

# Is school enjoyable, PowerPoint or textbooks, seating plans and an experiment!

We ran a little experiment last week – read on to the end to find out more...

## 1. Enjoying school right now?

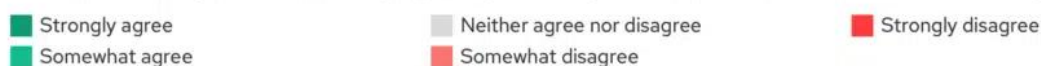
Over the last two years we have regularly asked how much you've enjoyed working in school that week and unfortunately we have some bad news – enjoyment is at an all-time low with just 6-in-10 of you saying you enjoyed working in school last week.

It feels like things are getting tough again, with absence rates rising again whilst many classes are supposed to be preparing for exams and assessments. Whilst we thought it might be the headteachers who were enjoying school the least at the moment since they have to manage supply teachers and cover difficulties, it turns out it is classroom teachers whose enjoyment is lowest.

### 'I enjoyed working this week'



Question answered by 6,143 teachers on 11/03/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

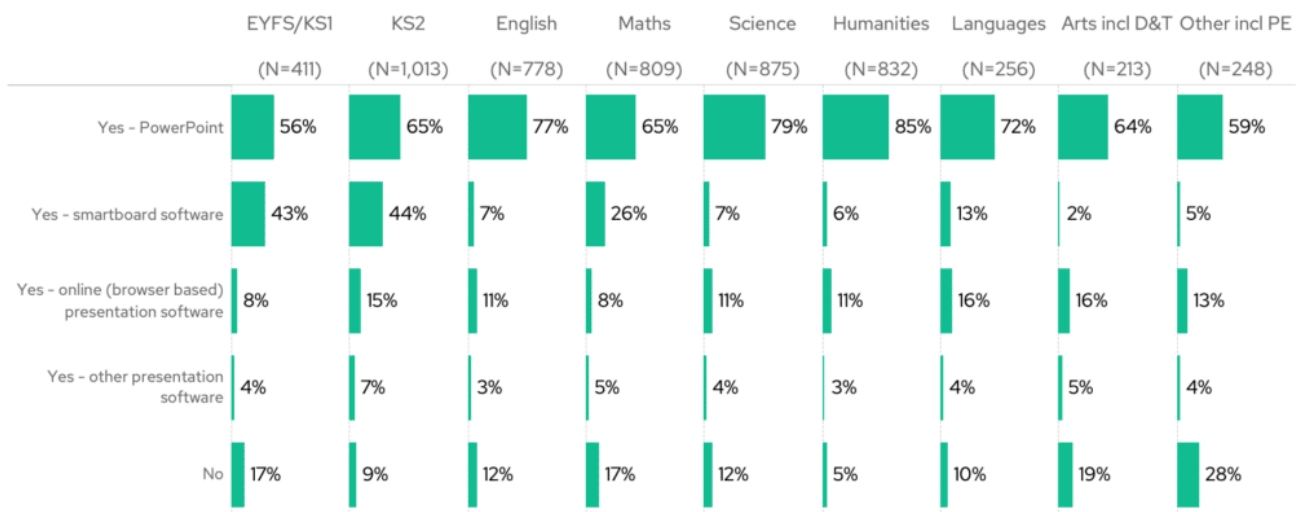


We may ask more questions over the next few weeks to try to find out what could be the root cause of this.

## 2. PowerPoint or textbooks?

PowerPoint continues to dominate classroom teaching across all subjects and phases. Its use is most popular amongst humanities teachers. It'll be no surprise to you that EYFS/KS1 and Other, incl PE teachers make the least use of PowerPoint. However, we find it interesting that almost 1-in-5 secondary maths teachers manage to teach without any form of slide projection or smartboard software.

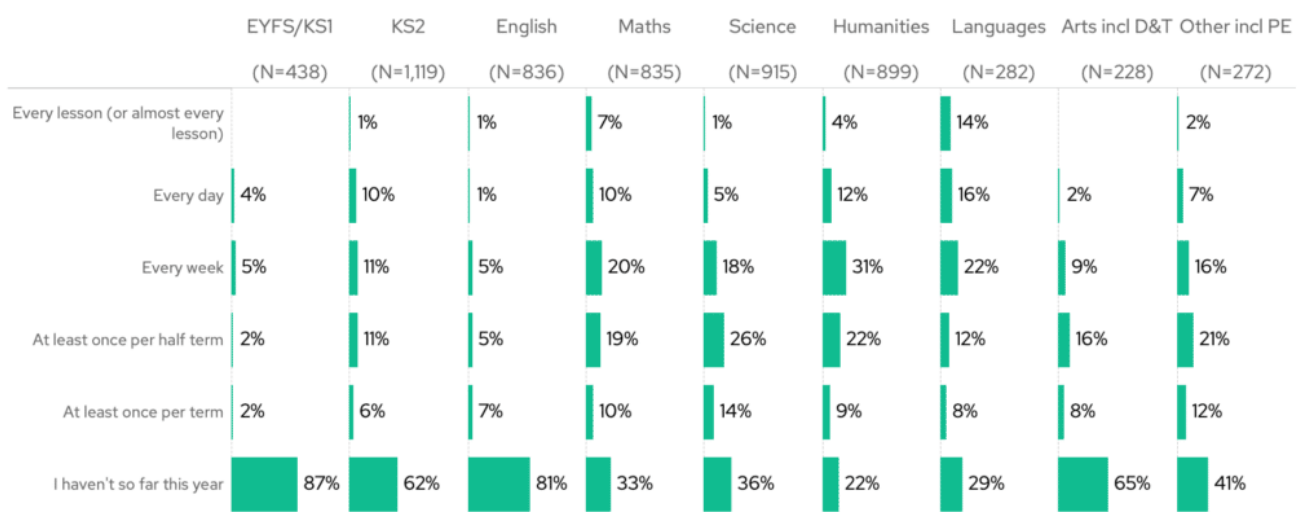
### Did you use PowerPoint (or similar presentation software) in your lessons at all today?



Question answered by 5,670 teachers on 11/03/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Many teachers have not used a textbook in their teaching at all this year. This includes 87% of EYFS/KS1 teachers, 83% of English teachers and 63% of Arts incl D&T teachers. Even in the humanities where textbooks are most popular, only a tiny minority of teachers are using them every day or lesson in their teaching.

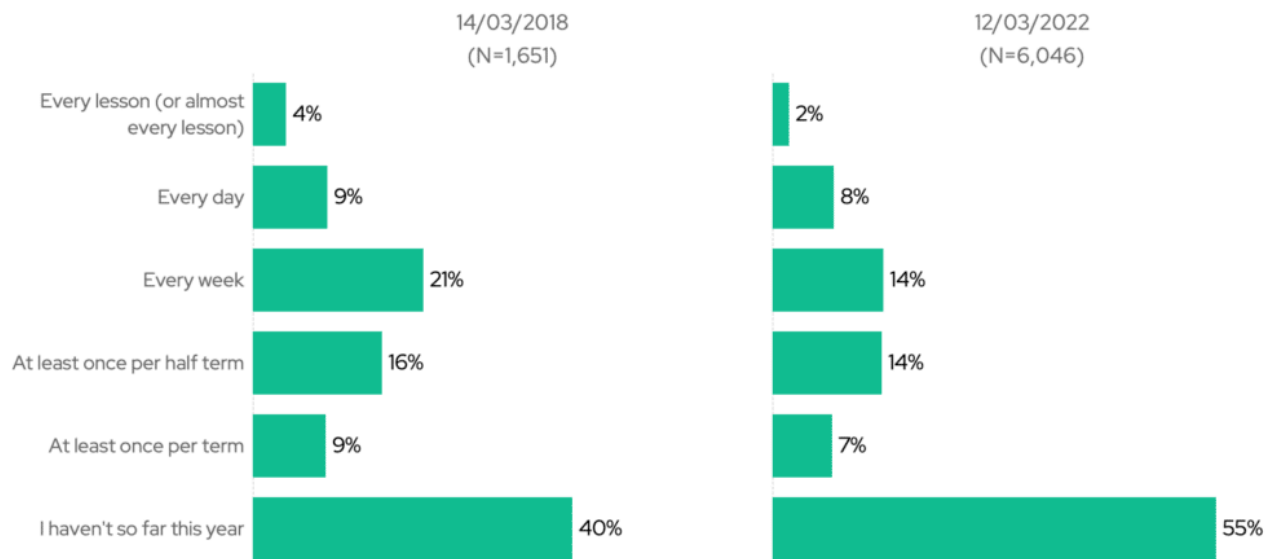
### So far this year, how often have you been using textbooks in your teaching?



Question answered by 6,046 teachers on 12/03/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

And despite government trying to encourage greater use of textbooks, we see no evidence that their use has increased. Indeed, if anything the reverse is true. Four years ago, 40% of teachers said they hadn't used a textbook so far this year and now 55% say the same thing. This is possibly due to the necessary shift to online or digital resources during the pandemic – printed textbooks can be used by a teacher with by multiple classes over the course of a week, but that's not been possible if students have had to be learning at home. Is this an example of another shift in the norm?

### So far this year, how often have you been using textbooks in your teaching?



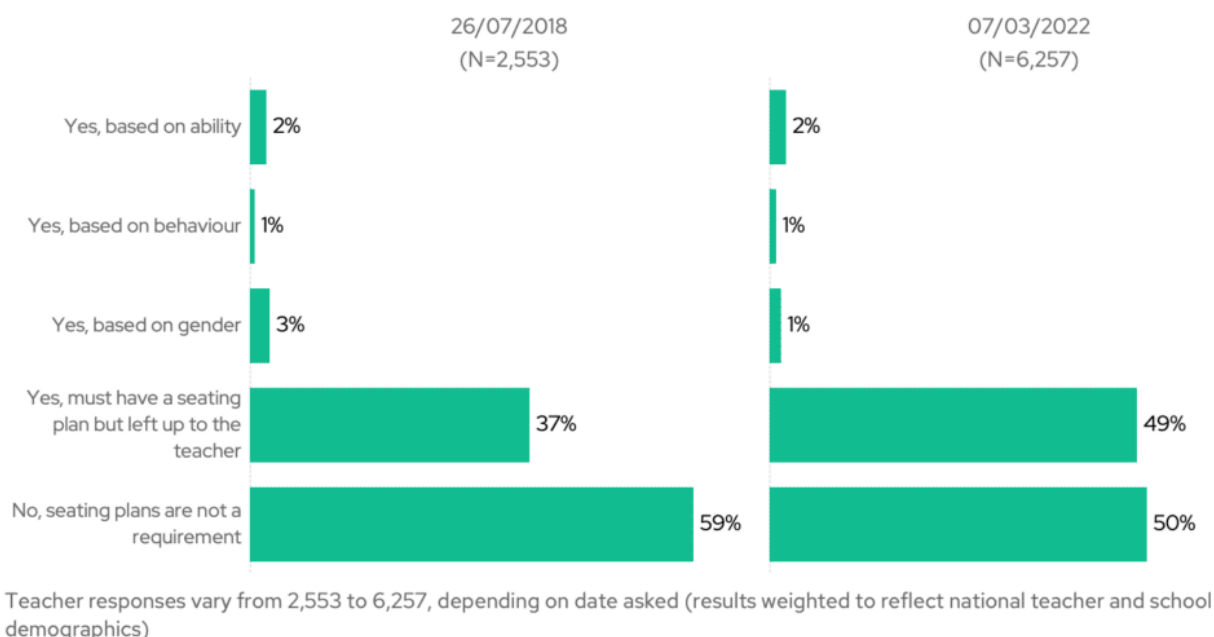
Teacher responses vary from 1,651 to 6,046, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

### 3. Students. How do you seat yours?

It has been a strange two years for seating plan arrangements. COVID arrangements led to many schools asking pupils to sit next to the same student as much as possible. Whilst many of the most stringent 'bubble' arrangements have ended, we wanted to know whether there has been any legacy impact on school seating plan policies. It seems that there might be!

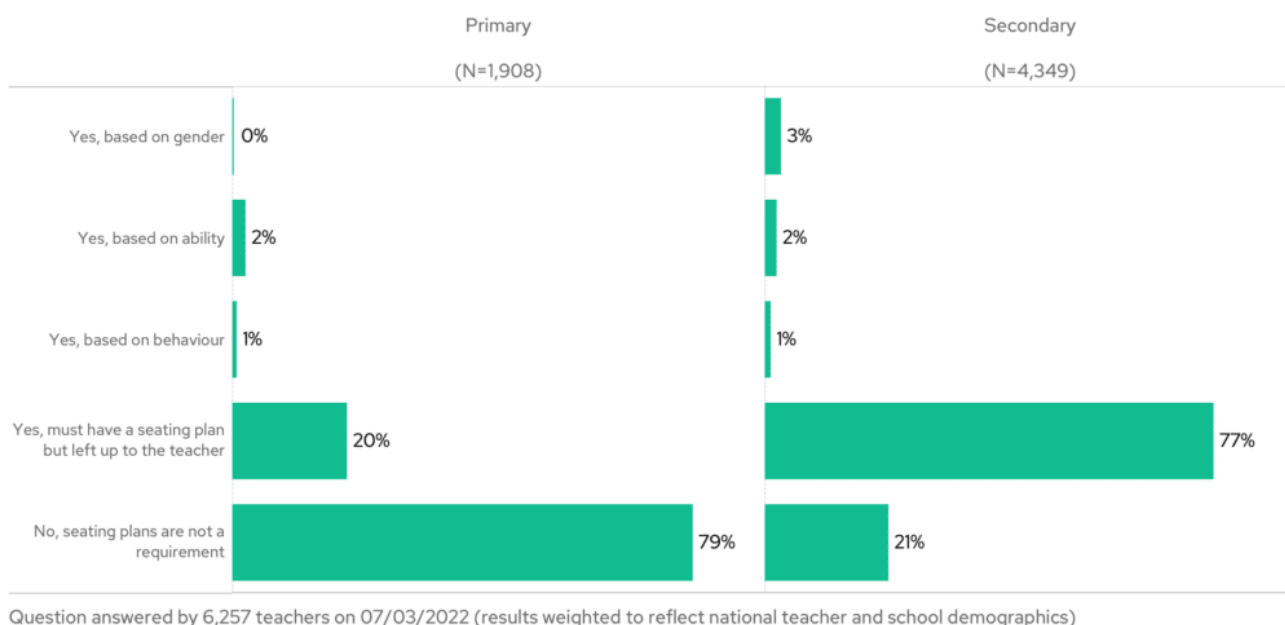
Back in 2018, 59% of you said that the school has no policy regarding seating plans; this figure has now fallen to 50%. However, in the vast majority of cases, the teacher is free to choose WHAT the plan looks like.

## Does your school have a policy about how to sit pupils in lessons?



As expected there is a different story when we look at the school phase with 8-in-10 primary schools with no requirement for seating plans, whereas in secondary schools the opposite is true with 8-in-10 requiring seating plans.

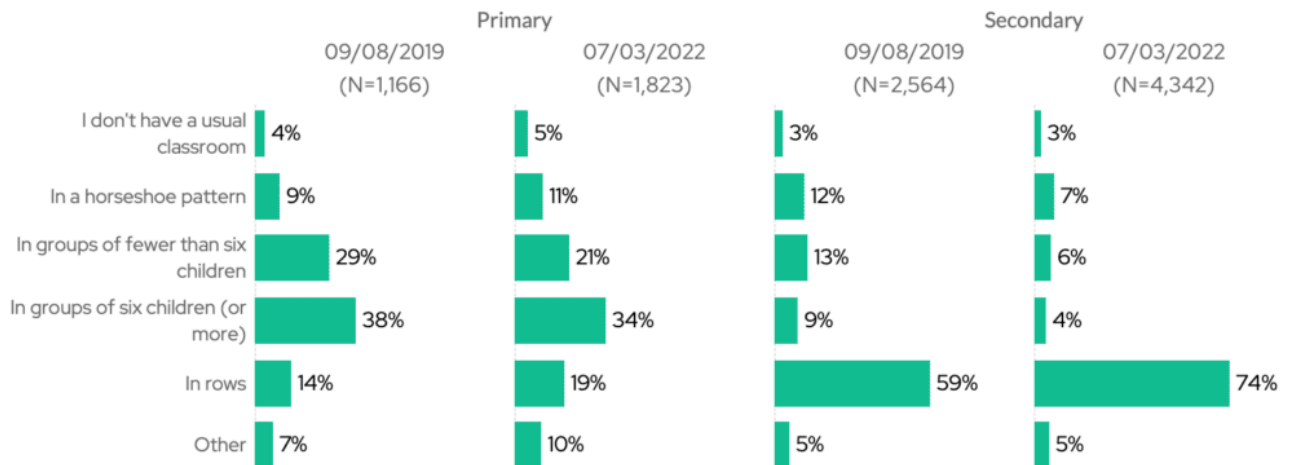
## Does your school have a policy about how to sit pupils in lessons?



In addition to increased use of seating plans, we've also found that desks set up in rows are now far more common than they were pre-pandemic. In the primary phase, things haven't changed that much, although the proportion of teachers saying they arrange their classroom

in rows has increased a little from 14% to 19%. However, in the secondary phase, the proportion of teachers saying their main classroom is arranged in rows has increased from 59% to a massive 74%. We wonder whether these rows will persist for another two years?

**How are your classroom desks set up in your usual classroom? (Secondary teachers - think of the classroom you teach in most, or just pick one classroom at random if this is hard.)**



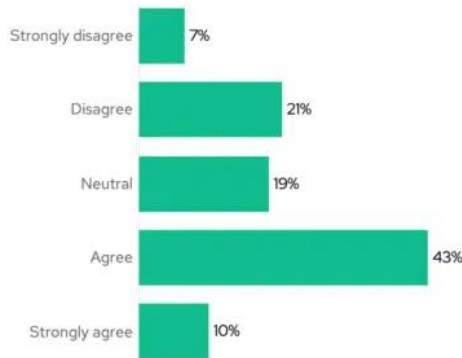
Teacher responses vary from 1,166 to 4,342, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

## 4. A realistic experiment

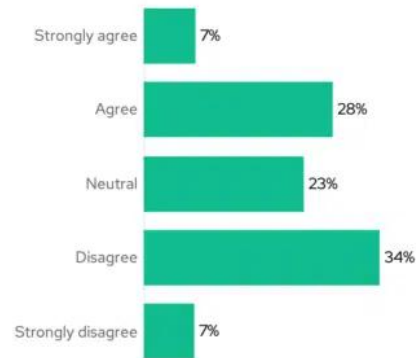
We did an experiment last week to shine a light on a contentious point in survey design - the use of negative adjectives in questions. In an effort to find out if realistic and unrealistic are true antonyms or if there is a bias towards one, we allocated you randomly into 2 groups and asked two opposing versions of the same three questions.

Half of you were asked the question on the left below about whether you agree that school's management have realistic expectations of you. The other half were asked whether they have unrealistic expectations. The results roughly align in their pattern (we've reversed one set of responses to show the alignment), although you'll note that in each case the 'Agree' response has larger percentage than the equivalent 'Disagree' response in the opposing question, which is something that other studies find.

**My school's management have realistic expectations of me**

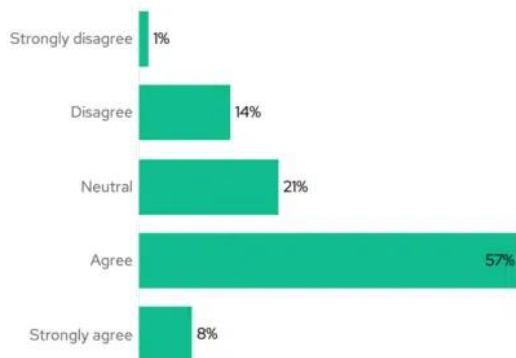


**My school's management have unrealistic expectations of me**

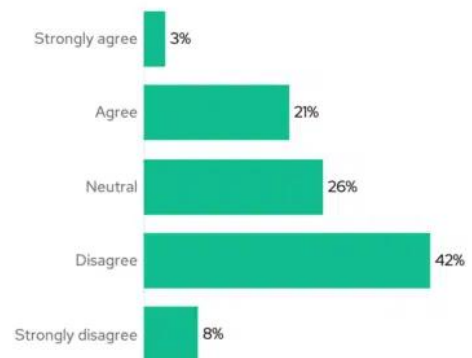


Again, when we asked whether pupils have realistic versus unrealistic expectations we found a similar pattern, with the 'Agree' response having a over-selection bias when compared with its equivalent 'Disagree' value once again.

**The pupils in my classes have realistic expectations about how I can support them**

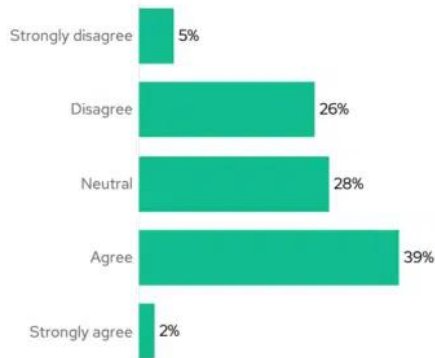


**The pupils in my classes have unrealistic expectations about how I can support them**

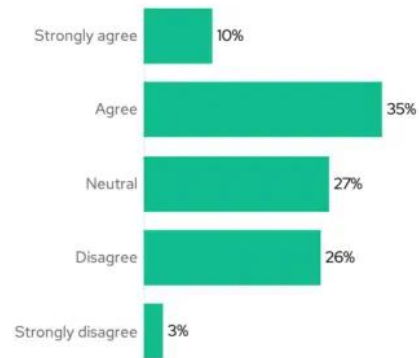


However, when we asked you whether PARENTS have realistic versus unrealistic expectations, your views were entirely dependent on how we ask the question! We're a bit stumped as to why might that be. Is it because you have less strong views about parents so are more likely to just 'agree' with the response?

**The parents of my pupils have realistic expectations about how I can support their children**



**The parents of my pupils have unrealistic expectations about how I can support their children**



Does anyone have any bright ideas? – do drop us a line to let us know.

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

The most read tip from the past week was: [AB Testing your classroom](#)

And here are the rest for your reference:

- [Seating plans: at the heart of my classroom management](#)
- [Is growth mindset real? New evidence, new conclusions](#)
- [How can the governments target of 90% of pupils achieving the expected standards at key stage 2 be achieved](#)
- [How do you grade yourself?](#)
- [Change vs Stasis: the tension at the heart of teacher development](#)