

# Is it possible to socially distance from pupils? And what is happening to nativity plays under Covid?

The country is locked-down, except for schools! (Well, there's universities, and hospitals, etc, but we don't survey them!)

Since the start of term we've been asking you to tell us three things:

1. Are you off for Covid reasons (usually on a Monday)
2. Are any large groups of pupils out of school - by which we mean whole classes or year groups.

The second question has repeatedly annoyed some of you! If you have a large friendship group, but not a whole class off, then you want to tell us about this - and we understand! However, we are trying to keep the questions comparable so that we can see changes over time.

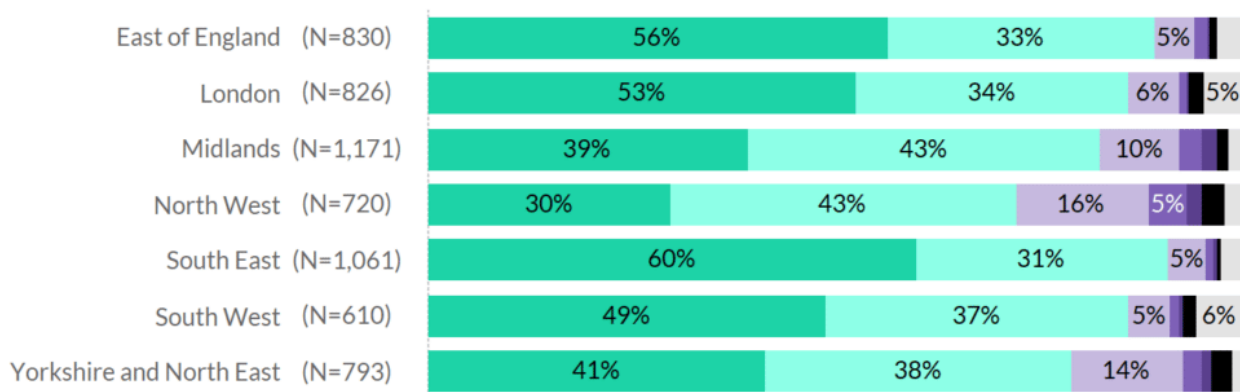
As an alternative, Tappster Bill Wilkinson, suggested using our 'last lesson you taught' approach to get a sense of exactly how many pupils are missing in an average class. So we've added it to the mix!

How did its first outing go?

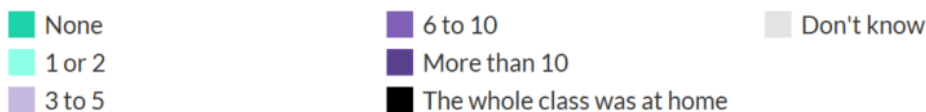
Looking at the data we can see that most schools managed to open to most pupils last week. But there is a clear regional difference reflecting the current prevalence of COVID across the country.

The North West, Yorkshire/Humber, North East and the Midlands have higher students absence rates than the south of England.

## Thinking of the last class you taught today, how many pupils were missing for Covid-related reasons?

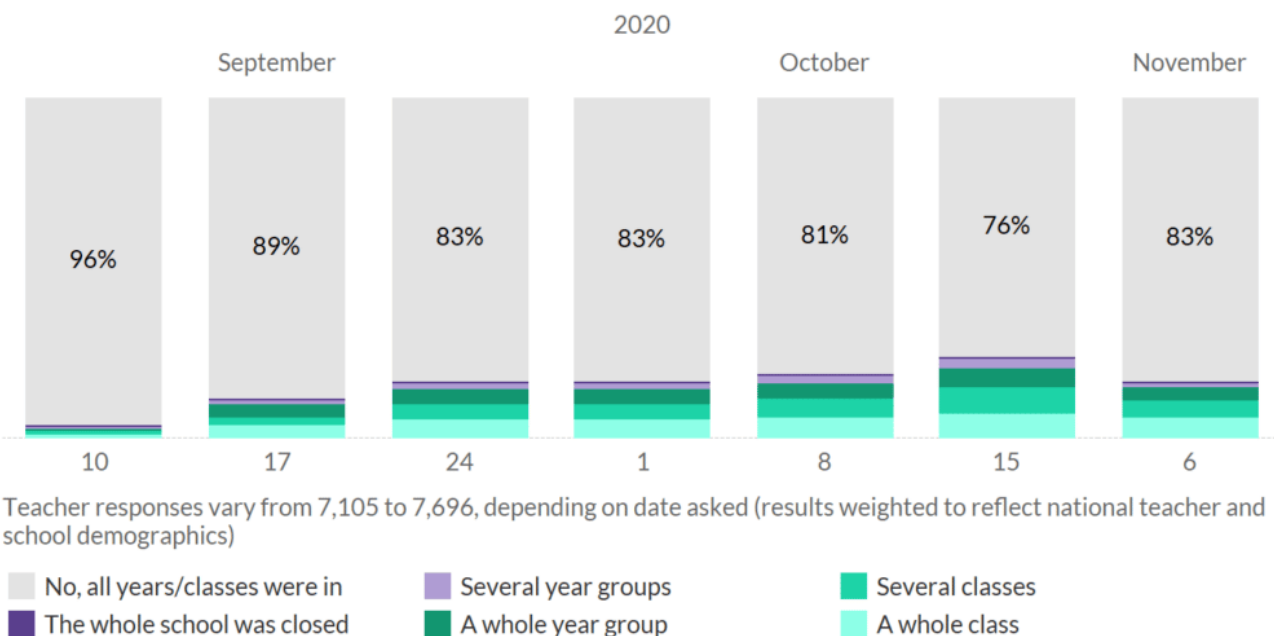


Question answered by 6,011 teachers on 05/11/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

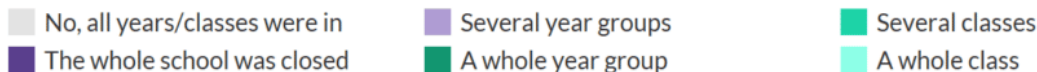


On the question we've been asking every week, we can see that half term has acted as a bit of a break on absences, which were lower last week than they were in the weeks before half term - but not much!

## Today, were any of the following large groups of pupils staying at home for isolation?



Teacher responses vary from 7,105 to 7,696, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

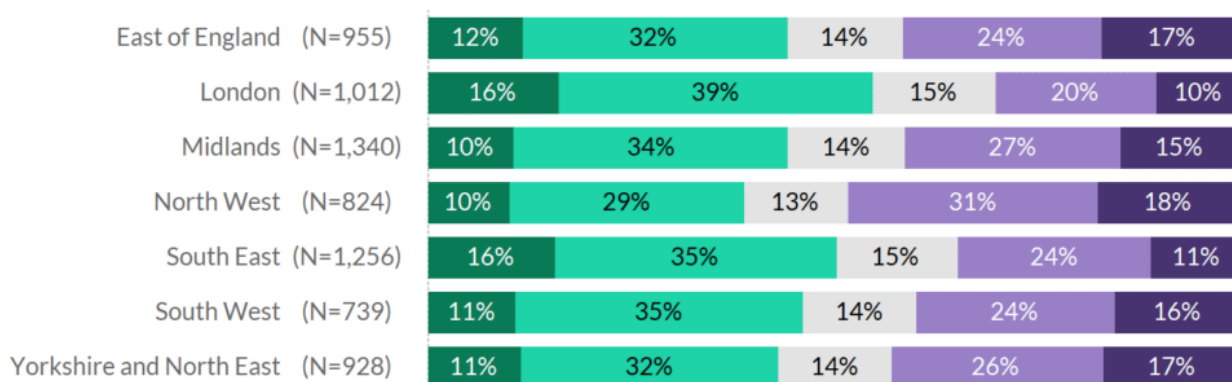


Should schools stay open?

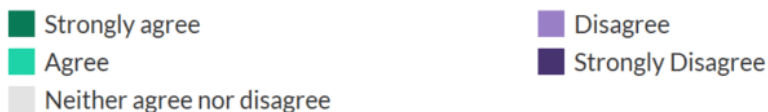
Keeping schools and childcare open during lockdown is controversial. According to ONS statistics, about 40% of UK households have dependent children living in them, which means reducing transmissions rate during this second lockdown will be challenging. But, overall, more teachers (47%) want to see schools remain open than want to see them closed (39%).

Those living in the North West where COVID has caused considerable health and economic damage in recent months are the least supportive of keeping schools open. (This has been a trend since the summer).

**Schools are set to remain open during the planned November lockdown. Do you agree with this approach?**

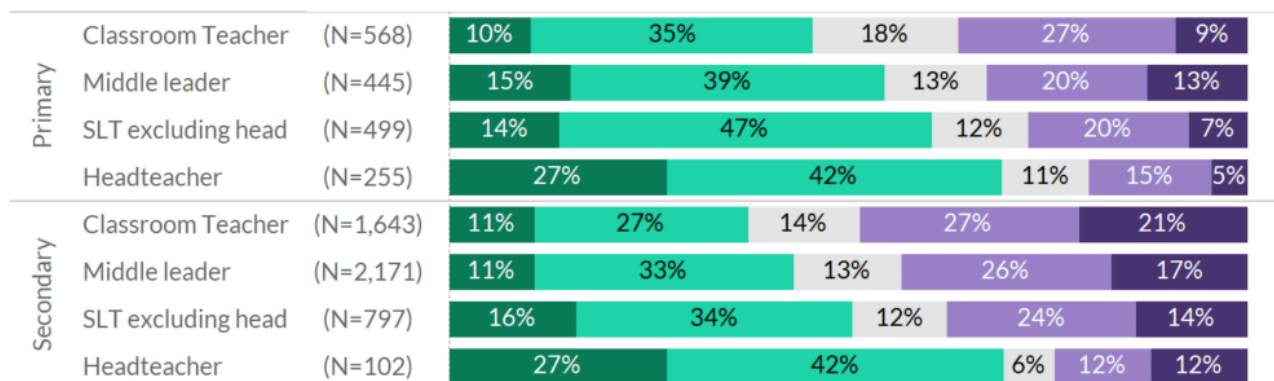


Question answered by 7,054 teachers on 01/11/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)



Headteachers have faced the greatest workload and stress this term in trying to keep their schools open, so it is interesting to see they are the most strongly supporting of keeping schools open. In general, primary teachers are also more supportive of keeping school open - perhaps because they recognise that learning will largely stop for many or most students unless they do and because the risks are lower for younger children.

## Schools are set to remain open during the planned November lockdown. Do you agree with this approach?

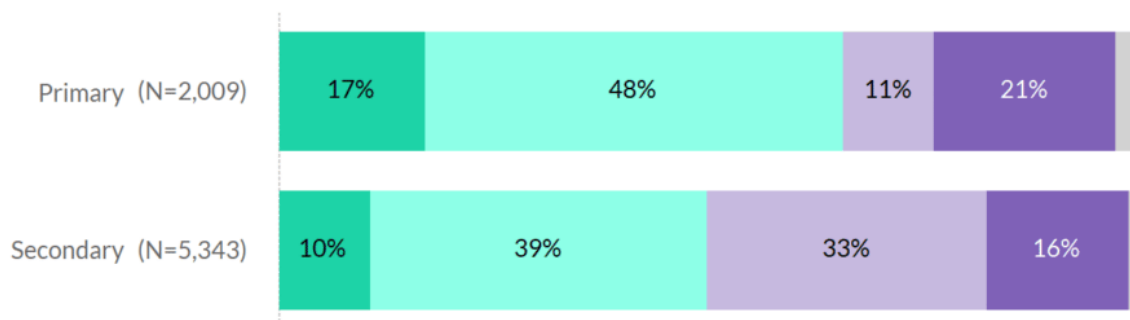


Question answered by 6,590 teachers on 01/11/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

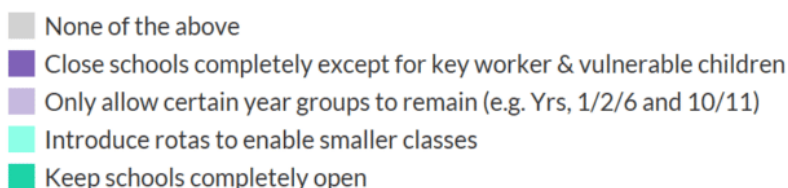


What is clear is that, if the situation deteriorates, few want to return to the situation during last lockdown where the vast majority of children accessed no face-to-face schooling. Primary teachers tend to favour introducing rotas so that every child can come to school part-time. Secondary teachers are more split, with a third favouring prioritisation of certain year groups (i.e. the exam ones) over others.

## If the Covid situation does not improve, which would you prefer as the government's next strategy for schools?



Question answered by 7,480 teachers on 01/11/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

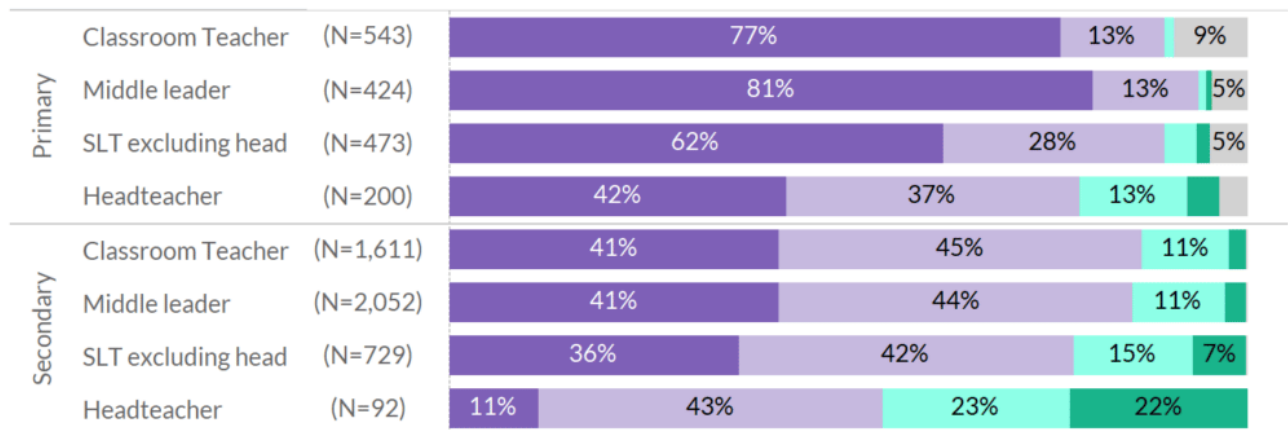


## Is social distancing in schools possible?

Sellotape boundaries. Masks. Poking sticks? How are you managing to stay away from pupils? Are you even trying?

Other than secondary headteachers, the figures below suggest that most of you are struggling with staying distant from your pupils – especially in primary schools.

### How difficult are you finding it to socially distance from your pupils?



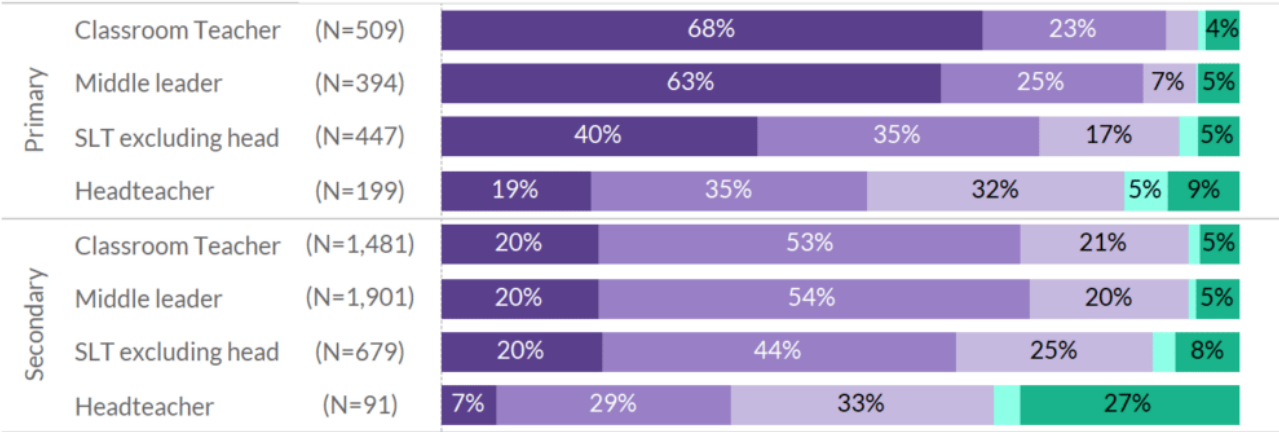
Question answered by 6,225 teachers on 04/11/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)



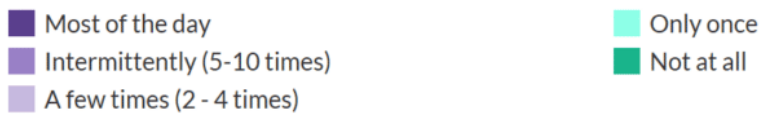
Not surprising, then, that almost 7 in 10 primary classroom teachers said they had spent 'most of the day' less than 1m away from a student. In secondary schools, just 2 in 10 teachers said the same.

Other than secondary heads – who are the least likely people to be teaching in a classroom on any given day – only a tiny percentage of teachers said they had not been within 1m of a student all day.

## Today in school, how often were you less than 1m away from a student?

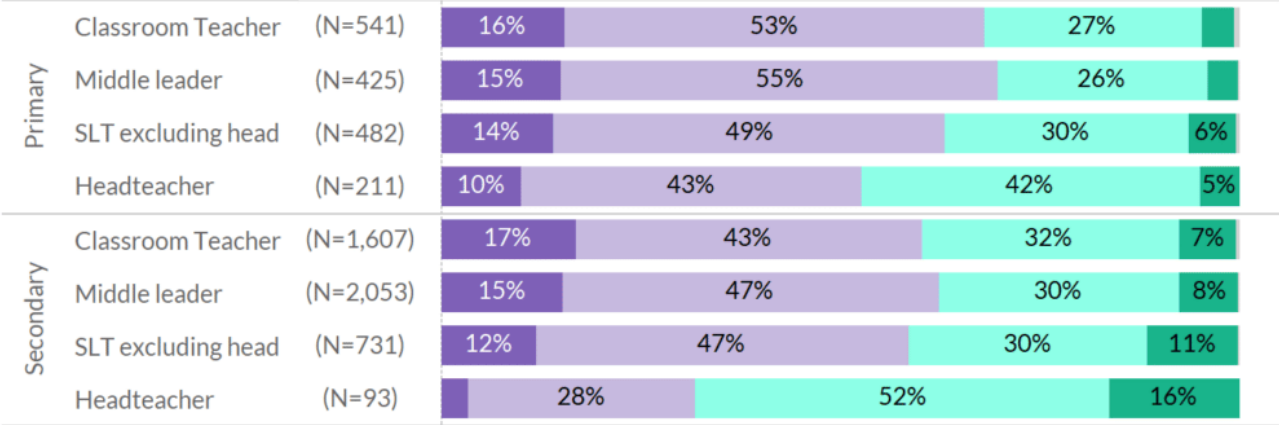


Question answered by 5,789 teachers on 04/11/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)



Secondary heads also seem to be the only group not finding it difficult to socially distance from other adults in the school.

## How difficult are you finding it to socially distance from other adults in your school?



Question answered by 6,244 teachers on 04/11/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)



## Who is shielding?

Last week the government made a last minute announcement that teachers holding a

shielding letter stating that they were "clinically extremely vulnerable" should stay at home.

So, how many people does this affect?

2% of teachers told us they had received a shielding letter, which is roughly in line with the population. The figure was a little higher for older teachers. Of those receiving the letter, only about half agree that they meet the criteria for shielding. Unfortunately the health databases on which these letters are sent are a little crude. However, a further 2% of teachers who did not receive the letter feel that they nevertheless meet the criteria for extremely clinically vulnerable. This was particularly true of older teachers.

### Have you received a letter asking you to shield in November due to being 'extremely clinically vulnerable'?



Question answered by 6,795 teachers on 05/11/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

- No, and I wouldn't expect to receive a letter
- No, but I do meet the criteria for extreme vulnerability
- Yes, but I don't think I'm vulnerable
- Yes, and I agree I am

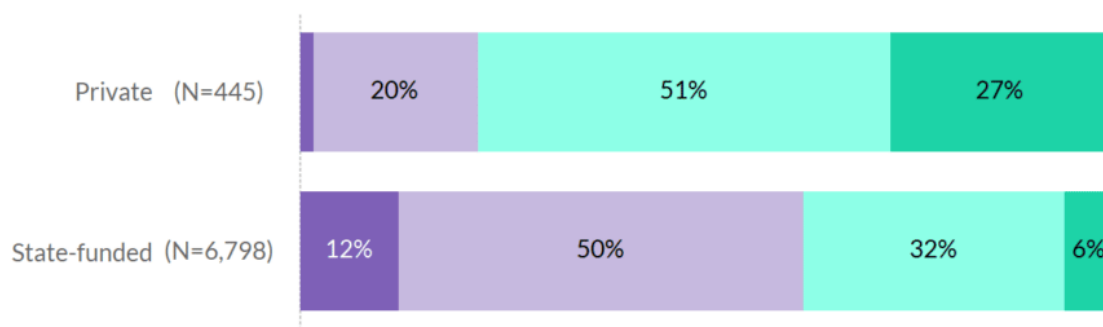
## Would a second school lockdown be different?

The government are adamant they will not be closing schools again. But they're adamant about a lot of things they later change their mind on, so let's entertain for a moment the possibility that schools were asked to close – or, even, work on a rota or stay open for certain year groups. Would things be the same as last time?

In the private sector, where remote lessons happened reasonably quickly, things would mostly be the same. In the state sector, however, the majority of teachers said things would either be completely different (12%) or quite different (50%). Given that every school is now providing work for isolated students, most are much better equipped for emailing/texting/phoning and providing work online.



**Suppose the government orders schools to close in your area for at least 4 weeks. How different would your own remote learning provision be to that you provided back in March-May?**



Question answered by 7,243 teachers on 26/10/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

- No differences - I'd essentially use an identical approach to remote provision
- Only a little different - just small differences in provision, compared to last March-May
- Quite different - I'd use some different approaches to either how work is set or types of activities
- Completely different - there would be no similarities in the way I set work or the type of activities set

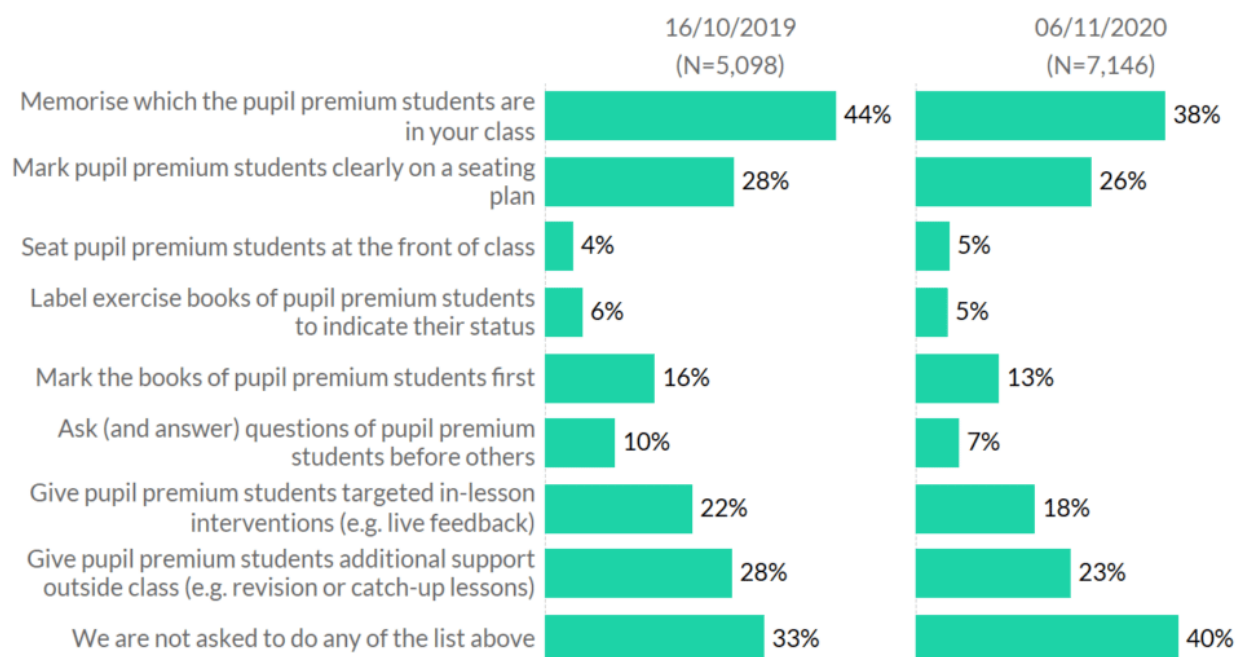
## What does Covid-19 mean for other parts of school life?

Teacher Tapp is now in its 4th year, which means we can compare lots of different time points. To help with this we often repeat questions that we asked the previous year. Here's a few of our recent autumn ones:

First, the pupil premium label. Last year we asked if your school required you to take certain actions for pupil premium pupils. This year we can see there is a slightly reduction in most activity – for example, fewer teachers are being asked to memorise who their pupil premium students are, or give targeted interventions. The shifts aren't huge, but they are consistent. Is this because Ofsted inspections are currently off?



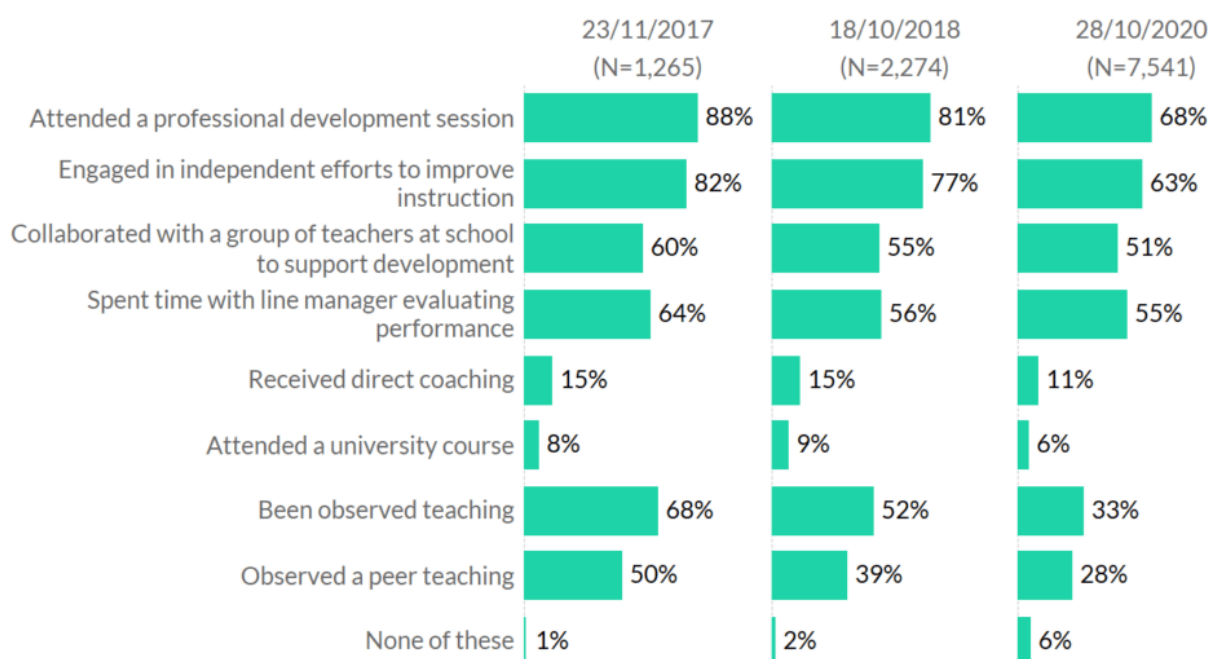
## Which of the following are you \*asked\* to do at your school?



Teacher responses vary from 5,098 to 7,146, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Teacher professional development has also taken a hit - with many fewer teachers attending training sessions, being observed teaching or seeing a peer teaching. (Again, quite difficult to do with social distancing).

## Which of these have you done so far this term?



Teacher responses vary from 1,265 to 7,541, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

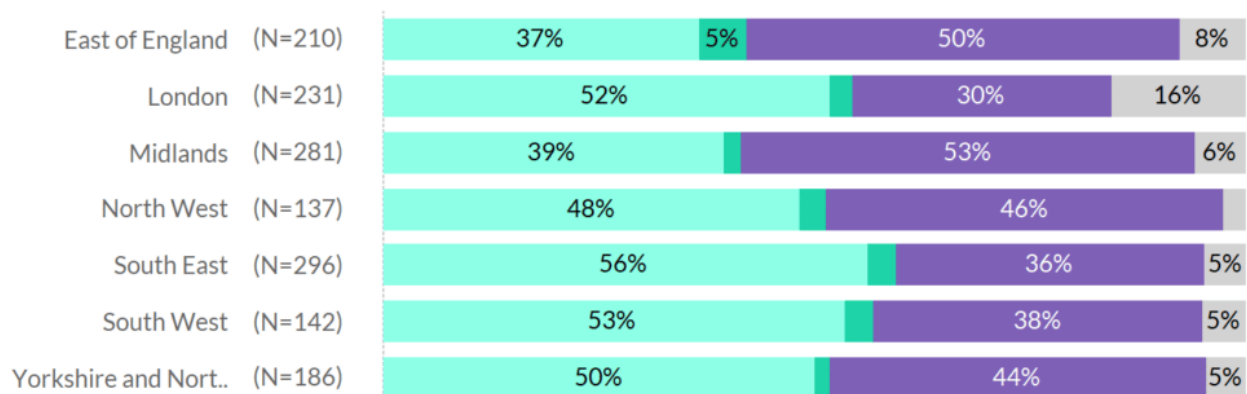
Ultimately, it's hard enough trying to get through the ordinary teaching day at the moment without adding extras on top, so none of this is surprising, but do keep an eye on new teachers who may be especially struggling if they're not easily able to access support.

## Finally, the sad nativity news...

Once upon a time, Teacher Tapp saved Christmas. That time was last year, and it was because 1 in 10 of you said your nativity plays were being cancelled due to the snap General Election closing schools on its planned date. A flurry of news cameras later and the government promised extra cash to secure new premises so that nativities could go ahead! Hurray.

Sadly, our luck has run out this year. Around half of schools are not going to run a nativity at all ■■(purple) , while the other half are going virtual ■■(bright green). Almost no one is even holding out hope of having visitors (the dark green sliver). Still, at least it means that teachers don't have to battle to get out of work to go to their own child's play. You can quietly stream it under the desk instead... Shh, we never suggested that!

### Is your school planning to run any kind of nativity activity this year?



Question answered by 1,483 teachers on 03/11/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

- We don't usually do a nativity
- No, we aren't having any nativity this year
- Yes, and we are hoping to allow visitors (but might go virtual)
- Yes, but it will be virtual

## Time for tips

- [Using goal-free problems in science](#)
- [8 things to remember about child development](#)
- [The complex question of leadership](#)
- [Estonia's swift move to digital remote learning](#)
- [Teaching less rather than catching up](#)
- [Attention is the gateway to cognition](#)

