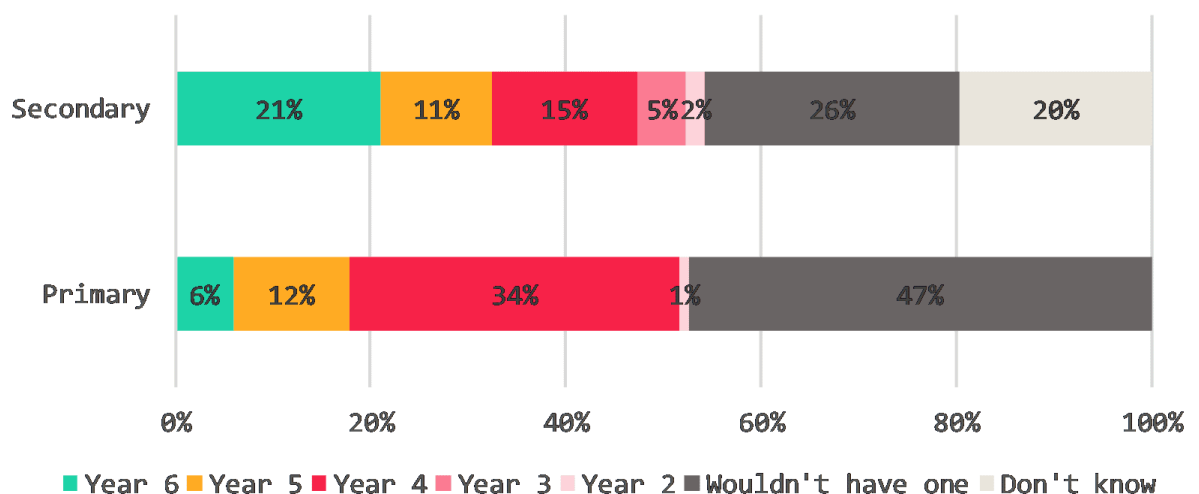


The Multiplication Check: When Should It Take Place?

Last week the education secretary announced a series of policy changes, including one on the online multiplication check. One of Teacher Tapp's purposes is to get quick feedback on government decisions. So we decided to put one to the test. Since 2015 the government has planned to make Year 6 pupils take an online "multiplication check" to test their times-table knowledge. But last week that switched to Year 4. No reason was given but, in the past, primary teachers have pointed out multiplication is taught in Year 4 so it might be better to do then. We asked our Teacher Tapp panel which year they thought was best. Here's what we found:

When you would have the multiplication check?



First, the bad news. Around half of primary teachers don't want a multiplication check at all. (And around half of secondary teachers either don't want or don't know enough about it). Then, the interesting news. Primary teachers are overwhelmingly in favour of Year 4 checks. Secondary teachers are more divided, but their biggest preference is for Year 6 checks. So What? It seems the government are moving in the direction of primary teachers' preferences. This is a shift. In the past, policies tended to go with the opinions of secondary teachers. But it also shows that around half of the people involved in these checks are against them. If the government wants the times-tables checks to have meaning, and not been seen as another imposition, they need to work on explaining the purpose to sceptical primary teachers. *

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