

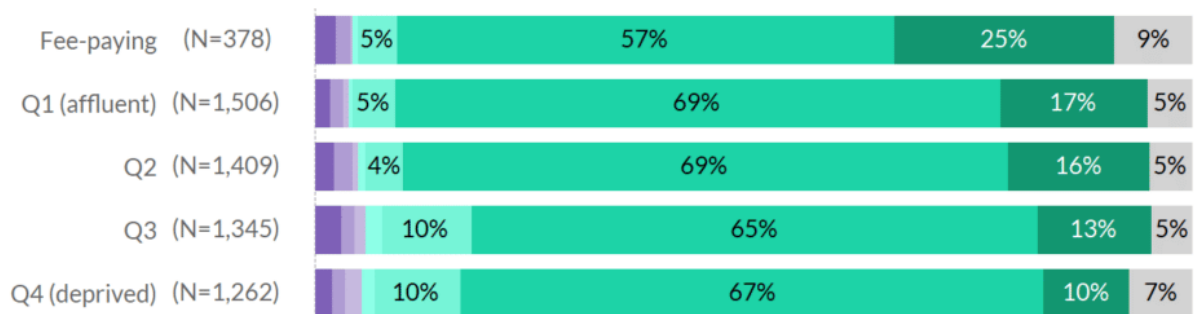
Pupil attendance, curious headteachers and baking GCSE grades!

1. Some good news to start...

We're back to school, if not quite to normality!

Let's start with good news. Back in June and July, there were stark inequalities concerning which children had returned to school. So far this year, those inequalities are MUCH lower. Yes, schools serving low income communities have seen slightly lower attendance last week but the differences are nowhere near as pronounced as previously. Let's hope this continues.

Ok, we are fully into the new term. So... What proportion of your students came to school today?
Tick the response that most closely applies.



Question answered by 5,900 teachers on 07/09/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

- Not relevant - school entirely closed
- All of them
- Almost all (90%+)
- About 4-in-5 (80%)
- About 2-in-3 (67%)
- About half (50%)
- About 1-in-3 (33%)
- Less than 1-in-5 (20%)

We will have to get used to hearing news stories about schools closing every day of the week through this winter season. Last week, you told us that 96% of schools are fully open. This may be as good as it gets!

Today in school, were any large groups of pupils required to stay at home for isolation?



Question answered by 7,239 teachers on 10/09/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

However, whilst it is natural to focus on the students and teachers who are isolating at home, having over 7 million students educated in schools during a pandemic is still a huge success.

2. The Curious Incident of Satisfied Headteachers

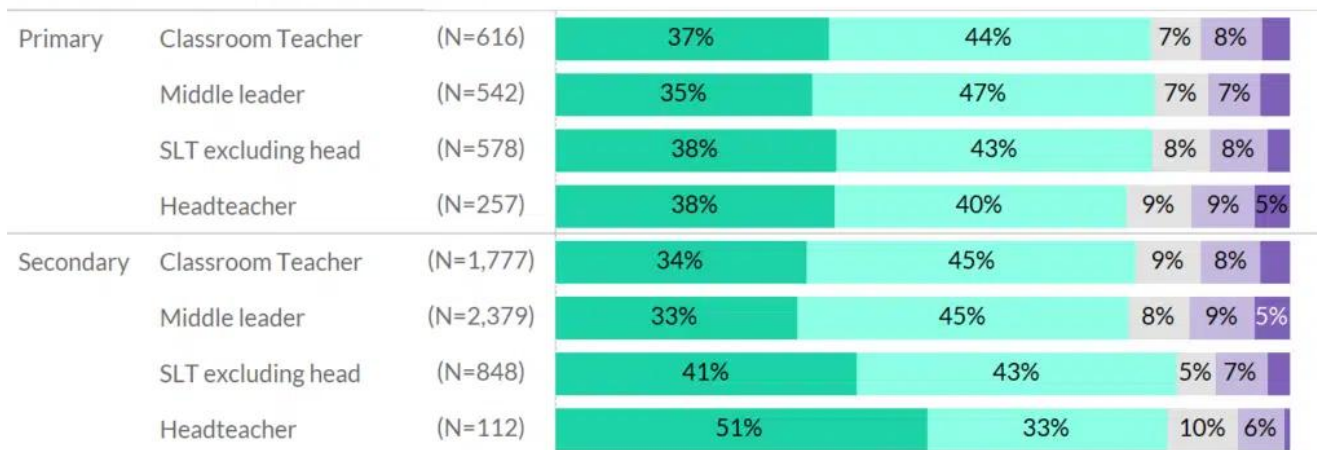
How will we know if things are going OK throughout this year?

You'll remember that in the last academic year we asked about work-related anxiety A LOT on Tuesdays! Although we didn't know it last September when we started, it turned out to be a great question for observing the huge impact of COVID-19.

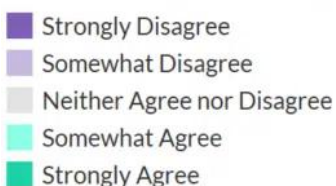
This week, rather than ask you about the negatives, we asked about whether you enjoyed working in the school this week.

The good news is that 80% of teachers did enjoy work, despite the strange rules and working arrangements we all have to adapt to. Curiously, secondary leaders were most likely to say they enjoyed school...

'I enjoyed working in school this week'



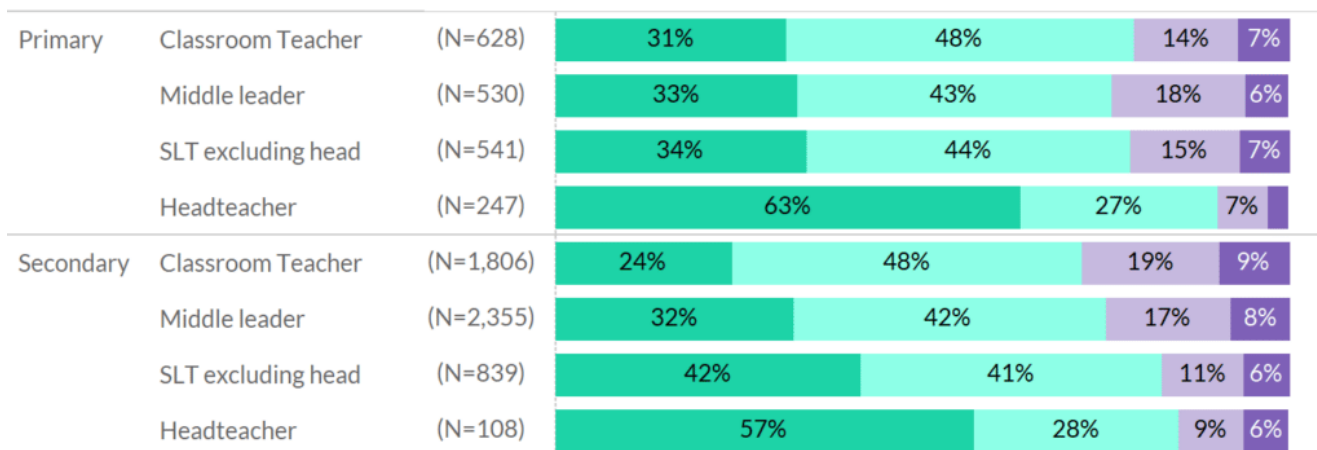
Question answered by 7,228 teachers on 11/09/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)



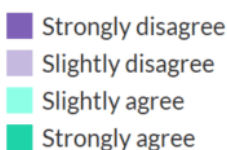
This pattern is curious given that school leaders have had an incredibly tough time trying to solve all the newly-needed arrangements and responding to problems. They've had the longest work hours and consistently shown the highest stress levels.

This week, headteachers also revealed they are the most likely to start thinking about work problems as soon as they wake each morning. Was their satisfaction with last week an artefact of finally seeing all their carefully laid plans put into practice?!

As soon as I get up in the morning I start thinking about work problems



Question answered by 7,179 teachers on 10/09/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

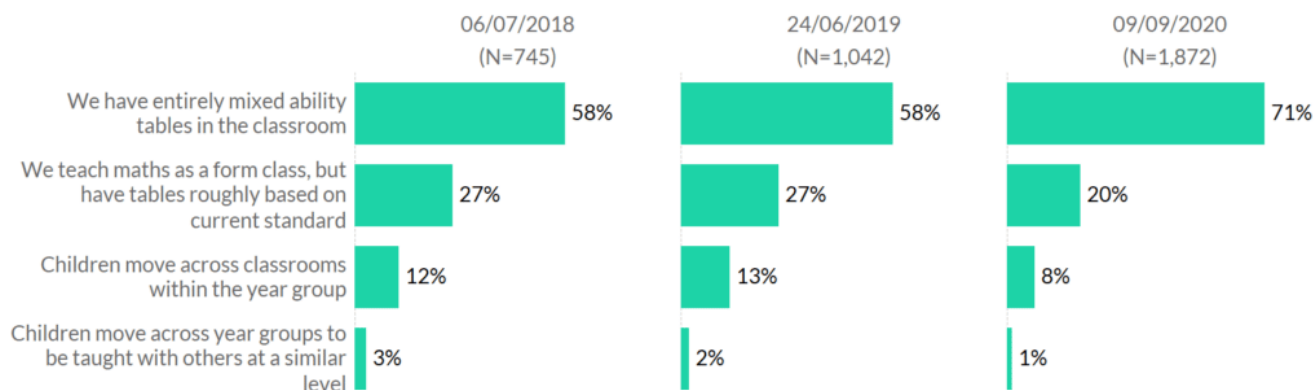


3. The re-emergence of mixed ability teaching

Should schools teach in ability groups or mixed-ability groups? (Or, indeed, what word should we use to describe these groups? With the COVID-era requiring more shuffling around of students across classrooms and tables, we wanted to see what's happened to school preferences for these arrangements!

In primary schools, we can see that many more schools are moving to mixed ability tables seating in maths and English (or reading, as a proxy).

This year, how does maths ability grouping work in your class? Tick the response that most closely applies.

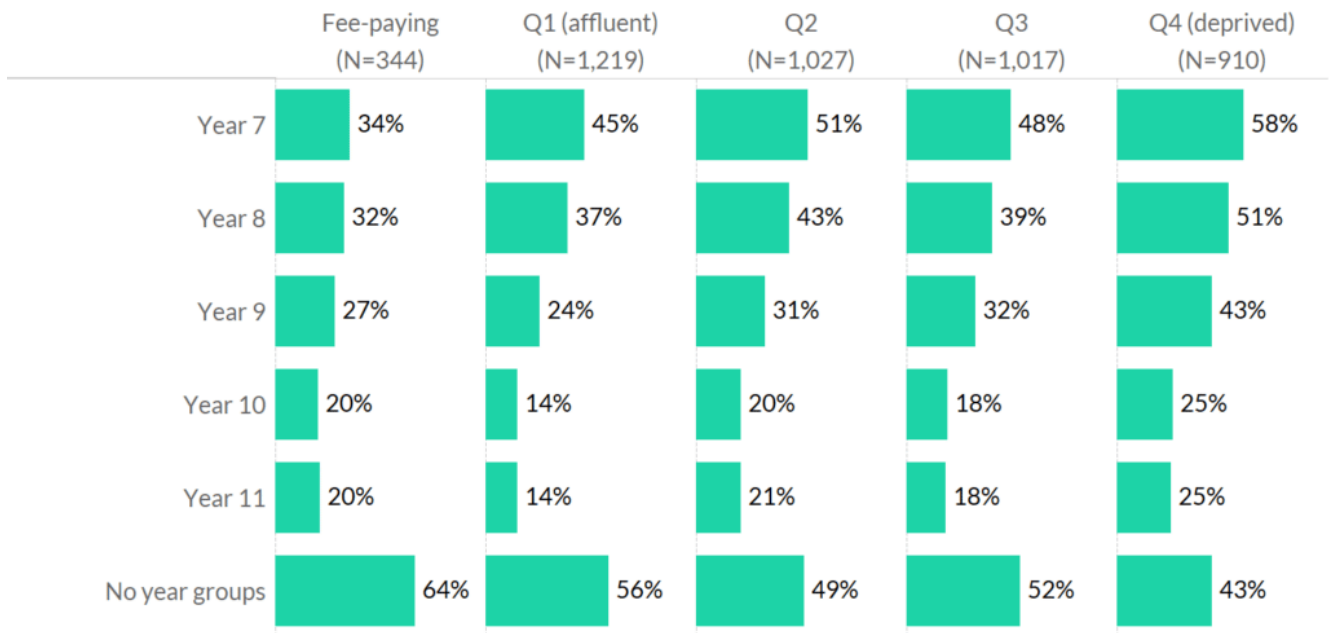


Teacher responses vary from 745 to 1,872, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Figuring out what is going on in secondary schools is a little more complicated because teachers teach so many classes.

Below is an initial 'sense' of how many students are being taught entirely within their form class - with Year 7 the most common for this, and very few pupils still taught in a single bubble group by GCSE. Note that schools serving the lowest income communities are MOST likely to be running form/single-class teaching in Key Stage 3. Over the coming weeks we'll be asking more specific questions about teaching arrangements within subjects.

**In your school, which year groups are being entirely educated in a form group/single class bubble?
(Tick all that apply)**



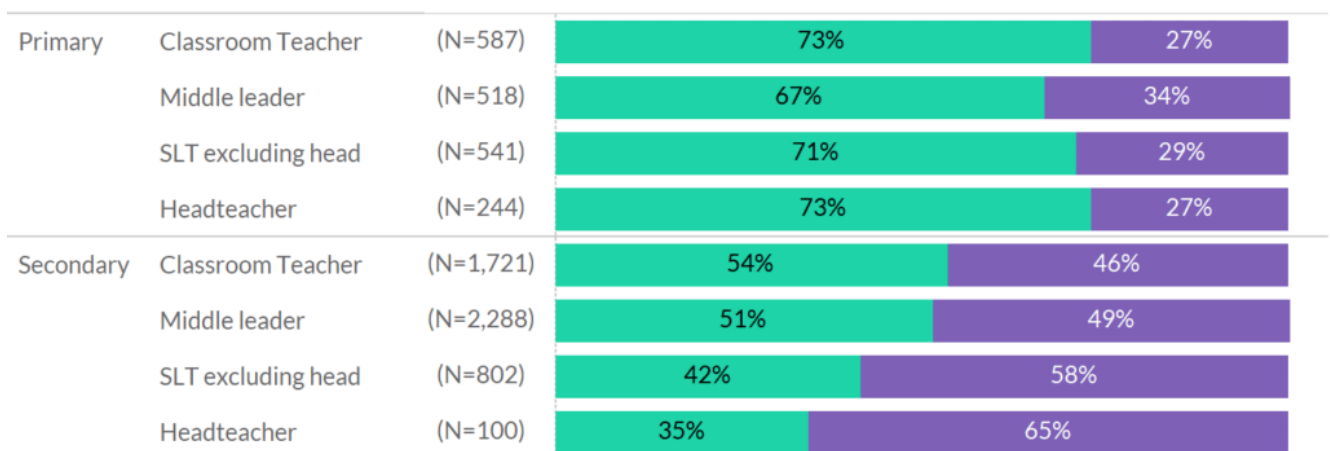
Question answered by 4,517 teachers on 09/09/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

4. Hanging out with other teachers

Teaching can be a lonely profession in 'normal' times, so it is particularly worrying that you won't be able to seek out your teaching colleagues for conversations during the day due to movement restrictions.

Whilst it is good to see that the majority of primary teachers still make it to their staffroom during the day, staggered break and lunch times mean that they won't necessarily get to see all their teaching colleagues. We will be asking more about these arrangements this week.

Did you visit the staffroom at any point today?

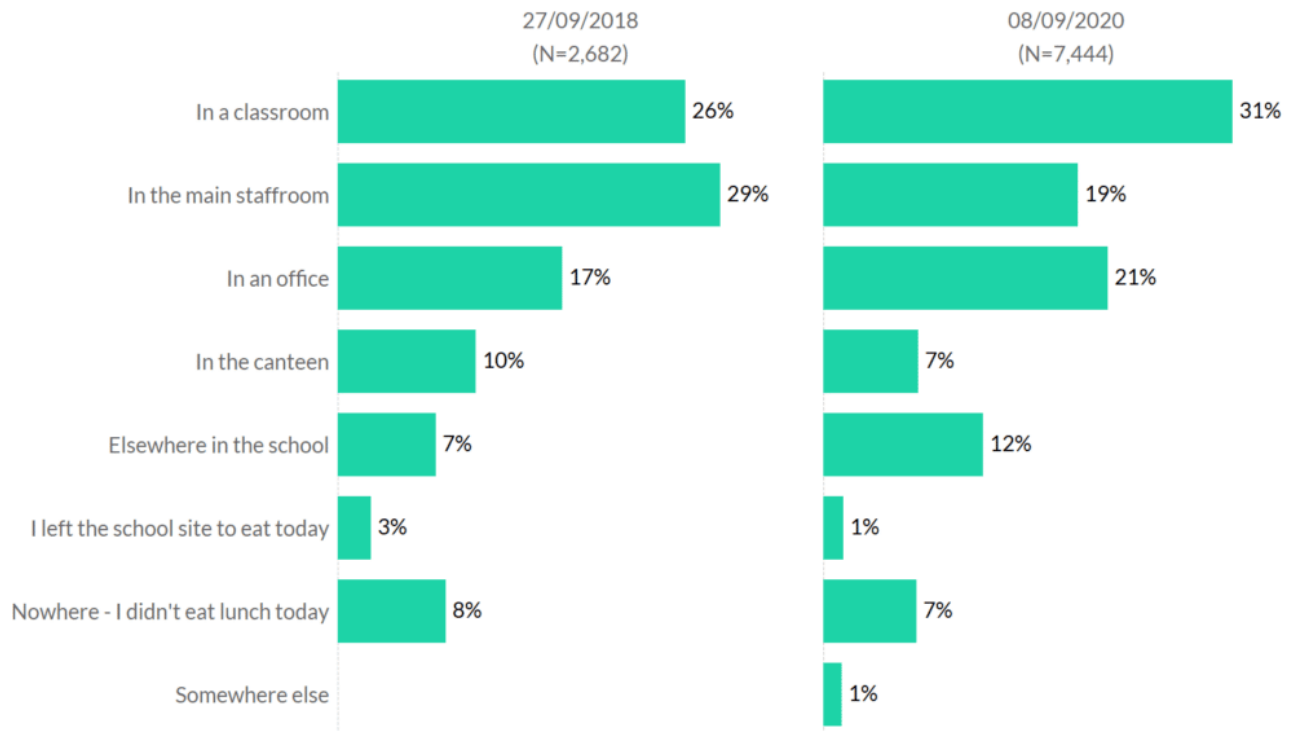


Question answered by 6,905 teachers on 08/09/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

■ No
■ Yes

Teachers are also less likely to be eating your lunch in a communal setting than this time last year. The number going to the staffroom for lunch has fallen from 29% to 19%. And the number going to the canteen has fallen a little too from 10% to 7%.

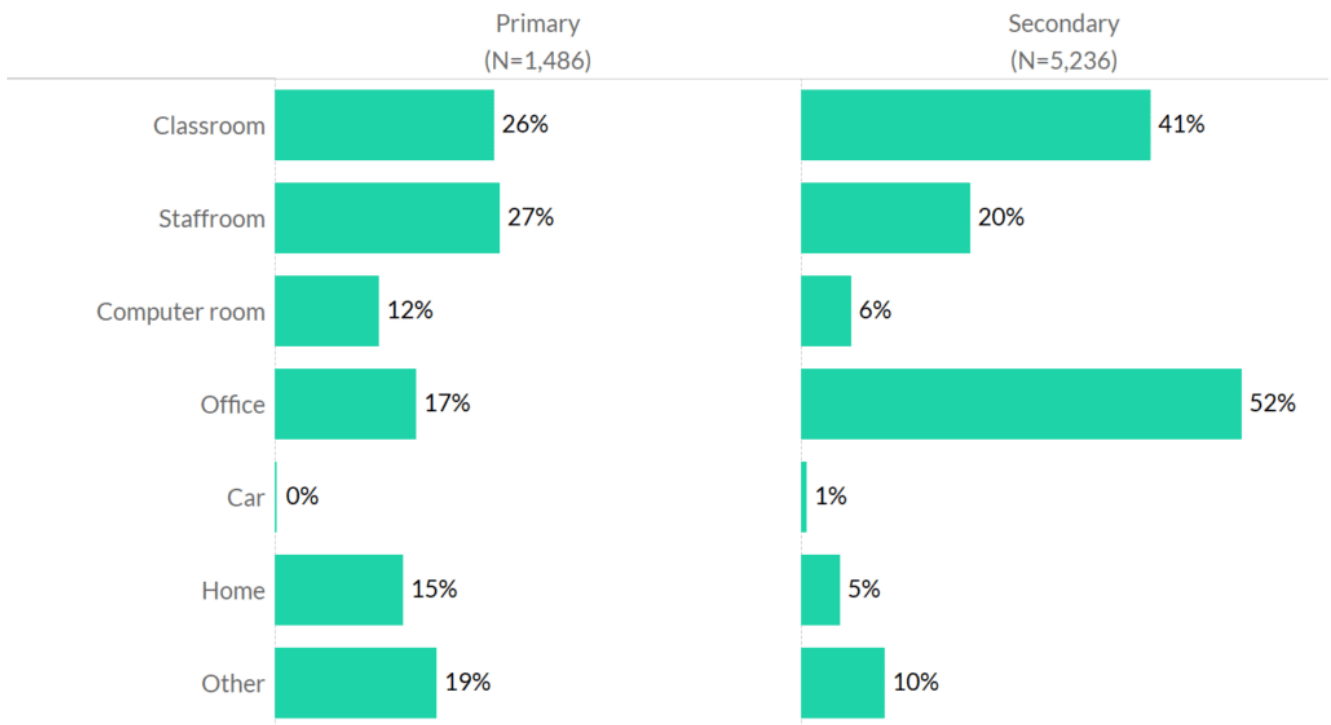
Where did you eat your lunch today?



Teacher responses vary from 2,682 to 7,444, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

We'd heard stories that there was nowhere for teachers to safely do their PPA time on site, forcing them to sit in the carpark. We wanted to check whether this was a significant problem. Whilst there are indeed some secondary teachers sitting in their car during PPA, most are doing it in more conventional places!

Where did you spend your PPA time this week? (Tick all that apply)



Question answered by 6,830 teachers on 11/09/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

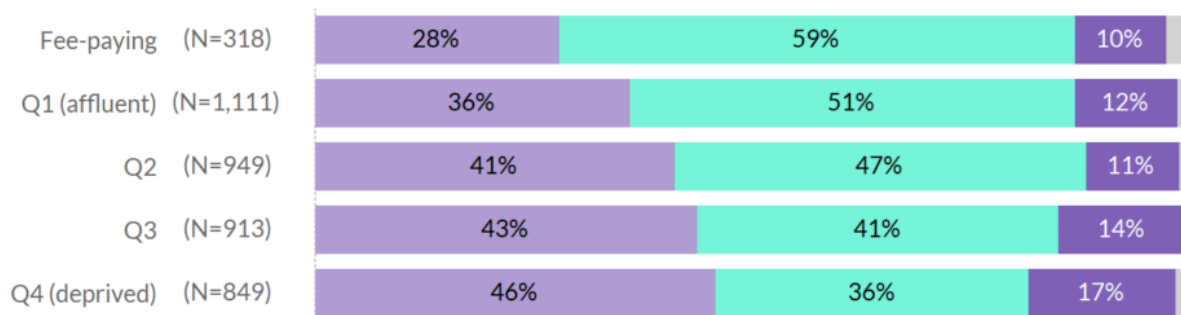
5. Solutions create problems

And finally... the solution to the grading crisis meant a much high proportion of students were awarded the highest GCSE and A Level grades this year. What should happen next year? We asked secondary teachers for their thoughts and were intrigued to see that your views reflected the interests of the institution you teach in.

Those in schools that typically get the highest exam results would like to see the return to the pass rates of 'normal' years, thus preserving the status and exclusivity of the top grades that their students typically achieve.

Those in schools where pupils are more often from lower-income families most want to 'bake-in' the higher grades for future cohorts, or look to create an entirely new system for awarding grades.

Which of the following options would you prefer for next year's GCSE grades?



Question answered by 4,140 teachers on 09/09/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

- Don't give any grades at all
- Invent a completely different system (e.g. pass/merit/fail)
- Same pass/top grade rates as previous examined years (2019)
- Same pass/top grade rates as this year (2020)

Finally, we know you love the daily reads, so here they are:

- [Questions to deepen mathematical understanding](#)
- [Are we doing practical work in science wrong?](#)
- [Stop students from forgetting what you teach](#)
- [Times tables games](#)
- [Teaching vocabulary](#)
- [Meaningful memory](#)
- [Are staggered starts safe?](#)
- [Do we learn from people we don't like?](#)