

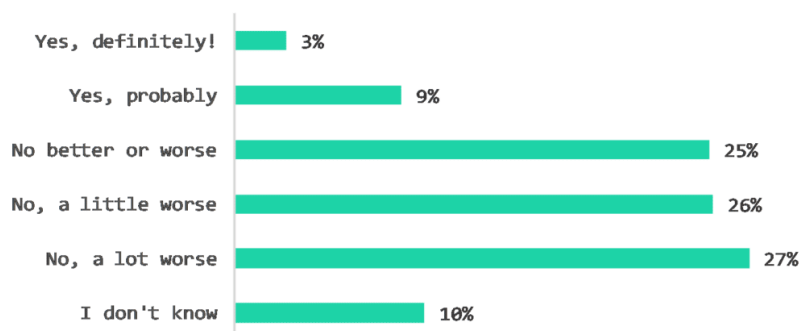
What Teachers Tapped This Week #15 – 8th January 2018

GUUUUYS! We made it to 2018! Thanks for your support in 2017. When we started this experiment we had no idea if it'd work and we're chuffed so many of you are enjoying. A few users even tweeted how we had helped them keep a semblance of routine amid the festivities! Not one of our main objectives, but we're always happy to help. Before this week's results, two things. An app update: Over at Teacher Tapp towers we're updating our app processes behind the scenes easier. In time this will make it easier for us to ask targeted questions and to do more cool analysis more quickly. So keep sending us your suggestions! The oddly repeating question: Last week the app repeated a question for a few minutes after a file corrupted. We solved it quickly, but if you were one of the first people to answer that day you might have seen the same question twice. Don't worry – we've removed the corrupted data from results. Ok, onto new findings...

1. Emergency! Is there a headteacher in the house?

Boy, this topic got you talking! In a dramatic question, we asked if an emergency took you out and your headteacher took over your class, would they do better than you in their teaching? Before releasing the question we internally debated it. Alex felt it was obvious that heads would always do worse because they haven't planned the lesson and may not know the topic/subject. Laura wasn't so sure. Teacher Tapp data shows [a lot of misbehaviour](#) in classrooms – would this be as likely with the headteacher? So we asked...and only 12% said their headteacher would do better.

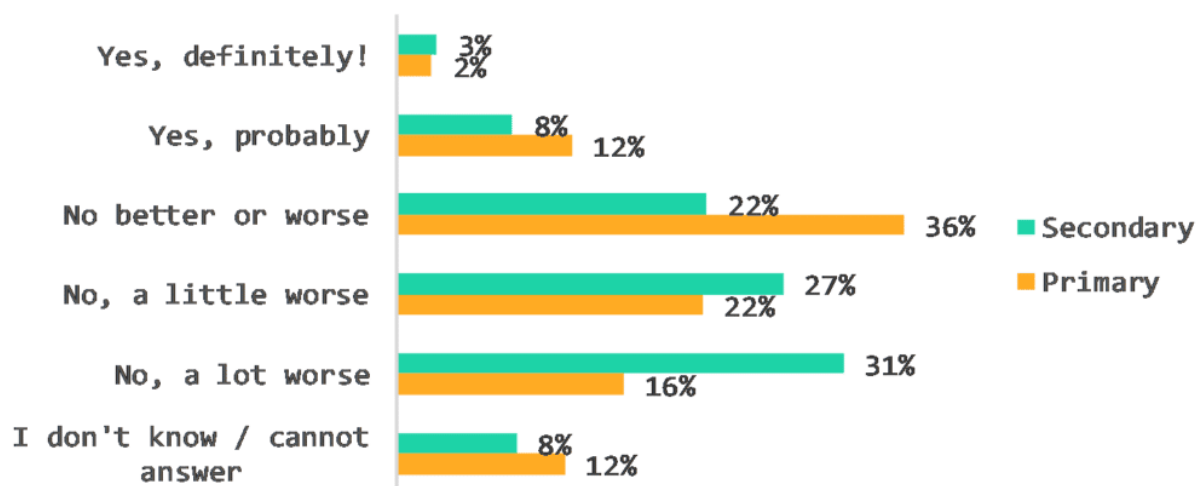
Would your headteacher do a better job in teaching your class in an emergency?



This led [one tweeter](#) to suggest teachers didn't have much "confidence" in their head's classroom skills. BUT - as mentioned - we suspected the number might be low given the planning/subjects constraints, etc. Would things be different between primary and secondary teachers? Some felt primary heads would be more able to step in, although a punchy riposte from headteacher Michael Tidd suggested otherwise.

<https://twitter.com/MichaelT1979/status/949347689635958789> What's the reality? We split down the figures to find out. Primary teachers were more confident that their headteachers would be better (15% vs 11% at secondary), or at least the same (35% versus 22%).

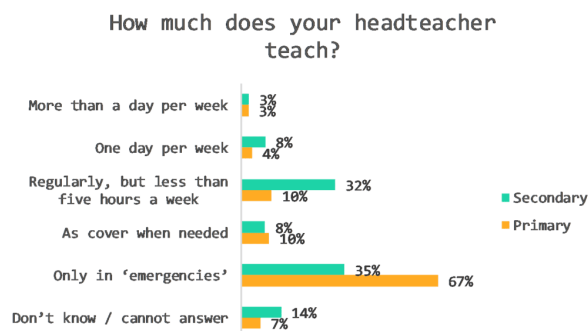
Would your head teach your class better or worse than you if taking over in an emergency?



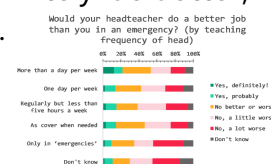
What makes primary teachers so much more sure about their heads' teaching?

It could be any number of things. Primary heads usually oversee fewer children, so are more likely to have a relationship with them, and they are more likely to have taught all subjects and therefore feel more comfortable jumping in last minute. We also wondered if primary headteachers are in the classroom more often. Helpfully, we had already asked a question on

this and the results were interesting. Secondary headteachers take regular classes far more often than their primary colleagues. BUT primary headteachers are much more likely to be an emergency fall-back than secondary counterparts.



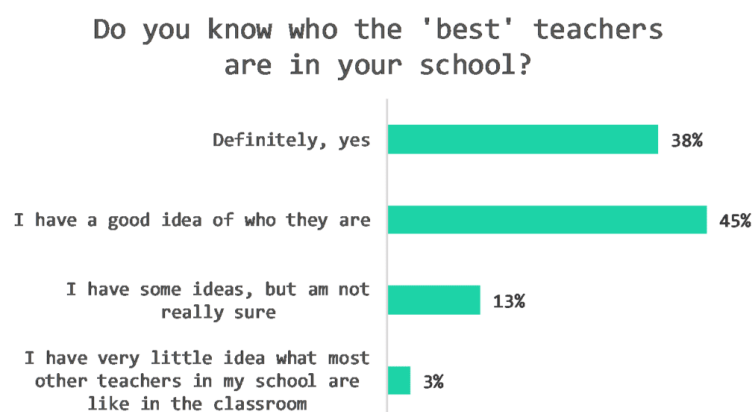
Next we considered if the amount of time headteachers spend in the classroom also affects confidence in their emergency-teaching. The only substantial difference appeared to be among heads who teach more than one day a week and those who teach 'only in emergencies'. Those teaching at least a day a week were more likely to 'definitely' be better, whereas those who only teach in emergencies were likely to be a lot worse.



But is this cause or effect? It might be that heads who are the best at teaching are also the ones most likely to remain teaching one day a week whereas those who are weaker avoid it other than when absolutely necessary! What we do know is that primary heads are much less likely to teach on any given day than a secondary one, something which is worth bearing in mind when thinking about the attractiveness of the job for teachers.

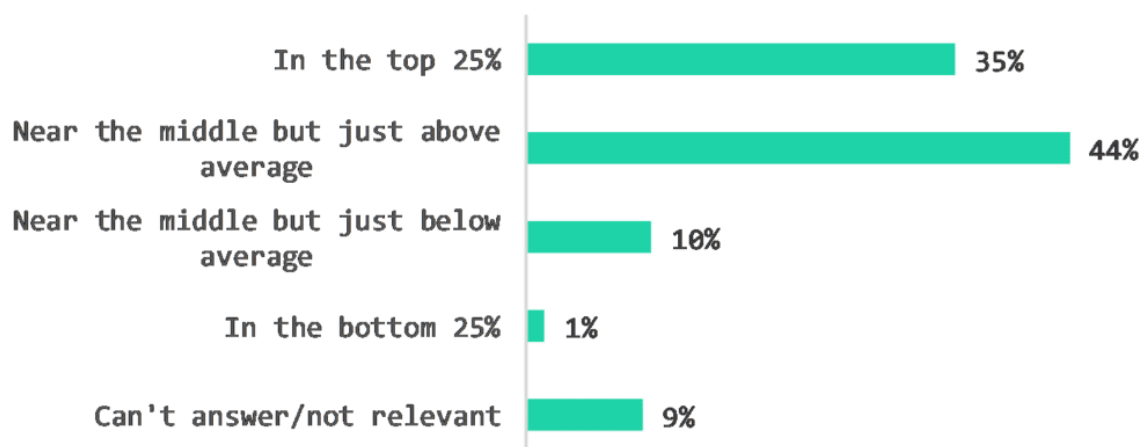
2. A Lake Wobegon Effect?

The Lake Wobegon effect is the tendency for people to overestimate their capabilities. It's named after the fictional town in [Prairie Home Companion](#) where all the children are "above average". Do teachers fall prey to the same problem? First we had to discern if people felt it was possible to identify teacher quality:



The results show that 83% of teachers believed they would be able to identify the 'best' teachers in their schools (either definitely, or that they had a good idea). This suggests teachers believe they can compare quality among teachers. Then we asked a trickier question:

If you were judged on teaching quality, where within your school do you think you would score?



As with Lake Wobegon we find that almost everyone felt they were above average. Just 11% of teachers felt they were below average. One reason for this might be that Teacher Tapp users are unusual – and there's good reason to believe that. They are curious enough to have downloaded the app and taken part in the question. But the imbalance is strikingly different, especially the low percentage in the bottom 25%. Why does this matter? Although it seems an amusing quirk it shows why data is so important. Personal opinion simply doesn't measure up. As we go forward, we also want to tease out if there are characteristics of people who say they are below average and if this affects their working life. At this stage we still don't know if feeling under par is linked to actual underperformance, unhappiness or likelihood to leave.

3. The 4-day Island Oasis

Another divided opinion at Teacher Tapp towers was settled this week. Becky has long argued that teaching life needs to become compatible with childcare – but how do you manage it? One of her ideas was that [parents and teachers](#) would prefer a 4-day week with slightly longer school day hours compared to the current 5-day format, as this is easier for picking up

children. But Laura was unconvinced. She felt a 4.15pm finish was equally problematic for parents as a 3.15pm one, and the extra day off would be a headache. In the end: Laura was wrong.

Which island would you prefer to move to?

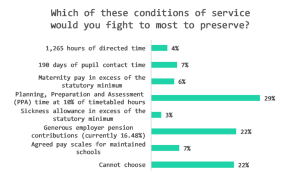


By a substantial margin, teachers said they would prefer a 4-day week with longer days.

Given recent research shows this model increased results in one US state, this might even be a go-to for outcomes. But is it equally good for parents? We broke the results down to check: There's no difference! People with children and those without are equally likely to want to move to a 4-day week. This is intriguing. While childcare may be playing into the preference, it doesn't appear to be the main force for the choice (or we'd see a big difference). An alternative reason for the choice might be that teachers would like to have one specific extra day to do the activities they currently take home (eg marking, planning, data). A problem with the way planning time is spread out across timetables for some teachers makes it unusable for its purpose. Speaking of which...

4. Are unions fighting the wrong fight?

Teaching unions spend a lot of their time defending teacher pay scales and the 1,265 directed time allocation (which specifies the number of hours in which teachers can be told what to do). Yet, these are not the working conditions that teachers cherish most.



Planning, prep and assessment time was the most popular condition that teachers would fight to save. Although it isn't under threat (almost all teachers will receive it), there are some issues with it. For example, Becky has previously written about the way its introduction upped the expectations on teachers to produce data. These expectations now far outweigh the time given to do them. As mentioned above, there's also the problem of planning periods being strewn across the timetable in helpful short blocks. A second issue was the generous employer pension contributions. Again, this isn't in threat. However there have been substantial pension changes in recent years which although disputed by the unions haven't always had punch through. Further revisions to pensions are expected in 2020. It's worth the unions keeping an eye on this issue given it has such salience among Teacher Tappers. Finally, the low number of people choosing directed-time and the 190 days contrasts with the amount of time unions spend discussing these. Could this mean people are more amenable to a new working hours deal? It's certainly one for us to explore.

5. The Boxing Day Myth?

It is an iron-law of recruitment that the busiest day of the year for looking at jobs online is the Christmas period. But is it true? We asked on Boxing Day if people had looked at adverts and found that only 7% said 'yes'. If the iron-law is correct - and it's based on the views of people in the know - then our best bet for how many teachers are looking for another teaching job at any one time is a maximum of 7%.

Boxing Day is allegedly the busiest day of the year for people looking up new jobs online. Did you browse job adverts today?

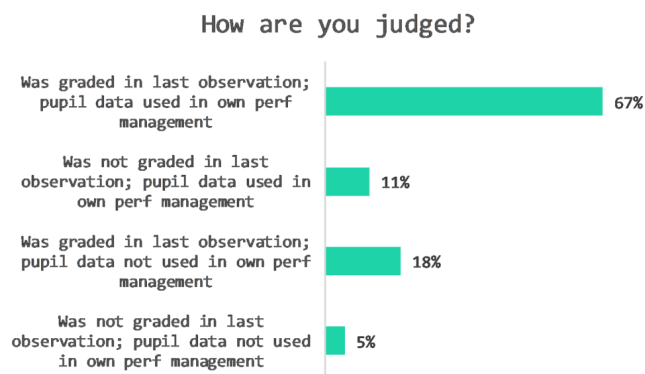


Given the levels of dissatisfaction subjectively reported, and the proportions of people who say they are actively looking for jobs at any one time, this seems low. But it gives us a baseline. We can look again in future and track how it changes!

6. Finally, A Very Depressing Graph...

Over the holidays we asked about two fairly controversial practices. One was the grading of lesson observations. This has been dropping out of favour for some time, first driven by some headteacher's decision to stop grading (see [here](#)) and later by Ofsted also nixing grades for observations due to reliability concerns ([here](#)). The other was the use of pupil data in performance management. Performance-related pay was foisted on schools back in 2013 but how schools do it is up to them. A known problem of using pupil data for performance

reviews, however, is that it often isn't reliable and is affected by many variables beyond the teacher's locus of control. (There are no rules stopping it, though). Given these debates we were surprised to find: 67% of teachers were GRADED in their last observation AND had pupil



Given that chief inspector Amanda Spielman is so incensed she ["tears her hair out"](#) over schools that still grade individual lessons, this finding is even more surprising! If you have any theories about why this is still happening, please let us know, so that we can investigate!

7. As ever, we know how much you love the tips, so here are the latest ones (3 weeks' worth!)

[9 Interesting Things About Ofsted's Annual Report](#) [Unusual teacher gift ideas](#) [Errors in movies](#) [Cognitive Load Explainer](#) [Does music train your brain?](#) [Why simply teaching matters](#) [101 reasons why lessons go wrong](#) [Teacher energy is finite](#) [Tackling insomnia](#) [Good news for group work](#) [Are some teachers inside a tweeting bubble?](#) [Gold dust of CPD time](#) [Setting cover 4-day week and achievement - full journal article](#) [How to turn teams into expert teams](#) [What makes a good explanation?](#) [Benefits of multiple choice](#) [Can we teach more than exams?](#) [Experiment in getting pupils to copy information into books](#)
data used in their performance management.

8. And finally, we are putting together the lists for the book giveaway raffle among our users this week and will be in touch with winners asap!

In the meantime, please keep sharing what we are doing with colleagues so they can sign up too. We've a [powerpoint slide \(with script\)](#), a [PDF](#), and a [black-and-white one-pager](#) to help out. Right folks, until next time... <https://giphy.com/gifs/join-barhopping-uLda64US3sb16>
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