



Department
for Education

Teachers in England's Secondary Schools: Evidence from TALIS 2013

Research brief

June 2014

**J. Micklewright, J. Jerrim, A. Vignoles,
A. Jenkins, R. Allen, S. Ilie, E. Bellarbre,
F. Barrera & C. Hein - Institute of Education,
University of London**

Contents

Introduction	3
TALIS data	3
What TALIS can tell us – and what it can't	4
Key findings	5
Lower secondary school teachers and their schools	5
School leadership and headteachers management styles	5
Professional development	6
Appraisal and feedback	6
Teachers' views of their jobs	7
Teaching practices	8
School and classroom disciplinary environment	8
Teachers' self-efficacy	9

Introduction

The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), led by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), provides new information on the views and practices of lower secondary teachers and their headteachers and on how these vary across countries. England participated in TALIS for the first time in 2013 – the only part of the UK to do so. The survey included over 30 other countries or parts of countries.

This national report for England is published simultaneously with the OECD's first international report on TALIS 2013. It complements the OECD's report by (i) providing a more focused comparison of England with other countries and (ii) analysing differences within England across school and teacher characteristics.

International comparisons of England made in the national report include contrasts with a group of nine countries or parts of countries with high performing educational systems (as identified through scores in PISA, TIMMS and PIAAC)¹: Japan, Korea, Singapore, Estonia, Finland, The Netherlands, Flanders (Belgium), Alberta (Canada) and Australia. The report reveals that teacher views and practices often vary widely among these high performers.

TALIS data

The TALIS survey covers all types of secondary school in England with pupils in Key Stage 3, except those devoted solely to children with special needs. Response rates in England were 75% for schools and 83% for teachers, leading to samples of 154 headteachers and 2,496 teachers. These are good response rates by the standards of previous school and teacher surveys in England. Weights provided by the OECD adjust for the level and pattern of school response and for the level of teacher response within each school².

The survey sample includes roughly equal numbers of local authority maintained schools and academies and a small number of independent schools. However, the modest sized sample of schools means that some findings (especially those concerning headteachers) that relate to the variation between schools need to be treated with caution.

Data from answers to the standard international questionnaires were augmented in two ways. First, several questions for the survey in England had additional elements to capture more information in the area concerned, and a small number of questions were

¹ See Appendix C in the main report for a full description of how high and low performing countries are defined.

² See Appendix A in the main report for a full discussion of the sample design and survey response.

added. Second, data files were linked with selected information on schools taken from School Performance Tables and Ofsted records. This allows a substantially richer analysis of difference in teacher attitudes and practices across English schools than would be possible using TALIS data alone.

What TALIS can tell us – and what it can't

- TALIS is an observational study, providing a cross-section of information at a single point in time. It cannot reveal causal relationships.
- The information collected by TALIS is self reports from the teachers and headteachers. In this sense it is 'subjective' information. It is not objectively observed information on what respondents actually do or how they behave in practice.
- The results refer to the Spring of 2013, when the survey was conducted, and should not be taken as necessarily giving a good indication of the situation in the Summer of 2014 when this report is published.

Key findings

The remainder of the brief provides a summary of key findings under each of the key themes (reflecting the sequence of chapters in the main report).

Lower secondary school teachers and their schools

Compared to the average for other countries, England has younger teachers and headteachers, fewer modern language teachers, more autonomous schools, significantly greater numbers of teaching assistants and administrative and managerial staff in schools, and teachers reporting longer total working hours on average but not face-to-face teaching hours.

Differences within England include higher teacher age and experience in independent schools and poorer pupil achievement where headteachers report that shortages of teaching staff restrict the quality of instruction. Average total working hours vary only modestly with the presence of young children in the household.

- 25% of teachers in state-funded schools in the lowest average ability quarter of pupil intake teach three or more subjects at Key Stage 3 compared to only 13% of teachers in schools in the top ability quarter.
- Almost all headteachers in England report that responsibility for determining teacher pay (both starting salary and pay increases) is at least shared at the school level but, on average, only 32% do so in high performing countries.
- Teachers in England report, on average, working 46 hours a week on all tasks (48 hours for full-time teachers), one of the highest figures in TALIS and 9 hours more than the median for all countries. But average face-to-face teaching time in England (20 hours) is close to the international average.

School leadership and headteachers management styles

Headship is increasingly a postgraduate-level job in England, with a very high proportion of school heads with higher degrees and/or the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). A high proportion of headteachers in England share important decision-making with others. In general, this 'distributed' leadership is less common in high performing TALIS countries.

Headteachers in more deprived schools in England have higher levels of distributed leadership and are less likely to find a lack of resources to be a barrier to their effectiveness. Both findings may reflect the large investment during recent decades in the more deprived urban schools in England.

- 86% of school heads in England disagreed that they make the important decisions in their schools on their own, compared to medians of 65% for all countries in TALIS and 66% for the nine high performing countries.
- The top three issues cited by headteachers in England as creating significant barriers to their effectiveness are: (i) government regulation and policy (79% of heads), (ii) inadequate school budget and resources (78%), and (iii) high workload and level of responsibilities in their job (68%). The averages for all TALIS countries are 69%, 80% and 72%.
- In all countries, including England (94%), a very large majority of headteachers report being satisfied with their jobs. Within England, headteachers in schools rated by Ofsted as 'outstanding' or 'good' are more satisfied on average than heads of schools rated as 'satisfactory' or 'inadequate'.

Professional development

The quantity of CPD undertaken by teachers in England is relatively high by international standards, when measured by the existence and use of induction programmes, by mentoring, and by participation in some (but not all) forms of training.

But time spent in training is lower on average in England. And the extent of 'effective' training – CPD felt to have a significant impact on teaching – is lower for a number of important areas of activity. Teachers in England also feel less need for CPD across a range of different areas than teachers elsewhere.

- 92% of teachers in England report having undertaken some CPD in the last 12 months. Finland and Japan have the lowest figures among high performing countries (79% and 83%).
- 50% of teachers in England report 'effective' training over the previous year in their subject fields compared to an average of 71% for high performing countries.
- About two thirds of teachers in England with children aged 0-4 report lack of time due to family responsibilities as a barrier to CPD. Induction, participation in CPD, and 'effective' training is lower for teachers in independent schools. Among teachers in the state-funded sector, 'effective' training is higher, on average, in schools with lower ability intakes and higher percentages of pupils receiving Free School Meals.

Appraisal and feedback

England has near universal systems of teacher appraisal, reported by headteachers, and the great majority of teachers report receiving feedback: England is a high appraisal/feedback country compared both to the average TALIS country and to some,

but not all, of the high performers. The high performing countries display considerable variation.

But teachers in England tend to be rather less positive about the effect of feedback on their teaching than teachers in many other countries. There are various competing explanations for this.

- 99% of teachers in England report receiving feedback from one or more sources in their current school, compared to an average of 88% for all countries in TALIS and 89% for high performing countries. But about a half of teachers in England – the same as on average in other countries – believe that appraisal and feedback are largely done to fulfil administrative requirements.
- A half of teachers in England do say that feedback had a moderate or large positive impact on their confidence, on their teaching practices, and on their job satisfaction.
- The average number of different sources of feedback reported by teachers and the average number of moderate/large positive changes as a result of feedback are lower in independent schools but there is no statistically significant variation in either measure by Ofsted rating.

Teachers' views of their jobs

The views expressed in this area are mixed. For example, fewer teachers in England express overall satisfaction with their jobs than in any other country in TALIS. This may be seen as disappointing if a crude 'league table' view is taken. But the large majority – four fifths – of teachers in England do say that they are satisfied with their jobs.

- 1 in 3 teachers in England (35%) believe that their profession is valued by society. The majority of countries in TALIS record even lower figures. But teachers in most high performing countries are more positive, including Singapore and Korea where two thirds of teachers hold this view, although they are not in Japan.
- There is a strong negative association in England between teacher age and whether the teacher believes that the teaching profession is valued in society – younger teachers hold more positive views. England is one of the few countries where this is the case.
- Most teachers in England (73%) feel that teachers are underpaid compared to other similarly qualified professionals. But half (53%) agree that their own pay is fair given their level of performance. Teachers who work long hours are less satisfied with their pay. Questions in relation to pay were asked in England only.

Teaching practices

There are clear differences between England and other countries in some views held by teachers and in the use of several practices.

- Teachers in England report, on average, spending 7% of their time in the classroom on administrative duties, 11% on maintaining discipline, and 82% on teaching. This situation is near the median for the high performing countries.
- 74% of teachers in England agree that 'Thinking and reasoning processes are more important than specific curriculum content', fewer than in most other TALIS countries (the average is 84%). The percentage in England does not vary significantly with measured characteristics of schools.
- 58% of teachers in England report often getting students to work in small groups, compared to only 40%, on average, in high performing countries. Again, there is no significant variation within England with measured school characteristics, but women and younger teachers use this technique more. Teachers in England are also much more likely than teachers in most countries to give different work to students with different abilities ('differentiation'). 63% report doing so often compared to 32%, on average, in high performing countries.

School and classroom disciplinary environment

On school climate, the evidence from TALIS suggests that serious disciplinary problems in England are unusual. For example, in all schools, headteachers report use or possession of drugs or alcohol as rare or absent.

On classroom climate, the situation in England again does not stand out as bad by international standards. On the evidence of teachers' reports, it is at the average for countries in TALIS or, in some respects, better.

- Late arrival of students and absence are reported by headteachers to occur on a weekly or daily basis in England in 56% and 41% respectively of schools – close to the medians for all countries and below the levels of several high performing countries. But headteachers report unjustified absenteeism by teachers as occurring at least weekly in 11% of schools, more than in many other countries.
- 21% of teachers in England agree that they have to wait quite a long time at the start of their class for students to quieten down – but this figure is less than the median for all countries (27%) and less than in most high performing countries.
- Classroom climate is notably better, on average, in independent schools than in state-funded schools and, among the latter, where Key Stage 2 intake scores are higher. But less than a fifth of the variation in classroom climate is accounted for at

the school level: typically, schools do not have uniformly good or bad classroom climate.

Teachers' self-efficacy

International comparison of self-efficacy (beliefs teachers hold about their capability to influence learning) must be treated with some caution as cultural differences may influence the way in which questions are answered. But the results from TALIS suggest that teachers in England are confident in their abilities – their self-efficacy is quite high compared to teachers in other countries.

Self-efficacy tends to be higher when teachers report good relations with others in the school. The direction of causality is unclear. Teachers with high self-efficacy may build good relations. Or by working in schools with good relations, teachers may become more confident.

- 56% of teachers in England believe they are very capable of calming a disruptive student, 49% that they can craft good questions for their students, and 29% that they can motivate students who show low interest – compared to median values for high performing countries of 30%, 31% and 21% respectively.
- Only a tenth of the variation in teachers' self-efficacy in England occurs at the school level. The bulk of the variation is within schools rather than between schools. There is no evidence that self-efficacy is higher in independent schools than in state-funded schools, nor, among the latter, that it varies according to the proportion of pupils from poor backgrounds in the school or between maintained schools and academies.
- Less experienced teachers in England – those with five years or less in the profession – tend to have lower self-efficacy. But beyond five years of experience there is no significant variation in self-efficacy levels.



Department
for Education

© Institute of Education, University of London 2014

Reference: DFE-RB302

ISBN: 978-1-78105-368-3

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

Natasha.CALVERT@education.gsi.gov.uk or www.education.gov.uk/contactus

This document is available for download at www.gov.uk/government/publications