

Election pledges, performance-related pay and three other remarkable findings from this week

As usual, we learned a lot about you this week. One of the main things we learned - you don't like long questions!

Over the course of the week, we asked for your views on educational pledges from the manifestos of the main political parties. We are sorry the text was so long - we wanted to remain true to the wordings used by the parties themselves, but they weren't exactly snappy, were they? (One or two of you might be old enough to remember when manifesto pledges were short enough to fit onto a pledge card or be carved into stone!!!)

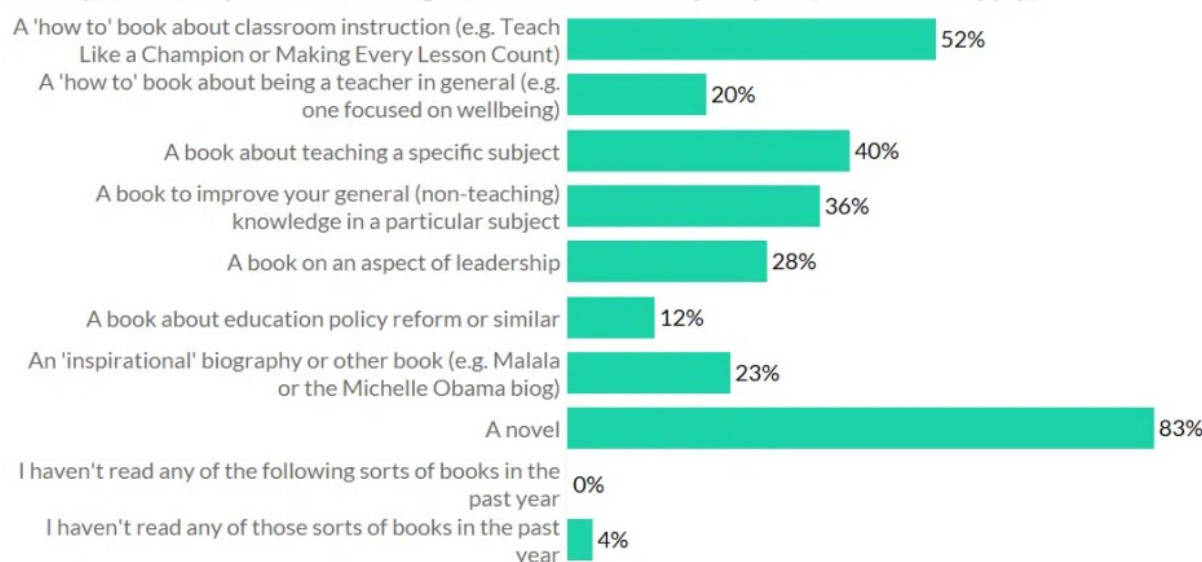
These lengthier items seemed to have put some of you off, with lower response rates than usual. We thought this might be reticence about discussing politics. But as you've never been shy before, we're going to attribute this dropoff to the duration and difficulty of the task.

We want you to know that we hear you. When 3:30pm hits, you've had a long day and aren't looking to scrutinise policy proposals. So we're reorienting our focus back to teaching practice. We'll still be asking for your thoughts on political matters as it's important your voice gets represented in the conversation. But our primary focus will continue to be the classroom.

1. What are teachers reading?

The questions about books you've read came from a teacher who attended the Hackathon. Now, reading books obviously isn't the only way to learn more and reflect on teaching, but seems to be an important one for many of you!

Have you read any of the following sorts of books in the past year (tick all that apply)?



Question answered by 5,011 teachers on 19/11/2019
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

With all the stress and duress of teaching, it was reassuring to find that 83% of you have been able to find time to escape through a novel. We were also delighted to see your passion for improving your practice. Despite spending your days doing it, a large number of you are also spending your free time reading up on teaching. 52% of you have read a 'how to' book to optimise your classroom instruction, 40% a subject-specific bit of educational literature and 28% on the craft of leadership.

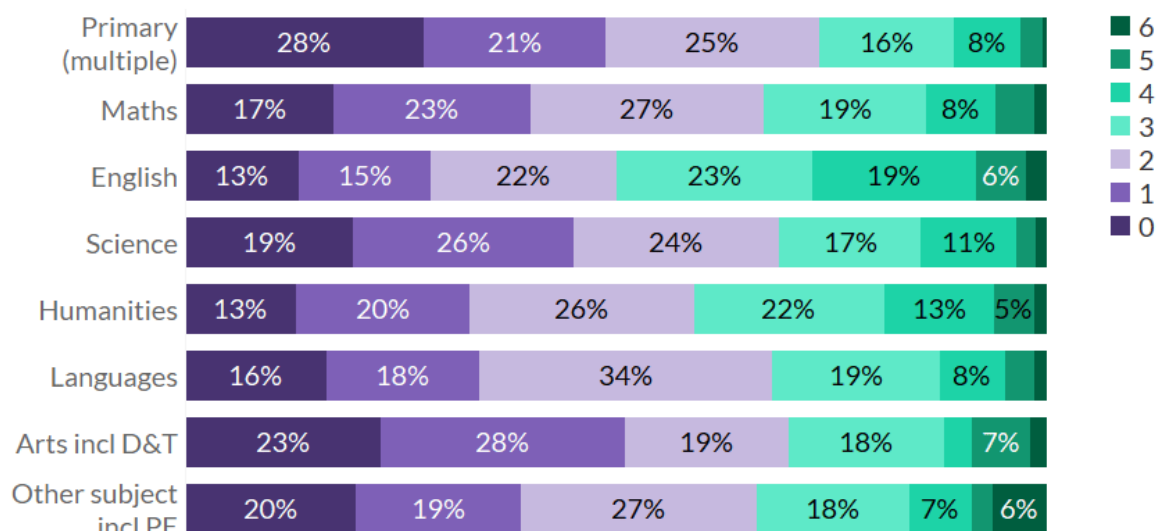
Count of types of education books read



Question answered by 4,783 teachers on 19/11/2019
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

We created a count of the TYPES of education books you are reading and its no surprise to see that Heads are reading the greatest variety. This meshes with the multiplicity of roles a headteacher has, requiring a broad knowledge base. 34% of primary teachers have read no ed-lit in the past year – are there not enough good education books explicitly aimed at primary teachers? Let us know.

Count of types of education books read



Question answered by **4,733** teachers on **19/11/2019**
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Meanwhile, in the secondary phase, English teachers are the most likely to have read three or more education books in the past year. With English teachers being natural-born bookworms, perhaps this should come as little surprise!

2. What political policies do teachers think will be impactful?

OK, onto those rather long manifesto question! These are the five policies that you feel are most likely to be impactful on pupil achievement:

- Reversing cuts to school funding and employing an extra 20,000 schoolteachers (Lib Dems)
- Increasing school funding by £14 billion and giving schools currently with less money the biggest increase (Tories)
- Giving schools a minimum of £5000 per secondary school pupil and a minimum £4000 per primary school pupil (Tories)
- Providing more free and subsidised preschool education hours per week along with 150,000 new early years staff (Labour)
- Replacing Ofsted with a new regulatory body which will structure and promote peer-to-peer school improvement (Labour)

Many of you (11%) felt the Labour manifesto did nothing to raise pupil achievement, perhaps because funding commitments were implicit rather than explicit in their pledges? (Just 2% and 3% of you felt this way about the LibDems and Tories manifestos, respectively.)

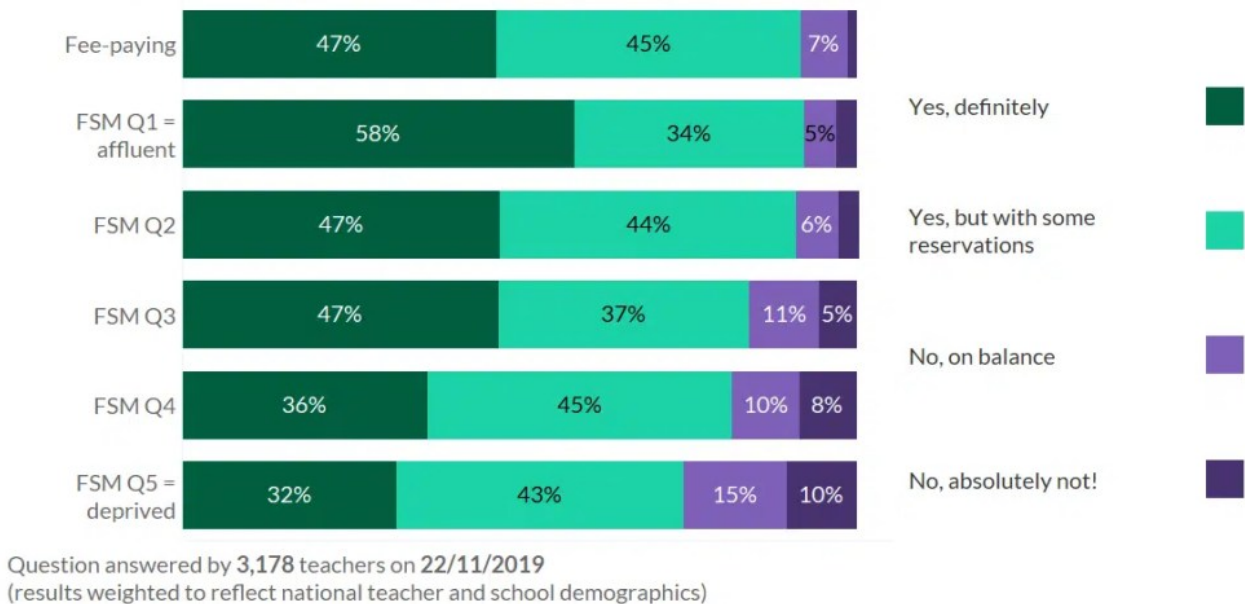
Does any of this matter and do teachers know how policies are likely to affect them in any case? One interesting example is the Tory policy to introduce minimum funding of £5000 per secondary pupil and £4000 per primary pupil. This will disproportionately benefit those in more affluent areas outside London. Yet, 30% of London teachers selected it as the policy they thought would have the biggest impact on day-to-day life in their school (compared to 32% outside London). And whilst 41% of those in the most affluent schools (likely correctly)

selected this policy, 32% of those in the highest FSM schools did too. It is highly likely their existing funding is already well over this funding floor.

3. Would you recommend your school?

We've all been there. A school looks great on paper, but step in the staffroom and you'll encounter a lot of disgruntled and unhappy employees. Aware of this disconnect between appearances and reality, we asked you whether you'd recommend your school to a prospective employee.

A teacher is looking for a new job. Would you recommend your school?



45% of you were firm in your strong endorsement of your current school, while 41% of you hedged your bets and would recommend with some reservations. Teachers in state schools situated in affluent communities were the most likely to strongly recommend their school – even more so than their counterparts in fee-paying schools!

A teacher is looking for a new job. Would you recommend your school?



Question answered by 3,051 teachers on 22/11/2019
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

25% of teachers in deprived communities were unwilling to endorse their workplace and 24% of teachers in RI/Inadequate schools are similarly disinclined to. This is instructive about the difficulties faced by teachers working in places undergoing school improvement initiatives, as well as the battery of challenges faced by schools in areas of deprivation.

As part of further assessing the working conditions of different schools, it's notable that overhearing a complaint about SLT is the norm across the spectrum. But, it's more likely to happen in schools rates RI/Inadequate. This provides further suggestions of the atrophying effect of school improvement initiatives on relationships between classroom staff and SLT.

Did you hear a colleague complain about the senior leadership team at your school today, either as a serious or as a throwaway comment?

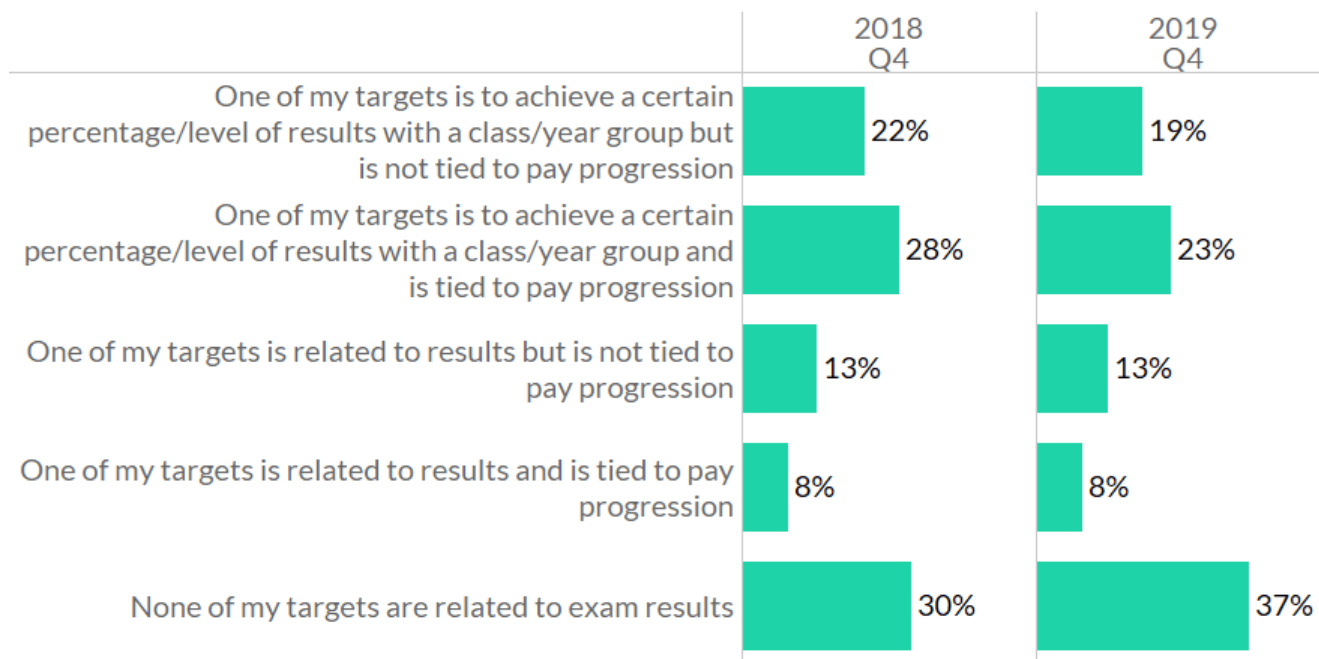


Question answered by 2,876 teachers on 20/11/2019
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

4. Is Performance-related Pay becoming less popular?

Performance-related pay has always been a source of heated debate in education. Polled last year, 28% of you had your pay tied to meeting targets for exam results. However, when we asked you this week, that number has decreased by 5 percentage points.

Does one of your performance related pay management targets refer to a specific percentage of exam/SATs results?



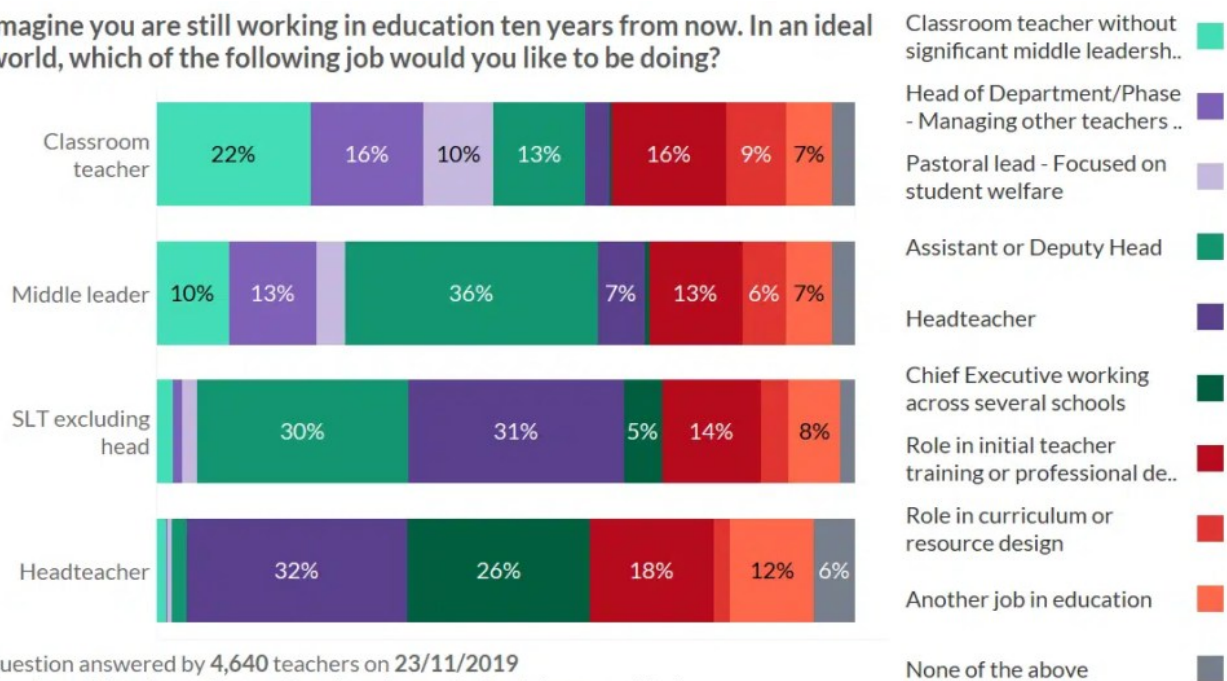
Question answered by **839** teachers on **All**
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

With other responses suggesting it's uptake has remained static, it looks like performance-related pay may have had its day!

5. Where do you want to be in ten years?

Asking where you want to be in ten years is a familiar way of framing aspirations. When we asked you, there was a common theme of progression.

Imagine you are still working in education ten years from now. In an ideal world, which of the following job would you like to be doing?



It's nice to see that 22% of classroom teachers would like to be still in the classroom, but 39% would like to have moved into middle or senior leadership. Middle leaders had their eyes trained on leadership, with 36% hoping to have joined SLT, while 26% of heads were hoping to be CEOs operating across multiple schools. The common theme of advancing in authority suggests that you're an ambitious bunch, with desires for fresh challenges and greater opportunities for influence.

Finally here are the tips you might have missed last week...

- [What can mainstream teachers learn from SEN teachers?](#)
- [Do teachers in Outstanding schools do anything differently?](#)
- [Improving hands-on learning](#)
- [Using mini-whiteboards](#)
- [Planning topics](#)
- [Is nudging an ethical way of steering student behaviour](#)