

Teachers Omnibus 2007 for
the Sutton Trust

December 2007

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Introduction

This document contains the summary report, computer tabulations and topline results (in the form of a 'marked-up' questionnaire) from the 2007 Teachers Omnibus, carried out by Ipsos MORI. This year's survey was the sixth wave of a multi-client survey which is conducted annually. Questions were placed on the study on behalf of the Sutton Trust.

Background and Objectives

Questions asked on behalf of the Sutton Trust covered the issues of:

- Higher Education, specifically school-university links, and teachers' perceptions of Oxbridge as an option for their pupils;
- the use of Academies to raise standards of education in deprived areas (a tracking question); and
- the identification of 'Gifted and Talented' pupils.

Methodology

The sample comprised 4,088 maintained primary and secondary schools in England and Wales, with probability of selection proportionate to size. Size of school was determined by the number of pupils on roll and was used as a proxy for the number of teachers per institution. This sampling approach was used to ensure that all teachers had an equal chance of participating in the survey. The sampling universe included county, voluntary aided/controlled and foundation schools, but excluded nursery schools, special schools and PRUs, FE and sixth form colleges.

A letter was sent to headteachers informing them of the research. Interviewers then contacted schools by telephone and attempted to secure an interview with one or more members of staff in each school (depending on the number of times the school was selected). Quotas were set on Government Office Region (GOR), phase (primary or secondary), sex and age to reflect the proportion of teachers in England and Wales known to be in each category. In addition, minimum quotas were set on subject specialism (for secondary teachers), teaching experience and most senior level of responsibility, to ensure that a broad range of teachers was interviewed.

Fieldwork for the study was conducted between 1 and 30 November 2007.

At the analysis stage, data have been weighted by age. The effect of weighting is shown in the computer tables.

Questions for the Sutton Trust were asked of a mix of all secondary teachers in England and Wales or all teachers in England and Wales. In total, 1,000 primary (503) and secondary (497) teachers in England and Wales were interviewed.

Layout of the Report

This report is divided into two main sections. The main section provides a summary of the survey findings. Meanwhile, the appendices contain a copy of the questionnaire marked-up with the overall results, followed by the computer tabulations, with each question analysed by 3 pages of sub-groups (cross-breaks).

Guide to Computer Tabulations

Basic Table Structure

The accompanying tables set out the findings from the study. They present the number of respondents, expressed as percentages, giving a response to each question and are analysed against a breakdown of other key questions to show which types of teacher have given each response.

Each table contains:

- the wording of the question and the question number;
- headings for the downbreak categories;
- headings for the crossbreak categories;
- a description of who answered each question;
- the number of respondents in each crossbreak who answered the question (the base); and
- total figures.

The downbreaks

The downbreaks are listed down the left-hand side of each table and include the range of all possible responses to a particular question. They include all the pre-coded responses that were available to the respondent.

Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' categories, or multiple responses. An asterisk (*) denotes a value of less than 0.5%, but not zero.

Some tables also include combination scores. These are literally combined responses to two or more response categories on the same "side" of a scale. For example, very satisfied and fairly satisfied gives a combination score of "satisfied".

Net scores are also provided. This reduces the findings for each question to a single figure in every column. The net score is calculated by subtracting the negative score from the positive score. For example, if 65% are satisfied and 20% dissatisfied, then the “net satisfied” score is +45 points.

The crossbreaks

The crossbreaks are found across the top of the table as column headings. The crossbreaks include:

- Weighted total;
- Phase (Primary, Secondary);
- Sex of teacher (Male, Female);
- Age of teacher (24 or below, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55 or above);
- Government Office Region (North East, North West incl. Merseyside, Yorkshire and Humberside, East Midlands, West Midlands, Eastern, London, South East, South West, Wales);
- Country (England, Wales);
- Years' Teaching Experience (NQT/in first year of teaching, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-25 years, Over 25 years);
- Subject Specialism – secondary teachers only (English; Maths; Science; ICT; Humanities; Modern Foreign Languages; Other)
- Most Senior Level of Responsibility (Classroom Teacher/Subject Teacher/Form Tutor; Curriculum Co-ordinator/Assistant Head of Department/Head of Department; Key Stage Co-ordinator/Assistant Head of Year/Head of Year; Assistant/Deputy Headteacher incl. acting; Headteacher incl. acting);
- Key Stage(s) taught (Foundation/Early Years/Nursery/Reception; KS1; KS2; KS3; KS4; Post-16)
- Trade Union membership (Yes, No)
- Unweighted total.

Viewing the results in this way can highlight any notable differences in the responses of these different types of respondent. Cross tabulations can also be used to show relationships to different questions.

Bases

The ‘base’ is the number of respondents answering the question.

Confidence Intervals

When interpreting the findings, it is important to remember that the results are based on a sample of teachers working in the maintained primary and secondary school sectors, and not the entire population. Therefore, we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody had been interviewed (the 'true' values). However, we can predict the variation between the sample results and the 'true' values from a knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given.

The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% - that is, the chances are 19 in 20 that the 'true' value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentages results at the '95% confidence interval', based on a random sample. For example, with a sample size of 1,000 where 30% give a particular answer, the margin of error/specified range will be plus or minus three per cent. In other words, results would lie in the range 27% to 33%, but would be most likely to be 30%, the actual finding.

Sample Size	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	\pm	\pm	\pm
50	8	13	14
100	6	9	10
200	4	6	7
500	3	4	5
750	2	3	3
1,000	2	3	3

Source: Ipsos MORI

Thus, the confidence interval (or margin of error) is the amount by which the survey result could increase or decrease and still be considered to reflect the 'true' result that would have been recorded if everyone in the population had been surveyed.

Tolerances are also involved in the **comparison of results** from different parts of the sample, and between two samples. A difference, in other words, must be of at least a certain size to be considered statistically significant. The following table is a guide to the sampling tolerances applicable to comparisons.

Differences required for significance at or near these percentages			
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
Size of sample on which survey result is based			
736 and 264 (e.g. number of female versus male teachers)	4	7	7
497 and 503 (e.g. number of primary versus secondary teachers)	4	6	6
300 and 300	5	7	8
250 and 250	5	8	9
100 and 100	8	13	14
50 and 50	12	18	20

Source: Ipsos MORI

Caution should be exercised when comparing percentages derived from base sizes of 99 respondents or fewer, and particularly when comparing percentages derived from base sizes of 50 respondents or fewer. In the reporting that follows, percentages which derive from base sizes of 50-99 respondents should be regarded as indicative. Where bases fall below 50 respondents, we give actual numbers (Ns), not percentages.

Interpreting the Data

When interpreting the data, it is often helpful to start with the overall picture and then look at specific details. Look first at the total column, decide whether there appears to be anything particularly interesting and look to see whether anything is different to what you had expected. Then look at the rest of the table. Are there any major differences between sub-groups? Are things similar where you expected to find differences? Where there are significant differences between sub-groups, these are highlighted with the use of letters on the computer tabulations.

Publication of Data

As with all our studies, findings from this survey are subject to our standard Terms and Conditions of Contract. Any press release or publication (including web-siting) of the findings requires the advance approval of Ipsos MORI. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation.

Acknowledgements

It is clear that staff in schools are increasingly working under great pressure from a number of different sources. They also receive numerous requests to participate in surveys such as this. Consequently, we wish to record our gratitude to the many respondents who took part and we are indebted to all the headteachers and staff who made this survey possible.

Summary of Findings

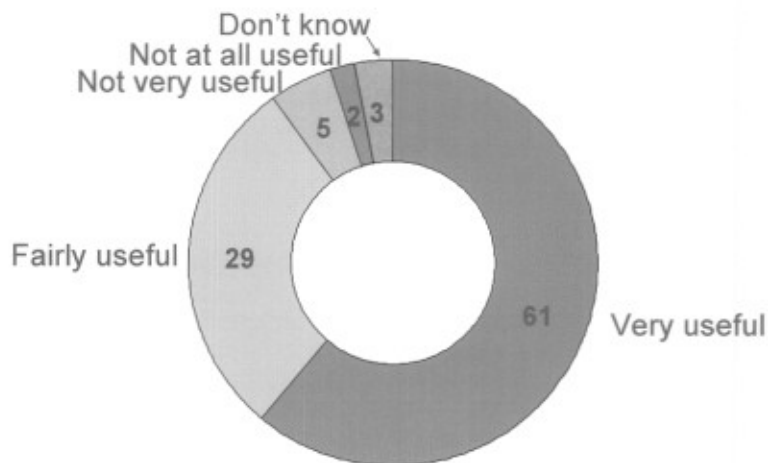
University links

Amongst secondary school teachers, the vast majority (90%) say that it would be *useful* (*very + fairly*) for their schools to have a formal link with a university, including six in ten who say it would be *very* useful (61%).

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Formal links with universities

Q How useful would it be for your school to have a formal link with a university?



Base: Ipsos MORI Teachers Omnibus 2007 for the Sutton Trust; 497 secondary teachers in England and Wales

Oxbridge

Two in three secondary teachers (68%) are clear that applications for Oxbridge undergraduate degree courses must be made earlier than applications to other universities. However, one in ten teachers (11%) believes they should be made at the same time, and one in five (20%) does not know whether they should be made earlier, at the same time or later.

Teachers in Wales are more likely than their English colleagues to say that Oxbridge applications should be made earlier (84% versus 67%)¹ and – more generally – are less likely to say they ‘don’t know’ when Oxbridge applications should be timed (4% versus 21% of teachers in England)².

Turning to the costs associated with studying at Oxbridge compared to other universities, the majority of teachers believe that courses there (compared on a like-for-like basis) are *more expensive* (44%). One in three says they are *as expensive* (32%) but around one in five (23%) again says they *don’t know*, with teachers in

¹ Indicative finding: small base size for Wales

² Indicative finding: small base size for Wales

England more than twice as likely to say this as their Welsh peers (24% versus 9%)³.

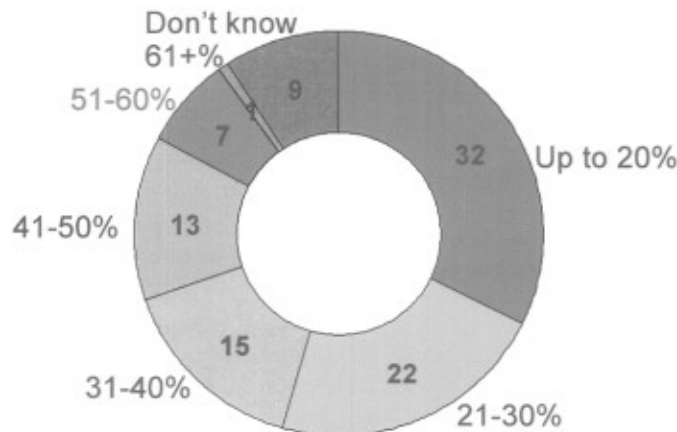
In her recent article, *The curse of the unambitious teacher*, Libby Purves⁴ has pointed out that for all the recent criticism of top universities for their failure to admit more state school pupils⁵, 'nobody can let in a candidate who doesn't apply'. She goes on to cite the findings from NFER's research in 2001 for the Sutton Trust and NAHT⁶ which showed that around two-thirds of heads of post-16 education surveyed 'believed that able students from disadvantaged areas:

- *Lacked the confidence to apply to universities with more demanding entry qualifications; but*
- *Were likely to do just as well as those from more favoured areas, should they go to such institutions.'*

In this context, findings from the 2007 Teachers Omnibus show that the majority of teachers working in maintained secondary schools greatly underestimate the percentage of state school pupils on undergraduate courses at Oxbridge. Eight in ten (82%) believe that less than half of entrants to Oxbridge come from the maintained sector, with three in ten (32%) – the biggest proportion of teachers overall – saying a fifth or less of Oxbridge students do so.

Ipsos MORI **Oxbridge entrants from the state sector**

Q At Oxbridge, what percentage of students from UK schools and colleges on undergraduate courses come from the state sector?



Base: Ipsos MORI Teachers Omnibus 2007 for the Sutton Trust; 497 secondary teachers in England and Wales

³ Indicative finding: small base size for Wales

⁴ http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/libby_purves/article2570437.ece

⁵ See THE SUTTON TRUST (2007). *University Admissions by Individual Schools*. London: The Sutton Trust - <http://www.suttontrust.com/reports/UniversityAdmissionsbySchool.pdf> ; <http://observer.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,,2175057,00.html>

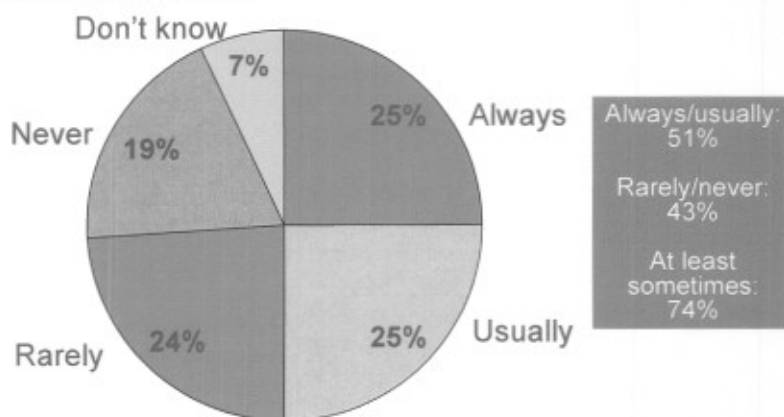
⁶ See THE SUTTON TRUST (2001). *Supporting Students Applying to Higher Education*. London: The Sutton Trust - http://dev.nfer.steel-hosting.co.uk/publications/other-publications/downloadable-reports/pdf_docs/THE.PDF

Moreover, only one in four teachers (25%) says they *always* advise their academically gifted pupils to apply to Oxbridge, a smaller proportion than says they *rarely* or *never* do so (43%).

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Encouraging Oxbridge applications by the academically gifted

Q Which of the following best describes the frequency with which you advise the academically-gifted pupils that you teach (or have taught) to apply to Oxbridge?



Base: Ipsos MORI Teachers Omnibus 2007 for the Sutton Trust; 497 secondary teachers in England and Wales

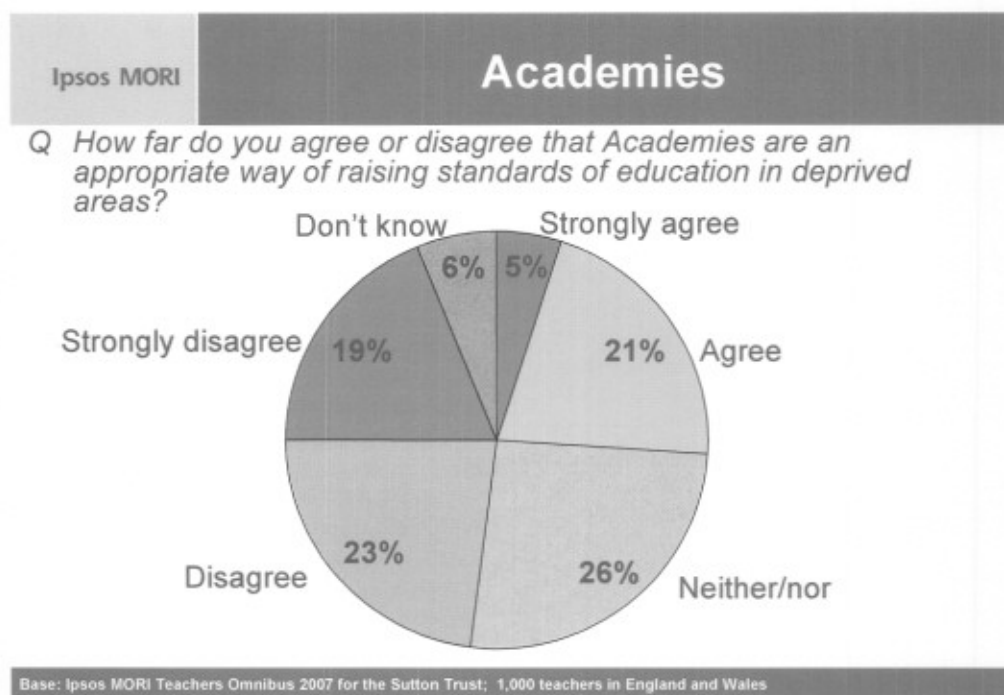
Teachers who *always* advise their academically-gifted pupils to apply for Oxbridge are more likely to be female (30% versus 18% of their male colleagues). Meanwhile, teachers in GOR South East are significantly more likely than average to say they always or usually advise their gifted students in this way (62% versus 51%)⁷; conversely, their colleagues in GOR North West are much more likely than average to say they rarely or never provide advice of this nature (56% versus 43%)⁸.

⁷ Indicative finding: small base size

⁸ Indicative finding: small base size

Academies

Although still the majority in 2007 (at 42%), there has been a marked fall since 2005 in the number of teachers who, overall, *disagree* that *Academies are an appropriate way of raising standards of education in deprived areas*; then, more than half (53%) thought this. Only one in four (26%) agrees that they are an appropriate way of raising standards, the same proportion as neither agrees nor disagrees.



As in previous years, support for Academies tends to be lower amongst older teaching staff than amongst their younger colleagues. A third (34%) of teachers age 34 and younger agree that *Academies are an appropriate way of raising standards of education in deprived areas*, compared to just one in five (22%) of those aged 35 or over. Moreover, teachers working in secondary schools are significantly more likely than average to disagree with Academies as a method of raising standards (51% versus 42%).

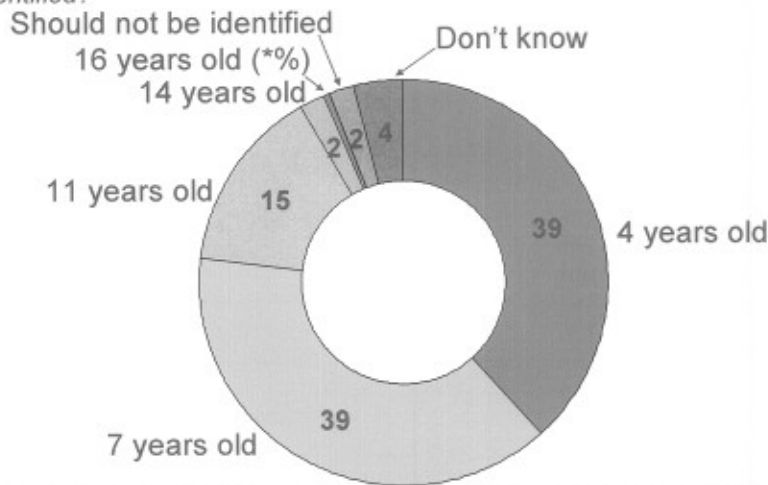
Identifying 'Gifted and Talented' pupils

Few teachers (16%) feel that pupils should be at least secondary school age (11 years old or more) before they are identified as being 'Gifted and Talented'. However, most (55%) do think that children should be no younger than seven years old before they are identified in this way. Nevertheless, four in ten teachers (39%) – rising to six in ten primary practitioners (59%) – are apparently prepared to identify 'Gifted and Talented' pupils from age 4 upwards.

Ipsos MORI

Youngest age for identifying 'Gifted and Talented' pupils

Q What is the youngest age at which 'Gifted and Talented' pupils should be identified?



Base: Ipsos MORI Teachers Omnibus 2007 for the Sutton Trust; 1,000 teachers in England and Wales

Teachers who say that children should be at least seven years old before being identified as 'Gifted and Talented' are twice as likely to be secondary practitioners as primary practitioners (74% versus 37%). Similarly, those who would not identify 'Gifted and Talented' pupils until they are at least 11 years old are seven times more likely to work in secondary schools than primary schools (29% versus 4%).

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Appendices

Marked-up questionnaire

**Teachers' Omnibus – Wave 6
Final Topline Results
7 December 2007**

- Results are based on 1,000 telephone interviews with primary and secondary teachers in England and Wales conducted between 1st and 30th November 2007.
- Data are weighted by age to the known profile of teachers in England and Wales.
- Results are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated.
- Where results do not sum to 100, this may be due to multiple responses, computer rounding or the exclusion of don't know/not stated categories.
- An asterisk (*) represents a value of less than one per cent, but greater than zero.

UNIVERSITY LINKS

Q1. **How useful would it be for your school to have a formal link with a university? Would it be ... ?**

Base: All secondary teachers in England and Wales (497)

	%
Very useful	61
Fairly useful	29
Not very useful	5
Not at all useful.....	2
Don't know.....	3

OXBRIDGE

Q1. **As far as you know, do applications for undergraduate degree courses at Oxbridge have to be made earlier than, at the same time as or later than undergraduate applications to other universities?**

Base: All secondary teachers in England and Wales (497)

	%
Earlier	68
At the same time	11
Later	*
Don't know.....	20

Q2. **Comparing courses on a like-for-like basis, is studying for an undergraduate degree at Oxbridge generally more expensive, as expensive or less expensive than at other universities?**

Base: All secondary teachers in England and Wales (497)

	%
More expensive	44
As expensive	32
Less expensive.....	1
Don't know.....	23

Q3. **At Oxbridge, what percentage of students from UK schools and colleges on undergraduate courses come from the state sector?**

Base: All secondary teachers in England and Wales (497)

	%
Up to 20%.....	32
21 to 30%	22
31 to 40%	15
41 to 50%	13
51 to 60%	7
61 to 70%	1
71 to 80%	*
81%+	-
Don't know.....	9

Q4. **Which of the following best describes the frequency with which you advise the academically-gifted pupils that you teach (or have taught) to apply to Oxbridge?**

Base: All secondary teachers in England and Wales (497)

	%
Always	25
Usually.....	25
Rarely	24
Never	19
Don't know.....	7

CITY ACADEMIES

Q1. **Approximately 80 Academies have replaced schools in deprived areas, and the Government plans to extend the scheme to 400 schools in a further bid to raise standards. Each Academy costs around £25 million and is owned by a sponsor, some of whom contribute up to £2 million, while the rest is Government funded. Academies receive state funding for ongoing costs, but have significant autonomy in terms of how they are managed, the curriculum they offer, staffing and school ethos. Both critics and proponents of Academies have pointed to these characteristics in support of their arguments.**

How far do you agree or disagree that Academies are an appropriate way of raising standards of education in deprived areas. Do you ... ?

	%
Strongly agree	5
Agree	21
Neither agree nor disagree.....	26
Disagree	23
Strongly disagree	19
Don't know/can't remember.....	6

IDENTIFYING GIFTED AND TALENTED PUPILS

Q1. **What is the youngest age at which 'Gifted and Talented' pupils should be identified?**

	%
4 years old	39
7 years old	39
11 years old	15
14 years old	2
16 years old	*
They should not be identified	2
Don't know.....	4

DEMOGRAPHICS

Sex

	%
Male.....	26
Female.....	74

Age

	%
24 or below.....	4
25-34.....	29
35-44.....	24
45-54.....	27
55 or above.....	16

Phase

	%
Primary.....	50
Secondary.....	50

GOR

	%
North East.....	5
North West (including Merseyside).....	12
Yorkshire and Humberside.....	10
East Midlands.....	9
West Midlands.....	10
East of England.....	10
London.....	12
South East.....	15
South West.....	9
Wales.....	8

How many years' teaching experience do you have?

	%
NQT/in first year of teaching.....	2
1-5 years.....	20
6-10 years.....	21
11-15 years.....	16
16-25 years.....	16
Over 25 years.....	25

Please can you tell me which of the following best describes your current professional role?

	%
Supply Teacher	1
Classroom or Subject Teacher.....	29
Class Teacher with special curricular or non-curricular responsibilities	20
Cross school responsibilities without a class teaching role	2
Deputy/Assistant Head of Department, or Deputy/Assistant Curriculum Co-ordinator	5
Head of Department or subject, or Curriculum Co-ordinator	24
Advanced Skills Teacher.....	1
Deputy/Assistant Head of Year, or Deputy/Assistant Key Stage Co-ordinator	2
Head of Year, or Key Stage Co-ordinator	4
Deputy/Assistant Headteacher/Principal (including acting)	7
Headteacher/Principal (including acting).....	5
Other.....	*

Can you tell me the Key Stages of the pupils you teach?

	%
Foundation/Early Years/Nursery/Reception.....	11
Key Stage 1	22
Key Stage 2	35
Key Stage 3	46
Key Stage 4	46
Post 16	26

Please can you tell me your subject specialism? I'm interested in knowing about the subject you spend (or used to spend) most of your time delivering?

Base: All secondary teachers in England and Wales (497)

	%
English.....	26
Maths.....	19
Science.....	19
ICT	8
Design & Technology	3
Humanities (History and Geography).....	6
Modern Foreign Languages	4
Art/Music/PE/Citizenship.....	7
Other.....	8

If you consider yourself to have a subject or curriculum specialism, could you please tell me what it is?

Base: All primary teachers in England and Wales (503)

	%
English or literacy	17
Maths or numeracy.....	14
Science.....	9
ICT	8
Design & Technology	2
Humanities (History and Geography).....	9
Modern Foreign Languages	2
Art/Music/PE/Citizenship.....	17
Other.....	10
Don't consider myself to have a subject/curriculum specialism	11
Don't know.....	*

Please can you tell me which teaching union you belong to, if any?

	%
Association for School and College Leaders (ASCoL)/Secondary Heads Association (SHA).....	2
Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL).....	12
National Association of Headteachers (NAHT).....	7
National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)	31
National Union of Teachers (NUT).....	40
Professional Association of Teachers (PAT).....	2
University and College Union (UCU).....	-
Other.....	2
Not a union member.....	5
Prefer not to say	*
Don't know.....	*
