

Attainment setting, complex timetables and most importantly, pens!

[Setting](#)

[How much content?](#)

[How many subjects?](#)

[Marking pens](#)

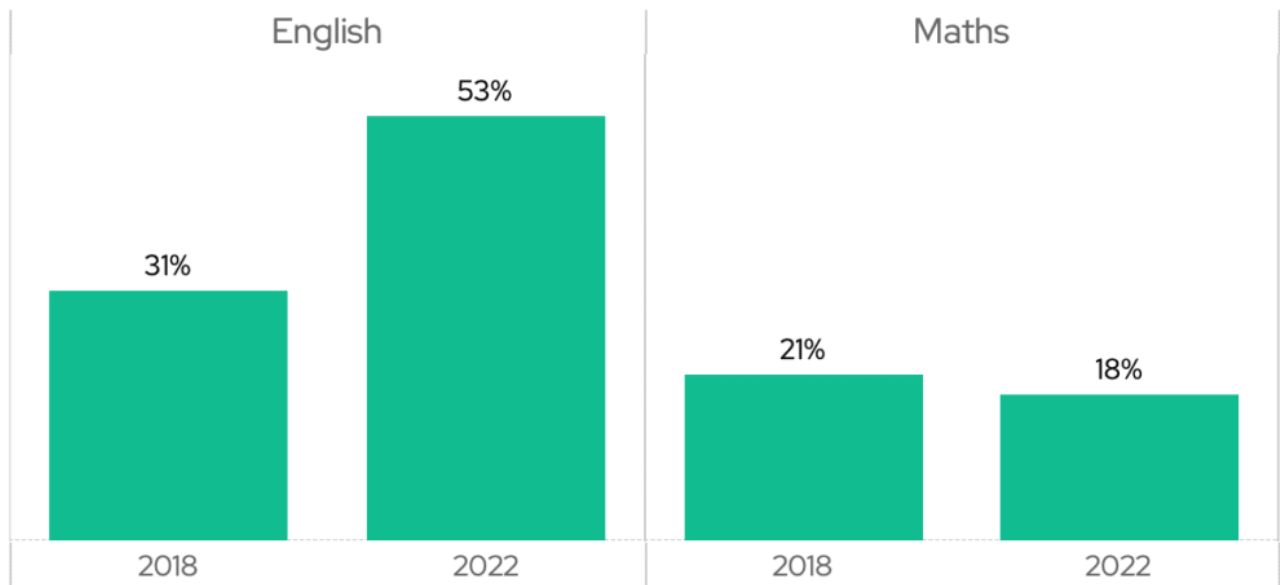
[World Teacher Day](#)

[Daily reads](#)

1. Game, set and match

During the pandemic, many of secondary teachers told us their school had removed some Key Stage 3 attainment grouping to reduce student mixing across form classes. As things are a little more normal this year, it seems like a great opportunity to see whether any changes are still in place. It seems that some of these changes have stuck, for now at least. 53% of English teachers told us they are teaching Year 8 in mixed attainment classes, compared to 31% back in 2018. Maths teaching seems less affected, with just one-in-five teaching in mixed attainment classes.

In your school this year, are pupils in Year 8 group in a mixed ability class for English/Maths?



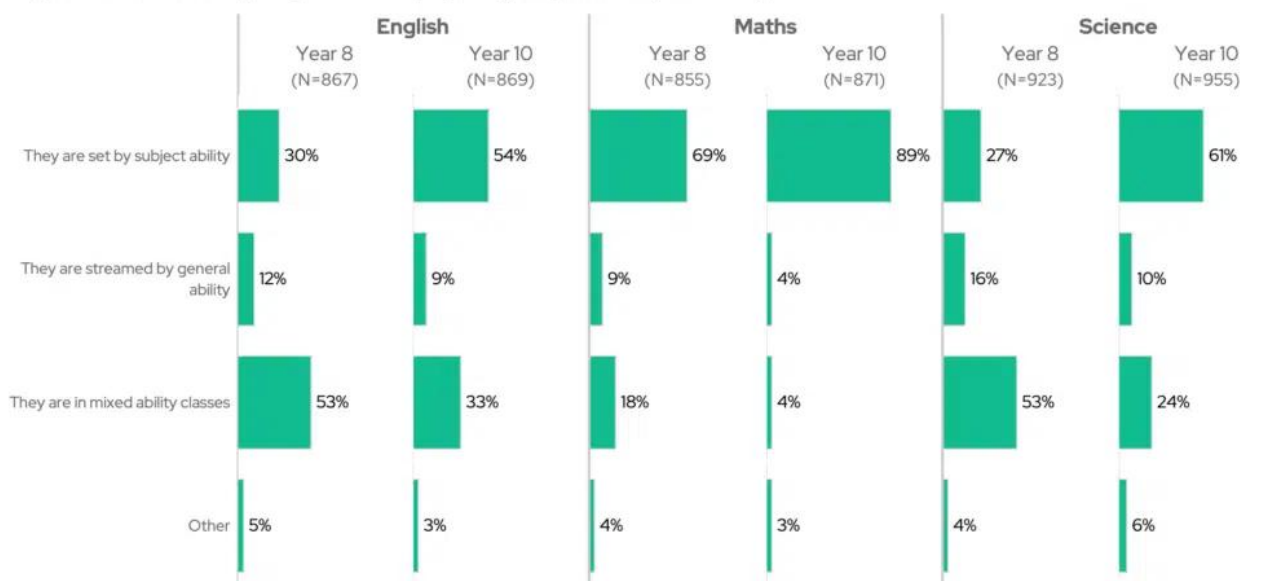
Question answered by 782 to 3,672 teachers on 04/07/2018 to 04/10/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

In Year 8, setting isn't favoured by the majority of teachers. Just 30% of English teachers say their pupils are set in Year 8, far less than when we last asked in 2018, when it was 50%. However, the reverse is true for Maths teachers. In 2018, 65% of Maths teachers said they used ability setting, rising to 69% today.

Across all Year 8 subjects, Maths remains is the only one where the majority of pupils are placed in subject ability sets. However, attainment setting rises as students move into the GCSE years, with 46% of teachers overall saying that pupils in their subject are set by subject ability. Even at that point, though, one-in-three English teachers say their students are still in mixed ability classes, as do one-in-four Science teachers.

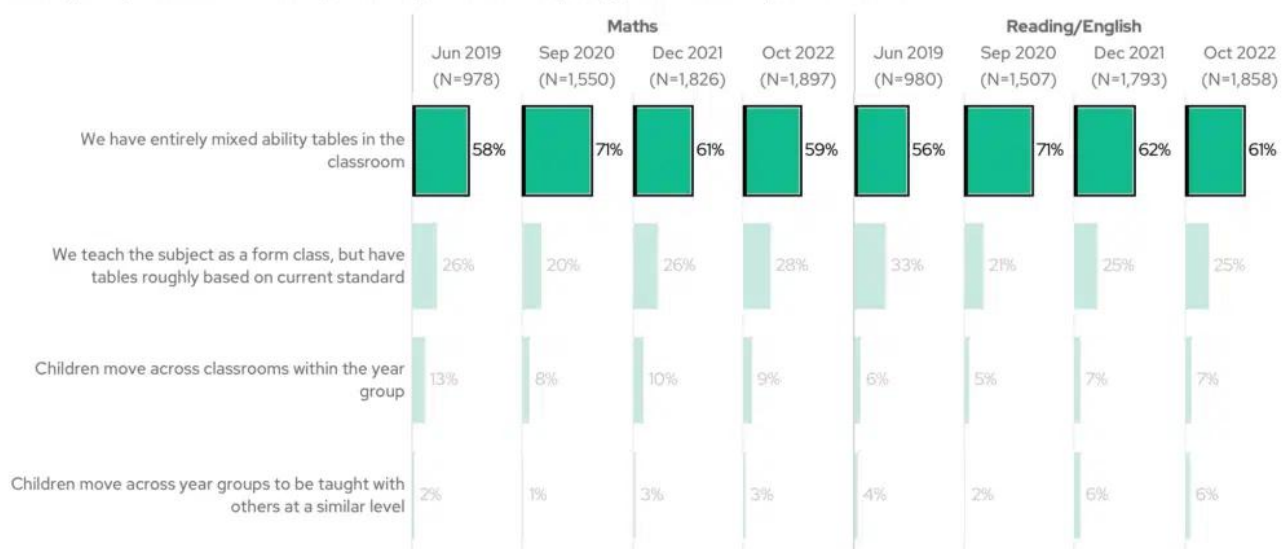
Understandably, among the option subjects, mixed ability grouping is far more common, as teaching often does not take place parallel classes to allow grouping to take place. Just 12% of Humanities teachers say their students are set in Year 10, and 20% of Languages say similar.

In your school this year, how are pupils grouped for your subject?



Grouping in primary schools looks very different, with the key question being how students are arranged on tables during maths and English/reading lessons. The pandemic saw a temporary increase in mixed ability grouping across tables in primary schools – in September 2020, over 70% said this was the case. It has since fallen again, back to a pre-pandemic norm of 60% of pupils on mixed-ability tables.

This year, how does ability setting for Maths/English work in your school?

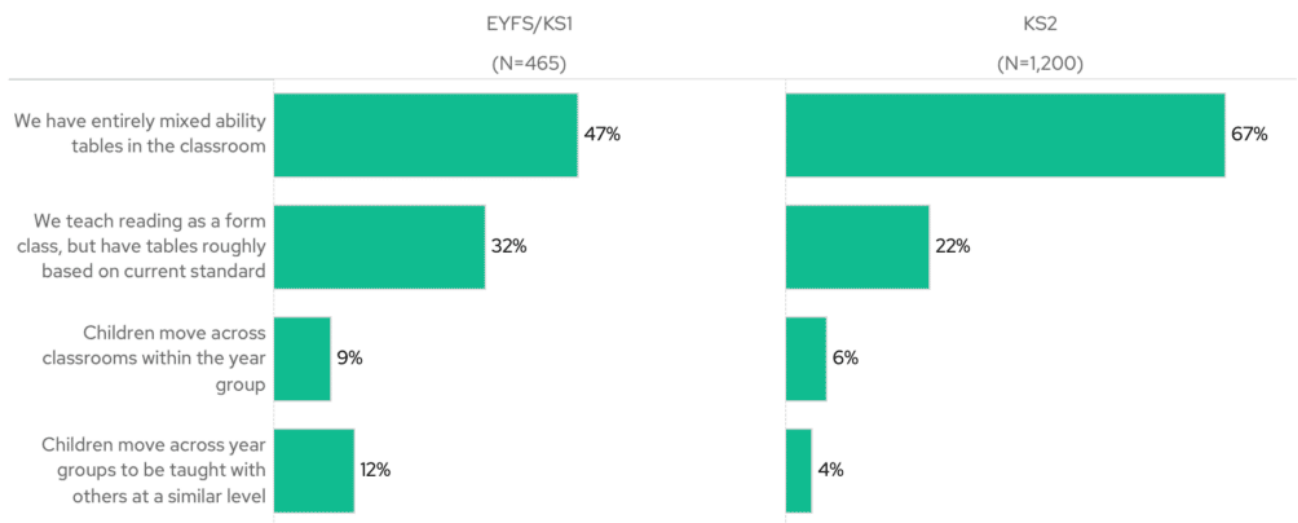


Teacher responses vary from 978 to 1,897, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Maths grouping doesn't vary much by Key Stage within primary schools, but things are very different for reading where phonics programmes usually require students to be grouped by their phonics stage. This means that in EYFS/KS1, less than half of reading instruction takes place on mixed reading attainment tables and 12% of students are even being moved across year groups to access reading instruction! By KS2, this has changed and two-thirds of

reading/English classes use mixed attainment tables.

This year, how does reading (or English if you do not have dedicated reading lessons) ability grouping work in your class? Tick the response that most closely applies.



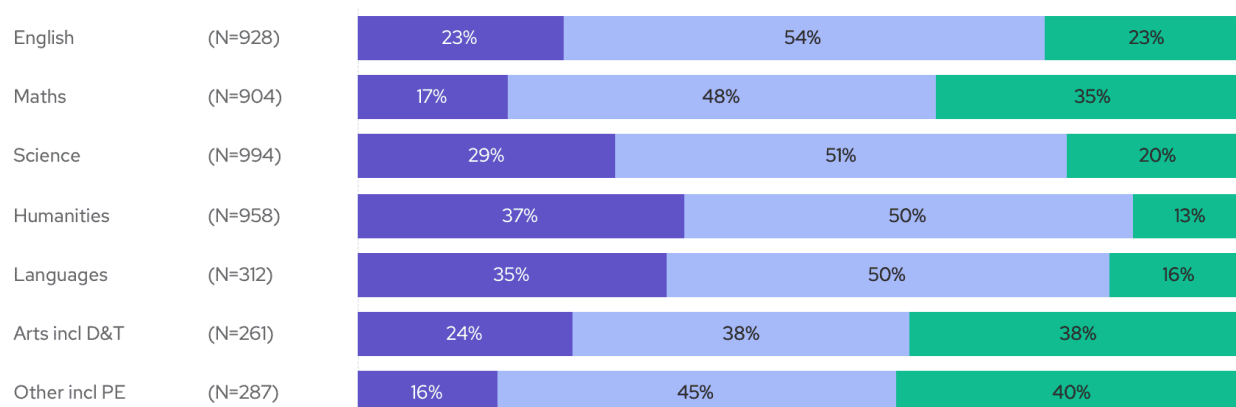
Question answered by 1,665 teachers on 04/10/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

2. Teaching too much content?

The curriculum reforms of this Conservative government are truly embedded now, so how do teachers feel about the volume of content they are expected to teach? This week we are focussing on Key Stage 4 - the content in the GCSE specifications. Just one-in-four teachers said that they want to keep the same amount of KS4 content in their subject. The vast majority want to see a reduction - but again there were differences by subject!

Maths teachers were one of the happiest with the amount of content, 35% saying they would keep the same amount of content. However, Languages and Humanities teachers wanted to see a big reduction in the amount of content they wanted.

Would you like to see a reduction in the amount of content that you are expected to cover in the KS4 curriculum in your main subject?



Question answered by 4,644 teachers on 07/10/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

- Yes, a significant reduction
- Yes, a slight reduction
- No, I would keep the same amount of content at KS4

Now, every so often we're challenged by Humanities teachers who, often rightly, say that Humanities subjects can be very different from one another. We often group these subjects together so it gives us a comparable sample size to other subjects (so if any of your colleagues aren't yet tapping – let them know!) and often their responses are similar. However, this is a question for which it will depend hugely on subject, and I don't think we'd be forgiven if we didn't split them out on this occasion!

Indeed, the splitting proved fruitful, as History teachers were most likely of all teachers to want a significant reduction in the amount of KS4 content in their subject. A huge 55% of History teachers wanted this, compared to 31% of Geography teachers and 24% of RS teachers.

Which of the following is the main subject you teach? (down) versus Would you like to see a reduction in the amount of content that you are expected to cover in the KS4 curriculum in your main subject? (across)



Question answered by 540 teachers on 14/01/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

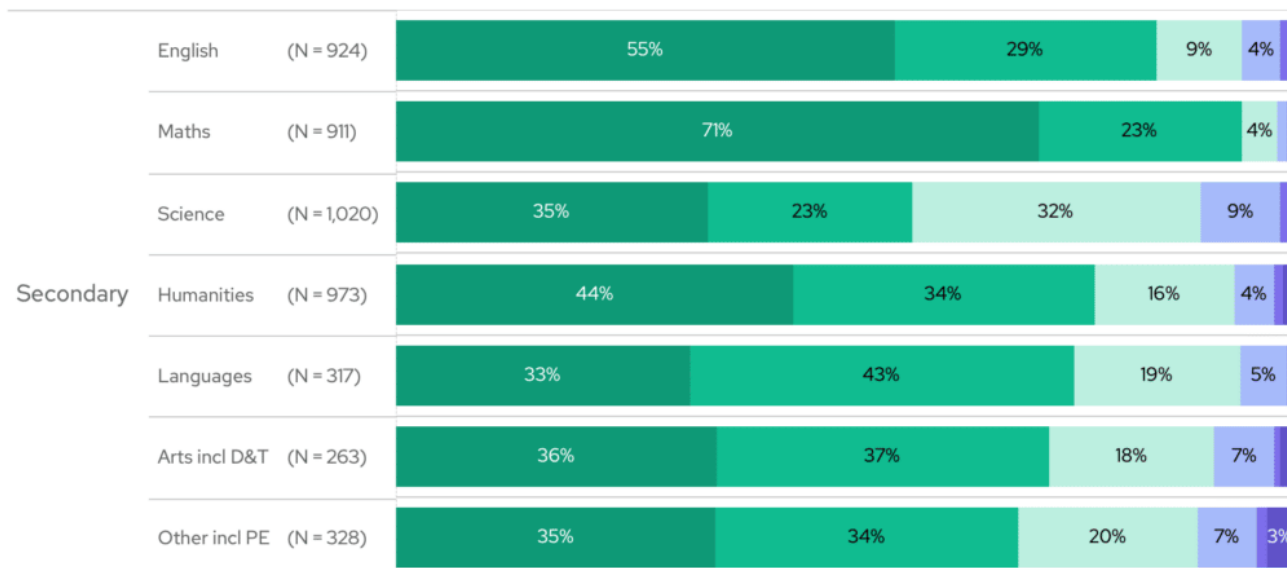
- Yes, a significant reduction
- Yes, a slight reduction
- No, I would keep the same amount of content at KS4

And no, Science teachers, we haven't forgotten about you – although it's slightly more challenging to tease apart this data. At first glance, however, teachers of all three sciences were in broad agreement, around 30% of Biology, Chemistry and Physics teachers wanted a significant reduction in content.

3. Teaching too many subjects?

What subject do you teach? Here at Teacher Tapp, we classify you according to the subject you are teaching the most this year. But many secondary teachers are expected to teach more than one subject. This is most common for science teachers who often teach all three of biology, chemistry and physics. Languages teachers also teach more than one, two-in-three of whom are teaching at least two subjects this year (presumably two different Languages). Even one-in-three maths teachers are teaching an additional subject or two this year.

How many different subjects will you teach this year?

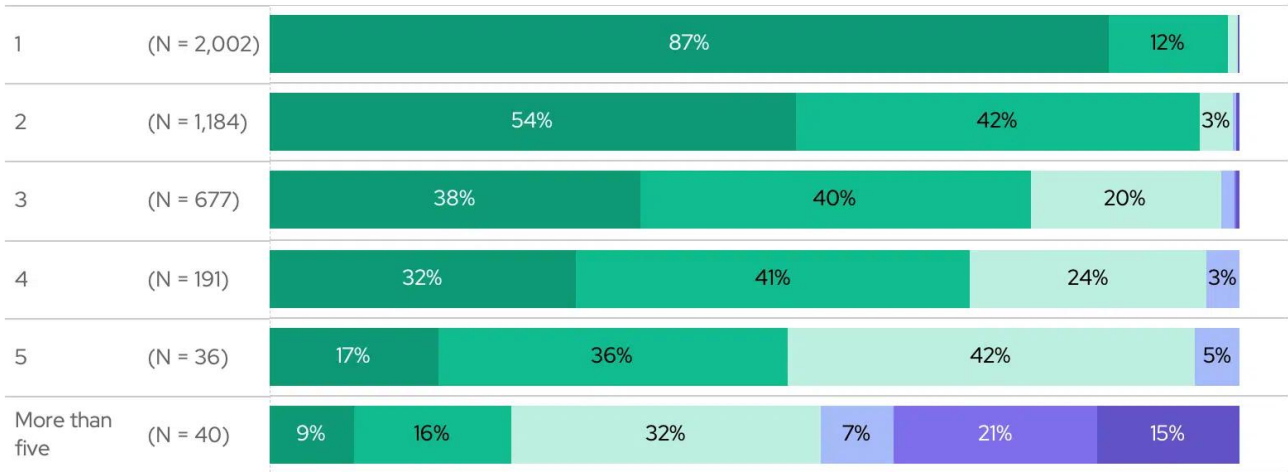


Question answered by 4,736 teachers on 06/10/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

This won't come as a huge surprise, but many people who say they are teaching lots of subjects want to teach fewer subjects! Not as much as you might think, though, as many teachers would only want to drop one or two of the subjects they teach! In fact, 13% of teachers who are only teaching one subject want to teach more subjects this year. They should be careful what they wish for though, as 54% of teachers who are teaching two subjects want to teach one!

However, many Languages teachers buck that trend and don't want to teach fewer – just 41% of Languages teachers said they'd ideally teach one subject. A similar theme emerged among Science teachers, 13% of whom said they would ideally teach all three sciences!

**How many different subjects will you teach this year? (down) versus
If you could devise your ideal timetable (whilst keeping hours the same), how many different subjects
would you teach each week? (across)**



Question answered by 4,130 teachers on 06/10/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

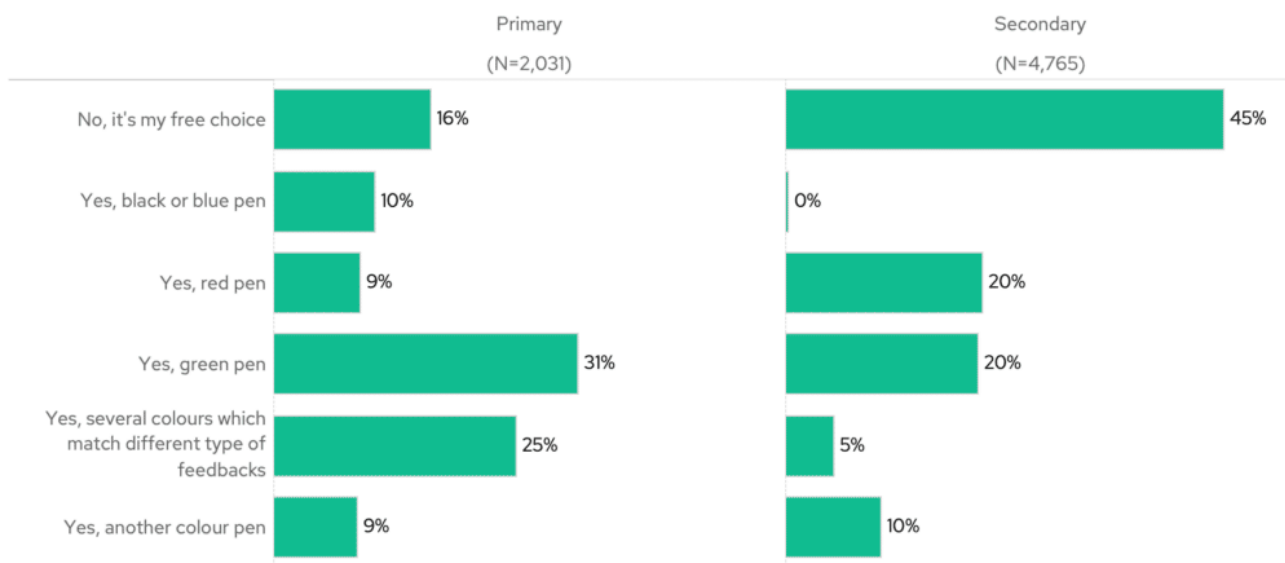


4. All about those pens

Just 16% of primary teachers say they have completely free rein to choose a pen for marking. 31% of primary teachers are required to use a green pen, but 25% say that they need to have several different colours depending on the feedback given - talk about workload! ■■

Things appear much simpler in secondary schools, with 45% of teachers saying they have complete freedom. Otherwise, green and red pens are the pens of choice, with 20% of the vote each.

Are you required to mark with particular colour pens?



Question answered by 6,796 teachers on 05/10/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

5. World Teacher Day ■■■■■

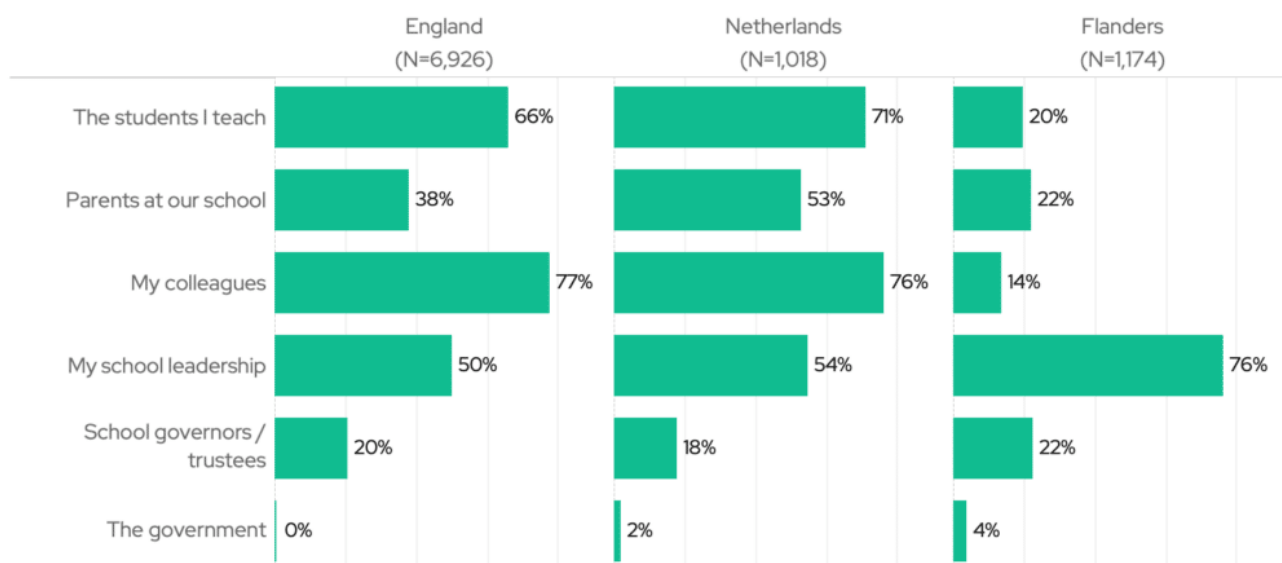
Happy World Teacher Day! ■■

Last Wednesday, 5th October, teachers were appreciated worldwide for their contribution to the lives of young people everywhere. But did you feel the appreciation? We celebrated World Teacher Day by finding out just this, and we did so with our Teacher Tapp friends over in the Netherlands and Flanders! So, by whom do you feel appreciated most?

Broadly, the Teacher Tapp England and Netherlands panels were in agreement, with colleagues showing the most appreciation (three-quarters of teachers said this), followed by students! School leadership fares well across all three panels, with more than half the vote on each!

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the government didn't fare well - but we're not alone in not feeling appreciated by political leaders. While 0% of teachers in England said they felt appreciated by the government (although there were some), 2% of teachers in the Netherlands and 4% in Flanders felt the same!

Currently, who do you feel appreciated by...?



Question answered by 1,018 to 6,926 teachers on 05/10/2022 (England results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics, other panels unweighted)

Governors reading this – you may be disheartened by the 20% of teachers who say they feel appreciated by you, but looking at headteachers alone, 69% say they feel appreciated by the school governors and trustees.

Finally... we know you love the daily read, so here are the ones from last week

The tip read by most secondary teachers in the past week was: [Convincing students their actions matter](#) and amongst primary teachers, the top tip was [Common primary maths misconceptions](#).

And here's the rest for your reference:

- [Does writing matter in Art and Design?](#)
- [Things to say to a teacher who may be thinking of leaving teaching!](#)
- [Towards a humanity-rich curriculum](#)
- [A top 10 of behaviour management](#)
- [Some of the great bits about teaching!](#)
- [Thinking about multiple-choice questions...](#)