

Would You Move Schools for a Pay Rise?

Do you remember a Teacher Tapp question last December that asked you to name a local school – and then told you how much more you might be paid if you applied to work there?

It probably felt a bit unusual at the time. That's because it was the first time we'd ever asked you to name a real local school. We wanted to make the scenario feel genuine so that we could find out what really makes a job at another school feel appealing (or not!).

This wasn't just curiosity. It was part of a [major research study, published today](#), exploring an important policy question:

Would teachers need higher salaries to consider working in schools that serve more disadvantaged communities?

At the moment, teacher pay is broadly standardised across the country. That means schools with more disadvantaged pupils can't easily offer higher salaries to attract or retain staff. Yet these are often the schools that struggle most with teacher turnover, staffing shortages, and out-of-specialism teaching.

How your answers helped

We could have simply asked, "Would you need more pay to teach in a school with higher free school meal (FSM) rates?" But people might hesitate to answer that honestly when asked directly. So instead, by comparing the FSM percentage of your current school with the one you named, we could see whether the salary uplift you said you'd need was linked to the difference in disadvantage between the two schools.

This clever design – which only worked because so many of you joined in – allowed us to estimate what salary changes teachers might require to consider moving schools.

What we found

- On average, teachers said they'd need a £6,250 pay rise to apply for a job at another local school with a similar intake. This shows how 'sticky' the labour market is, with understandable reluctance to move schools.
- If that school had a higher proportion of pupils eligible for FSM, teachers required about £115 more per FSM percentage point. This is equivalent to an additional

£4,485 to move from a low- to high-FSM school.

- The difference was even larger in secondary schools, where the uplift per FSM point was around £151 (compared with £44 in primary).

In other words, teachers' preferences reflect the real challenges faced by more disadvantaged schools. Your responses show just how difficult it is to make these schools equally attractive places to work under the current national pay system.

Why this matters

These findings have important implications for policymakers. They suggest that schools serving disadvantaged communities may need to offer either higher salaries or equivalently valued job features – such as smaller classes or extra planning time – to attract a similar applicant pool.

Because thousands of you answered those December questions, we've been able to provide the clearest evidence yet of the salary uplift that might be needed to level the playing field. This is the kind of research that genuinely changes how teacher workforce policy is designed, and it's only possible because you take part.

So thank you again for your thoughtful answers. The data you provide isn't abstract. It tells the real story of what teachers value, what motivates you, and what would make schools fairer places to work.

Read the entire research report on the Education Endowment Foundation website [here](#).