

Teacher Stress & Saving The World From Climate Disaster

Is a teaching job worth the stress?

Stress is considered a bad thing but teachers can find it a positive part of the job. Some people like stress. For others, it's just part of the challenge of school. In fact, 67% of teachers felt the stress and disappointments of the job were nevertheless worth it.

The stress and disappointments involved in teaching at my school aren't really worth it

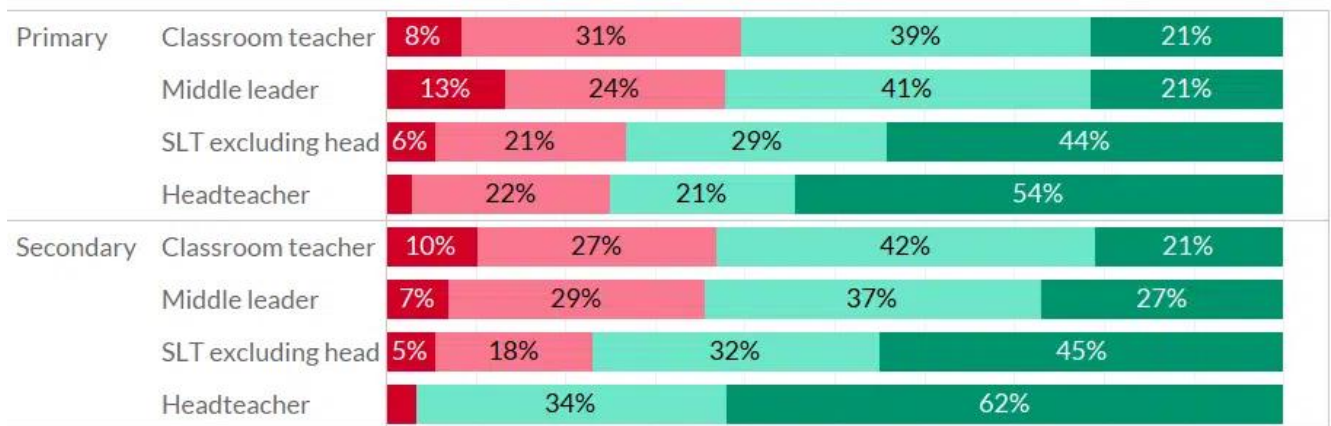


Question answered by 2,474 panellists on 31/03/2019

Senior leaders particularly felt the stress of their job was worthwhile.

The question was written in the negative so the green 'disagree' bar in the graph below is showing the proportion of people who feel the job is worth doing regardless of stress. We can see that headteachers strongly believe this to be the case, whereas classroom teachers are far less likely to agree.

The stress and disappointments involved in teaching at my school aren't really worth it



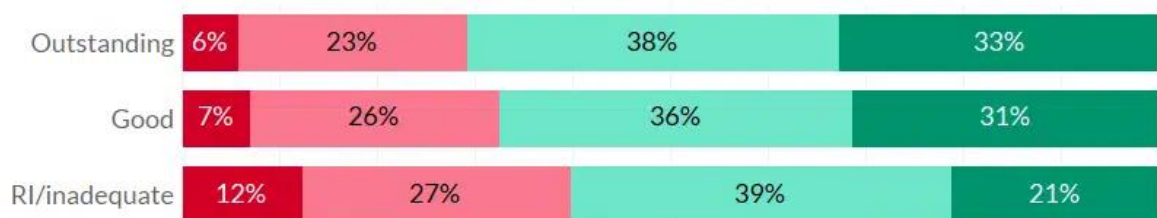
Question answered by 1,585 panellists on 31/03/2019

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

This pattern keeps coming up! Basically, people with more autonomy in their job don't seem to mind stressful situations as much and see them as worthwhile, whereas those with the least power over the situation do not.

If you teach in an Outstanding school you are also more likely to say the stress and disappointments are worthwhile. Putting in a huge amount of effort is probably more satisfying where it leads to good results and/or a higher Ofsted grade (which also typically correlate with good results).

The stress and disappointments involved in teaching at my school aren't really worth it

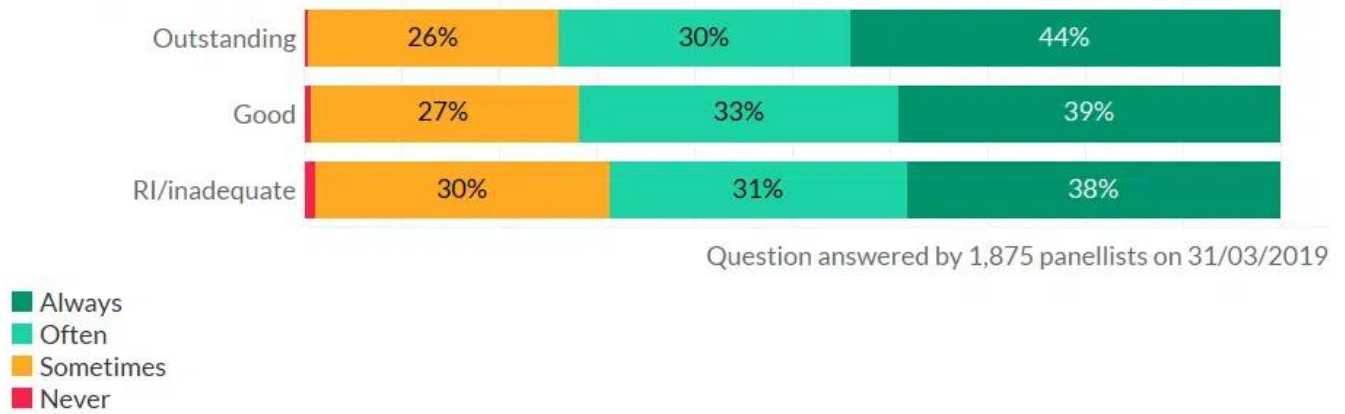


Question answered by 1,831 panellists on 31/03/2019

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

A related finding from this week was that teachers in Outstanding schools are more likely to have fellow workers they can rely on when they come across difficulties.

Can you count on your colleagues when you come across difficulties?



It's perhaps surprising the differences aren't greater between the school types. One of the major predictors of employee turnover in other workplaces is the extent to which people feel supported by colleagues. In schools, turnover is higher in RI/inadequate schools, yet the difference in colleagues between these and good schools is barely discernible. However, the percentage of people saying they can 'never' rely on colleagues is quite a bit higher in RI/inadequate schools. It's a small percentage overall, but not being able to rely on anyone is a desperate situation, and if this group leave more commonly then it could be a driver of the difference.

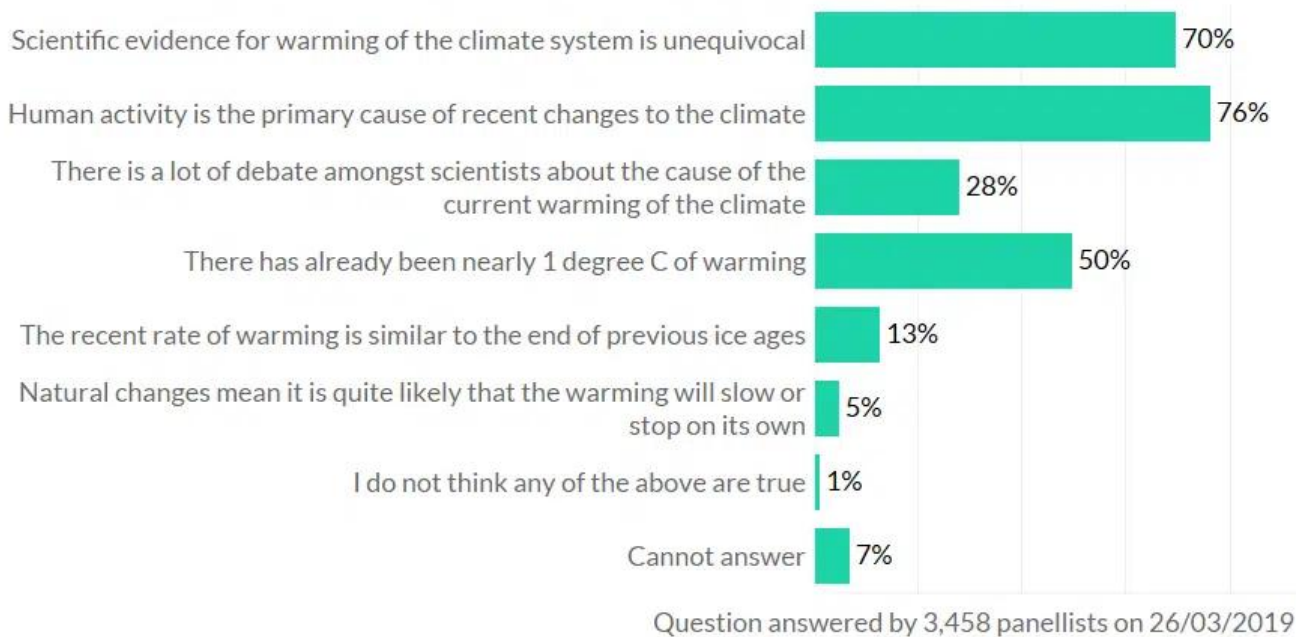
Conclusion: stress is not always bad, but it's not felt the same across schools and if it combines with people feeling unsupportive then there's a potential risk of that staff member leaving. It's worth school leaders thinking through the implications of this.

Climate Change

As the Teacher Tapp team has a science teacher among us, we're often interested in the reactions of pupils and teachers to popular issues within science. The recent climate change protests by young people are one such topic. But how much do teachers know about it?

We asked the following question:

There has recently been a climate change strike. Tick all the statements below that you think are true.



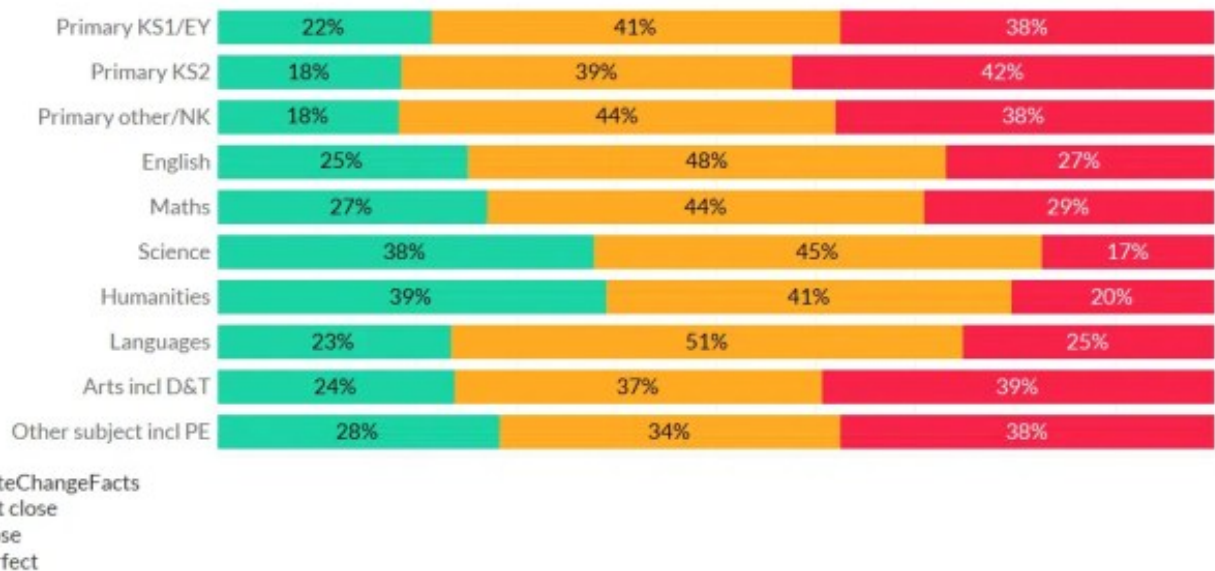
Three of the statements were true:

- Scientific evidence for warming of the climate system is unequivocal (direct quote from NASA, based on IPCC)
- Human activity is the primary cause of recent changes to the climate (97% of climate scientists agree and those who disagree have a variety of alternative theories rather than one)
- There has already been nearly 1 C of warming (0.9 degrees C since late 19th century with higher values from some other analyses)

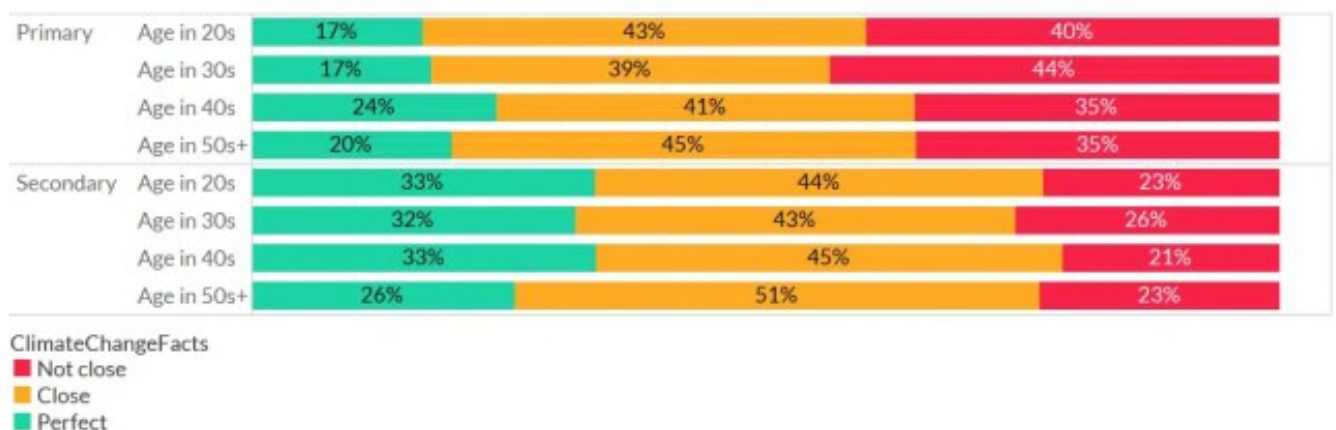
Only 27% of teachers received a perfect climate change knowledge score. Almost a third (31%) were not even close.



Of course, we expect the science teachers to be ahead on this knowledge... and yet they were not! Humanities teachers actually pipped them at the perfect post: 39% hums vs 38% science. Is that thanks to the knowledge of the geographers? That said, fewer scientists were way off the mark than in any other subjects. The most likely to give a completely wrong set of answers were the Primary KS2 teachers and the Arts/DT crowd.



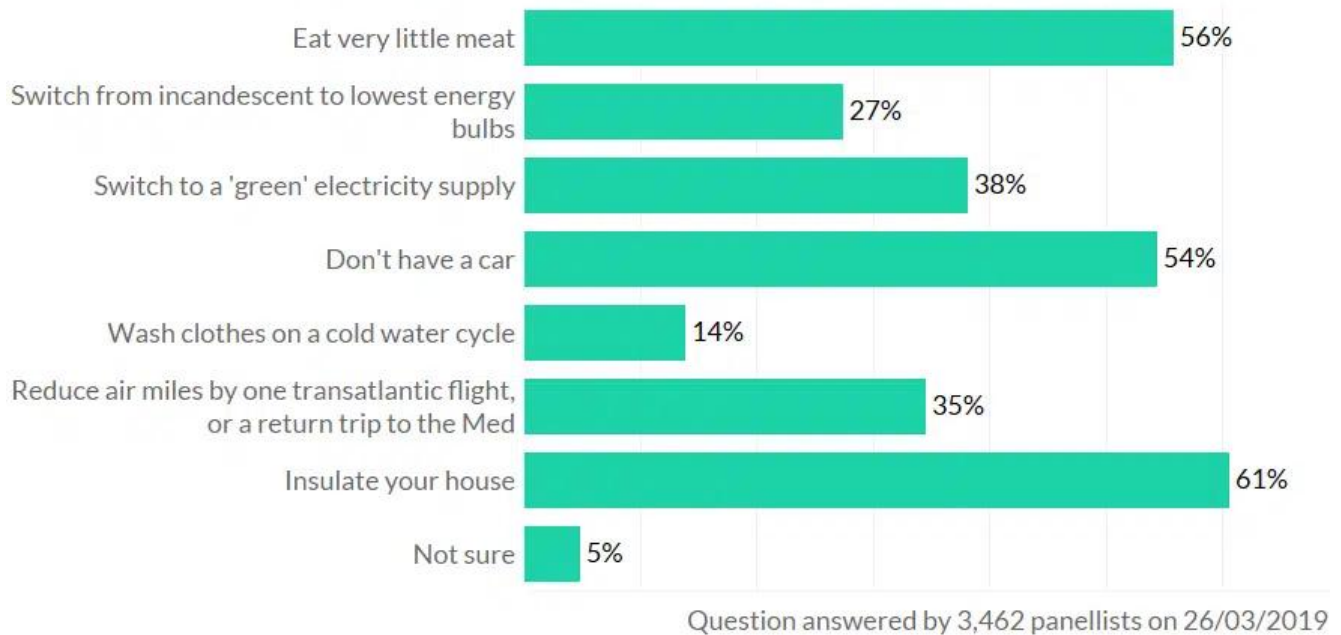
And if you thought young people might be better informed about such matters, the data did not stand that up! The inclusion of the environment in every GCSE specification before the current reforms does not appear to have had much of an effect!



Even if teachers aren't knowledgeable about the science, do they know how to improve the situation?

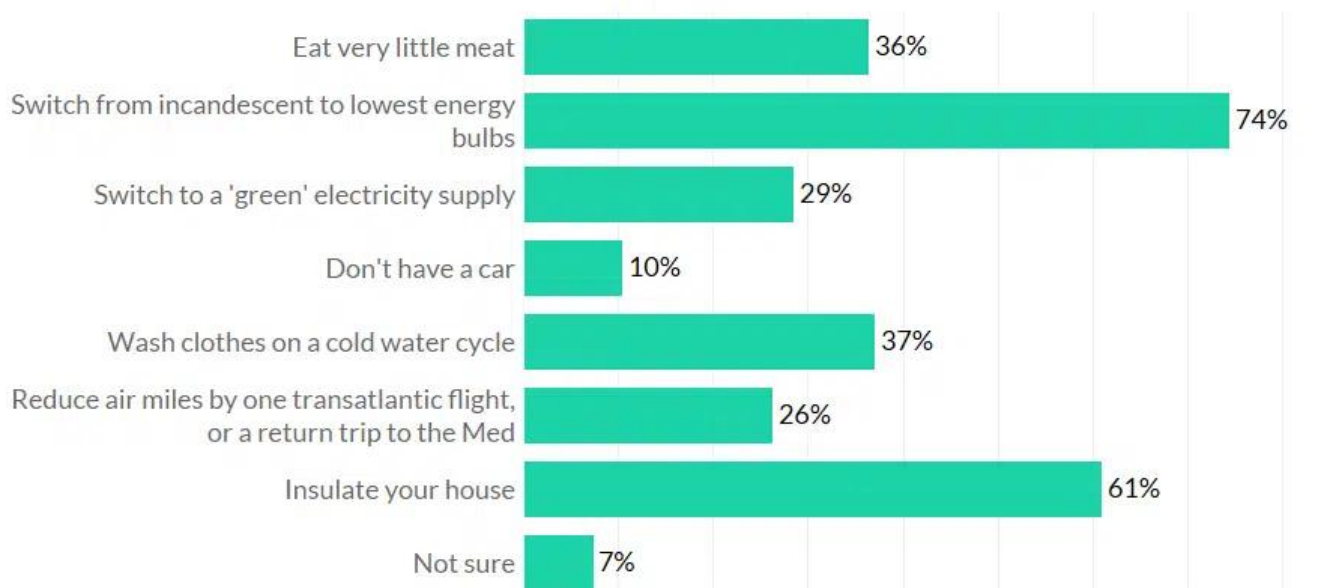
We used a [published list](#), removing the number one option of 'have one fewer child' as that seems a bit harsh on those of us who've already made our family-size choices. The next three were: don't have a car; reduce air miles; and eat very little meat. Teachers got meat and car, but missed the flight issue in favour of green electricity and house insulation. Just 11% of teachers got a perfect score on this one, a further 38% got close. (And half were not close at all).

Tick the three actions individuals, families or households can take that would make the biggest reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Please tick JUST THREE!



Furthermore, teachers aren't particularly taking up these key battles! Their main activities for reducing their impact on the planet are switching light bulbs and insulating the house. Almost no one is reducing their car use. Given so many teachers work in schools that are over a 20-minute journey from their house by car, and for which there are few public transport options, this is not a surprise.

All of the actions below are ways that individuals, families or households can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Tick any that you already do, or think you are likely to try to do in the next year.

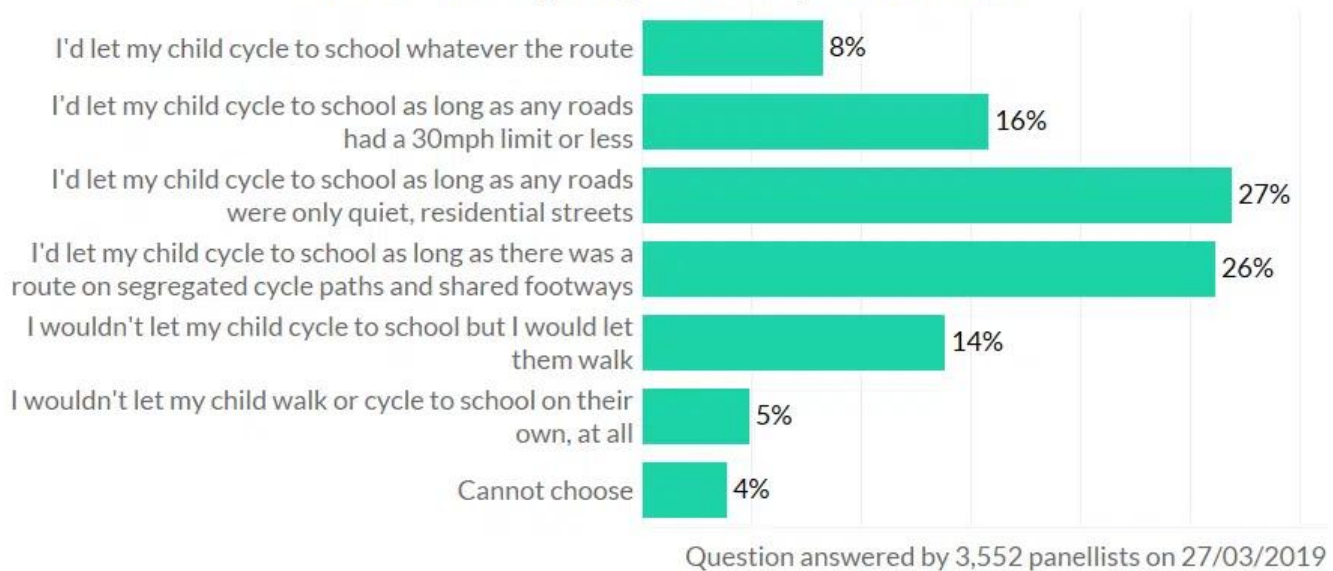


Question answered by 3,457 panellists on 26/03/2019

Should children cycle to school?

One way to reduce car use might be having more children cycle to school, rather than having parents dropping them off in cars. Once again we asked you about your 'perhaps hypothetical' child!

Imagine you live between 1 and 3 miles from your (perhaps hypothetical) child's secondary school (i.e. a long walk but a quick bike ride). What would your thoughts be on letting your Year 7 child ride a bike to school on their own? Tick the response that most closely aligns with your views.

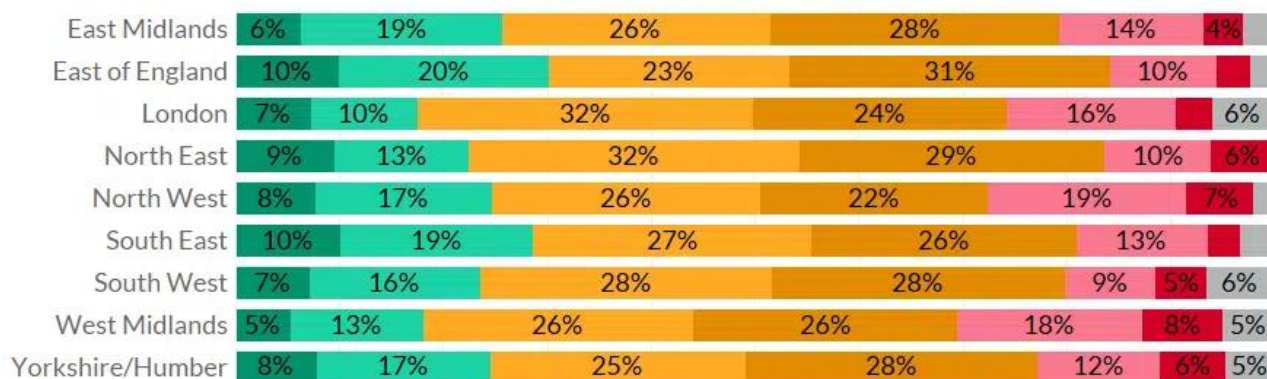


It therefore looks as if lots of teachers believe children could cycle to school as long as there were certain things in place (speed limits, quiet roads, segregated cycle paths).

Teachers in their 20s were a bit more gung-ho about the idea, which one might expect is because they are less likely to have real children and were simply imagining team, but we found no differences between those who do and don't have kids overall. Younger teachers are just less risk-averse either way!

We did see some regional differences, however, with the North West the most happy for children to walk over cycling, and the East of England and South East of England the most permissive towards cycling regardless of the route.

Imagine you live between 1 and 3 miles from your (perhaps hypothetical) child's secondary school (i.e. a long walk but a quick bike ride). What would your thoughts be on letting your Year 7 child ride a bike to school on their own? Tick the response that most closely aligns with your views.



Question answered by 2,909 panellists on 27/03/2019

- Cannot choose
- I wouldn't let my child walk or cycle to school on their own, at all
- I wouldn't let my child cycle to school but I would let them walk
- I'd let my child cycle to school as long as there was a route on segregated cycle paths and shared footways
- I'd let my child cycle to school as long as any roads were only quiet, residential streets
- I'd let my child cycle to school as long as any roads had a 30mph limit or less
- I'd let my child cycle to school whatever the route

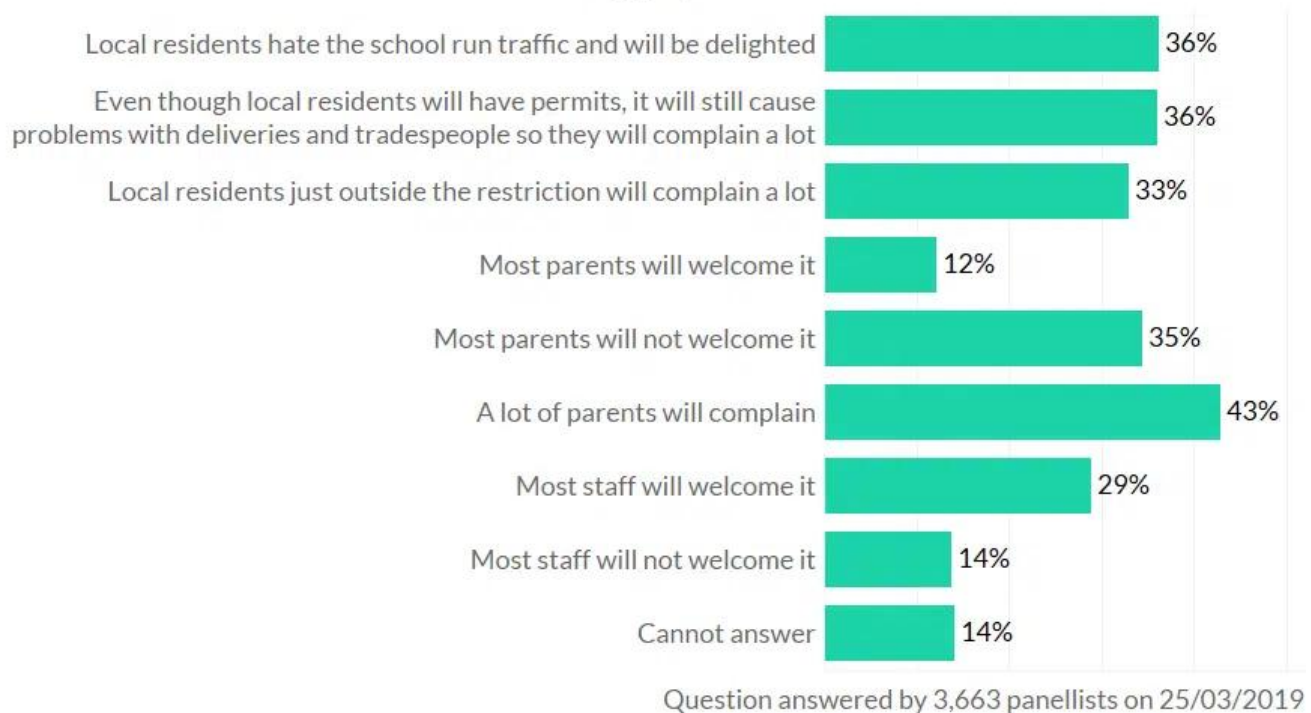
Traffic Calming

Primary school leaders are often harangued by local residents over the problem of parents descending onto nearby streets each day to pick up their children.

A number of councils have introduced School Streets, which mean the roads around the school are closed during drop-off/pick-up time, except for pedestrians, cyclists, and local residents who live on the streets. Most teachers haven't heard of them and are a little ambivalent about their introduction.

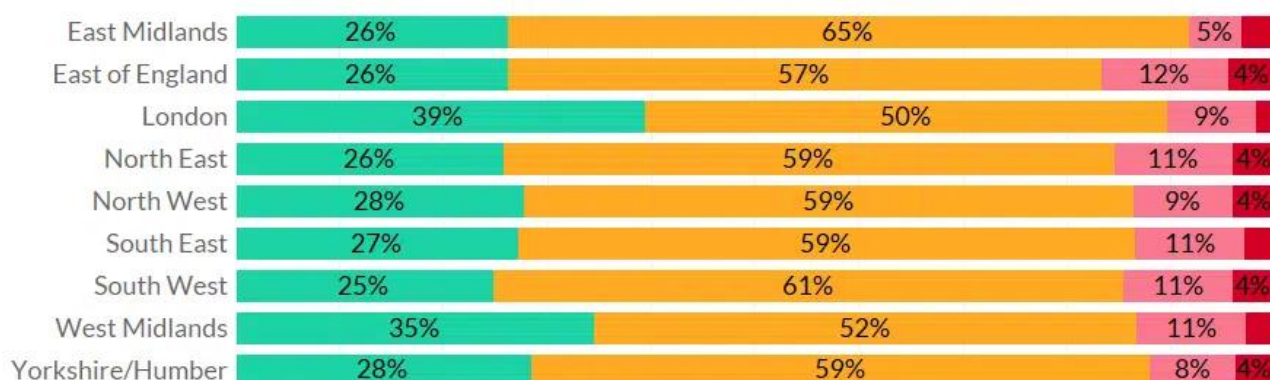
In particular the view is that parents won't like it and it will still cause complaints among local residents.

Imagine that a School Street is proposed at a school where you work. Which of these do you think would be true? Tick all that apply



However, there seems to be some appetite in London and the West Midlands, and school leaders struggling to solve this puzzle might not have many other options!

A School Street is where the street(s) around a school are closed to motor vehicles for the times when children are arriving at, and leaving, school. Local residents have permits and there may be arrangements for school staff, visitors' vehicles, taxis, and utility service vehicles. The idea is to reduce air pollution and increase active travel to school. What do you think?



Question answered by 2,935 panellists on 25/03/2019

- I think this is a bad idea
- I think this is a good idea but only for a few schools in special circumstances
- I think this is a good idea for some schools but won't work for others
- I think this is a great idea for most schools

Finally, we know you love the tips, so here they are for last week...

[The Sutton Trust 'Great Teaching' Report](#)

[Does 'memorising' push aside 'understanding'?](#)

[Teaching can make us anxious and perfectionist](#)

[Learning 'preferences' may be a better phrase than learning 'styles'](#)

[Making incorrect assumptions about the classroom](#)

[Managing an anxious, needy class](#)



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