

# Work stresses, primary PPA times and school open evenings!

Hey Tappsters!

Happy half term to the vast majority of you! Whether you've finished your half term, or have only just started, we hope get a chance to rest up ahead of the run to Christmas! ■■

Don't forget our October prize draw wraps up this week, where the winner will win 10 umbrellas for those autumn break duties. Keep your eyes peeled when we announce the winner on Friday ■■ – it could be you!

So, what have you been telling us this week?

## Work stresses

We know life in school can be stressful at times, and sometimes it's far too much so! This week, just 21% of you said that stress levels were acceptable for the job that you do. Prior to the pandemic the figure was higher, with as many as 37% of you happy with the job's stress levels.

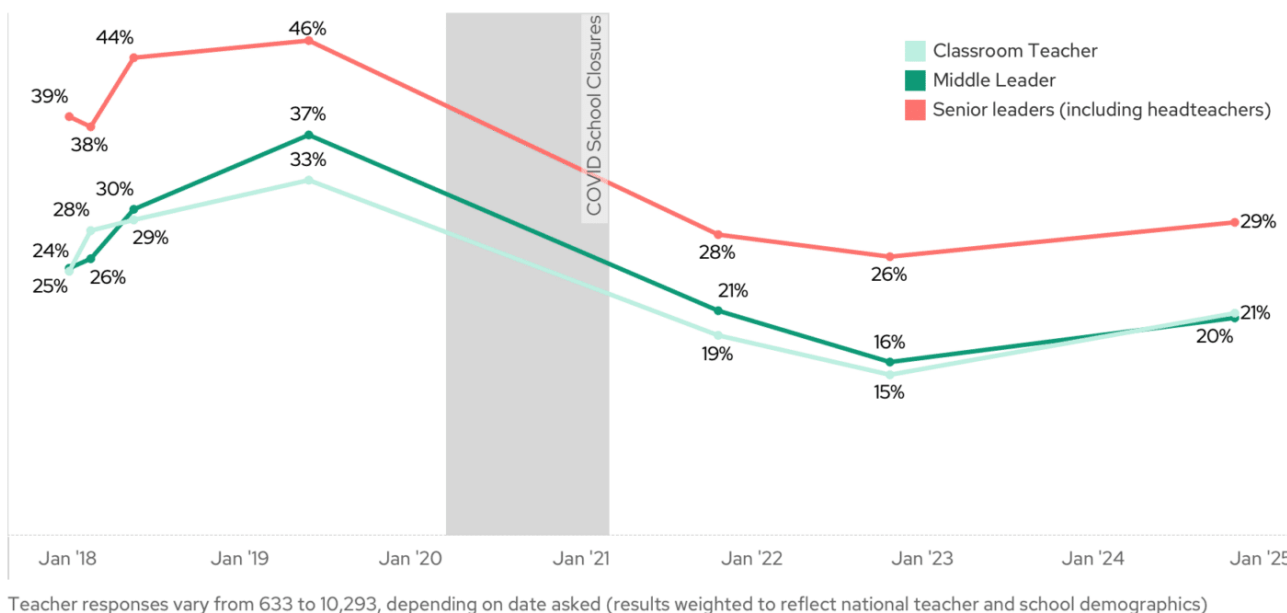
There are many theories about the change – not least ongoing funding cuts which have reduced staffing and increased the responsibilities (see blogs passim for many stats on this).

A point of difference in this stat is that it's the senior leaders (including heads) who are slightly more positive, in that they're more likely to say the stress level is acceptable. This is despite the fact that on other measures of stress, for example, work-related anxiety, senior leaders generally have higher scores.

Why the discrepancy? Other psychological studies suggest that senior leaders have more choice in how they manage their work, which can make the stress easier to cope with, but it may also be that they feel the higher pay and status of their role means higher stress levels are acceptable.

## Teachers who agree that stress levels are acceptable for the job they do

Question asked: "Do you agree that stress levels are acceptable for the job that you do?"



Beyond the basic figures, this year we really want to get to the crux of what is making you stressed. So, we'll be asking every month – so that we can look at pinch points across the year.

For example, in September, 29% of you said pupil pastoral concerns had stressed you. In October, that has risen to 36%. Similarly, 19% of you said marking was a particular stress in September, rising to 27% in October.

Many of you say you face a particular pain point in your relationships with parents. In October, 24% of you said you had been stressed or unhappy with these relationships in your school.

The three most common kinds of parent issues you are facing are unhappiness about sanctions (53%), unhappiness with the school rules (46%), and not supporting attendance (43%). This is the case across both primary and secondary phases. It is often headteachers who bear the brunt of parental complaints, and 47% of them have faced abusive language from parents directed at school staff and 25% directed at pupils.

## This term, which (if any) of the following parent issues have you faced?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Parents unhappy about a sanction their child received	53%	46%	60%
Disagreements between parents and teachers	34%	33%	35%
Parents reporting safeguarding concerns (eg self harm)	16%	15%	18%
Parents not supportive of attendance	43%	46%	40%
Abusive language from parents directed at school staff	21%	23%	19%
Abusive language from parents directed at pupils	10%	13%	8%
Parents unhappy with school rules	46%	40%	51%
Parents unhappy about the curriculum/what children are taught	17%	16%	19%
None of these issues this term	24%	25%	24%

Question answered by 10,105 teachers on 25/10/2024 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)



## Primary PPA - A deeper dig!

We know a lot about primary PPA now, but we haven't asked much about the blocking of PPA, i.e. the length of time that you get your PPA for in one go.

Among primary teachers, 95% said that each of their PPA sessions is 30 minutes or longer. In fact, it is predominantly private schools that have short blocks. Twenty percent of private school primary teachers have some PPA time for less than 30 minutes in their week, compared to just three percent of state school teachers.

What goes on during PPA time, though? 51% of primary teachers said they always plan the work they complete during their class' PPA time - with less experienced teachers the most likely to plan (59% with less than five years, compared to 48% with more than 20 years).

## Ability Setting

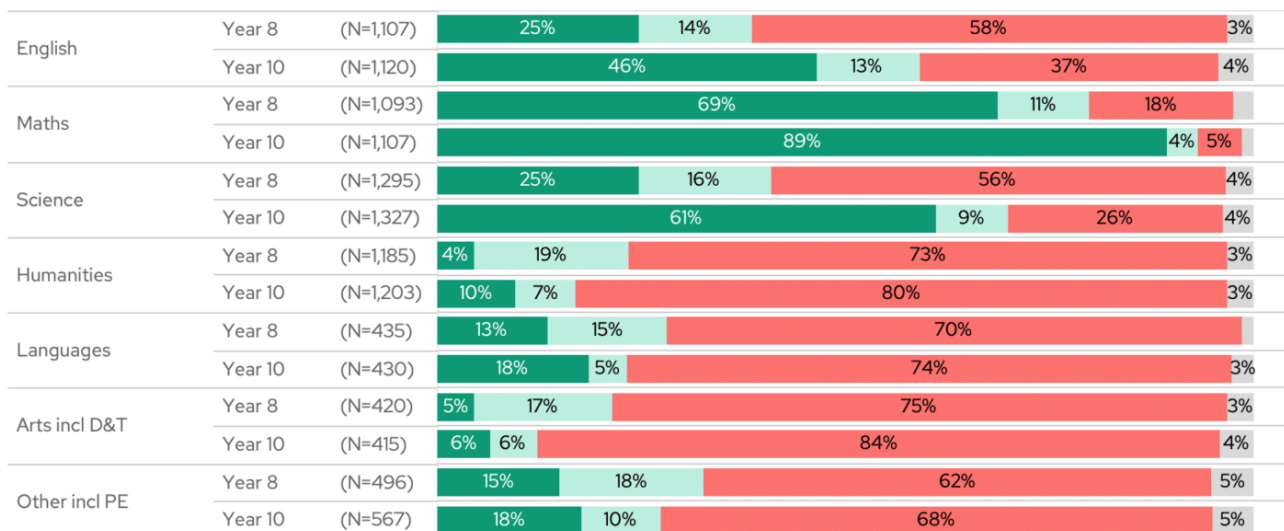
After the pandemic, some secondary teachers said their school had [removed some KS3 attainment groups to support having bubbles](#). 53% of English teachers said their Year 8 classes were in mixed attainment groups during the pandemic, compared to 31% before the pandemic.

It appears that this change has stuck! This year, 58% of English teachers say their Year 8 classes are mixed attainment, as are 56% of Science teachers' Y8 classes. Y8 Maths classes are the least likely to be mixed attainment, with just 18% of Maths teachers saying this is the

case.

How does this change going into higher years= groups? For English teachers, 46% say their Year 10 classes are set by ability, down eight percentage points compared to two years ago, but it hasn't changed much for Maths or Science, 89% and 61% of whom have ability-set classes.

### In your school, how are pupils grouped for your subject?



Question answered by 6,031 to 6,169 teachers on 25/10/2024 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

■ They are set by subject ability
 ■ They are in mixed ability classes  
■ They are streamed by general ability
 ■ Other

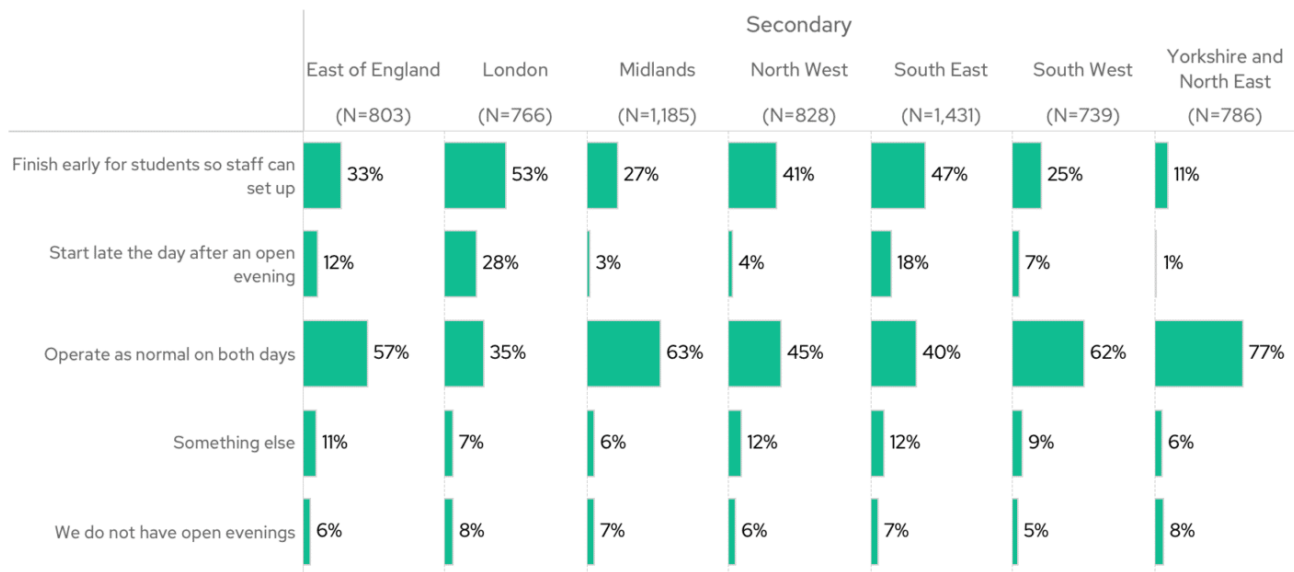
## Open Evenings

Open Evenings are a key part of prospective parents' decision-making when choosing a school for their child. For almost half of primary schools, though, open evenings are not a thing! 46% of primary teachers say their school does not run open evenings, with the remaining mostly saying their school operates normally around the evening!

Secondary schools are different—just 7% of secondary teachers say their school doesn't run an open evening, and 54% say their school operates normally on both days. However, operating times differ hugely by region. 53% of teachers in London say their school finishes early for students so staff can set up. This is true for just 11% of teachers in Yorkshire and the North East!

A teacher wants to know...

## For open evenings at your school, which of the following applies?



Question answered by 6,851 teachers on 26/10/2024 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Almost all secondary teachers are also required to stay late at their school for open evenings. 85% of classroom teachers say they have to stay behind at least once in the academic year!

## ■ Top events

A new event topped the chart this week! The Education People Show, an in-person event in Kent! Which our [School Surveys](#) team will be attending.

Don't forget - we have lots of in-person, online and remote events available in the app! Just head over to the Events pages and there's sure to be something for everyone!

## Daily Reads

This week our most-read blog was about [the lost art of planning](#).

Have you seen a great blog you think would make a great daily read? Let us know by emailing [england@teachertapp.co.uk](mailto:england@teachertapp.co.uk) and we will check it out!