

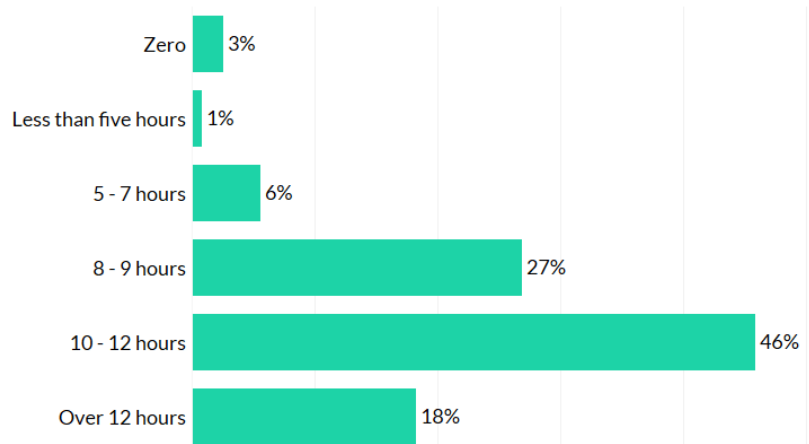
# What Teachers Tapped This Week #54 - 8th October 2018

Uhoh, the weather is turning... have you had to put on your big coat yet?  
<https://giphy.com/gifs/a-christmas-story-pVQUCfmpSv1Qs> October averages 13 days of rain in the UK, so it's worth bunging a brolly into your bag too. That's enough weather data! It's Monday so we have all the data joy from the things you tapped this week. LET'S GO...

## 1. Working Hours: Where are they occurring?

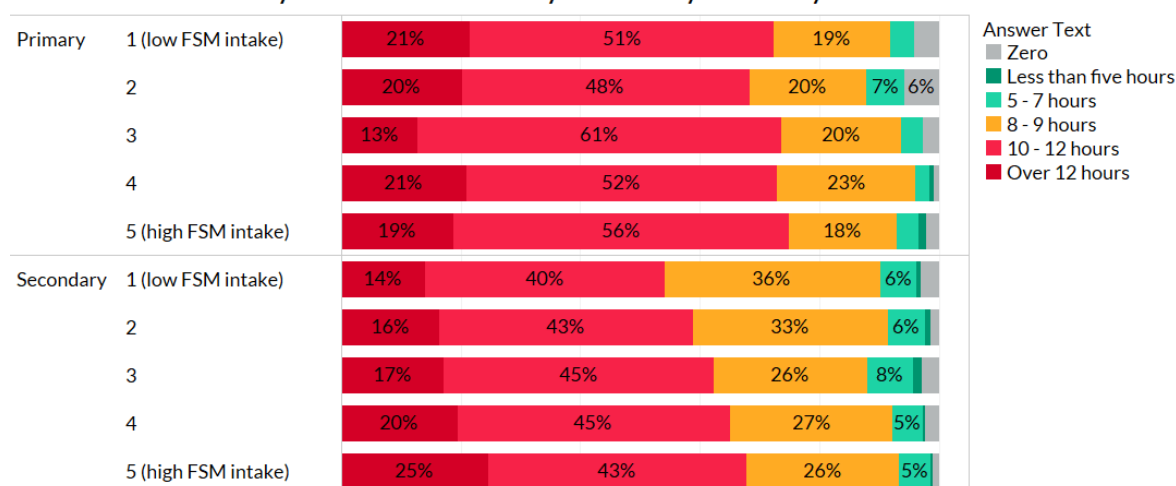
Looking at working hours in teaching causes problems for researchers. On the one hand, workload is high and we want to find out if there are squeeze points. On the other hand, pointing out where hours are high can seem like a competition. As if we are saying 'hey, these folks are working more than you and that's virtuous'. Please know: we are not saying that long hours are a good thing. When we ask, teachers typically say they worked between 10 and 12 hours on any given day. A small group worked 8-9 hours (27%) and an even smaller group worked 12 hours (18%).

How many hours in total did you work yesterday?



Primary teachers report more hours at work - and the amount doesn't seem to change regardless of deprivation levels in the school. At secondary, the level of deprivation does matter - with those in areas with fewer pupils on free school meals charting a lower average response.

## How many hours in total did you work yesterday?

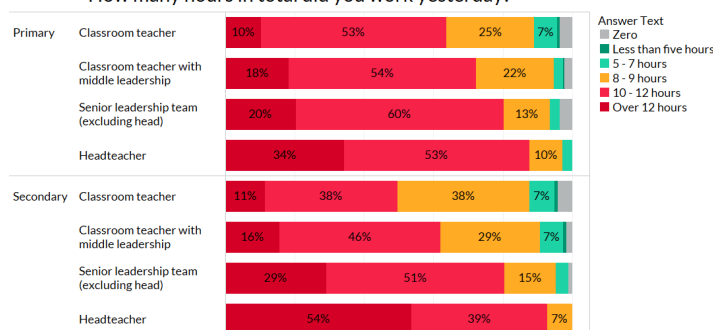


In primary schools, colleagues in lower-graded Ofsted schools did report longer working hours. This reflects the many reports we get from teachers who say that working in a 'turnaround' school involves a lot more meeting and paperwork.



We also replicated a finding we've had several times before - which is that headteachers are the most likely to say they worked a 12+ hour day. Therefore, while classroom teachers may feel as if they are bearing the brunt of paperwork and frustrations in schools, it does seem that senior managers are pulling long shifts too.

## How many hours in total did you work yesterday?



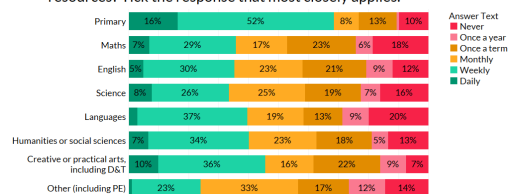
Heads seem to enjoy their jobs more than classroom teachers, and are more likely to say they are going to say in the job. Which suggests that working hours are not necessarily what drives people from the job. There's something about what happens during the hours that matters. A big difference between heads and classroom teachers is the amount of autonomy and scrutiny given to them. It is possible that teachers don't mind long hours, but they do mind being told what to do and heavily scrutinised during them. In which case it may be less about workload and more the worktype that is causing disgruntlement in the profession. Certainly this is something for us to keep looking into. Suggestions and thoughts are welcome.

## [2. A Benefit of Larger Primary Schools](#)

One way to reduce lesson planning workload is for teachers to share resources. It's not an exact science. Teachers often need to adapt items made by others to make it work in their classroom (and with their class), but working from a template speeds up the process considerably. Not all teachers frequently meet with others to plan/share resources however:

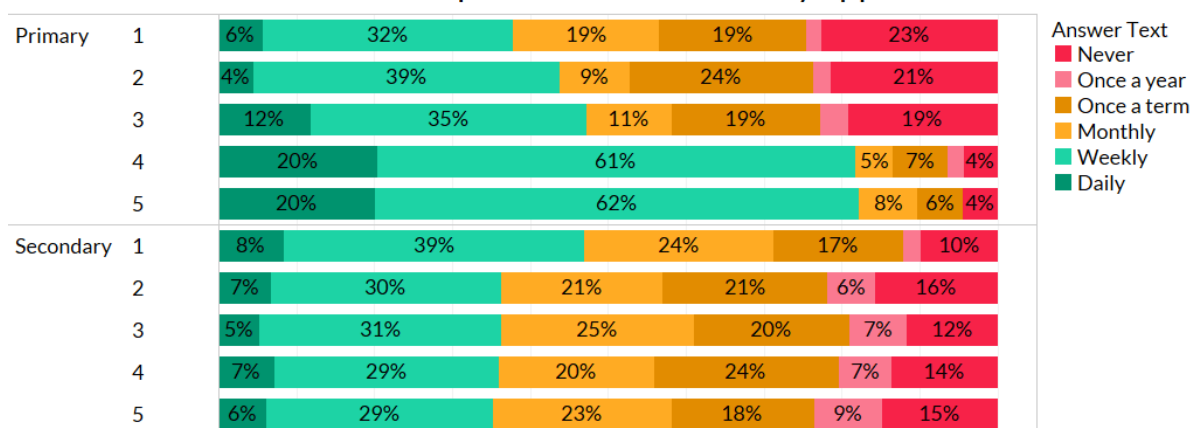
## Primary teachers are better at it than secondary teachers

How frequently do you meet with teachers to plan and share resources? Tick the response that most closely applies.



Note: we separated by school size (1 is smallest, 5 is largest) and found that primary teachers in larger schools are much more likely to frequently meet to share resources. This is likely due to those schools having more than 1 class in each year group – meaning there's at least one other person in the school who will be teaching the same materials, and so planning can be shared.

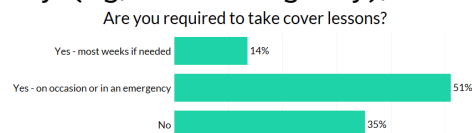
How frequently do you meet with teachers to plan and share resources? Tick the response that most closely applies.



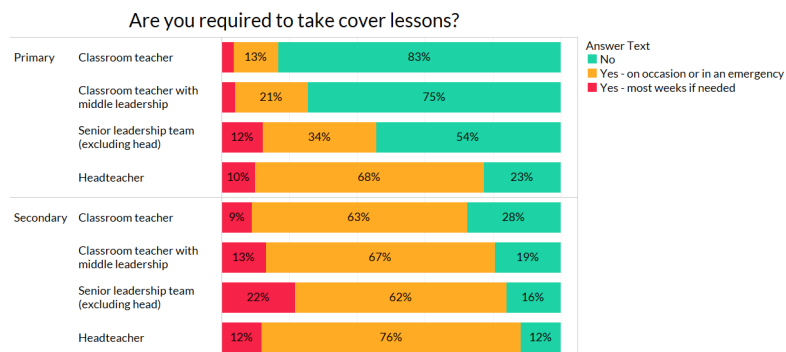
This benefit did not occur in secondary schools. In fact, the smallest secondary schools size seems to benefit from more co-planning.

## 3. Do you do cover?

In the 2000s, cover lessons were a popular complaint among teachers. Instead of getting a planning period, teachers were asked to take classes left without a teacher due to an absent colleague. After substantial noise by the unions, it was determined within teachers' conditions that cover should only be done 'rarely'. However, the rules don't cover academies. So, have we crept back towards teachers doing a lot of cover? As it stands, most teachers are not regularly doing cover. 51% do so within the parameters of 'rarely' (eg, in an emergency), but 35% of teachers said they simply never take cover lessons.



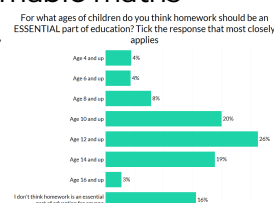
However, there are substantial differences between primary and secondary schools. Primary schools make much more use of teaching assistants, many of whom take classes when the main teacher is absent. This saves cash for the school and reduces disruption as the pupils know the person taking them. Primary teachers almost never do cover, and even senior leaders manage to miss out on cover.



At secondary, the situation is more complex - with most teachers saying they are used for rare cover, and 22% of senior leaders saying they do cover 'most weeks'. Given the time pressures on this group, this is quite a stressful aspect of the job as it's disruptive and can't easily be planned for. As budgets continue to be squeezed, if the costs of cover teachers are cut out it looks as if this group would be the ones who will take on that burden. But schools will need to be careful it doesn't burn them out.

## 4. Is homework essential?

Dylan Wiliam once famously said that "most homework teachers set is crap". Speaking to a lot of parents, they agree. Random projects, scraps of memorisation, unfathomable maths exercises: the whole thing can frustrate a family in minutes. So, we asked...



Of the teachers who think homework is essential, the majority felt it was best for 10+ year olds. Primary teachers often hold a harder line on tests than secondary teachers. (Secondary teachers seem a bit squeamish about getting young children to do difficult things; whereas primary teachers are up for it!) Primary teachers did skew younger for a homework starting age although most still went for 10+.

For what ages of children do you think homework should be an ESSENTIAL part of education? Tick the response that most closely applies



Perhaps more surprising were the 24% of secondary teachers who felt homework was only essential for pupils age 14 and upwards. (An additional 4% went for 16+) Note the substantial differences in subjects, too. 21% of English teachers did not think homework was essential for any age, whereas only 7% of language and 9% of maths teachers felt the same.



If you have a whole-school homework policy, it is worth thinking through if it needs to be the same for every subject and in every year group. \*

5. Finally, as ever, we learned that you really love our daily tips, so here are the links for last week:

[What if everything you knew about mindset and resilience was wrong](#) [How to get pupils started on tasks independently](#) [How to support young people with literacy difficulties](#) [A book of poems for pupils to memorise](#) [Starting lessons with low-stakes quizzing](#) [Surrey study into](#)

## Right folks – over and out for another week...

In the meantime, keep sharing what we are doing. Here's a [powerpoint slide \(with script\)](#), a [PDF](#), and a [black-and-white one-pager](#) to help. Remember, we need more of you before we can do the really exciting and detailed analysis! Enjoyed this post and want to join our Teacher Tapp panel? Sign up via the [iPhone App Store](#) or the [Android App Store](#). You can also check out more at [www.teachertapp.com](http://www.teachertapp.com)