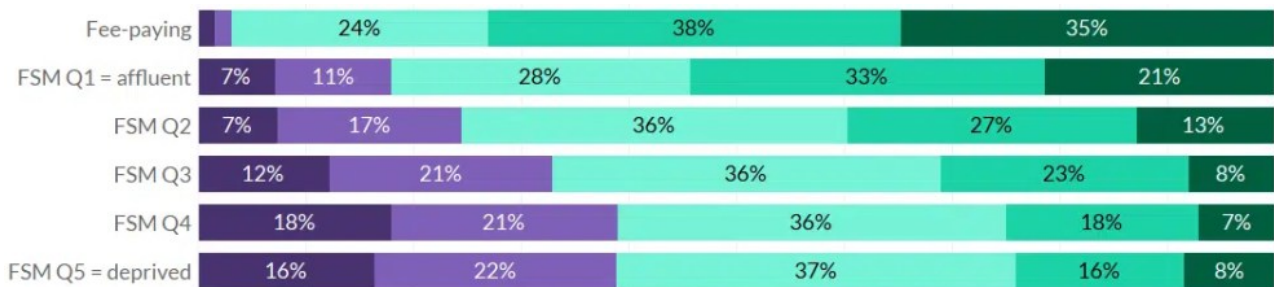
How much autonomy do you have over how you teach? Choose the answer that most closely reflects your situation.



I have a great deal of choice and freedom in deciding how I do my work

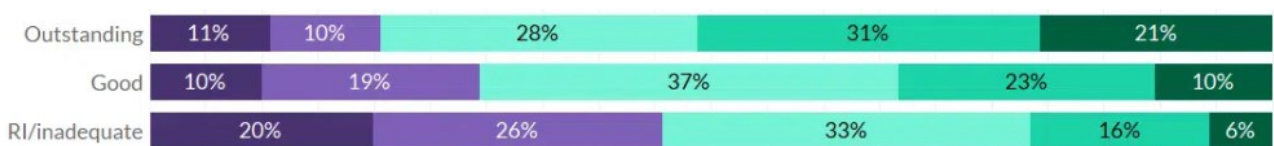


We asked you the four questions in the charts above on professional autonomy and collected them together into a novel scale to represent how much autonomy teachers have in different schools, with some intriguing results.



■ Very high autonomy
■ High autonomy
■ Moderate autonomy
■ Low autonomy
■ Very low autonomy

Fee paying schools afford their teachers the most autonomy, while schools in deprived communities afford their teachers the least. Along a similar line, Outstanding schools are more likely than schools rated RI/Inadequate to offer their teachers a high degree of autonomy.



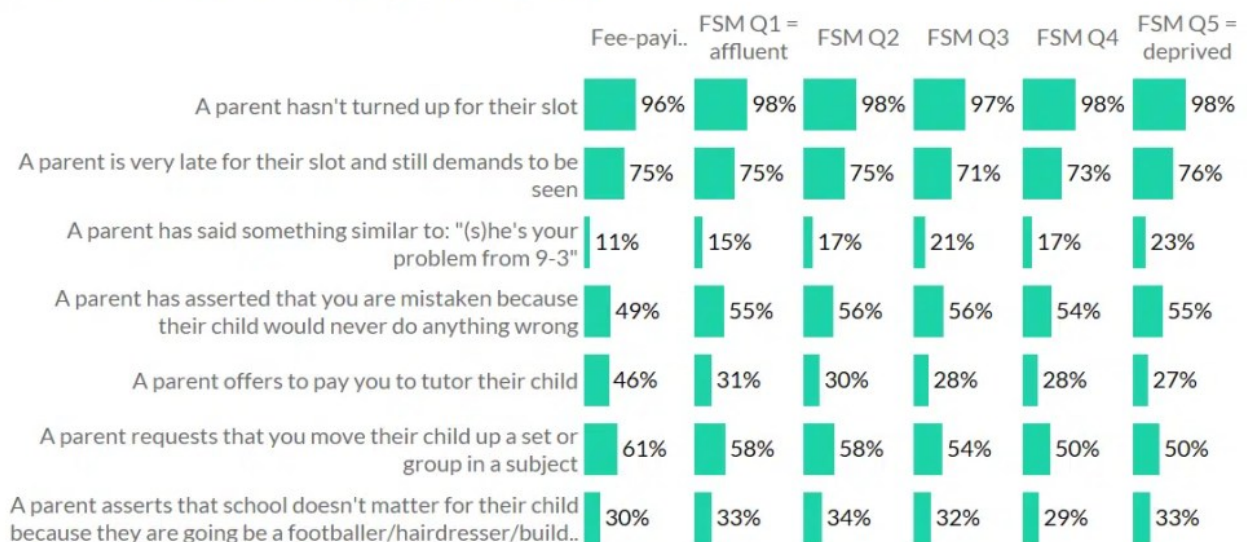
■ Very high autonomy
■ High autonomy
■ Moderate autonomy
■ Low autonomy
■ Very low autonomy

Schools with low Ofsted ratings and in deprived communities are the most likely to be engaged in school improvement initiatives. With such initiatives frequently involving centralised direction of teaching practice, teacher autonomy is naturally diminished. But it's worth reminding leaders in such schools that teachers really value autonomy. And offering teachers greater latitude to control their practice may help with recruitment, retention and overall job satisfaction.

3. What do teachers hear a lot of on parents' evenings?

Parents' evening comes but several times a year, so it's no surprise that at this point you've heard it all before. Nearly all of you have had a parent miss a slot, and 74% of you had an unpunctual parent still insist on being seen.

This coming week is a popular week for parents' evenings. Have any of the following ever happened to you on a parents' evening? Tick any that apply.



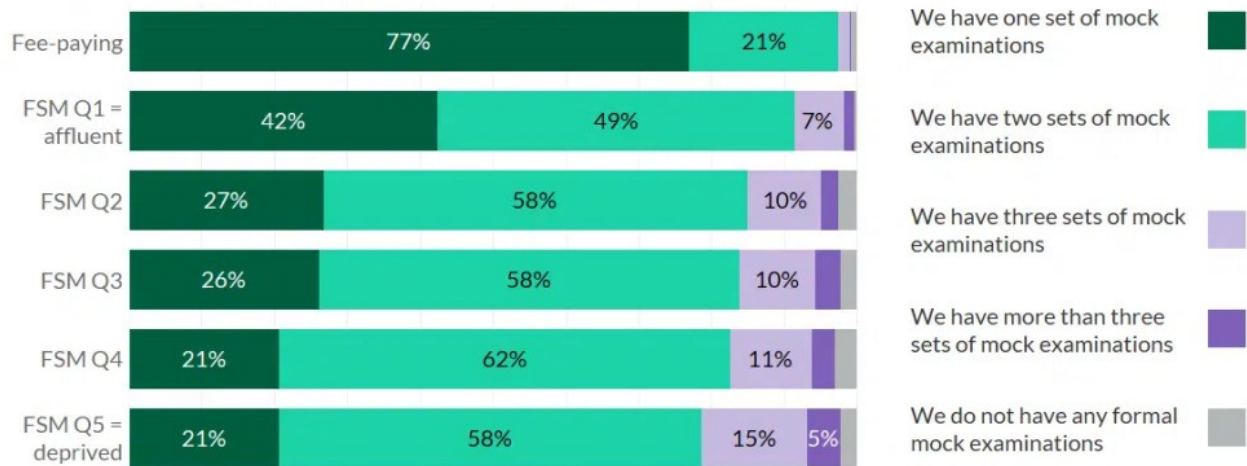
Question answered by 4,486 teachers on 11/11/2019

Requests from parents to bump their child up a set in your subject were fairly common across the spectrum, alongside assertions from parents that you must be mistaken as their child would never do anything wrong.

What was truly surprising is the finding that teachers in fee-paying schools are the MOST likely to face requests to tutor their child for extra cash. With parents in fee-paying schools already dropping a sizable sum on their child's schooling, you might expect them to be hesitant to commit further cash to this project. But what we're seeing instead is that parents who already pay often have the resources to pay more and are more likely to see this as a solution to educational challenges their child faces.

4. How many mock exams does your school run?

How many opportunities do you give for your Year 11 students to sit 'mock' examinations in a formal setting? (Please think about the main subject you teach for your response.)



Question answered by 3,082 teachers on 11/11/2019
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

With mock exam season advancing over the horizon, we were surprised to learn that most schools are using more than one set of mocks to prepare their Year 11s. 20% of schools in the most deprived areas are using three or more sets of mocks. Why is this happening, given the huge amount of time it takes away from classroom instruction? Is it an attempt to bounce students into doing some early revision or a means to identify gaps in learning? Let us know why your students sit so many mock exams!

Finally, we know you love our tips...

- [Helping students to change their behaviour for the better](#)
- [How can schools improve pupil behaviour?](#)
- [The power of expectations](#)
- [What does Bake Off show us about the limits of discovery-based learning?](#)
- [What makes some teachers more experimental than others?](#)
- [How to use extensive subject knowledge to extend learning beyond your lesson plan](#)