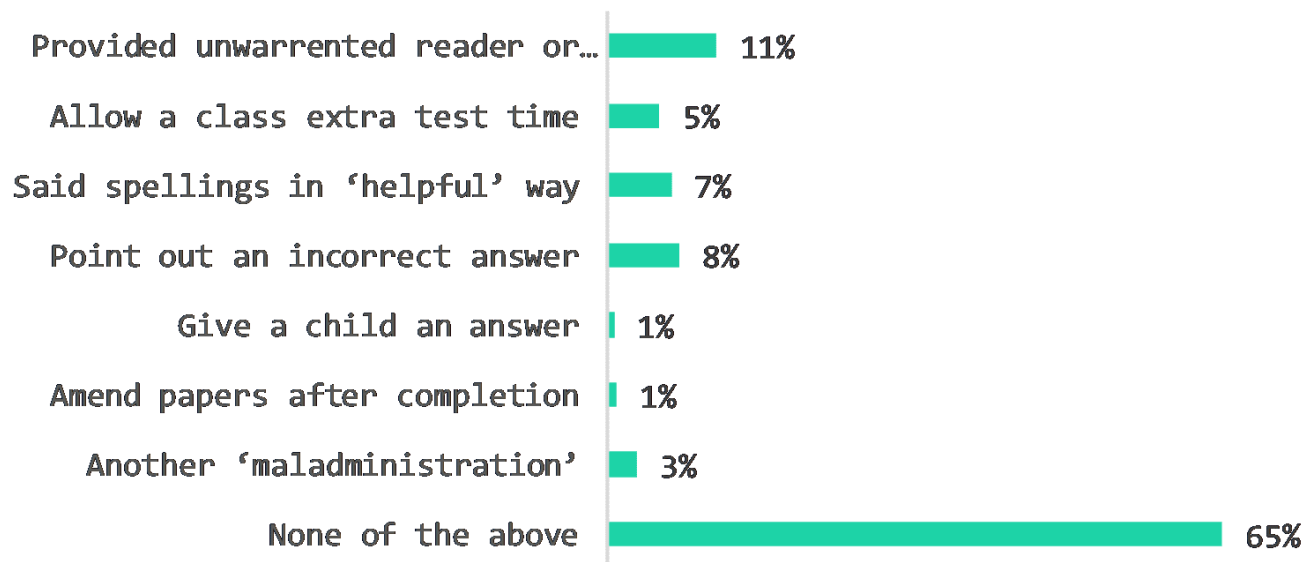


A Startling Story on SATs Cheating

Teachers who talk publicly about cheating in public exams are sometimes treated as if they've broken an omerta. [If you've not seen the Godfather: an omerta is the mafia's secret code] One of the great things about Teacher Tapp is that people answer anonymously. And users seem comfortable telling us things normally considered private. For example, 95% of panellists told us who they voted for in the last general election. Last week, while panellists were split into primary and secondary groupings, we asked some questions about cheating in SATs. The results were alarming, if not surprising.

1 in 3 primary teachers had been asked to undertake a form of cheating during the SATs exams.

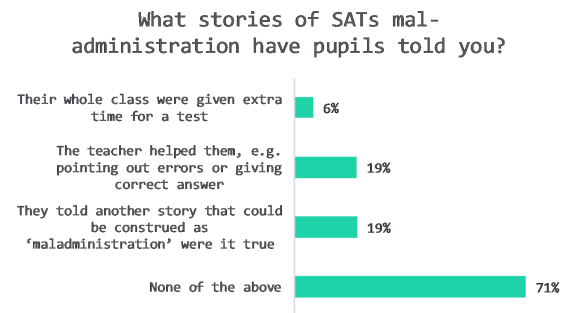
Which have you been asked to do whilst administering SATs?



Phrasing the question in this way ('have you been asked') is a safe way of doing things. It doesn't implicate the respondent in cheating because maybe they didn't carry out the instruction. But it shows the extent to which teachers are leaned out to push testing boundaries. Unwarranted use of readers or scribes was the most common form of cheating pressure (11%). However, 7% also said they were asked to say spellings in a "helpful" way and 8% were told to point out incorrect answers, which is a pretty blatant form of cheating.

We also asked secondary teachers if their pupils had told them any stories about their primary SATs exams.

Again, around a third said they'd heard about classes given extra time or teachers pointing out errors. Error pointing was particularly pervasive (19%).

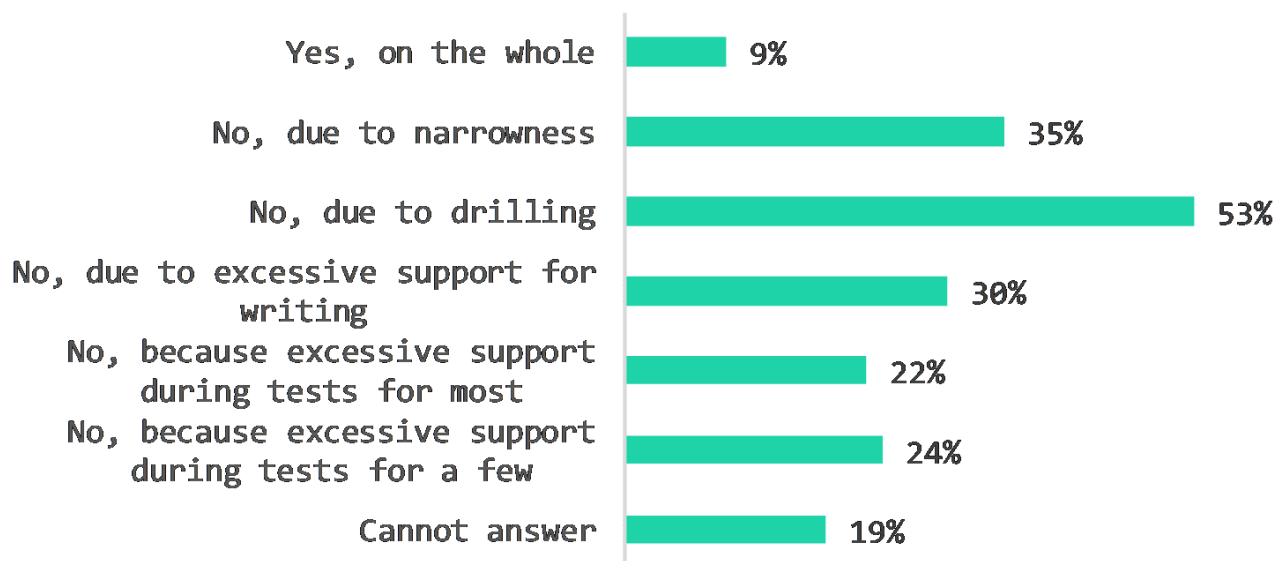


Now, here comes the caveat: THIS DOES NOT MEAN A THIRD OF SATs EXAMS INVOLVE CHEATING.

In both cases the real numbers are likely to be less. Primary teachers may not carry out their boss's orders. Children exaggerate when telling stories. However, it shows there is a lot of pressure and perception around cheating at the least.

Has this undermined faith in the exams system? Very possibly. Because when we asked if secondary teachers felt KS2 scores accurately reflected their children's academic standards only 9% agreed. 9%!

Are KS2 scores accurate reflection of student academic standards?



The lack of faith is partly due to over-preparation, which secondary teachers have complained about for ages. But quite a lot of the score is due to the belief in "excessive support" given during the tests.

When you consider that last week [64% of secondary teachers said their school creates ability sets by using KS2 data](#), there is a strange disconnect going on here.

If nothing else, these findings should encourage secondary leaders to rethink the use of SATs data for setting (or at least triangulate it). ** Enjoyed this post and want to join our Teacher Tapp panel? Sign up via the [iPhone App Store](#) or the [Android App Store](#). You can also check out more at www.teachertapp.com **

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