

How did schools mark the passing of Queen Elizabeth? And other stories from the first week of term...

[Queen Elizabeth](#)

[First Week Back](#)

[Energy Efficiency](#)

[Lesson Plans](#)

[Daily reads](#)

1. Rest in Peace, Queen Elizabeth

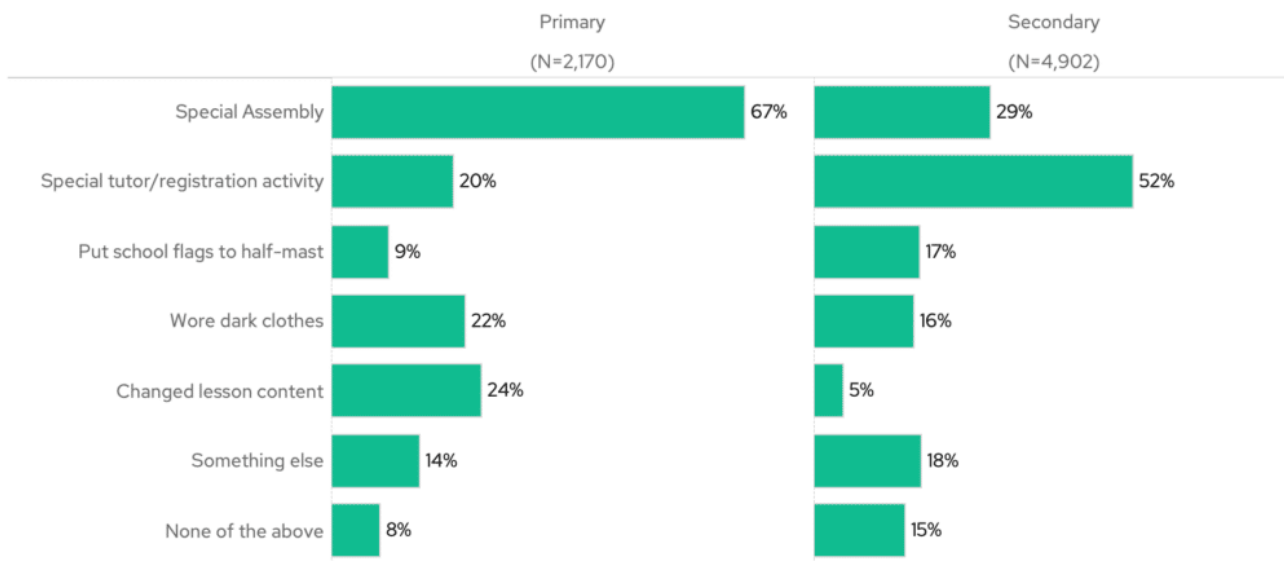
After two pandemic September returns, everyone was hoping this year's start of term would be fairly normal this year. And it was. Until it wasn't.

Queen Elizabeth's death last week was simultaneously expected and yet surprising. As news of her death came late on Thursday, schools wanting to respond had to do so rapidly. And most of you did.

2 in 3 primary schools held a special assembly the next day (Friday 9th) and 1 in 4 of you changed lesson content.

Assemblies occur less regularly in secondaries on a usual day, so it's no surprise the figure was lower (29%). However, half of you had special tutor time activities and 17% of secondaries also put flags to half-mast. (This question reminded us that we don't know how many schools have flags, but presumably the vast majority were dipped).

Did your school (or you) do anything *today* to mark the passing of Queen Elizabeth?

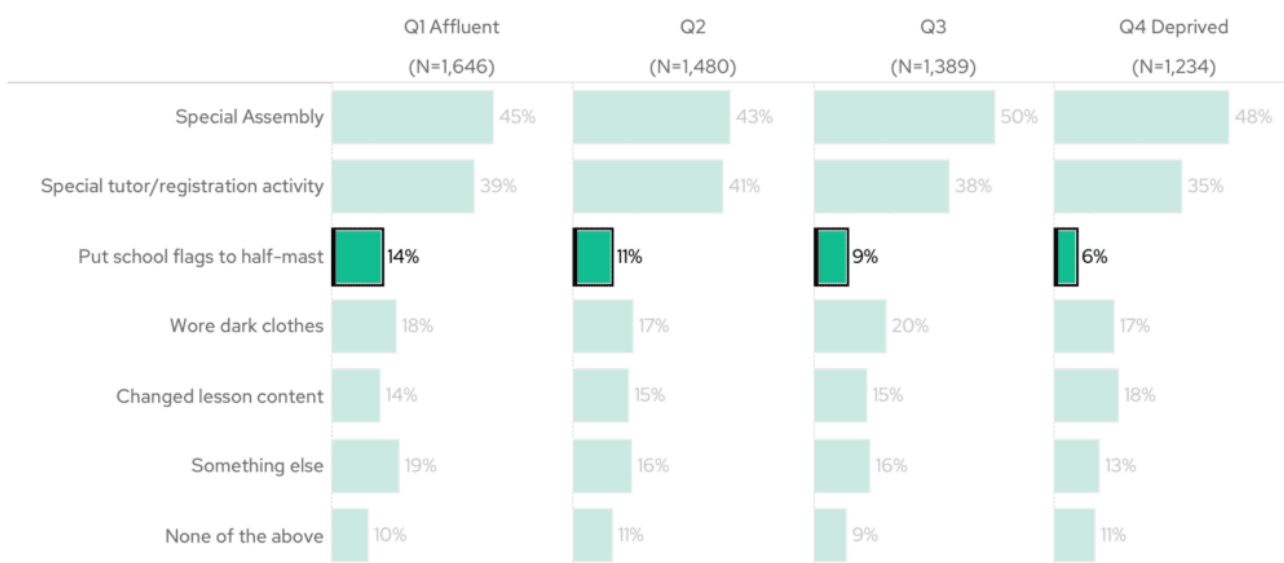


Question answered by 7,072 teachers on 09/09/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

On flags, we wondered if there would be regional differences in how many schools had flags, but there didn't seem to be. More affluent schools, however, were much more likely to have flags – especially independent schools.

Beyond that, most schools, regardless of affluence, were remarkably similar in their choices of memorialising the occasion, with only 10% doing nothing on Friday...

Did your school (or you) do anything *today* to mark the passing of Queen Elizabeth?



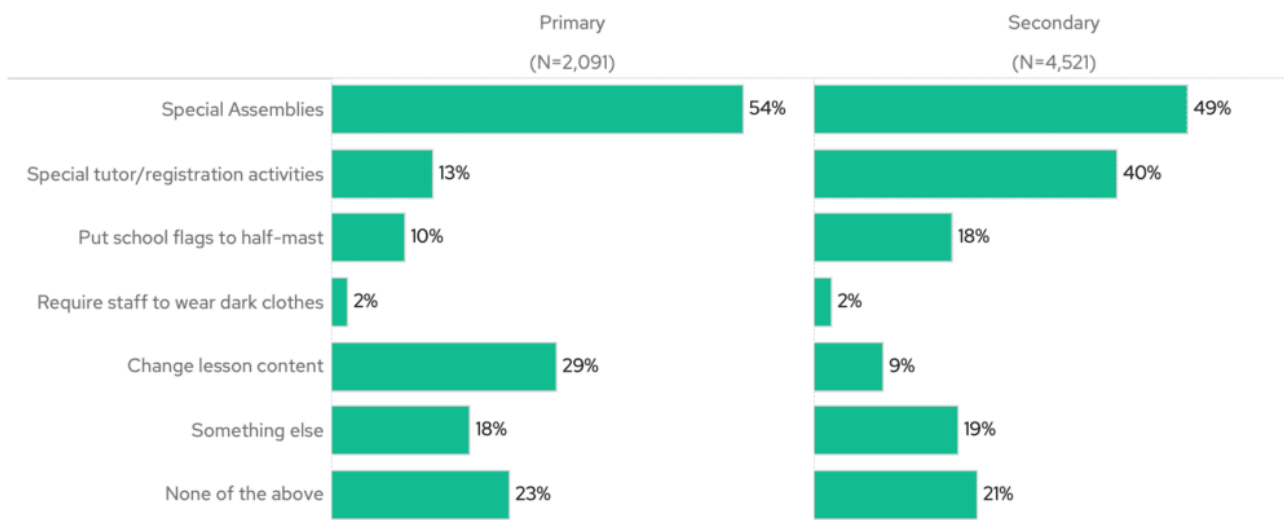
Question answered by 5,749 teachers on 09/09/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Over this week (and up to the funeral), many more secondary schools are expecting to have

special assemblies or registration activities. For lessons, 29% of primary teachers are also expecting to change content in the coming week, as will 9% of secondary ones.

To give space for a variety of opinions, we asked an open-text question about anything else you had observed in school on Friday. Many primary teachers said that pupils had taken part in Jubilee activities, so explaining what had happened, and about the traditions around a new monarch was in keeping with the pupils' curriculum.

Do you expect your school will do anything over the next 10 days (not including today) to mark the passing of Queen Elizabeth?



Question answered by 6,612 teachers on 09/09/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Your open-ended observations also brought into sharp focus that national events don't always seem the same inside schools. A story that's consuming the news can pale into insignificance amid the difficulty of a school day.

Beyond many of you saying the school held a minute's silence (which we'd missed from our activities list above), there was A LOT of variations in your day. About as many of you said it was a 'normal day' or that the pupils barely mentioned the Queen, as said that it was a very emotional day with lots of sad or curious pupils.

Some teachers were very upset about colleagues who they felt were disrespectful towards the Queen, because they were wearing bright clothes or being negative about the royal family in the staffroom. On the other hand, several teachers felt that it was almost unacceptable to have anti-royalist views, and felt the government's views on teachers being 'apolitical' should also extend to supporting (or denigrating) royalty.

Others among you didn't mention the Queen's death at all when asked about your Friday. Bigger concerns included rain causing a stressful 'wet play'; staff absences; timetable changes; and, in the case of one teaching assistant, the fact that they had just been told they would be expected to teach for 10 hours a week after a teacher hadn't turned up as expected that term.



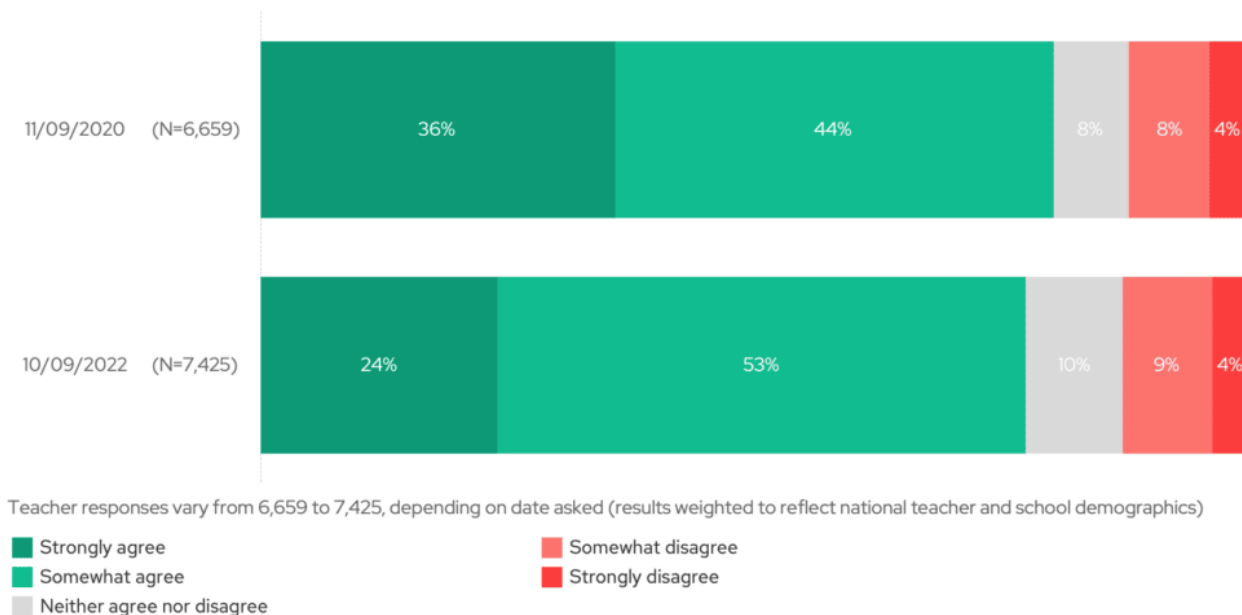
All of which might explain why, when asked how you felt, the most common response was 'tired' rather than sad! (With youngest teachers the most tired of all.)

2. Absence makes the heart grow fonder

Despite its unexpected end, how enjoyable was the first full week of school?

The graph below shows your answer to this at the end of the first full week for most schools in 2020 (top line) compared to this year, 2022 (bottom line).

'I enjoyed working this week'



At first glance it looks as if school is becoming less enjoyable. BUT, we must be careful with this comparison.

September 2020 was when many pupils came back to school after the first pandemic lockdowns. Bubbles had just been introduced, and much of the rest of the country was still under significant controls. Coming to school in 2020 was likely more enjoyable than in other years, rather than this year being much less!

What's perhaps most heartening is that roughly the same number of people are disagreeing about their week – which means about the same number of people didn't enjoy their week as in 2020. Hence, while people may not be as wildly excited about the start of term this year, it still seems pretty exciting that 77% of people enjoyed their week, even if it was exhausting! We wonder how this compares to other professions. (Or even compares to you, on a rainy week in November...).

3. Is your school energy efficient?

Energy is now at a premium and without more funds from the government, schools are having to plan for the cost whacking.

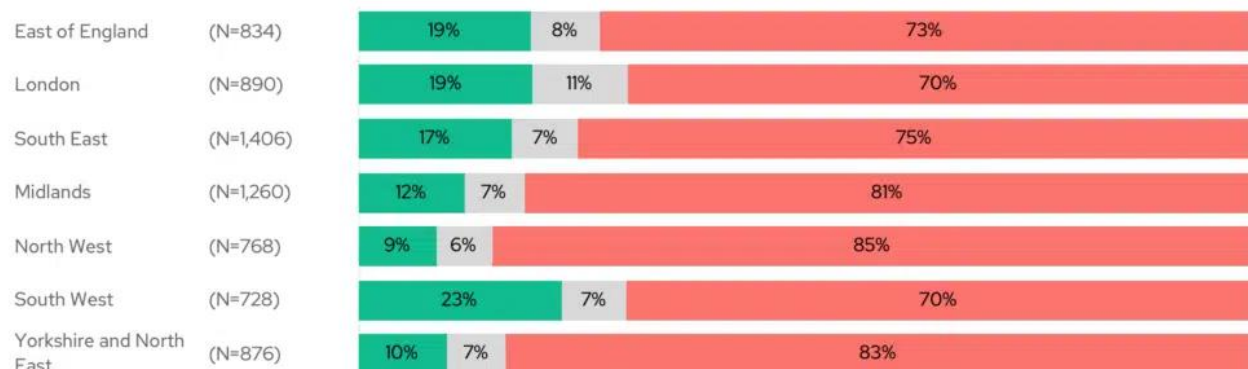
However, some schools make money on their energy, because they have solar panels on their roof and so can sell the energy back to suppliers. No one seemed to know how widespread this was. So we asked!

Places like the East of England, London and the South West are doing well. The South West is particularly ahead with 23% of teachers saying their school had solar panels.

Unfortunately, the North West lags behind with just 9% of schools having panels, and

Yorkshire & North East just in front of that on 10%. Perhaps this is one of those levelling-up things that the government could actually get on with?!

Does your school have solar panels?



Question answered by 6,762 teachers on 08/09/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

■ Yes ■ Don't know! ■ No

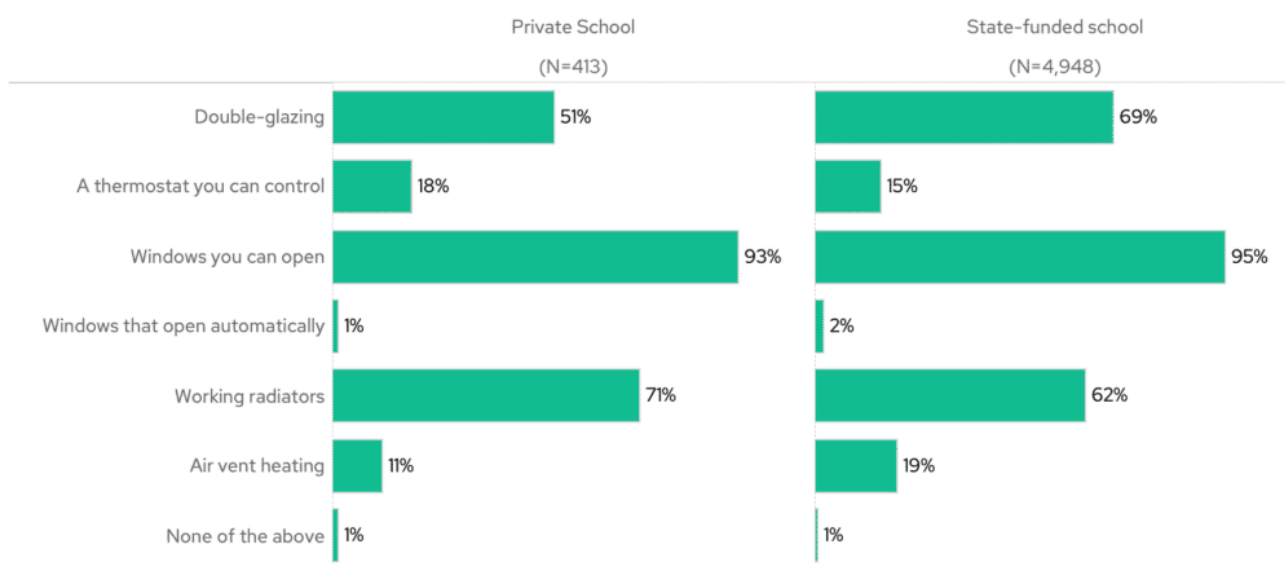
How about heating and insulation of your school buildings?

One teacher on social media exclaimed surprise that any school didn't have double-glazing. Yet, it's fairly common not to. (About 1/3rd don't).

AND, in a rare case where the private sector comes off worse, they are 28 percentage points less likely to have double-glazing than their state counterparts.

Why? Usually, single-glazing persists because the school is so old that it's impossible to change the windows without doing serious building work and/or damaging the historical nature of the building. So while the top private schools might have fancy-looking buildings, it's worth remembering that they may also be freezing!

Think of the classroom you are in most often. Does it have...



Question answered by 5,361 teachers on 08/09/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Senior leaders also told us about school boilers, as the age of these can make a huge difference to energy costs. Removing all the 'don't knows' left us with a small sample, but the picture seems to be that around two-thirds of schools have boilers installed in the past twenty years, but a glut of around 15% still have pre-1970s boilers!

All of this adds up to a varied picture for schools as we head towards an energy-expensive winter. On the upside, after a few years of open windows, we hope you already have your thermals ready!

4. Lesson Plans: Is it 2004?

Seeing a Teacher Tapp question this week about submitting lesson plans in advance, one teacher quipped: "What is this, 2004?"

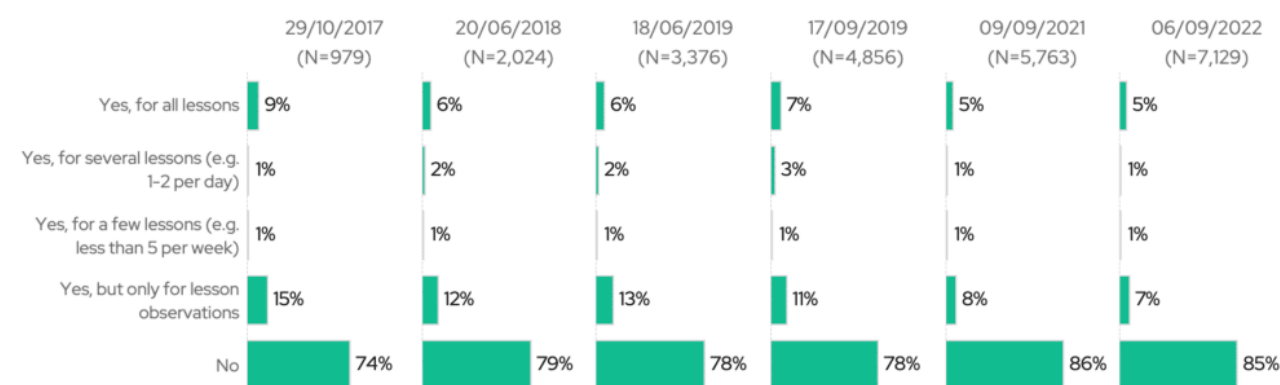
It was a fair point. The trend for teachers handing in lesson plans has reduced over the years. However, we wanted to tell you by how much this had reduced. And now we can!

Five years ago, when Teacher Tapp records began, 9% of teachers were required to submit lesson plans in advance. Almost 1 in 10! Back then 15% also had to hand them in for lesson observations.

These days, both numbers have halved. Only 5% of teachers (1 in 20) must hand in lesson plans and 7% do so for lesson observations. All of which would suggest that the tradition is indeed old hat, but not yet completely gone!

Does your school still require it? Let us know if so (and why!) via hello@teachertapp.co.uk

Does anyone (e.g. SLT or heads of department) require you to submit lesson plans in advance?



Teacher responses vary from 979 to 7,129, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Coming up on Teacher Tapp this week: We are planning on looking at salary expectations, the teaching load of senior leaders, primary school classrooms and whether teachers now struggle more with parental abuse than they did pre-pandemic. Keep eyes peeled!

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: [A view on Liz Truss' education priorities](#)

Here are the universal reads for your reference:

- [Resolutions for the new academic year](#)
- [A Love Letter to Teaching](#)
- [How to talk to children about the Queen's death](#)
- [Giving clear instructions in lessons](#)
- [Why a CPD curriculum is important](#)