

Personal Lives, Teacher Couples, Impartiality and Who Has The Best Subject Departments?

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Yet again, this past week, we've seen the world get more fractious and challenging.

As with the start of the pandemic, you may be facing questions from children who are seeing things on television or have families caught up in the Ukraine conflict, and are struck by how hard it is to give answers when things are so uncertain. [This article](#) explains how one child asked: "Sir, can we talk about it, but not talk about it too much?"

Over here at Teacher Tapp, we haven't asked any questions about it yet. In part because it's hard to know if it will be useful. We will keep thinking. If you have thoughts, let us know.

Here's what we did ask last week...

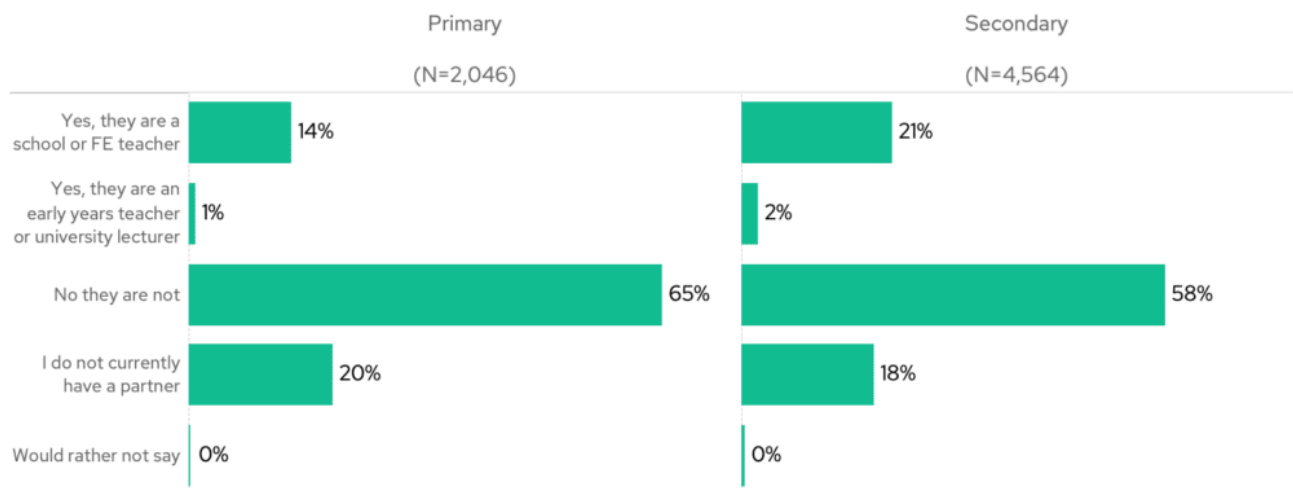
[1. How many teachers are in couples together?](#)

It's a common story that teachers often get together - but how common actually is it?

All in, around one in five of you has a teacher partner. Teaching pairs are slightly more common among secondary teachers, where 23% say they have a teacher partner, compared with 15% of primary teachers.

(Perhaps this is because primary schools are smaller and so have fewer teachers, which means there's less opportunity to meet someone suitable while at work?)

'Teaching couples' are common? Is your partner, if you have one, a teacher?



Question answered by 6,610 teachers on 23/02/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

2. Staying impartial

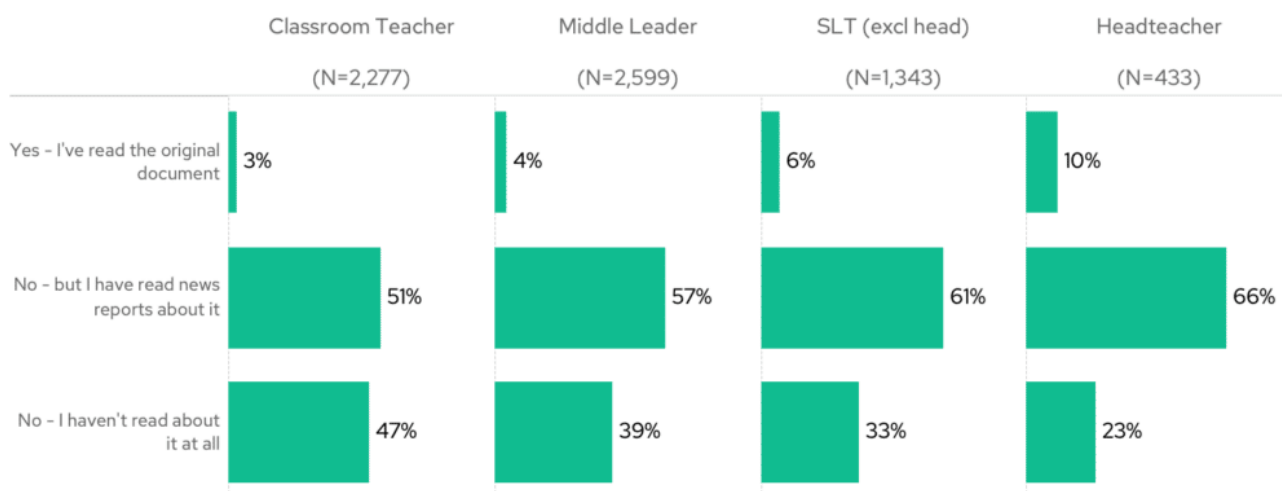
In the context of the last week the timing seems ironic. But, a few weeks ago, the Department for Education released a new set of [political impartiality guidance](#). At the time, the document made a splash - with the education secretary securing media interviews and newspaper front pages.

However, the guidance hasn't quite taken off with you, yet. Just 4% of you have read the actual document. Even just looking at headteachers alone, this figure is only 10%.

What you did see is the news reporting - with over half of you saying you'd read reports about it.

In many ways that's unsurprising. The document is quite long and there's no real change to the laws for teachers, so why bother to read? One reason is that the news reports often made mistakes and suggested that teachers shouldn't be teaching about racism or famous figures' links to the slave trade. In reality, the guidance is a lot more nuanced than the news reports suggested and, especially for those in subjects where controversial matters do come up, it may be worth a quick glance just so you know what the guidance really says.

Have you read the new political impartiality guidance for teachers?



Question answered by 6,652 teachers on 20/02/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

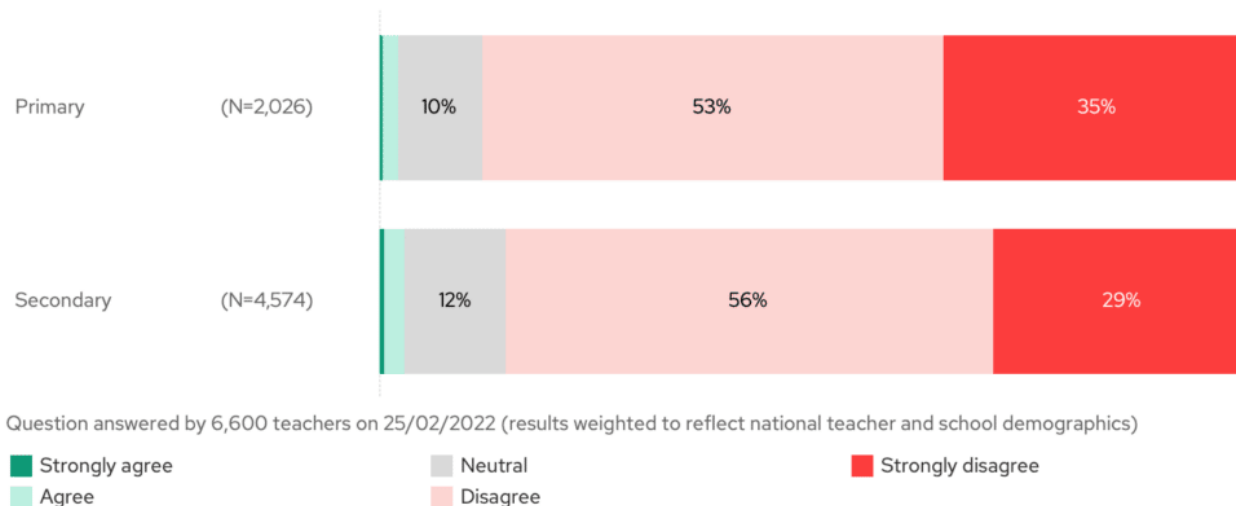
3. This time it's personal

When you spend so much time with pupils, it can seem hard to completely cut your life outside the classroom from all conversation. For a start, they notice things: wedding rings, new bags ("was it your birthday?"), and they sometimes see you in other places with family or friends.

Most teachers recognise that these conversations come up and are generally open about talking about life outside of school, with just 2% of you saying that a teacher never had any reason to do so.

This was true among teachers of all demographics; primary and secondary, all seniorities and ages - nearly 9-in-10 of you think that teachers can talk about their life outside of school with pupils.

'Teachers never have a reason to talk about their life outside of schools with pupils'

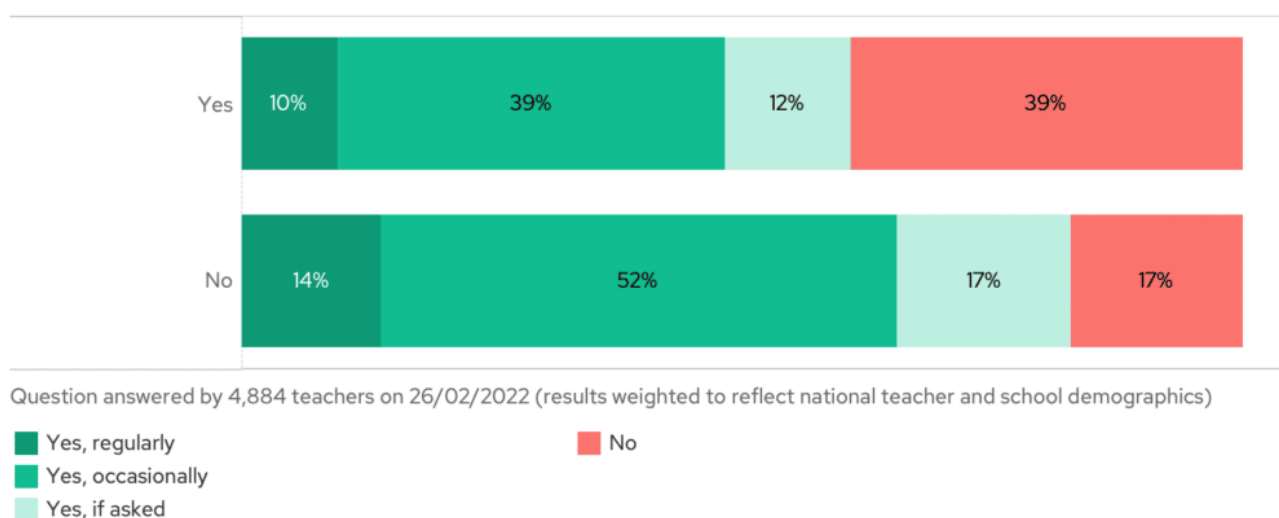


However, we've sometimes heard it said that not all teachers feel equally comfortable sharing information about their lives. For example, teachers in lesbian or gay relationships were historically less able to discuss their partners, especially in religious schools.

We found that teachers who identify as LGBT+ said were still less likely to say they mention their partner to their pupils. 39% of LGBT+ teachers say that would not mention their partner to their class, compared to 17% of teachers who do not identify as LGBT+. (We've removed teachers from both groups who said they didn't have a partner).

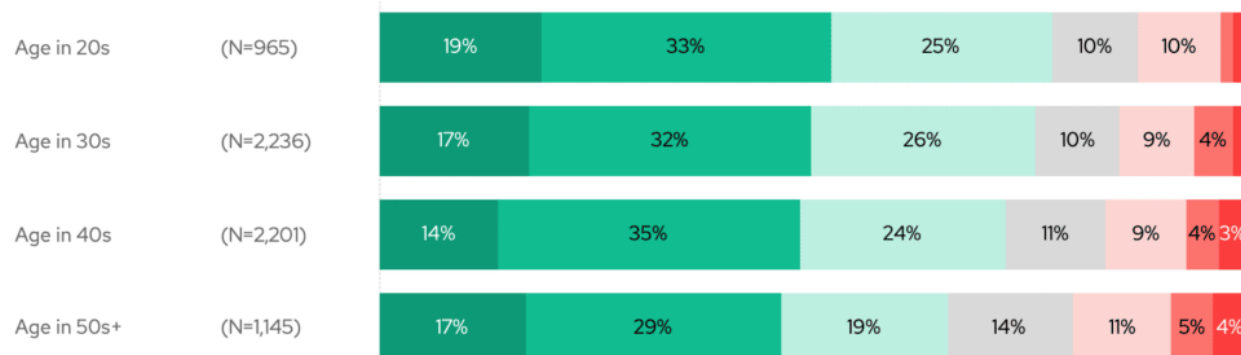
However, a majority of teachers in both groups said they have mentioned their partner to their class - which again shows the extent to which teachers do feel able to share things their lives with students, at least when asked.

Do you identify as LGBT+? (down) versus Do you ever mention your partner to your class? (across)

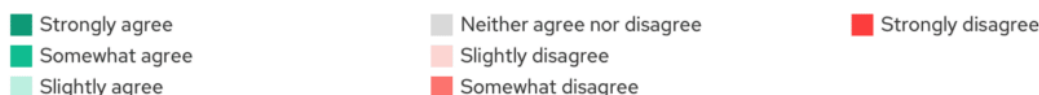


One other trend we noted is that younger teachers were slightly more confident than older teachers when it came to talking about LGBT+ matters in school, with over three-quarters of teachers in their 20s agreeing that they were confident, compared to 65% of teachers aged 50+.

I feel confident supporting colleagues and talking about LGBT+ matters in school.



Question answered by 6,547 teachers on 26/02/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)



It's a shame that we don't have historical data on which to compare these trends. Our sense is that things have changed over the past decade. If anyone knows of any other sources of data which might be useful for comparisons, please do let us know.

4. How do subject departments differ

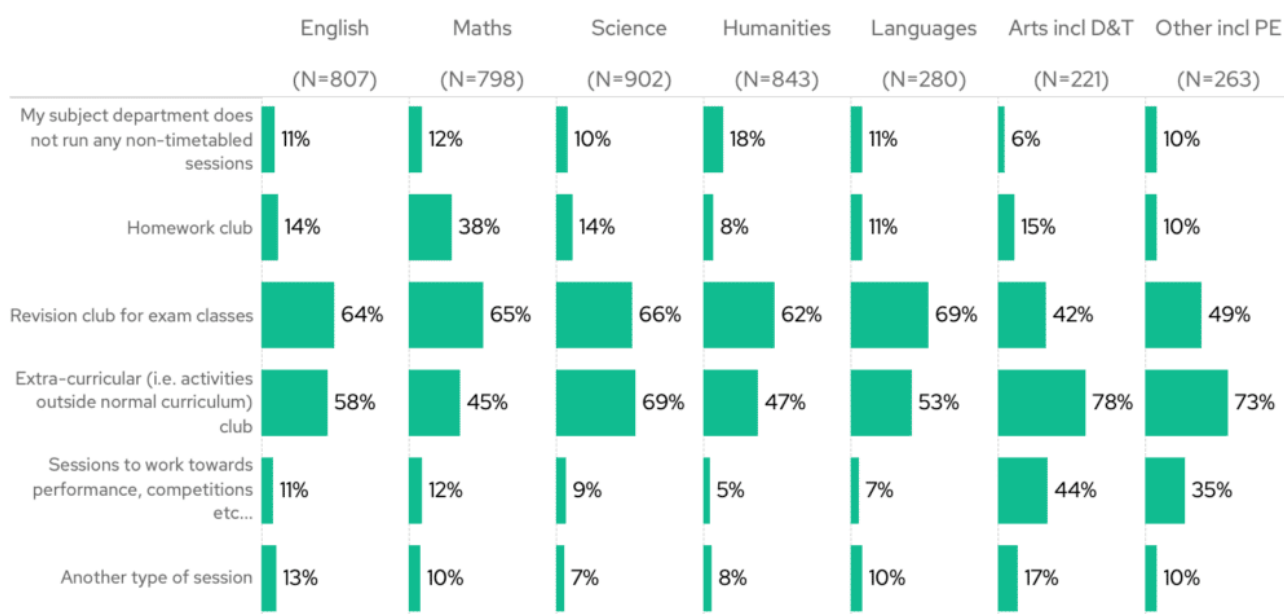
How different is the life of a maths teacher versus an art teacher? This is something we come back to again and again at Teacher Tapp and this week we've been looking at a whole range of subject differences.

For example, homework clubs are much more popular among maths departments than any other department.

However, extra-curricular activities are less popular among maths teachers, with just 45% of maths teachers saying they run such activities, compared to 69% of Science teachers and 78% of Arts teachers.

Does this give the message that the only thing you can do with maths outside of schools is... more maths?! (Eek!)

Does your subject department currently run any of the following types of lunchtime/after-school clubs?

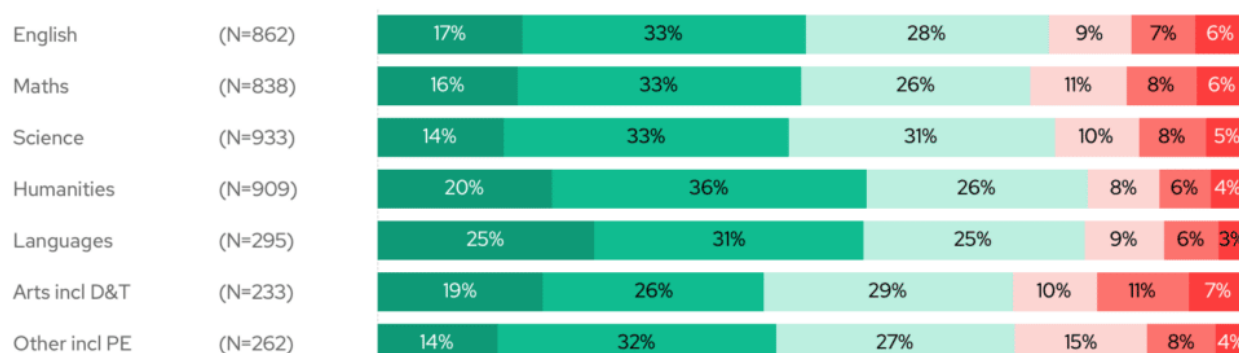


Question answered by 4,219 teachers on 22/02/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

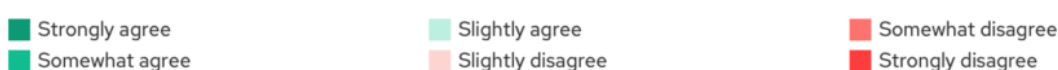
When it comes to professional development sessions, teachers are positive about their department's environment to learn.

In particular, Humanities and Languages teachers are the most positive about their departments. (Arts and other were least satisfied, but as this can include an assortment of subjects it's hard to know what's driving it).

Our subject department (or faculty) provides an environment where everyone is able to get better at teaching through professional development, observations and other collaborations



Question answered by 4,385 teachers on 23/02/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)



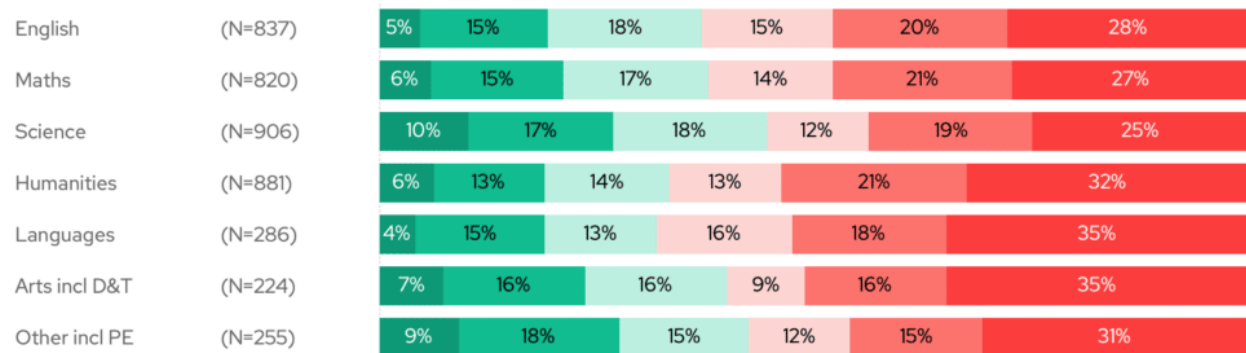
When it comes to timetabling, science teachers are the ones who are most likely to say that a

lack of suitably qualified and experienced staff means teachers don't always get their desired class allocations.

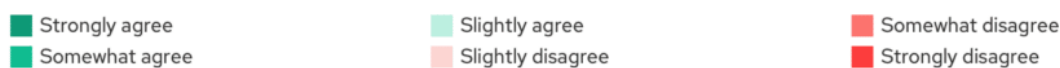
And languages teachers are the best off, though, with just 32% of teachers reporting that.

Perhaps this is because science teachers are slightly easier to interchange. A physics specialist may end up teaching biology, whereas it might be more difficult for a German teacher to be suddenly asked to teach Mandarin!

In my subject department (or faculty), a lack of suitably qualified and experienced staff means we cannot always give teachers the class allocations they would ideally want



Question answered by 4,254 teachers on 23/02/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)



Finally... we know you love the daily read, so here are the ones from last week

The most read tip from the past week was: [Do we learn best from people we don't like?](#)

And here are the rest for your reference:

- [Should homework be set a term in advance?](#)
- [Never forget the vocational routes a student could take!](#)
- [Can we really measure pupil progress?](#)
- [Why can it be a struggle to change things for the better in schools?](#)
- [How to make the transition from Year 6 to 7 work better!](#)