

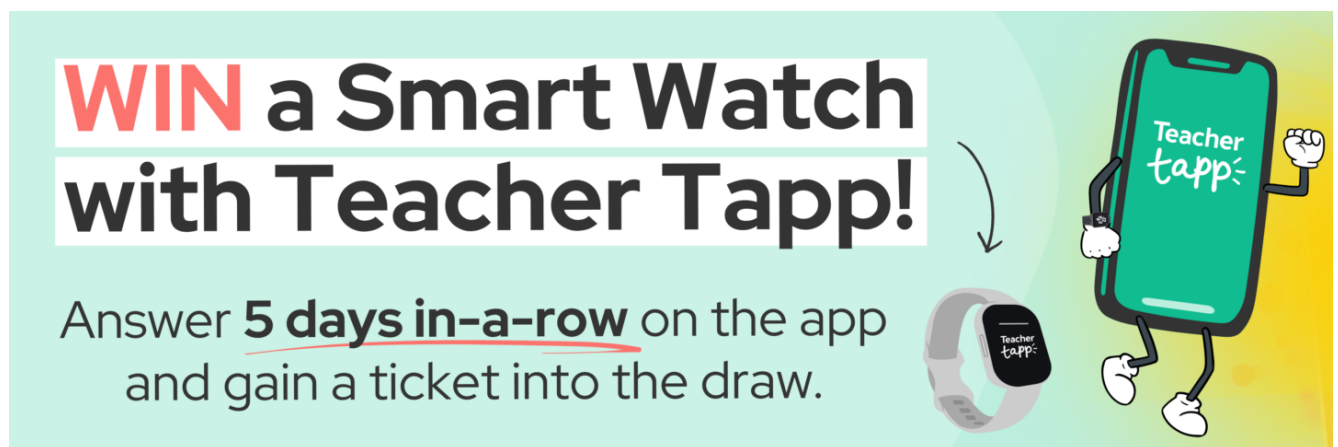
# Graded observations, modular exams and teacher improvements

Hey Tappsters!

Less than two weeks left of our latest Teacher Tapp giveaway where one lucky Teacher Tapper will choose between either an Apple Watch Series 10 OR a Garmin Venu 3 📱.

Taking part is easy! All you need to do is tap! Read more about the details of the comp and see the full terms and conditions [here](#).

We'll share the winning ticket codes on our socials, and email the winners too.



But what has Teacher Tapp learned this week? Here are the findings...

## Graded observations

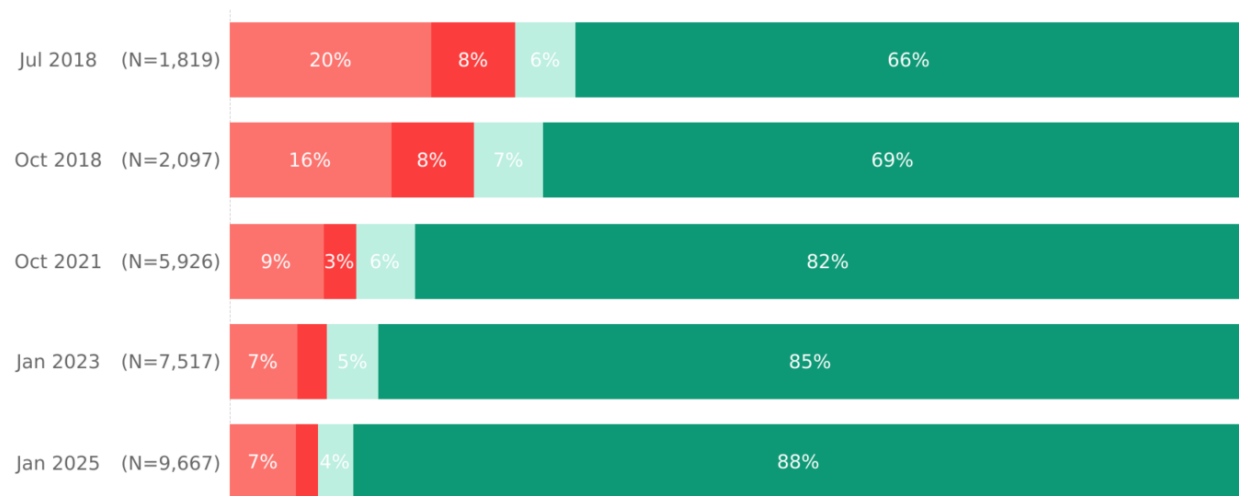
Once upon a time, grading lesson observations was considered standard practice – but is that still true today?

There has been a huge drop since 2018, when 28% of schools graded observations, to today when 9% grade observations.

Although the practice is dying out, 9% of teachers say it is still a feature of their school. However, among these teachers, the vast majority don't like the practice, and would rather it

didn't happen.

### Does your school grade lesson observations?



Teacher responses vary from 1,819 to 9,667, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Yes, but I don't like the practice      No, but I'd prefer they did  
Yes, and I'm happy with this practice      No, and I'm happy that they don't

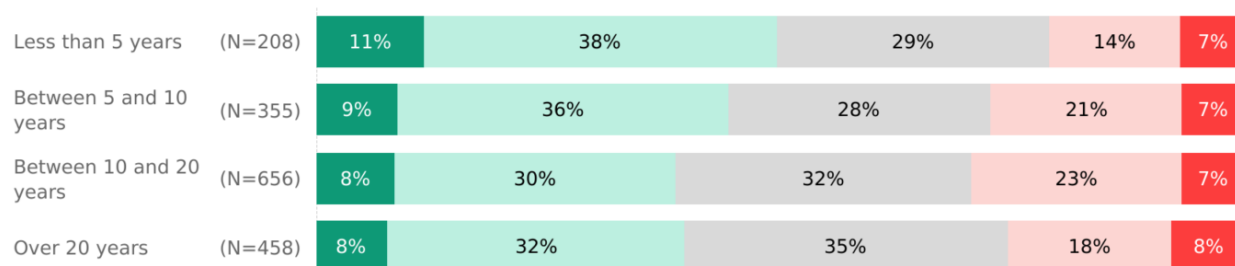
Graded or not – how do teachers feel about observations that are taking place in their schools?

How useful you feel the process is changes depending on the role you hold at school. Senior leaders and headteachers are more likely to feel that feedback they have from observations are helping them improve when compared to classroom teachers (50% vs 42%), and middle leaders are the least likely to find the process helpful (34%).

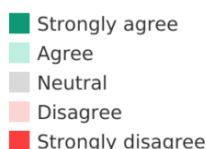
But how frequently are senior leaders observed? Checking back to last June, 61% of headteachers and 88% of senior leaders say they were observed, compared to 95% of middle and 96% of classroom teachers.

Is the strength of positivity towards observations partly because senior leaders are less likely to be subjected to them so frequently?

## My school's professional development provision is helping me to improve



Question answered by 1,677 teachers on 18/01/2025 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)



What makes observation feedback useful? How do you prefer to receive your feedback? We're going to be asking more questions about observations – please send any suggested questions into the app using the '[contact us](#)' in the app, or emailing [england@teachertapp.co.uk](mailto:england@teachertapp.co.uk).

## Who would welcome back modular exams?

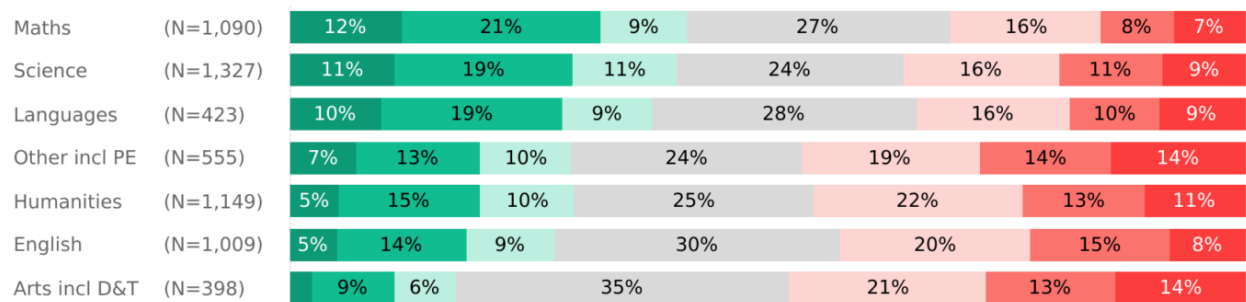
As we await the news about the curriculum review, attentions might be turning to assessment methods, and how best to judge a student's ability at the end of KS4.

Modular exams were once used in most subjects, and now feature in just a handful. But would students be better served if ALL subjects used them?

On Bluesky, some teachers were asking about this question, and made guesses that certain subjects would be more in favour than others...but is that true?

The results show that yes the arts, English, humanities and PE (plus others) are more in favour of modular maths, and sciences and MFL are more likely to be pro-linear exams. 42% of maths teachers are in favour of linear exams, compared to 17% of arts teachers.

## I believe linear exams are better than modular exams



Question answered by 5,951 teachers on 15/01/2025 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

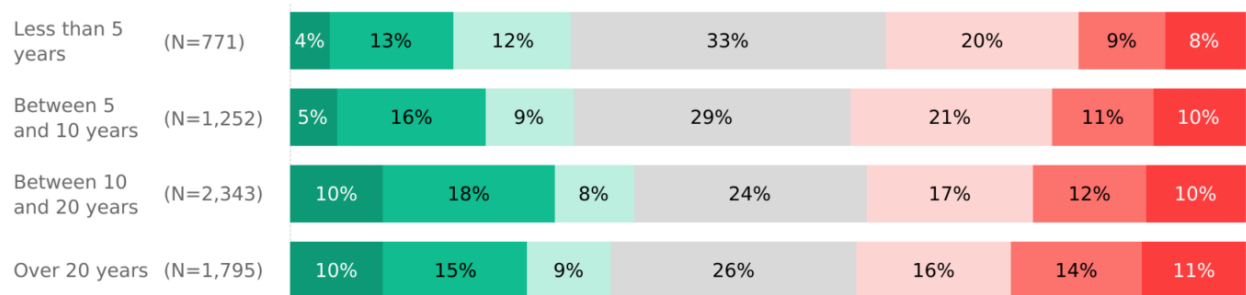


But that isn't the full story.

Another Bluesky teacher asked about years experience - and wondered whether those teachers who had taught while modular exams were used would be less in favour...

And that teacher was correct. Teachers who have been in the classroom before 2014 would have taught when coursework and controlled assessments were used. Teachers who trained after 2019 are less likely to support modular exams than those who trained before 2014 (4% vs 10% strongly agree).

## I believe linear exams are better than modular exams



Question answered by 6,161 teachers on 15/01/2025 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)



## Are you getting better?

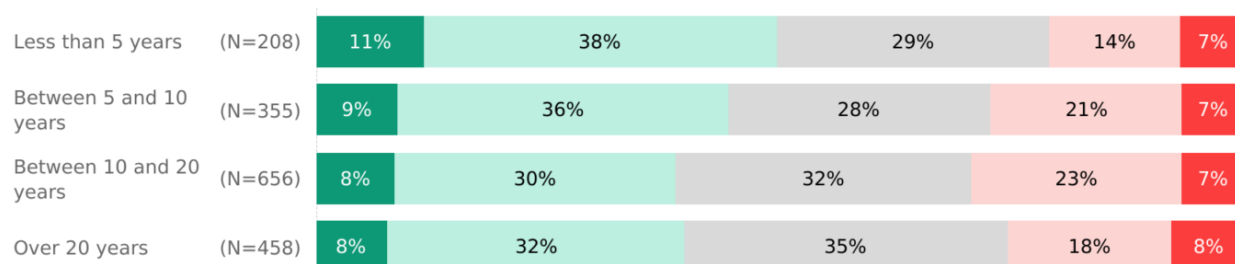
Last year, one of our most striking findings was that teachers who felt they were improving were more likely to say they were looking forward to the new school year.

This is a particularly powerful bit of information because this is something school leaders can lean into and create environments where teachers can feel they are getting better – and one way to do that is through their continuous professional development programmes (CPD).

Teachers who have been in the classroom less than five years are more likely to say their school's professional development provision is helping them improve (11% vs 8% among teachers who have been in the classroom for more than 20 years).

Partly, this will be down to the rapid growth and improvement teachers make when they first enter the classroom – arguably, it's easier to find CPD for less experienced teachers as they are starting at the beginning of their CPD journey.

### My school's professional development provision is helping me to improve



Question answered by 1,677 teachers on 18/01/2025 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

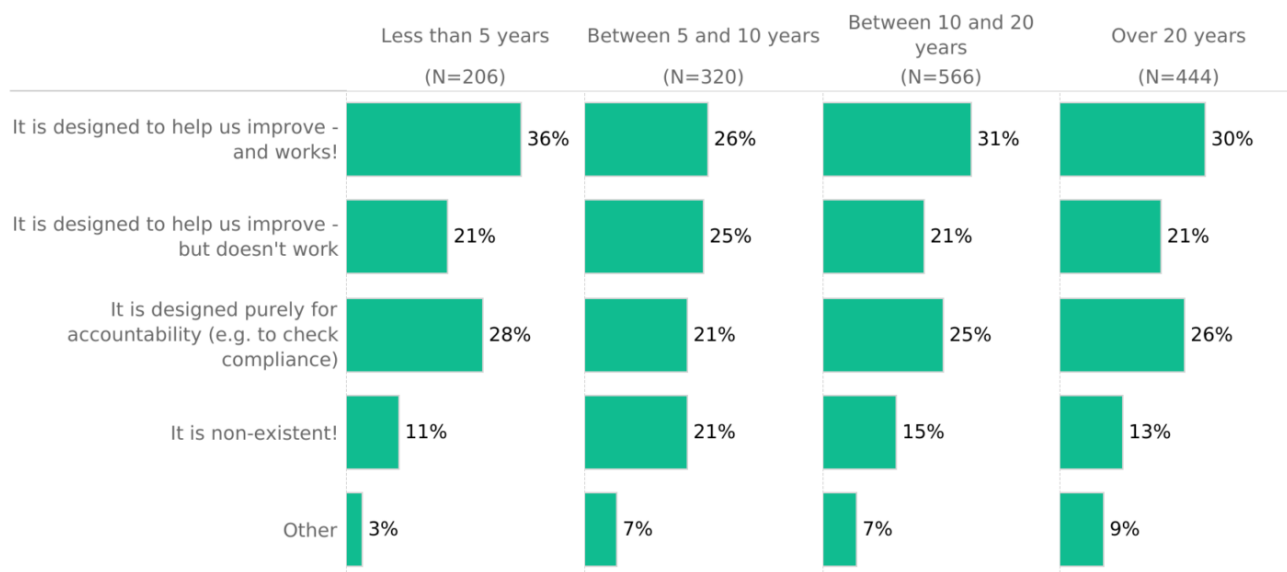


Another way that schools can help support teachers to see the improvements they have made is through the observation process.

Again, teachers who are new to the classroom are more likely to feel their observation process is designed to help them improve – AND think it works (36% vs 26% among teachers who have been teaching between 5 and 10 years).

This enthusiasm could reflect the way that providing feedback through observations for newer teachers in many ways is easier for teachers who are new to the classroom – but the challenge schools face is designing one that helps those who have been in the classroom for longer.

## Does your school have an observation process that is designed to help you improve?



Question answered by 1,536 teachers on 18/01/2025 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

What does CPD look like in different schools? If you're interested in finding out more, we have the Teacher Tapp 'State of the Nation' report on CPD, which you can read [here](#).

## Ups and Downs

### On the rise ■■

Pointless emails – There has been a little bump UP in the number of teachers reporting that "most" of their emails are irrelevant. 25% UP from 22% in 2022.

### Heading down ■■

Mixed class popularity – There has been a drop in the number of KS2 teachers who would accept a job teaching a mixed-year group class (15% DOWN from 23% in 2020).

## Daily Reads

This week our most-read blog was all about [left-handed learners in the early years](#).

Have you seen a great blog you think would make a great daily read? Let us know by emailing [england@teachertapp.co.uk](mailto:england@teachertapp.co.uk) and we will check it out!