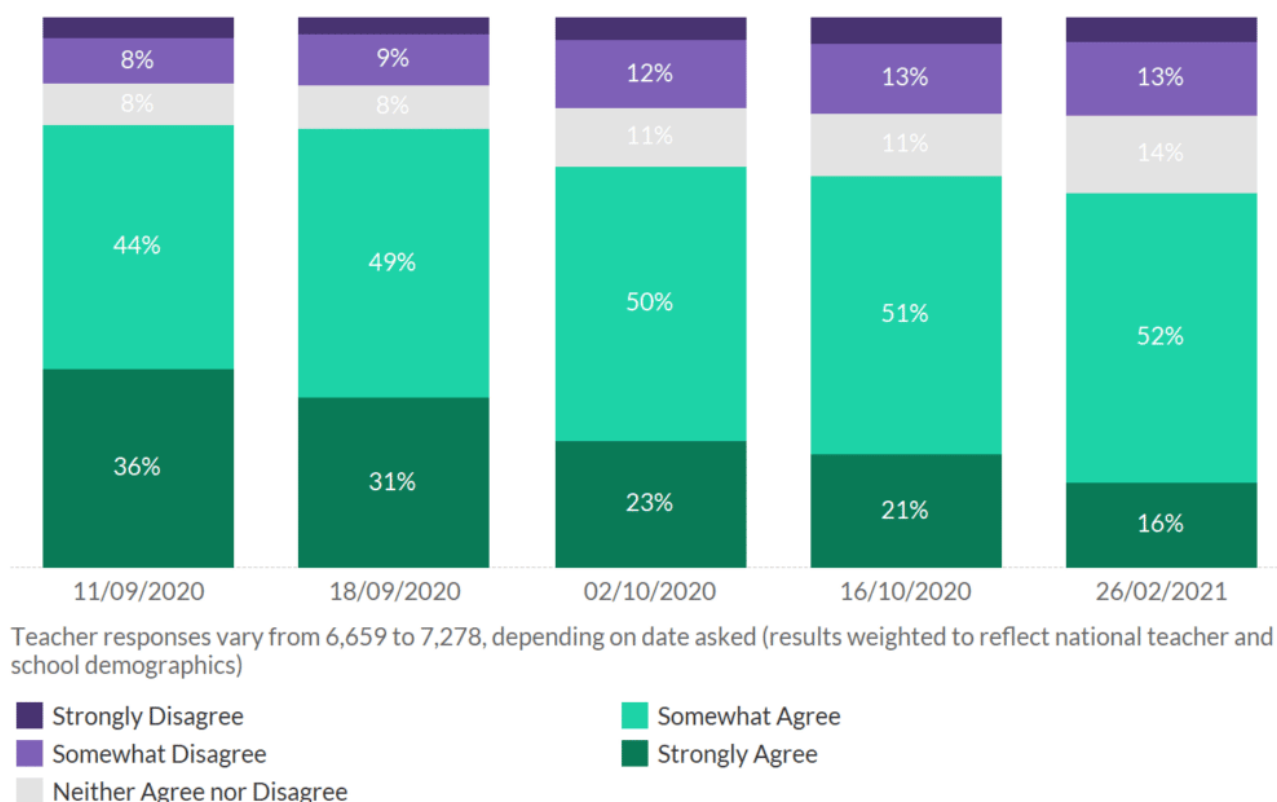


## A Good Compromise? Mass testing, face masks & views on the new GCSE and A-Level plan

It's nearly time to return to face-to-face teaching again for most of you, and let's hope it raises your spirits. Last week, just 16% of you 'strongly agreed' that you had enjoyed working over the past five days. Last September, it was a massive 36% (though you can see how much enthusiasm falls during the term!).

### 'I enjoyed working this week'

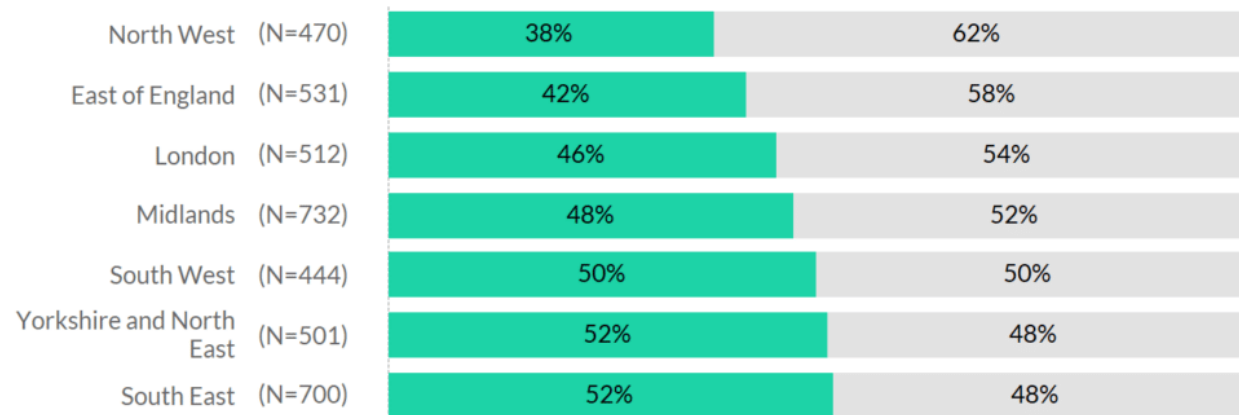


teachertapp.com teachertapp.com

Before the return, thousands of secondary pupils will be going into school this week to undergo the first of the mass COVID-19 testing. Nationally, just under half of you said your school is testing pupils ahead of March 8th. The South East, Yorkshire and the North East are the furthest ahead, with over half of schools opening this week to crack on with testing. A long

way behind was the North West, where just 38% of you said your school is opening this week to get ahead on mass testing.

### Will pupils currently at home be going into your school this week for mass testing ahead of March 8th?

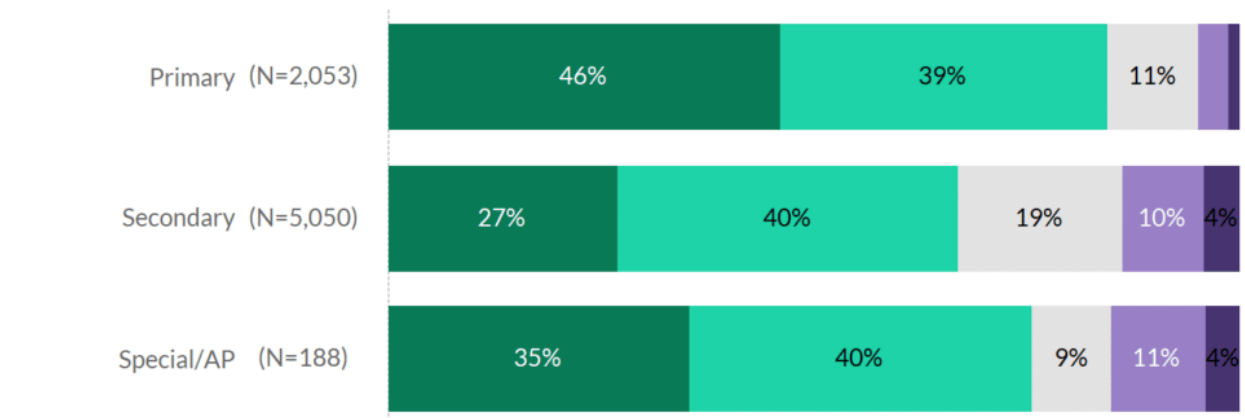


Question answered by 3,890 teachers on 27/02/2021 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

- No - we won't be starting mass testing until March 8th
- Yes - we are bringing in pupils next week for tests

One of the new testing regime's joys is that you will all be given kits to test yourself regularly. Primary and special school teachers are very keen on this plan, but secondary teachers are a little less enthusiastic. Does this reflect greater worries about the transmission of COVID in secondary schools? Or are you less convinced it's important because students are all being tested now too?

### Both secondary and primary staff will be given home testing kits to use twice a week once schools fully return. To what extent do you agree with this policy?

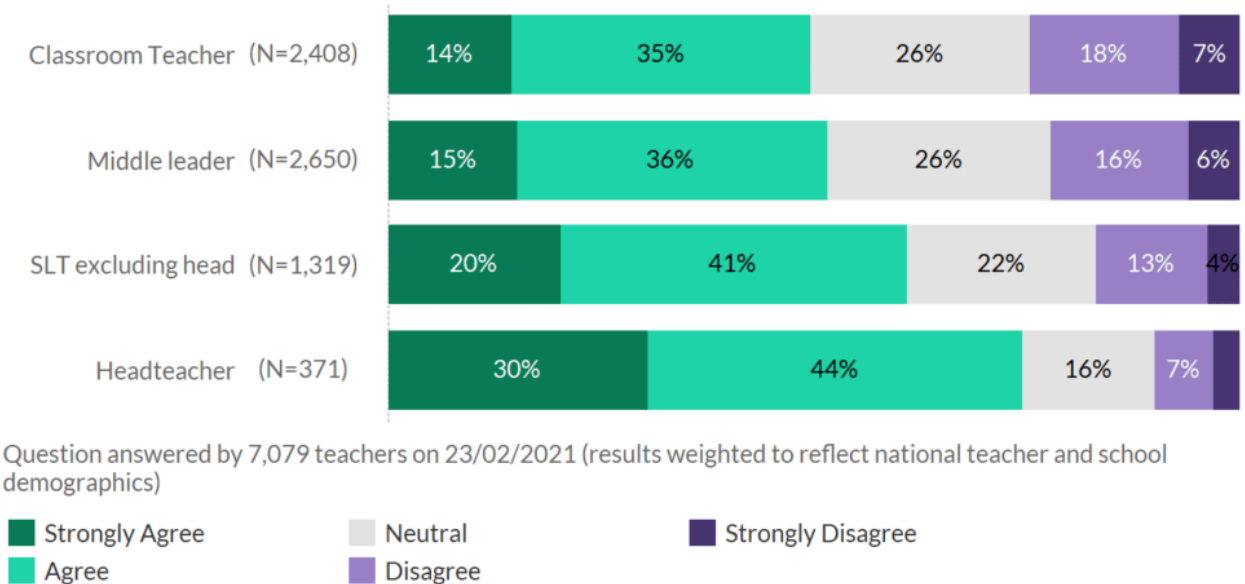


Question answered by 7,363 teachers on 23/02/2021 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

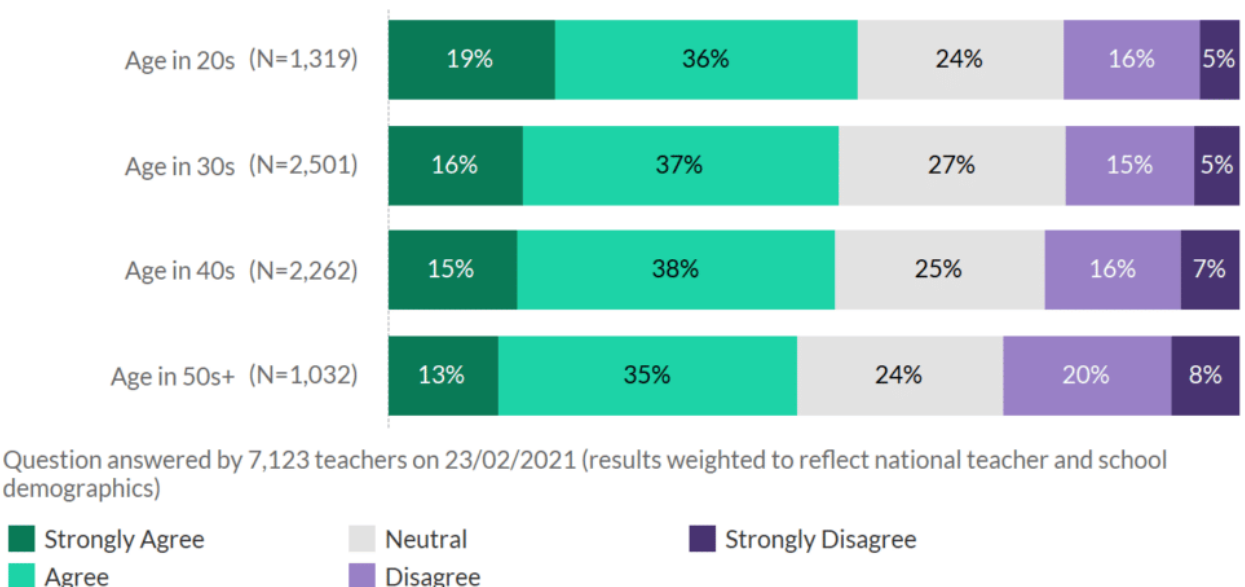
When it comes to face masks, the government has advised primary schools that their pupils do not need to wear masks in the classroom. Primary teachers mainly agreed with the approach, though heads are the most enthusiastic in their support.

**In PRIMARY schools, pupils will NOT be advised to wear face coverings in classrooms. To what extent do you agree with this policy?**



When we look by age, we can also see that teachers in their 20s are most supportive of the approach, which is logical since they have the lowest risk of complications from COVID.

**In PRIMARY schools, pupils will NOT be advised to wear face coverings in classrooms. To what extent do you agree with this policy?**

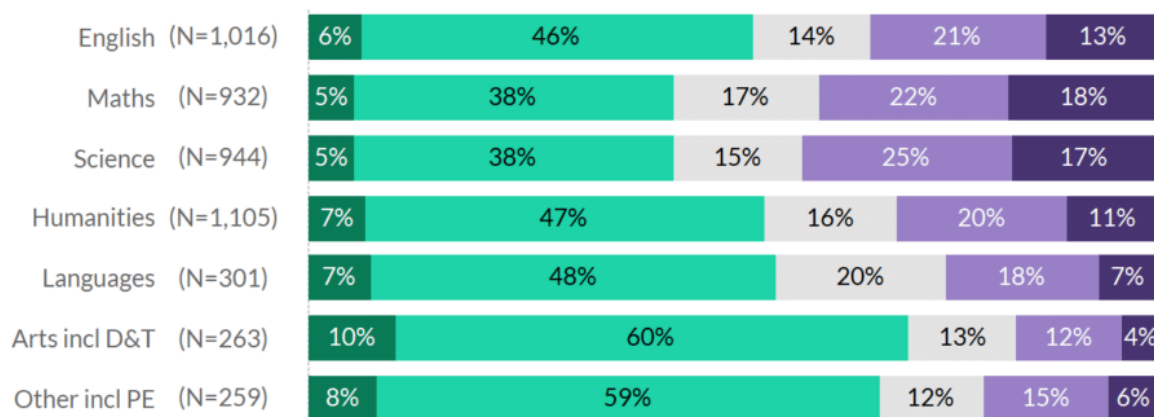


## What about the plan for GCSEs and A levels?

Last week the education secretary announced that GCSEs and A-levels would be based entirely on centre-assessed grades. Teachers will be required to create and mark assessments before giving an overall grade. Exam boards will check the grades, for example by asking to see evidence.

The Prime Minister said that he felt it was a 'good compromise' given the circumstances. Overall, most teachers agreed with his statement. But it varied by subject. Maths and science teachers are the least pleased (43% felt it was a good compromise) - which continues a trend we've seen over the past year of these teachers preferring exams above anything else. Meanwhile, art teachers were the happiest, with 70% agreeing it was a good compromise.

### The government has announced its teacher assessed grading plan for GCSEs and A-levels. The Prime Minister has called it 'a good compromise'. Do you agree?



Question answered by 6,799 teachers on 25/02/2021 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Strongly Agree    Don't Know    Strongly Disagree  
Agree    Disagree

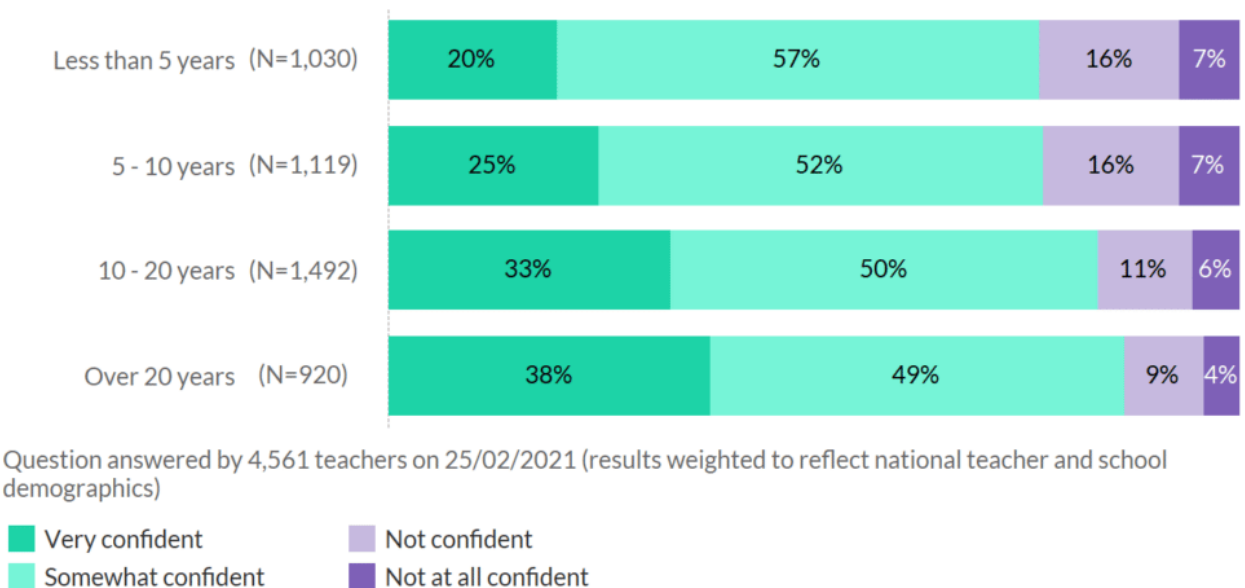
Just because something seems like a good compromise doesn't mean it necessarily will turn out that way in reality. On social media many teachers raised concerns that it simply wasn't possible to grade accurately given all the disruptions. How could they know what an 'A grade' even looks like given all the changes to grade boundaries?

Yet, most teachers felt at least somewhat confident they would be able to create and mark assessments in such a way to give fair and reliable grades. Confidence was higher for teachers with more experience. These teachers will have worked under older assessment systems, which often included coursework and required teachers to make grading judgements based on 'grade descriptors' rather than boundary scores. They are also more likely to have worked as an official examiner or moderator.

Younger teachers feel less confident. So if you're a senior leader, do make sure to give them

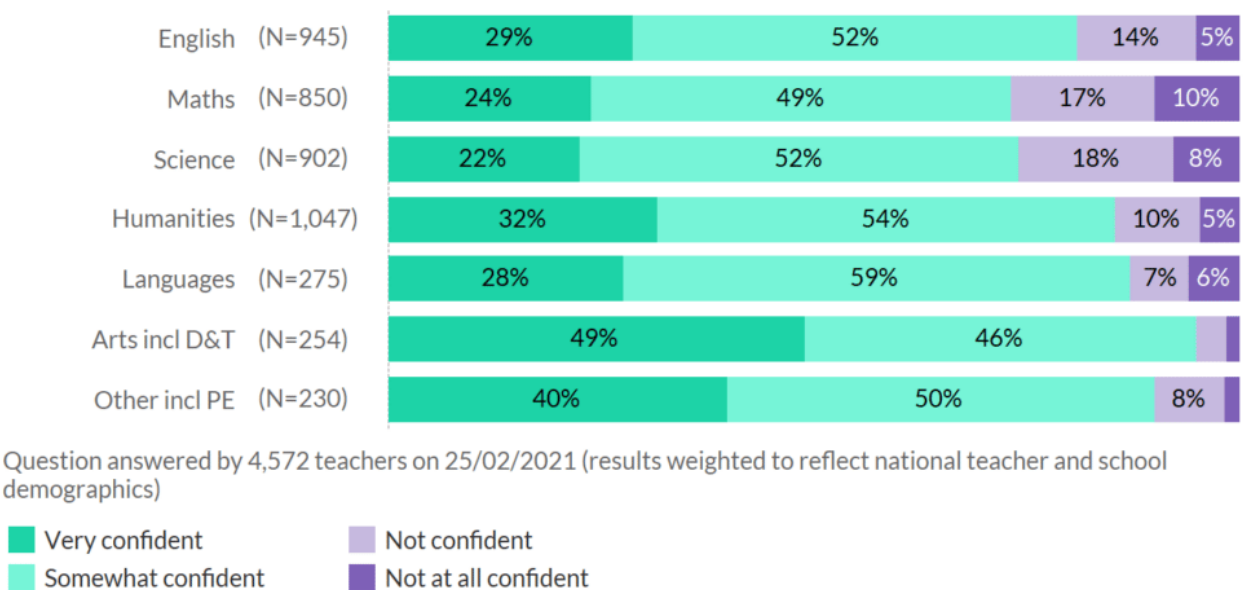
additional support.

**How confident do you feel that you will be able to create and mark assessments in such a way that will give your students a fair and reliable grade?**



Maths, science and MFL teachers also feel the least confident about their grading. These subjects may also need additional support from senior leaders to feel confident they are making good decisions.

**How confident do you feel that you will be able to create and mark assessments in such a way that will give your students a fair and reliable grade?**

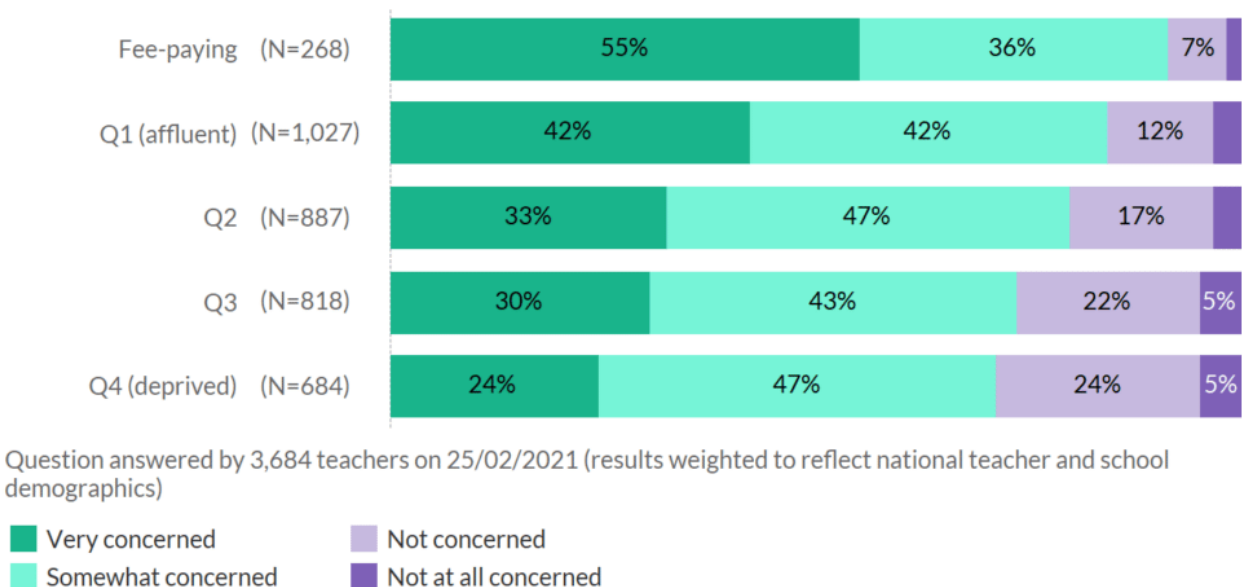


Despite their confidence, teachers are concerned they will come under pressure from

students or parents to increased grades. Teachers in fee-paying schools are particularly anxious - with 55% saying they are 'very concerned'.

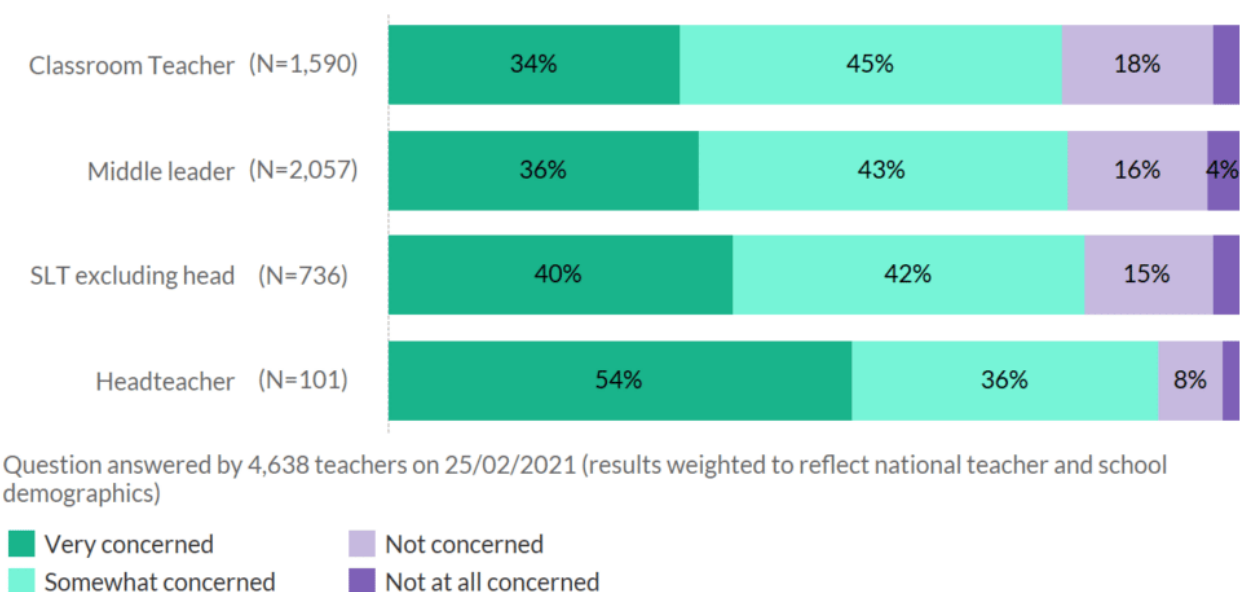
One requirement of the new system is that students are shown the evidence on which their grades will be based before it is submitted. They should also have a chance to flag any mitigating circumstances and have that taken into consideration. For all teachers, this opens the possibility of an articulate parent making a persuasive case on behalf of their child. But for those in fee-paying schools it can be complicated if a parent argues that they have 'paid' for their child to be taught in such a way that will 'ensure' they get a good grade. The exam boards will need to be alive to the potential of this pressure.

**To what extent are you concerned you will face pressure from students or parents to increase grades?**



Heads are particularly aware of this issue - not least because they will be required to sign off on the overall process and assure its fairness. Heads will need to ensure that all aspects of the system are carried out fairly, and that grades are reliable and accurate, even though it's almost impossible to ensure this happens entirely.

## To what extent are you concerned you will face pressure from students or parents to increase grades?



## Don't forget: books, books, books!

A quick reminder that the John Catt Book Voucher scheme is back for 2021. You can find out how close you are to getting a voucher in the 'eligible voucher' box. For every 150 questions answered, you will receive a voucher.

A reminder: Not everyone is asked the same number of questions each day. We sometimes have optional 'extra questions' on certain topics (e.g. maths teaching), which are only asked to certain teachers (e.g. maths teachers). Also, demographic questions, such as whether or not you have children or your job role, are periodically asked at times related to when you signed up. Hence, your road to 150 questions will slightly vary to others, so keep your eyes peeled!

The rewards go like this:

150 questions = 50% off voucher

300 questions = £10 voucher

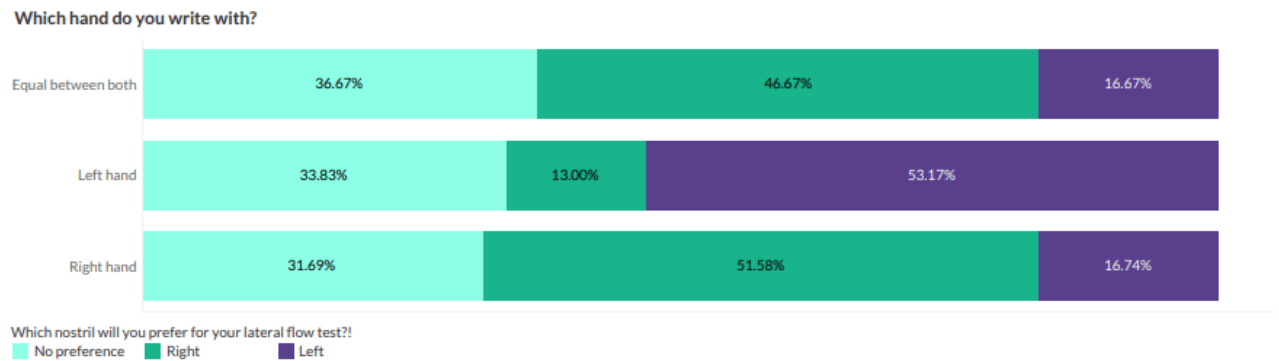
450 questions = 50% off voucher

600 questions = £10 voucher

## And, finally, NOSTRILS!

On social media, we were summoned to answer the most important question of the month: Do people who are right or left handed, prefer to take a nostril swab in their left or nostril?!

Thankfully, we already knew which hand you prefer as we asked last November. So, behold the results, created by our newest data analyst Jack Ashworth, who crunched the numbers to find that there is a matched hand preference. Phew, we're glad we've solved that one! ■■



Finally, finally, we know you love the daily tips so here they are for last week!

- [Why students might not be engaging in an online lesson](#)
- [Not worrying about catch-up](#)
- [What are your Mountains of Kong?](#)
- [What to do after an INSET](#)
- [Changing direction](#)
- [Dual-coding](#)