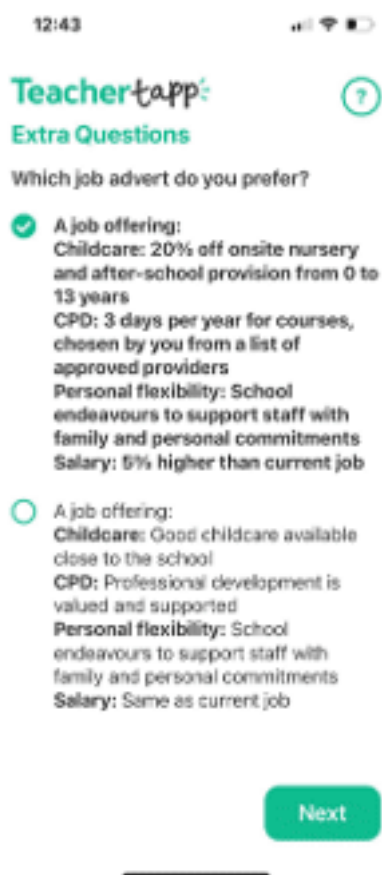


What Really Makes a Teaching Job Worth Applying For?

You might remember a Teacher Tapp question that began: “Imagine you’ve moved house and need to find a new school...”

Then you were shown two job adverts side-by-side – each with a different mix of salary, class size, workload, and flexibility – and asked which one you’d prefer.

A screenshot of a mobile app interface for Teacher Tapp. At the top, the status bar shows the time 12:43 and signal strength. The app header includes the 'TeacherTapp' logo and a green circle with a white question mark. Below the header, the text 'Extra Questions' is displayed. The main question is 'Which job advert do you prefer?'. There are two radio button options. The first option is selected, indicated by a green checkmark in the radio button. The second option is unselected, indicated by an empty radio button. A green 'Next' button is at the bottom right of the question area.

12:43

TeacherTapp

Extra Questions

Which job advert do you prefer?

☒ A job offering:
Childcare: 20% off onsite nursery and after-school provision from 0 to 13 years
CPD: 3 days per year for courses, chosen by you from a list of approved providers
Personal flexibility: School endeavours to support staff with family and personal commitments
Salary: 5% higher than current job

☐ A job offering:
Childcare: Good childcare available close to the school
CPD: Professional development is valued and supported
Personal flexibility: School endeavours to support staff with family and personal commitments
Salary: Same as current job

Next

It probably wasn't the easiest set of questions we've ever asked! But by asking you to make choices between real-feeling job adverts rather than answer in theory, we could see what really matters when teachers weigh up a new job. This type of survey is called a discrete choice experiment, and thanks to your thousands of responses, it became the largest study of its kind ever carried out with teachers.

The research questions were part of a major research study, [published this week](#).

What your answers revealed

When we analysed all those choices, a clear pattern emerged: teachers care most about concrete, practical improvements to their working lives.

- Offering 30 % protected PPA time,
- Smaller class sizes capped at 22 pupils, and
- Free ancillary healthcare (including time off for appointments)

were each as appealing as a 10 % pay rise. Teachers also liked job adverts promising a 35-hour working week with structured support and a clear commitment to flexible working, though these were valued slightly less than the big three.

Generic statements such as “we value staff well-being” or “we have great leadership” had only modest effects. Your answers show that specific, tangible offers count far more than vague promises.

Headteachers' views

We also asked headteachers to complete the same kind of task. They strongly supported government policies that would fund smaller class sizes and increased PPA time, though many noted the real-world difficulties of finding staff and money to make these changes work.

They were enthusiastic about improving working conditions in principle but emphasised the financial and organisational constraints schools face. Their comments underlined that good intentions need practical backing – from adequate funding to stable staffing – if reforms are to stick.

Cost-benefit insights

Once we had measured how much teachers valued each job feature, we were able to put prices on them. Many desirable changes – like extra PPA or smaller classes – are so costly that schools would get similar recruitment benefits by simply raising salaries.

But some offers stood out as both effective and good value:

- Free or subsidised healthcare,
- Commitments to flexible working, and
- On-site childcare support.

Even relatively low-cost gestures – such as clearer statements about managing workload or supporting collaboration – help make adverts more appealing when combined with other measures. The message is simple: small, specific promises can go a long way.

Why this matters

Together, these findings show that schools and policymakers have real levers for change. Teachers respond most strongly to visible, credible improvements in workload, flexibility, and well-being – and those changes do not always have to be expensive.

Your participation made it possible to measure the true value of different aspects of teaching jobs – evidence that will inform how schools and government can design roles that attract and retain great teachers.

So once again, thank you for taking part in those long, tricky questions. They have already helped shape new thinking about how to make teaching jobs fairer, more appealing, and more sustainable.

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