



NFER Teacher Voice Omnibus November 2010 Survey

The Government's education reforms The Sutton Trust

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December 2010

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Introduction

Seven questions were submitted by The Sutton Trust to the NFER's Teacher Voice Omnibus survey in November 2010. The questions were on the theme of the Coalition Government's education reforms and asked teachers for their views on the following aspects:

- the new freedoms resulting from the expansion of the academies programme
- the introduction of free schools
- the potential of the Government's reforms to improve educational outcomes for less privileged children
- checks, balances and incentives to ensure that the reforms benefit all children, including school admissions and accountability
- priorities for spending money deriving from the pupil premium

This report provides an analysis of the responses to these questions alongside supporting information about the survey. Where appropriate, the results are presented by school phase (primary and secondary) and seniority (classroom teachers and senior leaders). This report forms one part of the output from the Omnibus survey. The analysis is also presented and given in more detail in a set of interactive web-based tables produced separately (in Pulsar Web).

Context

In July 2010, Royal Assent was received for the Academies Act which paved the way for the expansion of the academies programme. Previously, academies, or schools operating independently of their Local Authority, had typically replaced underperforming schools in disadvantaged areas¹ This Act enables maintained schools to apply to the Secretary of State to become academies although initially, only schools judged as 'outstanding' by Ofsted were able to submit applications to convert. At the end of the live survey period for this research, the programme was opened up to any group of schools, providing at least one of the schools is outstanding or good with outstanding features, to apply to join.

In addition to freedom from Local Authority control, other freedoms for schools granted academy status include:

- the ability to set their own pay and conditions for staff
- freedoms around the delivery of the curriculum
- the ability to change the lengths of terms and school days.

¹ Academies Act 2010 Explanatory Notes <http://legislation.data.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/32/notes/data.pdf> accessed 1/12/2010

The Academies Act also made provision for the establishment of ‘free schools’ - additional maintained schools that do not replace existing provision and are set up by parent groups, teachers charities and other organisations.

Opinions have been polarised on the impact of these structural measures on the educational outcomes of the most disadvantaged pupils. During the passage of this Bill the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, argued, that the legislation was urgently required to redress the existing educational divide between the wealthy and the poorest and ‘*to ensure that opportunity becomes more equal in our society*’². The main teaching unions and some academic studies have taken the opposing view and consider that the school reforms will further entrench existing inequalities and lead to greater social segregation between schools. Machin and Veroit from the University of London, in their evaluation of the first wave of new academy schools, considered that the Coalition Government’s academies programme ‘*is now likely to reinforce advantage and exacerbate existing inequalities in schooling*’³. Susanne Wiborg’s Research Paper on the Swedish Free School Reforms concluded that school choice in Sweden had increased both social and ethnic segregation particularly for schools in deprived areas. If this was the impact in Sweden, where levels of social equality are relatively high, she cautioned, ‘*other countries could risk an even greater increase in inequality from implementing similar kinds of free schools*’⁴

Any future evaluation of the impact of the school reforms on educational outcomes and social segregation would need to consider these measures alongside the range of new Government initiatives, notably the pupil premium. This premium will provide funding specifically linked to disadvantaged pupils. A sum reaching £2.5 billion per annum by 2014-15 was set aside in the October 2010 Spending Review⁵ to, ‘*support the educational development of the most disadvantaged, and provide incentives for good schools to take on pupils from poorer backgrounds*’⁶.

² Hansard (2010): Academies Bill Second Reading. Available <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm100719/debtext/100719-0001.htm> [1 December 2010]

³ Machin and Veroit (2010). Available <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/cp325.pdf> [1 December 2010]

⁴ Wiborg, S. (2010): *Swedish Free Schools: Do they work?* Available <http://www.llakes.org> [1 December 2010]

⁵ Cabinet Office (2010). Available http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2010/101015-fairness.aspx [1 December 2010]

⁶ HM Treasury (2010). Available http://cdn.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sr2010_completereport.pdf [1 December 2010]

The programme of educational reforms is of particular interest to the Sutton Trust which exists to combat educational inequality and prevent the subsequent waste of talents: In their Research Report '*Ensuring less privileged pupils benefit from the Government's school reforms*', the Trust highlighted existing concerns that increased school autonomy will lead to further social segregation among schools and hinder social mobility. Their report also proposed a series of checks, balances and incentives to ensure that the reforms benefit all pupils⁷. Against this background, the Trust submitted seven questions to the November 2010 Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey on the school reforms and some of the checks and balances that could be implemented to secure benefits for all pupils

Analysis of findings

The sample

The survey was completed by a sample of over 2,100 teachers and was weighted to ensure representativeness. The sample included teachers from a wide range of school governance types and subject areas. Sample numbers were sufficient to allow for comparisons between the primary and secondary sectors. Detailed information about the sample is given in the supplementary section of this report.

The impact of the new freedoms - the expansion of the academies programme

The first question submitted by the Sutton Trust included three statements about the impact of more academy schools operating independently of Local Authority control. As can be seen from Table 1 below, teachers' opinions were divided about whether the new freedoms would allow schools to focus more time on improving achievement for children. Thirty-seven per cent of teachers disagreed (either disagreed or strongly disagreed) compared to 27 per cent of teachers who agreed (either agreed or strongly agreed) that the new freedoms would allow schools to focus more time on improving achievement. In addition, over a quarter of respondents (29 per cent) neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. Amongst secondary teachers however, a markedly larger proportion of teachers disagreed (44 per cent) than agreed (29 per cent) that the new freedoms would allow schools to focus more time on improving achievement.

⁷ *Ensuring less privileged pupils benefit from the Government's school reforms (2010)*. Available <http://www.suttontrust.com/research/ensuring-less-privileged-pupils-benefit/> [1 December 2010]

Table 1. The new freedoms will allow schools to focus more time on improving achievement for children

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	6%	6%	6%
Agree	21%	19%	23%
Neither agree nor disagree	29%	32%	25%
Disagree	21%	20%	22%
Strongly disagree	16%	13%	20%
Don't know	8%	11%	4%
Local base (N)	2173	1202	964

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

Opinions were less divided about whether any improvements in educational standards resulting from the new freedoms would be more likely to benefit pupils from more privileged backgrounds than pupils from less privileged ones. Across both phases, 59 per cent of teachers agreed (either agreed or strongly agreed) that pupils from more privileged background would be the more likely beneficiaries (Table 2). Only 13 per cent of all teachers disagreed that this would be the outcome.

Table 2. Pupils from more privileged backgrounds will be more likely than those from less privileged backgrounds to benefit from any improvements in educational standards arising from the new freedoms

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	24%	23%	26%
Agree	35%	36%	34%
Neither agree nor disagree	20%	21%	19%
Disagree	10%	9%	12%
Strongly disagree	3%	3%	4%
Don't know	8%	9%	6%
Local base (N)	2173	1202	965

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

The third question on the expansion of the academies programme asked teachers to what extent they considered the new freedoms would lead to greater social segregation between

schools that are independent from local authority control and other schools in the local area. Over two-thirds of all teachers (69 per cent agreed or strongly agreed) considered that greater social segregation would result from the new freedoms. As can be seen from Table 3 below, responses of primary and secondary teachers were broadly similar. The views of senior leaders and class teachers were also similar.

Table 3. The new freedoms will lead to greater social segregation between the new academy schools and other schools in the local area

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	33%	32%	36%
Agree	36%	38%	33%
Neither agree nor disagree	16%	16%	15%
Disagree	6%	5%	8%
Strongly disagree	2%	1%	4%
Don't know	7%	9%	5%
Local base (N)	2173	1201	966

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

Teachers' views on free schools

The second set of questions from the Sutton Trust explored similar issues on educational standards and social segregation but in relation to free schools. Teachers were asked to what extent they agreed that free schools will:

- provide a better education for less privileged children in the local area
- drive up education standards through increased competition
- lead to greater social segregation between schools in the local area

A key argument advanced by the Government in support of free schools was that they would drive up education standards for all children, including those from less privileged backgrounds. The respondent panel took the opposite view. Approximately two-thirds of teachers disagreed that free schools would provide a better education for less privileged children in the local area (63 per cent either disagreed or strongly disagreed, Table 4). Similarly, two-thirds (67 per cent, Table 5) of teachers did not consider that free schools would drive up educational standards through increased competition. It is worth noting that less than ten per cent of teachers felt that free schools would provide a better education for less privileged children or that they would drive up education standards through increased competition.

About two-thirds of teachers (66 per cent, Table 6) considered that free schools would lead to greater social segregation between schools in the local area. This was similar to the proportion of respondents who felt that the new freedoms deriving from academy status would also lead to greater social segregation between schools locally.

As shown in Tables 4 - 6 below, the views of primary and secondary respondents in relation to free schools are broadly similar. Generally the views of senior leaders and class teachers were similar although a higher proportion of senior leaders (74 per cent) than class teachers disagreed that free schools will drive up education standards through increased competition.

Table 4. To what extent do you agree that free schools will provide a better education for less privileged children in the local area?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	1%	1%	1%
Agree	6%	5%	8%
Neither agree nor disagree	20%	21%	20%
Disagree	33%	36%	29%
Strongly disagree	30%	27%	35%
Don't know	10%	11%	8%
Local base (N)	2172	1201	965

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

Table 5. To what extent do you agree that free schools will drive up education standards through increased competition?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	1%	1%	1%
Agree	7%	5%	8%
Neither agree nor disagree	17%	19%	16%
Disagree	37%	39%	33%
Strongly disagree	30%	27%	36%
Don't know	8%	9%	6%
Local base (N)	2170	1199	965

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

Table 6. To what extent do you agree that free schools will lead to greater social segregation between schools in the local area?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	29%	28%	32%
Agree	37%	37%	36%
Neither agree nor disagree	17%	19%	14%
Disagree	5%	5%	5%
Strongly disagree	3%	2%	4%
Don't know	10%	10%	9%
Local base (N)	2172	1200	966

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

The overall impact of the Government's school reforms on educational outcomes for less privileged children

The Sutton Trust included a final question on the school reforms asking teachers whether, taken overall, these measures have the potential to improve educational outcomes for less privileged children. In line with the findings reported above, about two-thirds of all respondents (64 per cent either disagreed or strongly disagreed, Table 7) disagreed with this premise. Again, less than ten per cent of teachers considered the reforms have the potential to improve educational outcomes for the less privileged and there were no marked differences between the responses of primary and secondary teachers and between responses of senior leaders and class teachers.

Table 7. Overall, to what extent do you agree that the Government's school reforms have the potential to improve the educational outcomes for less privileged children?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	1%	1%	1%
Agree	7%	6%	8%
Neither agree nor disagree	22%	23%	21%
Disagree	36%	39%	33%
Strongly disagree	28%	25%	32%
Don't know	6%	7%	6%
Local base (N)	2177	1204	967

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

Checks and balances

A series of questions followed asking teachers about various checks, balances and incentives that could be employed with the aim of ensuring that the school reforms benefit all children. This covered a range of options including:

- using the pupil premium
- using the new freedoms to set teachers pay and length of the school days
- removing poorly performing teachers
- school admissions
- school accountability

The Sutton Trust in its research report, *‘Ensuring less privileged pupils benefit from the Government’s school reforms’*⁷ considers that in order to have an impact on admissions of disadvantaged pupils, the pupil premium needs to be significant and of the order of an extra 50 per cent above the average funding per pupil. Their first question in this section asked teachers if they agreed that additional funding of 50 per cent would be required for the pupil premium to make a difference. As Table 8 shows, just over a half of all respondents (55 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed) felt this was the order of additional funding that would be required. About a third of respondents were broadly neutral or did not know and only a relatively small percentage disagreed (13 per cent either disagreed or strongly disagreed) that this level of additional funding was required. There was little difference between the responses of primary and secondary teachers and between the responses of senior leaders and class teachers.

Table 8. To make a difference, the proposed pupil premium (extra money for schools admitting disadvantaged pupils) needs to be of the order of an extra 50% over the normal funding per pupil.

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	15%	15%	15%
Agree	40%	40%	41%
Neither agree nor disagree	19%	19%	18%
Disagree	10%	10%	11%
Strongly disagree	3%	3%	4%
Don’t know	13%	13%	12%
Local base (N)	2172	1200	966

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

A similar question was asked to establish whether teachers considered that schools should offer pay incentives of the order of £10,000 above normal salaries to recruit and retain effective teachers. As shown in Table 9, approximately half of all respondents felt that schools should be able to offer incentives of this order (51 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed) and just under a third disagreed with this suggestion (31 per cent either disagreed or strongly disagreed). Slightly higher levels of support were registered among class teachers (54 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed). However, amongst senior leaders and in particular, those in secondary schools, there was less support for this measure - 39 per cent of secondary leaders agreed with the suggestion and 39 per cent were opposed. This may reflect the concerns of budget holders about sufficient funds being made available for this measure.

Table 9. Schools should be able to offer pay incentives of the order of £10k above normal salaries to recruit and retain effective teachers to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	14%	13%	15%
Agree	37%	37%	37%
Neither agree nor disagree	16%	16%	15%
Disagree	22%	24%	21%
Strongly disagree	9%	7%	11%
Don't know	3%	4%	2%
Local base (N)	2171	1201	964

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

Some interesting findings emerged when teachers were asked if they agreed that there was not enough freedom for schools to dismiss poorly performing teachers (Table 10). Over half of all teachers agreed that this was the case (57 per cent either agreed or strongly agreed, Table 10) and less than a quarter of respondents (21 per cent) took the opposing view. The responses of primary and secondary teachers were similar but there were notable differences between the responses of senior leaders and class teachers. Seventy-three per cent of senior leaders, compared to 52 per cent of classroom teachers, considered that there was not enough freedom to dismiss poorly performing teachers.

Table 10. Currently there is not enough freedom for schools to dismiss poorly performing teachers.

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	21%	20%	21%
Agree	36%	37%	34%
Neither agree nor disagree	18%	19%	17%
Disagree	15%	14%	16%
Strongly disagree	6%	5%	7%
Don't know	5%	6%	4%
Local base (N)	2172	1199	967

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

The majority of respondents rejected the suggestion that, in principle, the school day should be lengthened by approximately 50 per cent in order to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children (Table 11). Over three-quarters of all teachers disagreed with this suggestion (77 per cent either disagreed or strongly disagreed, Table 11). Opposition was strongest among primary teachers - 81 per cent of them compared to 71 per cent of secondary teachers disagreed with this suggestion. The responses of senior leaders and class teachers were broadly similar. As an extra 50 per cent learning time equates to a seven hour school day, primary teachers' responses may reflect concerns about the suitability of such a measure given the age of their pupils.

Table 11. In principle, schools should introduce longer school days to help improve the outcomes for disadvantaged children - providing approximately 50% more learning time.

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	2%	1%	2%
Agree	8%	6%	10%
Neither agree nor disagree	11%	9%	14%
Disagree	43%	47%	37%
Strongly disagree	34%	34%	34%
Don't know	2%	3%	2%
Local base (N)	2171	1199	966

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

The Sutton Trust also included a question to determine the level of support among teachers for changes in school admissions. Respondents were asked if schools should be allowed to give priority to children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) in their admissions criteria in the same way that preference is given to looked after children or children with a statement of Special Educational Needs (Table 12). Opinions were divided but generally there was limited support for this measure. Forty-two per cent of respondents did not agree with this proposition and about a third of respondents were broadly neutral (neither agreed nor disagreed) or did not know. A smaller proportion of respondents (27 per cent) felt schools should be allowed to give priority to children eligible for FSM. Differences were noted between the responses of primary and secondary respondents. A larger proportion of primary respondents (47 per cent) than secondary respondents (35 per cent) opposed this suggestion. Similarly, proportionately more senior leaders (53 per cent) than class teachers (39 per cent) opposed this idea.

Table 12. Schools should be allowed to give priority to children eligible for Free School Meals in their admissions criteria in the same way they give preference to looked after children or children with a statement of Special Educational Needs.

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	4%	3%	4%
Agree	23%	19%	28%
Neither agree nor disagree	27%	26%	29%
Disagree	32%	37%	25%
Strongly disagree	10%	10%	10%
Don't know	4%	5%	4%
Local base (N)	2174	1202	967

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

Opinions were also divided about encouraging the use of random ballots alongside other admission criteria when schools are over-subscribed and there was no consensus among the teachers surveyed. As shown in Table 13 below, 41 per cent of all respondents disagreed (either disagreed or strongly disagreed) with the encouragement of random ballots whilst 31 per cent supported this measure. A further 29 per cent of respondents were broadly neutral (neither agreed nor disagreed) or did not know. There were no marked differences between the responses of primary and secondary teachers. Whilst the responses of classroom teachers mirrored that of the panel overall, a majority of senior leaders were opposed to encouraging the use of random ballots – 57 per cent of them disagreed with this suggestion compared with 21 per cent who were in favour.

Table 13. Schools should be encouraged to use random ballots alongside other admissions criteria to decide which children get school places when schools are over-subscribed.

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	6%	5%	7%
Agree	25%	22%	29%
Neither agree nor disagree	22%	22%	21%
Disagree	28%	31%	23%
Strongly disagree	13%	12%	14%
Don't know	7%	8%	6%
Local base (N)	2172	1202	965

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

The remaining question in this section covered school accountability. The Sutton Trust was interested in teachers' views about the possibility of requiring schools to publish two additional indicators; one showing the extent to which schools are narrowing attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils and a second reporting the proportion of pupils who go on to higher education. Across the panel as a whole, opinions were divided and there was no prevailing view. As shown in Tables 14 and 15, between 41 and 45 per cent of teachers opposed these additional indicators while a third of teachers were in favour. However, among secondary teachers there was more support for both measures - about 45 per cent of secondary teachers were in favour of publishing these additional indicators compared to approximately 35 per cent who opposed their publication. Among senior leaders in secondary schools, support for both measures rose to around half of respondents. In primary schools however, less than 30 per cent of respondents, irrespective of their seniority, supported publication of each of these additional measures.

Table 14. A measure for schools should be published showing how much they are narrowing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils.

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	7%	5%	8%
Agree	29%	23%	36%
Neither agree nor disagree	17%	17%	18%
Disagree	32%	37%	24%
Strongly disagree	13%	14%	11%
Don't know	3%	3%	3%
Local base (N)	2174	1202	966

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

Table 15. A measure for schools should be published showing the proportion of pupils who go on to enter higher education.

	All	Primary	Secondary
Strongly agree	5%	3%	6%
Agree	30%	24%	40%
Neither agree nor disagree	21%	23%	19%
Disagree	29%	33%	22%
Strongly disagree	12%	13%	11%
Don't know	3%	4%	2%
Local base (N)	2170	1199	965

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

Priorities for spending the pupil premium

The final question submitted by the Sutton Trust to the Teacher Voice Survey asked teachers to select their top three priorities for spending any money their school received from the pupil premium. Table 16 shows that reducing class sizes and increasing staffing were the main priorities for teachers. Smaller class sizes was identified as one of the top priorities from the list provided by the largest proportion of teachers (44 per cent) while 16 per cent would prioritise additional teachers although this could also be a means of securing smaller class sizes. The only marked difference between the top priorities selected by primary and secondary teachers was in relation to additional support staff

where proportionately more primary teachers (19 per cent) than secondary teachers (nine per cent) identified this as their top priority. (There were a few differences between the views of senior leaders and class teachers and these may be explained by interchangeability between some of the choices).

Reducing class sizes and increasing staffing were also among the most commonly cited second and third priorities (Tables 17 and 18) while improving the classroom or school environment and extending curriculum breadth were also frequently selected as second and third priorities. The choices of primary and secondary teachers and of senior leaders and class teachers were similar.

Table 16. If your school had extra money through the pupil premium and you were free to choose how to spend it, what would be your first priority?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Increased salaries to attract and retain individual staff	3%	2%	5%
Performance-related bonuses for staff	2%	1%	3%
Additional teachers	16%	17%	15%
Additional support staff	14%	19%	9%
Staff development or CPD	2%	2%	3%
Improving the classroom or school environment	5%	5%	6%
More ICT equipment or resources	2%	1%	4%
New books or other teaching resources (not ICT)	1%	1%	2%
More testing or assessment materials and/or services	0%	0%	0%
Smaller class sizes	44%	43%	45%
Longer school days for all pupils	<1%	<1%	<1%
Holiday classes (e.g. Summer schools)	<1%	<1%	<1%
Extending curriculum breadth (e.g. through music, art or physical education)	4%	4%	3%
Catchup classes during term time for those falling behind	4%	3%	5%
Extra provision for gifted and talented students	1%	1%	1%
Local base (N)	2175	1205	965

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

Table 17. If your school had extra money through the pupil premium and you were free to choose how to spend it, what would be your second priority?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Increased salaries to attract and retain individual staff	3%	2%	4%
Performance-related bonuses for staff	3%	2%	3%
Additional teachers	18%	18%	16%
Additional support staff	17%	20%	14%
Staff development or CPD	3%	2%	4%
Improving the classroom or school environment	11%	10%	12%
More ICT equipment or resources	4%	3%	5%
New books or other teaching resources (not ICT)	5%	5%	5%
More testing or assessment materials and/or services	<1%	<1%	<1%
Smaller class sizes	18%	18%	18%
Longer school days for all pupils	<1%	<1%	<1%
Holiday classes (e.g. Summer schools)	1%	1%	1%
Extending curriculum breadth (e.g. through music, art or physical education)	8%	10%	6%
Catchup classes during term time for those falling behind	9%	8%	10%
Extra provision for gifted and talented students	2%	2%	3%
Local base (N)	2172	1204	963

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100
Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

Table 18. If your school had extra money through the pupil premium and you were free to choose how to spend it, what would be your third priority?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Increased salaries to attract and retain individual staff	3%	3%	4%
Performance-related bonuses for staff	3%	2%	3%
Additional teachers	9%	9%	10%
Additional support staff	13%	12%	13%
Staff development or CPD	6%	7%	6%
Improving the classroom or school environment	12%	12%	10%
More ICT equipment or resources	6%	5%	8%
New books or other teaching resources (not ICT)	8%	10%	6%
More testing or assessment materials and/or services	<1%	<1%	<1%
Smaller class sizes	11%	10%	12%
Longer school days for all pupils	1%	<1%	1%
Holiday classes (e.g. Summer schools)	2%	2%	2%
Extending curriculum breadth (e.g. through music, art or physical education)	12%	12%	10%
Catchup classes during term time for those falling behind	10%	10%	10%
Extra provision for gifted and talented students	5%	5%	4%
Local base (N)	2160	1201	954

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

In summary, the responses to the survey indicated that nearly three-quarters (73 per cent) of teachers identified reducing class sizes as one of their top three priorities while 44 per cent identified increases in support staff, and 43 per cent said additional teachers, as one of the top three priorities. While fewer identified improving the classroom or school environment or extending curriculum breadth as their first priority, it was apparent that 28 per cent and 24 per cent of teachers respectively identified these as one of their top three priorities.

Conclusions and implications for the client

The responses from teachers on the Teacher Voice panel has revealed that, in the view of the majority, the Government's drive for school autonomy, whether through the new academies or free schools, could lead to increased social segregation between schools and may not contribute to improved educational outcomes for less privileged children.

Equally, however, the panel delivered some mixed messages about some of the checks, balances and incentives advocated by the Sutton Trust to ensure that the school reforms can benefit all pupils. There was some support for a pupil premium in the order of an extra 50 per cent over normal funding per pupil for schools admitting disadvantaged pupils although there was also some uncertainty about this and some teachers were neutral in their view. In considering the findings, it is worth taking into consideration that respondents were not presented with any alternative scenarios and no definition of 'disadvantaged' pupils was provided. Similarly, until the Government provides details of the scope and coverage of the premium, detailed financial comparisons are not possible.

A substantial majority of senior leaders felt that schools currently lacked sufficient freedom to dismiss poorly performing teachers. Over 50 per cent of classroom teachers also shared this view. Clearly, the initiatives to tackle teacher underperformance announced in the Government's recent Education White Paper⁸ will be of interest to the Trust.

There was also support for the suggestion that schools should offer pay incentives of the order of £10,000 above normal salaries to recruit and retain effective teachers. Some caution needs to be exercised as responses may have been influenced by the two year pay freeze for teachers between 2011 and 2013. Despite support for this measure, increased salaries did not feature prominently among teachers' top three priorities for spending additional money allocated to schools through the pupil premium. Further initiatives to give schools more flexibility to reward good performance were announced in the White Paper and again, these will be of interest to the Sutton Trust.

It was evident that there was limited support for the principle of extending the school day in general (as less than one per cent of teachers said this would be first priority for spending the pupil premium) or by 50 per cent (ten per cent of teachers agreed with this principle).

⁸ *The Importance of Teaching(2010)*: Cm 7980. Available <http://publications.education.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/CM-7980.pdf> [1 December 2010]

The panel gave limited support to the Trust's proposals for publishing additional measures to show how schools are narrowing attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils and to show the proportion of pupils going on to Higher Education. Senior leaders in secondary schools registered the strongest level of support for this suggestion, but even within this group, less than half of respondents were in favour of publishing these additional indicators. This may reflect concerns about possible unfairness arising from the method of calculation and more general issues among educationalists about indicators within the inspection process and of published league tables.

Overall, there was no clear consensus among respondents to the survey regarding the Suttons Trust's proposals on school admissions. Opinions were mixed, with strongest opposition being registered by senior leaders. Over 50 per cent of them opposed allowing schools to give priority to children eligible for FSM in their admissions criteria. Similarly, over 50 per cent of senior leaders also rejected encouraging the use of random ballots alongside other admissions criteria when schools are over-subscribed. While the reasons for this cannot be discerned from this survey, there may be value in investigating this view further with senior managers.

Supporting information

How was the survey conducted?

This report is based on data from the November 2010 survey. The survey was completed in November 2010 by a panel of 2,199 practising teachers from 1,551 schools in the maintained sector in England. The survey was conducted online and teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire between 5 November and 17 November 2010. During the survey period all ‘open’ questions (those without a pre-identified set of responses) were coded by a team of experienced coders within the Foundation.

What was the composition of the panel?

The panel included teachers from the full range of roles in primary and secondary schools, from headteachers to newly qualified class teachers. Fifty four per cent (1,198) of the respondents were teaching in primary schools and 46 per cent (1,001) were teaching in secondary schools.

How representative of schools nationally were the schools corresponding to the teachers panel?

There was an under-representation of schools in the highest quintile in terms of eligibility for free school meals in both the sample of primary schools and the sample of secondary schools. The sample of secondary schools also had an over-representation of schools with low eligibility for free school meals. To address this, weights were calculated using free schools meals factors to create a more balanced sample. Due to the differences between the populations of primary schools and secondary schools, different weights were created for primary schools, secondary schools and then for the whole sample overall. The weightings have been applied to all of the analyses referred to in this commentary and contained within the tables supplied in electronic format (via Pulsar Web)⁹.

Tables S.1, S.2 and S.3 show the representation of the weighted achieved sample against the population. Table S.4 shows the representation of the weighted teacher sample by role in school.

⁹ *The sample was not weighted for missing free school meal data*

Table S.1 Representation of (weighted) primary schools compared to primary schools nationally

		National Population	NFER Sample
		%	%
Achievement Band (Overall performance by KS2 2008 data)	Lowest band	16	16
	2nd lowest band	17	18
	Middle band	18	20
	2nd highest band	20	21
	Highest band	22	24
	Missing	7	1
% eligible FSM (5 pt scale)	Lowest 20%	20	20
	2nd lowest 20%	20	20
	Middle 20%	20	20
	2nd highest 20%	20	20
	Highest 20%	20	20
	Missing	1	0
Primary school type	Infant/First	15	12
	Primary/Combined	77	73
	Junior	8	13
	Middle/other type	<1	1
Region	North	31	23
	Midlands	32	29
	South	37	48
Local Authority type	London Borough	11	15
	Metropolitan Authorities	21	19
	English Unitary Authorities	18	20
	Counties	51	46
Number of schools		16,973	1,025

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Some information is not available for all schools and some schools included more than one respondent

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

Table S.2 Representation of (weighted) secondary schools compared to secondary schools nationally

		National Population	NFER Sample
		%	%
Achievement Band (Overall performance by GCSE 2008 data)	Lowest band	17	13
	2nd lowest band	18	17
	Middle band	18	23
	2nd highest band	18	22
	Highest band	20	22
	Missing	10	2
% eligible FSM (5 pt scale)	Lowest 20%	19	20
	2nd lowest 20%	19	20
	Middle 20%	19	20
	2nd highest 20%	19	20
	Highest 20%	19	20
	Missing	4	1
Secondary school type	Middle	7	2
	Comprehensive to 16	34	28
	Comprehensive to 18	44	59
	Secondary Moderns	5	4
	Grammar	5	5
	Academies	6	1
Region	North	29	24
	Midlands	33	30
	South	37	46
Local Authority type	London Borough	13	15
	Metropolitan Authorities	21	22
	English Unitary Authorities	19	19
	Counties	47	44
Number of schools		3,326	526

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100. Some information is not available for all schools and some schools included more than one respondent. Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

Table S.3 Representation of all schools (weighted) compared to all schools nationally

		National Population	NFER Sample
		%	%
Achievement Band (By KS2 2008 and GCSE 2008 data)	Lowest band	17	16
	2nd lowest band	18	18
	Middle band	18	21
	2nd highest band	20	21
	Highest band	21	23
	Missing	6	1
% eligible FSM (5 pt scale)	Lowest 20%	20	20
	2nd lowest 20%	20	20
	Middle 20%	20	20
	2nd highest 20%	20	20
	Highest 20%	20	20
	Missing	1	<1
Region	North	30	23
	Midlands	32	29
	South	37	48
Local Authority type	London Borough	11	15
	Metropolitan Authorities	21	20
	English Unitary Authorities	18	19
	Counties	50	45
Number of schools		20,299	1,551

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Some information is not available for all schools and some schools included more than one respondent

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010

Table S.4 Comparison of the achieved (weighted) sample with the national population by grade of teacher

Role	Primary schools				Secondary schools			
	population		weighted sample		population		weighted sample	
	N*	%	N	%	N*	%	N	%
Headteachers	16.8*	10	113	9	3.2*	2	16	2
Deputy Headteachers	11.7*	7	131	11	5.3*	3	44	5
Assistant Headteachers	6.5*	4	68	6	11.4*	6	95	10
Class teachers and others	131.8*	79	911	75	160.0*	89	812	84

**Population N is expressed in thousands*

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Sources: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2010, DCSF: School Workforce in England (including Local Authority level figures), January 2010 (Provisional)

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000927/index.shtml> [1 December 2010]

How accurately do the findings represent the national position?

Precision is a measure of the extent to which the results of different samples agree with each other. If we drew a different sample of teachers would we get the same results? The more data that is available the more precise the findings. For all schools and a 50 per cent response, the precision of that response is between 47.9 per cent and 52.1 per cent. For secondary schools the same precision is + and – 3.10 percentage points and for primary schools it is + and – 2.83 percentage points.

With the weightings applied to the data, we are confident that the omnibus sample is broadly representative of teachers nationally and provides a robust analysis of teachers' views.