



**A THIRD OF HEADS “USING FUNDING FOR POORER PUPILS TO PLUG GAPS” IN THEIR
SCHOOLS’S BUDGET
*NEW SUTTON TRUST POLLING OF TEACHERS***

Almost a third (30%) of heads say the funding they get for poorer pupils is being used to plug gaps in their school’s budget, according to polling published by the Sutton Trust today. 32% of senior leaders in primary schools said they’re using their pupil premium funding in this way, slightly more than those who teach in secondary schools (27%).

The survey of 1,361 teachers, conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research for the Trust as part of their Teachers Voice Omnibus survey, highlights how budget cuts are affecting schools across the country.

The research comes after the Institute for Fiscal Studies found that schools in England are facing their first real-terms funding cuts in 20 years, reductions that the Public Accounts Committee warn are threatening to undermine the quality of education in English schools.

Almost two-thirds (65%) of the secondary school heads polled said that their school had cut back on teaching staff to save money. Four-fifths (80%) said they had cut back on either teaching staff or teaching assistants and 50% said they had cut both.

While primary school heads were much less likely to report that their school had got rid of teaching staff (21%), over half (54%) still said their teaching assistants had been cut and over a quarter (29%) said their support staff had been cut back.

Schools with more disadvantaged intakes were more likely to report cuts to staff too. Almost half (47%) of heads in the most disadvantaged fifth of primary and secondary schools said they had cut

teaching staff, compared with just over a third (35%) in the least disadvantaged fifth of schools. Teachers in London and the North East were also more likely to report cutting staff.

The research also asked teachers their priorities for spending their pupil premium funding. Most teachers cited early intervention schemes (27%), followed by more one-to-tuition (12%) and teaching assistants (12%). But just 4% of all teachers cited pupil feedback as a priority while 1% said peer-to-peer tutoring, both methods shown to be highly cost-effective in the Sutton Trust-EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit. Almost a fifth (18%) of teachers said they don't know what their school's main priority for pupil premium spending is.

Sir Peter Lampl, Founder and Chairman of the Sutton Trust and Chairman of the Education Endowment Foundation, said today:

“Our new polling adds to the growing evidence from highly credible sources that the squeeze on school budgets is having a detrimental effect on schools.

“Of particular concern is that schools are having to use funding for poorer pupils to plug gaps in their finances. Many are having to get rid of teachers to close these funding gaps.

“The pupil premium should be used for highly cost-effective interventions such as peer tutoring and pupil feedback, as shown by the Sutton Trust-EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit.”

For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact: Hilary Cornwell or Conor Ryan on 0207 802 1660.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The [Sutton Trust](#) is a foundation set up in 1997, dedicated to improving social mobility through education. It has published over 180 research studies and funded and evaluated programmes that have helped hundreds of thousands of young people of all ages, from early years through to access to the professions.
2. The [Education Endowment Foundation](#) (EEF) is a grant-making charity set up in 2011 by the Sutton Trust as lead foundation in partnership with Impetus Trust (now part of Impetus–The Private Equity Foundation), with a £125m founding grant from the Department for Education. The EEF is dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement. Since its launch the EEF has awarded £82.4 million to 133 projects working with over 850,000 pupils in over 8,300 schools across England. The EEF and Sutton Trust are, together, the government-designated What Works Centre for Education.
3. The [Teaching and Learning Toolkit](#) and its [Early Years](#) companion are accessible summaries of educational research developed by the EEF in collaboration with the Sutton Trust and a team of academics at Durham University led by Professor Steve Higgins. The Toolkits cover 46 topics and summarises research from over 11,500 studies. The Toolkits are live resources which are regularly updated.

4. The [National Foundation for Educational Research \(NFER\)](#) is a leading independent provider of rigorous research and insights in education, working to create an excellent education for all children and young people. It is a charity whose robust and innovative research, assessments and other services are widely known and used by key decision-makers. Any surplus generated is reinvested in projects to support its charitable purpose.
5. The NFER runs their Teacher Voice omnibus surveys three times a year, in the autumn, spring and summer terms. The survey achieves responses from over 1,000 practising teachers from schools in the maintained sector in England. The panel is representative of teachers from the full range of roles in primary and secondary schools, from head teachers to newly qualified class teachers.
6. The IFS research on impact of the national funding formula for schools in England can be accessed [here](#).
7. The Public Accounts Committee's report on the financial sustainability of schools can be accessed [here](#).