



Department
for Education

Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 3

Summary report

November 2024

**IFF Research and IOE, UCL's Faculty of
Education and Society**



**Government
Social Research**

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Methodology	3
3. Teacher and leader workload	6
4. Flexible working	11
5. Pupil behaviour	12
6. Teacher and leader pay	13
7. Job and career reflections	15
8. Teacher and leader wellbeing	17
9. Future plans	20
10. Leaving teaching in the English state school sector	22

1. Introduction

The working lives of teachers and leaders study is an annual survey of teachers and leaders in state schools in England. The survey explores teachers and leaders’:

- workload, wellbeing and flexible working arrangements
- attitudes to pay
- experiences of professional development
- views on pupil behaviour
- career reflections
- future career intentions

This summary presents headline findings from wave 3 of the survey, carried out between 26 January and 4 May 2024.

Findings from wave 1 ([Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 1 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/121421/Working_lives_of_teachers_and_leaders_-_wave_1_-_GOV.UK.pdf)), and wave 2 ([Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 2 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/121422/Working_lives_of_teachers_and_leaders_-_wave_2_-_GOV.UK.pdf)) are available at the links above.

2. Methodology

In part, the working lives of teachers and leaders survey uses a longitudinal design. Those who took part in the preceding year are approached to participate in the following wave. All those who completed the wave 2 survey were invited to take part in wave 3. New participants are also invited to take part each year, ensuring a representative sample of at least 10,000 teachers and leaders.

Wave 3 participants

A total of 10,020 teachers and leaders participated in wave 3 of the survey, 6,413 of whom also completed the wave 2 survey (2023) and of these, 4,397 have participated in the research since wave 1 (2022). The new participants for wave 3 were sampled from:

- the [school workforce in England, 2022 reporting year](#)
- DfE's continuing professional development portal for early career teachers (ECTs)

In addition, 520 leavers (those who no longer teach in an English state school) completed a section of the survey, taking the total number of responses to 10,540.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was split into a core questionnaire and three shorter modules. All participating teachers and leaders were asked questions from the core questionnaire. Those who took part online were also randomly assigned one of the modules:

- work life and wellbeing (2,364)
- continuing professional development (2,359)
- pay (2,363)

Weighting and margin of error

Survey data was weighted to the [school workforce in England, 2023 reporting year](#) to ensure that findings represent the population of teachers and leaders in England. Data presented from a sample of teachers and leaders, rather than the total population, is subject to sampling error.

The sample of 10,020 teachers and leaders currently working in an English state school means that statistically, we can be 95% confident that the true value of a survey finding of 50% lies within a +/- 1.1% range, that is 48.9% to 51.1%. Results based on a sub-set of teachers and leaders surveyed are subject to a wider margin of error.

In this report we have:

- made comparisons from wave 1 and wave 2 against wave 3 where possible
- drawn out statistically significant differences between the three years

Comparisons between groups such as teachers and leaders or school phase are drawn out when statistically significant.

The [wave 1](#) and [wave 2](#) technical reports have more detail on the methodology.

Groups used in the analysis

An explanation of the groups of participants used in the analysis and the number in each group.

Teachers

Includes all who specified they were:

- leading practitioners
- middle leaders
- classroom teachers (not early career teachers)
- classroom teachers (early career teachers)
- unqualified teachers

There were 8,099 participants in this group.

Classroom teacher

Includes all who specified they were:

- a classroom teacher (not early career teacher)
- a classroom teacher (early career teacher)

There were 7,541 participants in this group.

Middle leaders

Includes all who specified they were a middle leader, such as a:

- head of faculty
- head of subject or subject leader
- head of key stage
- head of phase

- head of year group

There were 2,199 participants in this group.

Senior leaders

Includes all who specified that they were:

- an executive headteacher
- a headteacher
- deputy headteacher
- assistant headteacher
- leading practitioner

There were 2,019 participants in this group.

Leaders

Includes all who specified that they were:

- an executive headteacher
- a headteacher
- deputy headteacher
- an assistant headteacher

There were 1,755 participants in this group.

Those with teaching responsibilities

Includes all who reported that they were a classroom teacher, or who indicated that their responsibilities included classroom teaching. This includes those who specified that they were leaders but undertook classroom teaching. Over nine-in-ten (93%) teachers and leaders in the survey reported having teaching responsibilities.

There were 9,118 participants in this group.

3. Teacher and leader workload

Overall workload

The survey asked teachers and leaders to estimate their total working hours in their most recent term-time working week.

Leaders' average reported working hours were 56.6 per week in 2024, a decrease from 57.4 per week in 2023, and consistent with 56.8 in 2022. Average working hours for leaders working full-time were 57.6 (consistent with 58.2 in 2023, and 57.5 in 2022).

Teachers continued to report working fewer hours on average than leaders, and also reported slightly lower working hours than in 2022 or 2023 (48.7 in 2022, 49.4 in 2023, 48.1 in 2024). Average hours worked per week were also slightly lower for full-time teachers in 2024 (51.9 in 2022, 52.4 in 2023, 51.2 in 2024).

Distribution of working hours by band

Full-time teachers and leaders were most likely to report working 50 to 59 hours per week, as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Distribution of working hours 2024 - full-time teachers and leaders

Hours worked	<20	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 or more	Don't know
Full-time teachers	1%	1%*	4%*	32%*	39%	17%	4%	1%	2%*
Full-time leaders	<1%	0%	1%	10%	42%*	34%*	10%*	2%*	1%

Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. D1. In your most recent fully working week, approximately how many hours did you work? Single response. All full-time teachers (wave 3, 2024, n=6,472) and all full-time leaders (wave 3, 2024, n=1,571). *Indicates significant difference between teachers and leaders.

Average working hours by phase

Full-time teachers in primary and secondary schools worked fewer hours on average in 2024 compared with previous years (Table 3.2). There was, however, no change between years for hours worked by teachers in special schools, pupil referral units or other alternative provision. Working hours for leaders remained consistent between years across all phases.

Table 3.2 Average working hours by phase for full-time teachers and leaders, 2022-2024

Phase	2022	2023	2024
Primary (teachers) ^(a)	53.2*	53.9*	52.5 ^{bc}
Primary (leaders) ^(a)	57.2	57.9	57.5 ^c
Secondary (teachers) ^(b)	51.2*	51.4*	50.3 ^c
Secondary (leaders) ^(b)	58.6	59.1	58.3 ^c
Special/PRUs/AP (teachers) ^(c)	48.2	49.3	48.3
Special/PRUs/AP (leaders) ^(c)	54.7	55.5	54.8

Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. D1. In your most recent full working week, approximately how many hours did you work? Single response. All full-time primary teachers (wave 1, 2022, n=3,431, wave 2, 2023, n=3,339, wave 3, 2024, n=3,066). All full-time primary leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=967, wave 2, 2023, n=837, wave 3, 2024, n=983). All full-time secondary teachers (wave 1, 2022, n=3,340, wave 2, 2023, n=3,312, wave 3, 2024, n=3,086). All full-time secondary leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=610, wave 2, 2023, n=546, wave 3, 2024, n=462). All full-time special/PRU/AP teachers (wave 1, 2022, n=342, wave 2, 2023, n=294, wave 3, 2024, n=320). All full-time special/PRU/AP leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=118, wave 2, 2023, n=114, wave 3, 2024, n=126). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2024. Letters denote significant differences between school phases in 2024.

Hours spent teaching

In 2024 full-time leaders with teaching responsibilities reported spending 12.4 hours teaching on average in the reference week, consistent with the 12.8 hours in 2023 but lower than the 13.3 hours in 2022.

Full-time teachers with teaching responsibilities spent an average of 23.3 hours teaching in the reference week in 2024. This was lower than the 24.0 hours in 2023 and 23.7 in 2022.

Average teaching hours for full-time teachers with teaching responsibilities in secondary schools (21.5) were lower than those in primary schools (25.3) and also those in special schools, pupil referral units or other alternative provision (22.9).

As shown in Table 3.3 below, the majority of leaders spent less than 15 hours teaching in the reference week (65%). Teachers were most likely to spend between 20 and 24 hours teaching in the reference week (39%), similar to the pattern observed in previous waves.

Table 3.3 distribution of teaching hours 2024 - full-time teachers and leaders

Hours spent teaching	0	1 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 29	30 to 34	35 or more	Don't know
Teachers	<1%	4%	2%	11%	39%*	23%*	15%*	4%*	2%*
Leaders	1%*	38%*	26%*	16%*	10%	5%	4%	<1%	0%

Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders 2024 survey. D2. In your most recent full working week, approximately how many hours did you spend on teaching in the classroom (including online classes)? Single response. All full-time teachers (n=6,419) and full-time leaders (n=967) with teaching responsibilities. *Indicates a significant difference between responses of leaders vs. teachers.

Views on workload

Compared with previous years, there was an increase in the proportion of teachers and leaders who felt their workload was acceptable. Just over one-in-five (22%) agreed that they had an acceptable workload in 2024, an increase from 17% in both 2022 and 2023. Similarly, a higher proportion agreed that they had sufficient control over their workload than in previous years (34% in 2024 vs. 30% in 2023 and 26% in 2022).

In total, half (49%) of teachers and leaders thought their workload was both not acceptable and that they did not have sufficient control over it, a decrease compared with 2023 (54%) and 2022 (57%).

Time spent on non-teaching tasks

Teachers and middle leaders

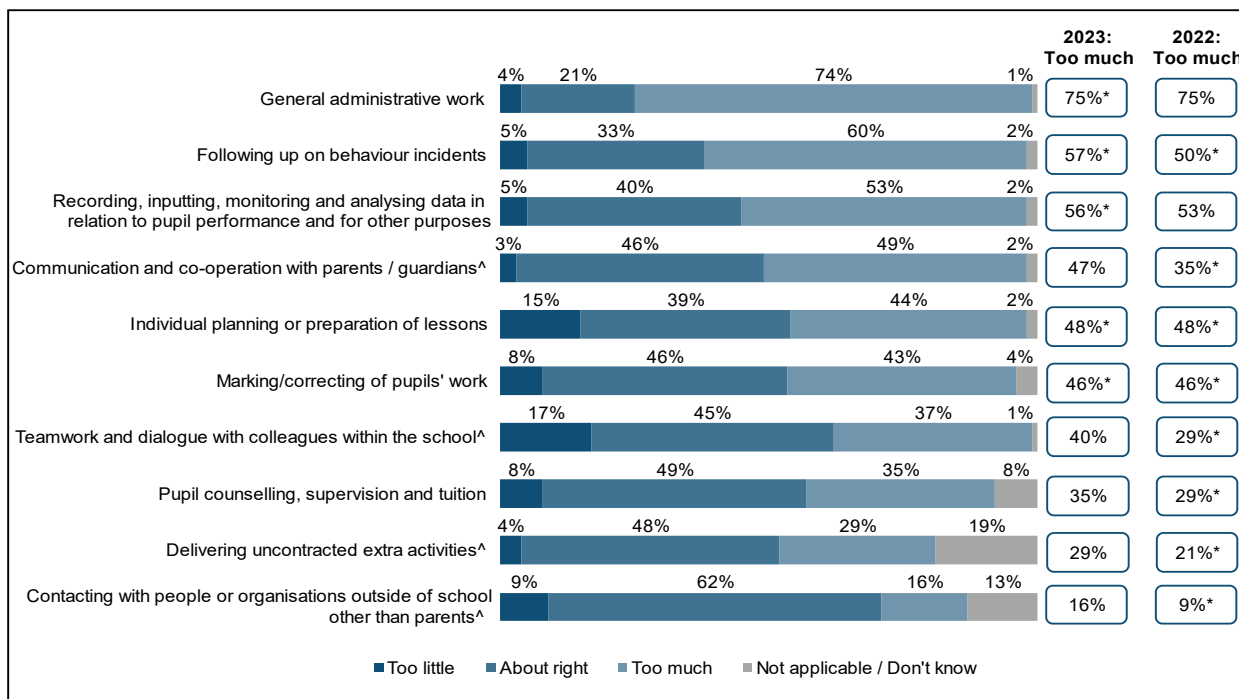
The tasks teachers and middle leaders most commonly reported spending too much time on have been broadly similar year on year, as shown in Figure 3.1. For example, general administrative work has consistently appeared at the top of the list (74% in 2024, 75% in 2023 and 2022).¹

Nevertheless, there were some differences in 2024. Teachers and middle leaders were less likely to report spending too much time on individual planning or preparation of lessons (44% in 2024 vs. 48% in both 2022 and 2023) and marking/correcting pupils work (43% in 2024 vs. 46% in both 2022 and 2023).

Conversely, there was one category where the proportion of teachers and leaders reporting spending too much time on the activity increased: this was follow up on behaviour incidents, at 60% in 2024, compared to 57% in 2023 and 50% in 2022.

¹ General administrative tasks include tasks such as communication, paperwork, work emails, and other clerical duties they undertake in their job as a teacher.

Figure 3.1 Classroom teachers and middle leaders' views on time on specific tasks



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey D3_1-6/P1_1-4. Across the whole school year, is the amount of time you spend outside lessons on the following far too little, too little, about right, too much, far too much, or is the statement not applicable to you? “Too much” is the sum of too much and far too much “too little” is the sum of too little and far too little. Single response. D3: All classroom teachers and middle leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=8,960) (wave 2, 2023, n=8,476) (wave 3, 2024, n=8,001). P1: All module 1 classroom teachers and middle leaders (wave 1, 2022, P1-3 n=2,903, P1_4=2915) (wave 2, 2023, n=2,139) (wave 3, 2024, n=2,031). [^]Indicates question asked at P1 to a smaller base of respondents randomly assigned to a module within the survey. *Indicates statistically significant difference compared to 2024 survey.

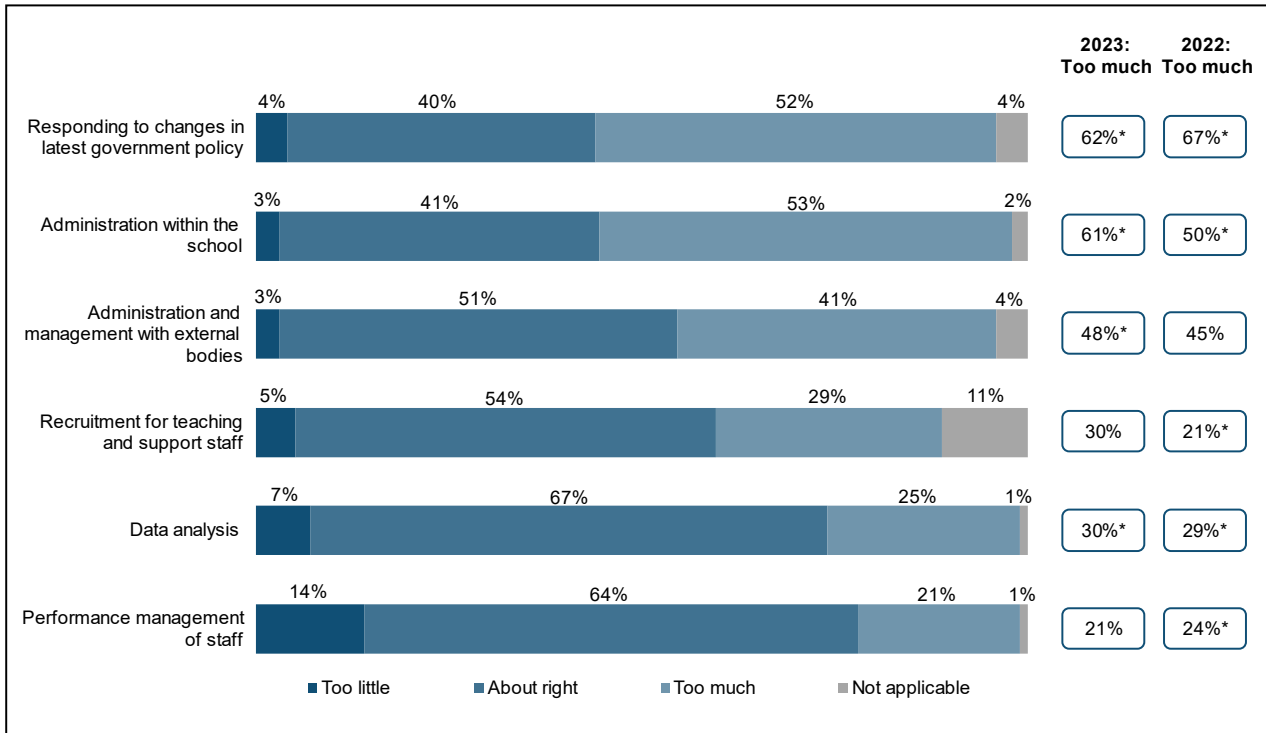
Senior leaders

In 2024 senior leaders remained most likely to report spending too much time on administration within the school (53%) and responding to government policy changes (52%) (Figure 3.2). The same was reported in 2022 and 2023.

However, the proportion of senior leaders reporting tasks as taking too much time had decreased in several categories, including:

- responding to changes in latest government policy: 52% in 2024 vs. 62% in 2023 and 67% in 2022
- administration within the school: 53% in 2024 vs. 61% in 2023
- data analysis: 25% in 2024 vs. 30% in 2023 and 29% in 2022

Figure 3.2 Senior leaders' views on time on specific tasks



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. D3_7-12. Across the whole school year, is the amount of time you spend outside lessons on the following far too little, too little, about right, too much, far too much, or is the statement not applicable to you? “Too much” is the sum of too much and far too much
 “too little” is the sum of too little and far too little. Single response. All senior leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=2,213) (wave 2, 2023, n=1,892) (wave 3, 2024, n=2,019). *Indicates statistically significant difference compared to 2024 survey.

4. Flexible working

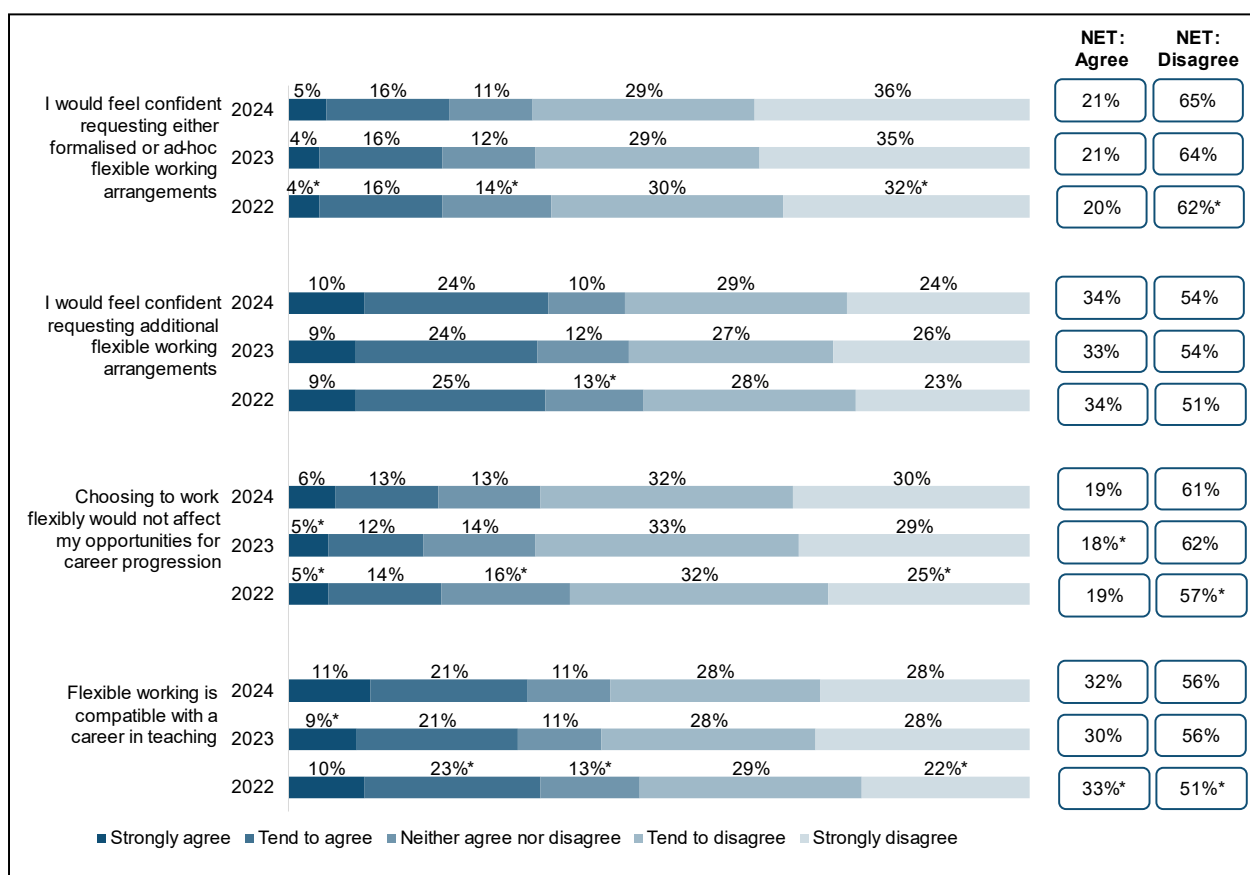
Types of flexible working arrangements

Almost half of teachers and leaders had a flexible working arrangement in place (46%). This was consistent with the 46% seen in 2023 and an increase from the 40% seen in 2022.

Part-time working remained the most common flexible working arrangement, at 21%, but the prevalence of a number of other arrangements have increased since 2022. This includes PPA time off-site (15% in 2024 vs. 12% in 2022), ad-hoc days to start late or finish early (13% in 2024 vs. 7% in 2022 and 14% in 2023), and ad-hoc personal days off at their manager’s discretion (11% in 2024 vs. 6% in 2022).

Views on the compatibility and acceptability of flexible working were mixed (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 Teachers and leaders’ views on flexible working arrangements



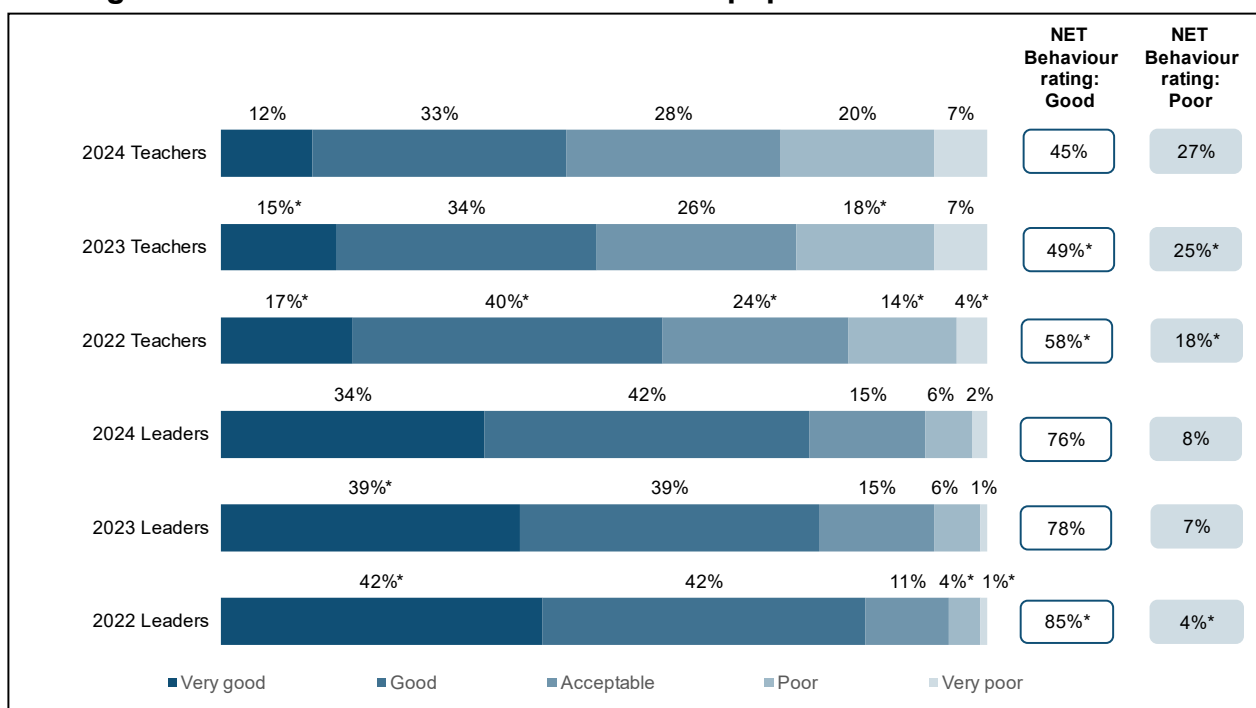
Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. K2_1-4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Single response. All currently teaching or leading in an English state school (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, n=10,020). Base for K2_3: All not working flexibly or whose only flexible working is occasional days off or leaving early (wave 1, 2022, n=7,256) (wave 2, 2023, n=6,677) (wave 3, 2024, n=6,291). Base for K2_4: All those currently working flexibly (wave 1, 2022, n=3,921) (wave 2, 2023, n=3,734) (wave 3, 2024, n=3,729). *Indicates statistically significant difference compared to 2024 survey.

5. Pupil behaviour

Views on pupil behaviour

Figure 5.1 shows teachers and leaders' views on pupil behaviour at their school. Around three-quarters (76%) of leaders reported that behaviour at their school was either good or very good, consistent with 2023, but a decrease from the 85% seen in 2022. Likewise, 45% of teachers reported that behaviour at their school was either good or very good, a decrease from 49% in 2023 and 58% in 2022.

Figure 5.1 Teachers and leaders' views on pupil behaviour at their school



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. F1. In general, how would you rate pupil behaviour in your school? Single response for each statement. "Good" is the sum of good and very good, "poor" is the sum of poor and very poor. All teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, n=10,020). The proportion of those answering 'don't know' was 1% or less. *Indicates significant difference compared to 2024 survey.

Around eight-in-ten (79%) leaders with teaching responsibilities reported that they felt always or mostly supported to deal with disruptive behaviour (consistent with the 80% in 2023 but lower than the 85% in 2022).

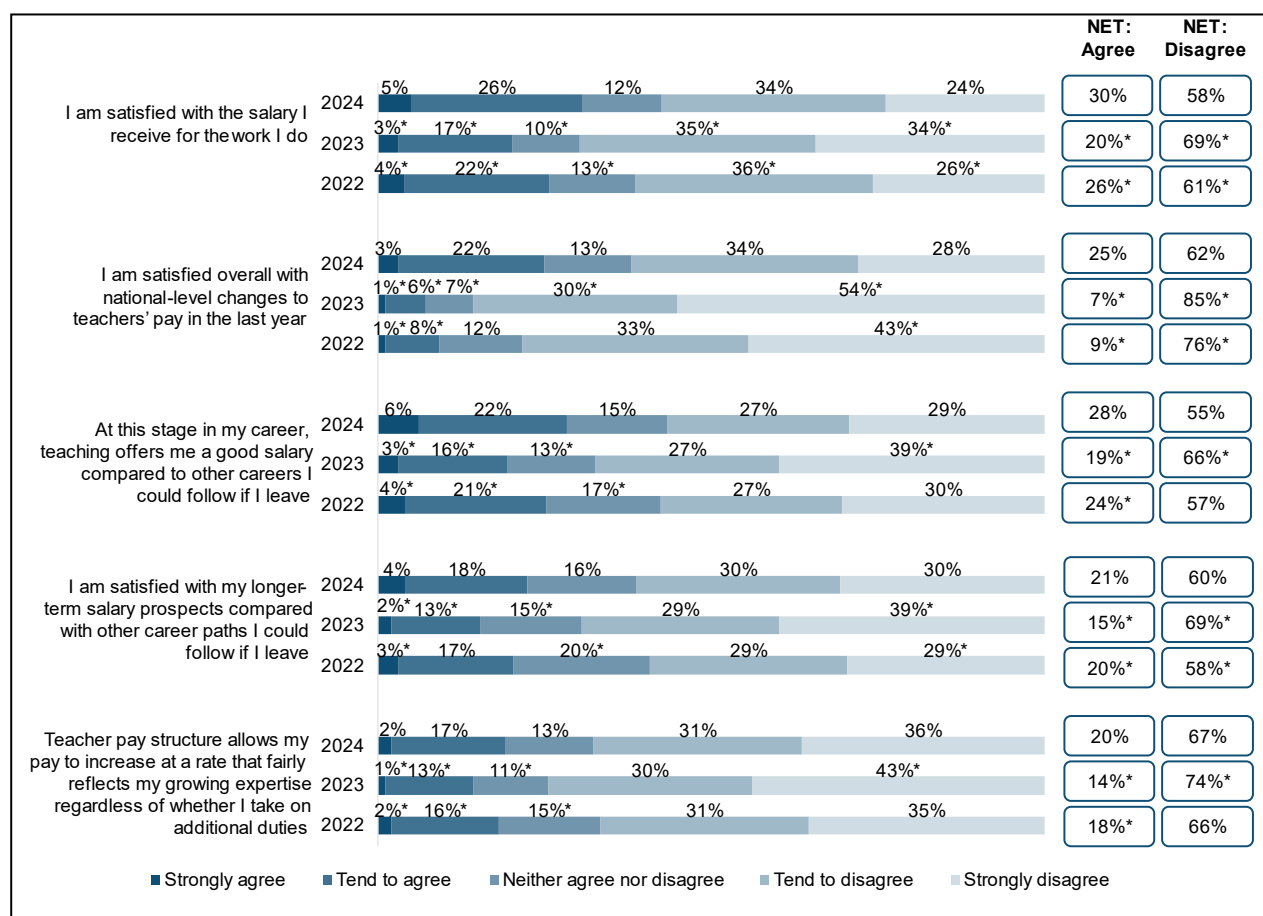
Teachers with teaching responsibilities were less positive, with 49% reporting feeling always or mostly supported with dealing with disruptive behaviour (lower than the 52% in 2023 and 58% in 2022).

6. Teacher and leader pay

Views on salary and salary prospects

As seen in previous years, the majority of teachers and leaders (58%) disagreed that they were satisfied with the salary they received for the work that they did (Figure 6.1). However, this was lower than in previous waves (69% in 2023 and 61% in 2022). Accordingly, a greater proportion agreed that they were satisfied with the salary they received (30%) than in 2023 (20%) or 2022 (26%).

Figure 6.1 Teachers and leaders' views on pay, 2022-2024



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. J1_1-5. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about pay and your job? Single response. All teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, n=10,020). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2024 survey.

As in previous years, leaders were more likely than teachers to agree that they were satisfied with the salary they received (55% of leaders vs. 26% of teachers).

Satisfaction with school decisions around pay

Teachers and leaders not classified as headteachers or executive headteachers were more positive about some decisions their school made regarding pay compared with

2023 and 2022. Around two-thirds (65%) reported that the decisions their school took about their pay was fair, a continued increase from 57% in 2023 and 51% in 2022. A similar proportion (63%) were satisfied with how their school communicated decisions about their pay, up from 58% in 2023 and 53% in 2022. A smaller proportion (44%) felt that their school followed its own pay policy in making decisions about their pay, down from 46% in 2023.

Headteachers and executive headteachers were more positive about their pay than other teachers and leaders. Around three-quarters (77%) of headteachers and executive headteachers agreed that the decisions taken about their pay were fair, consistent with 2023 (72%) and 2022 (74%). A further 81% agreed that they were satisfied with how decisions about their pay were communicated to them, again consistent with 2023 (79%) and 2022 (78%).

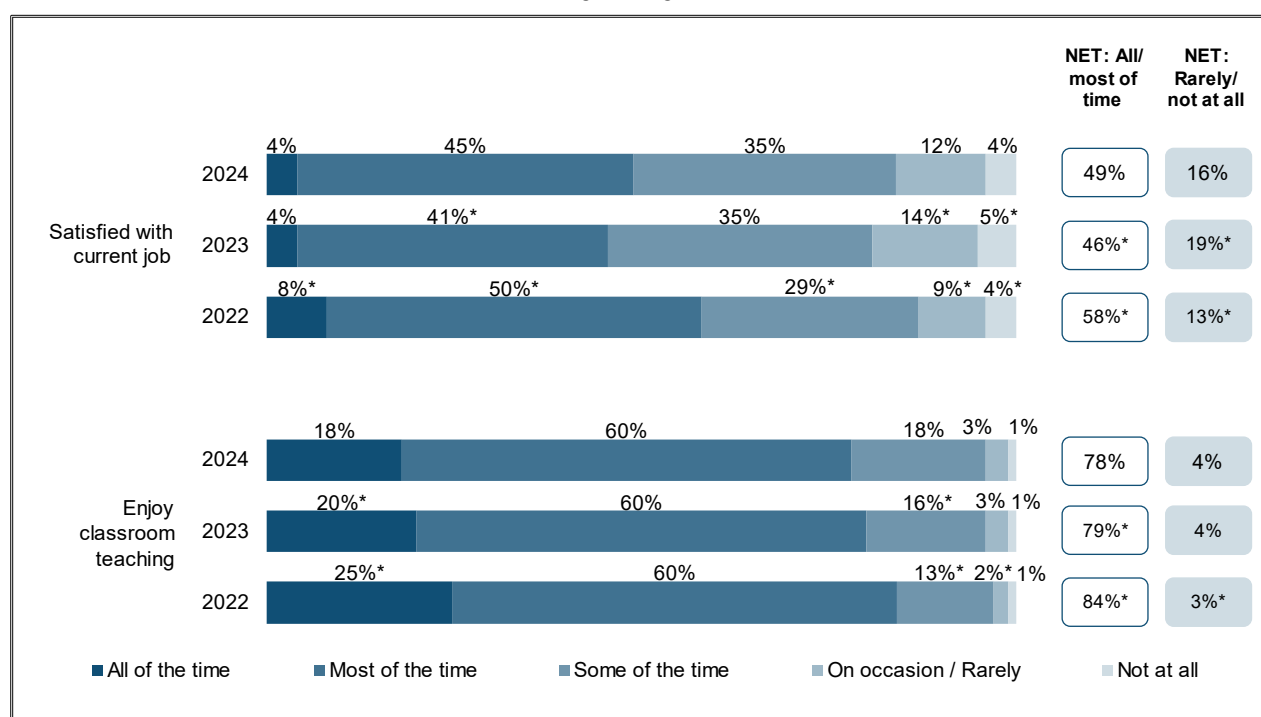
7. Job and career reflections

Satisfaction with job

Almost half of all teachers and leaders (49%) reported that they were satisfied with their job either most or all of the time (Figure 7.1). This was an increase from 46% in 2023 but remained lower than the 58% seen in 2022.

The proportion of teachers and leaders who enjoyed classroom teaching most or all of the time decreased from 84% in 2022 and 79% in 2023 to 78% in 2024.

Figure 7.1 Satisfaction with current job and enjoyment of classroom teaching, 2022-2024²



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. M1_1. To what extent would you say that you are satisfied with your current job? Single response. All teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, 10,020). M1_2. To what extent would you say that you enjoy classroom teaching? Single response. All with teaching responsibilities (wave 1, 2022, n=10,244) (wave 2, 2023, n=9,620) (wave 3, 2024, 9,118). The proportion of those answering 'don't know' was less than 1%, as it was for all previous survey waves. *Indicates significant difference compared to 2024 survey.

Views on being valued and recognised

Two-thirds (66%) of teachers and leaders reported that they felt valued by their school, an increase from 65% in 2023 and 2022. However, whilst views on feeling recognised by their school, the fairness of school inspection and feeling valued by society were similar

² The 2022 data for 'Not at all' (4%) is significantly different compared to the 2024 data (4%) for 'Satisfied with current job' due to rounding.

to 2023, more tended to disagree with these statements compared to 2022, as shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Teachers and leaders' views on school accountability, inspection regimes and whether views are valued

Net agree/disagree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Year	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
I feel valued by my school	65%	65%*	66%	21%	21%	20%
My school recognises and rewards high performance from the teaching / leadership staff	39%*	34%	35%	31%*	35%	35%
School accountability measures provide important information about school performance	28%	26%	28%	49%*	52%	51%
The school inspection regime provides a fair assessment of school performance	18%*	15%	14%	63%*	71%	72%
Teachers' views are valued by policymakers, e.g. the government	6%*	4%*	5%	85%*	90%*	88%
I think the teaching profession is valued by society	17%*	12%	12%	69%*	76%	77%

Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. "Agree" is the sum of tend to agree and strongly agree, "disagree" is the sum of tend to disagree and strongly disagree. E1_1. Agreement that 'I feel valued by my school'. Single response. All teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, n=10,020). Q1_4. Agreement that 'my school recognises and rewards high performance from the teaching / leadership staff'. Q1_7. Agreement that 'I think the teaching profession is valued by society'. Single response. All teachers and leaders (module 2) (wave 1, 2022, n=3,494) (wave 2, 2023, n=2,462) (wave 3, 2024, n=2,359). E4_1-3. Agreement that 'school accountability measures provide important information about school performance'; 'The school inspection regime provides a fair assessment of school performance'; 'Teachers' views are valued by policymakers'. Single response. All teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, n=10,020). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2024 survey.

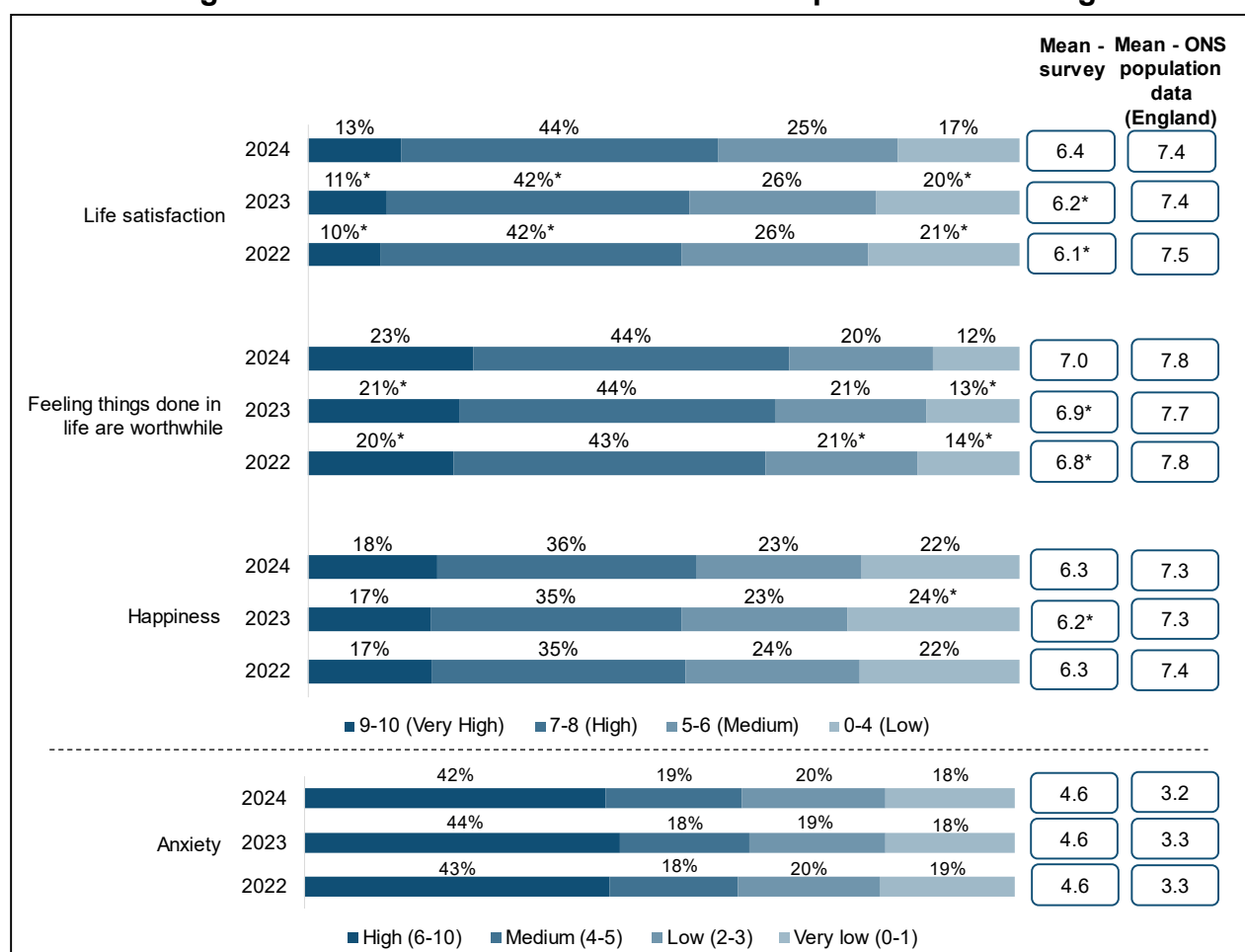
8. Teacher and leader wellbeing

Overall wellbeing

The average life satisfaction score for teachers and leaders rose since 2023, as did the average score they gave to feeling things done in life were worthwhile, and in both cases, this followed increases between 2022 and 2023 (Figure 8.1).

The teacher and leader mean happiness score also rose between 2023 and 2024, returning to the same level as in 2022, whilst there was no change in reported anxiety. It remains the case that these wellbeing measures are lower for survey respondents than for the wider population in England.³

Figure 8.1 Teachers and leaders' views on personal wellbeing



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. N1. For each of the following questions, please give an answer on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is “not at all” and 10 is “completely”. N2. On a scale where 0 is “not at all anxious” and 10 is “completely anxious”, overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? Single response. All teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, n=10,020). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2024 survey.

³ [UK Measures of National Well-being Dashboard - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/uk-measures-of-national-well-being)
 ONS data for each year is taken from Quarter 1; 2024 data from January-March 2024, 2023 data from January-March 23, 2022 data from January-March 2022

Impact of work life on wellbeing

Teachers and leaders were asked about the extent to which their work life impacted their wellbeing. While their views were generally consistent with 2023, teachers and leaders' views remained less positive than 2022, as shown in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Teachers and leaders' views on how work life impacts wellbeing

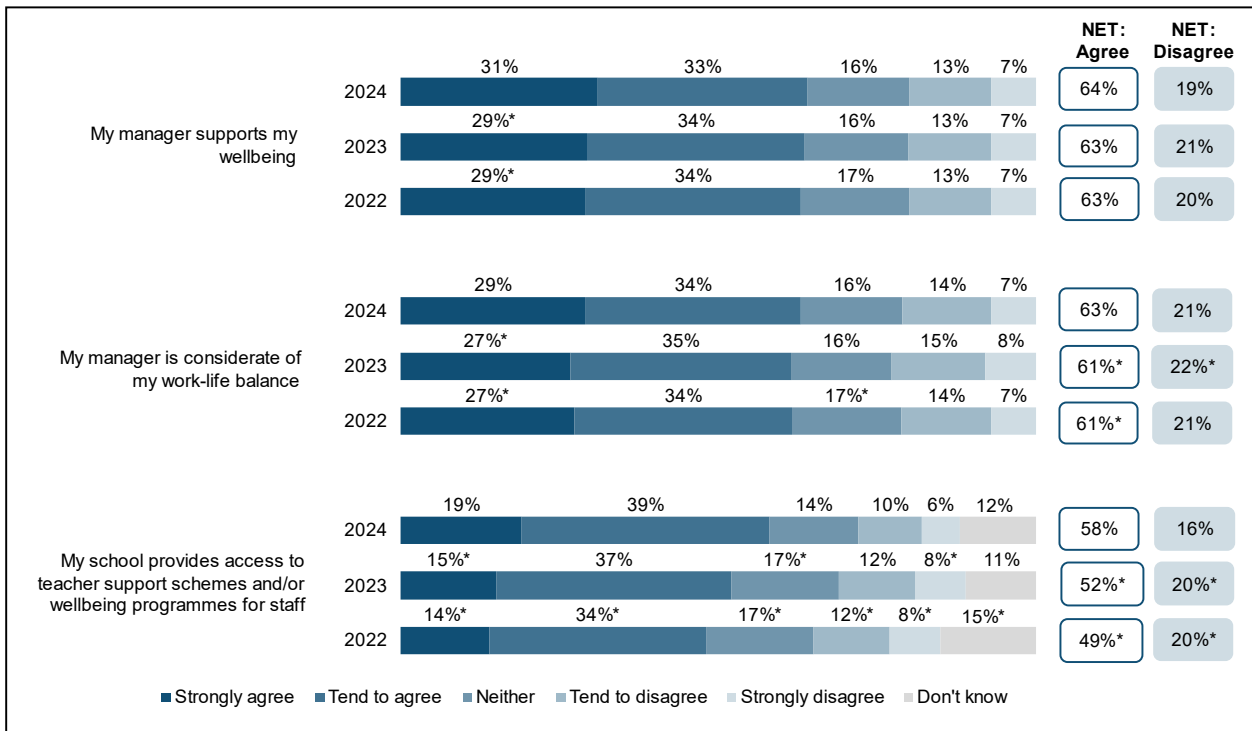
Net agree/disagree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree
Year	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
I experience stress in my work	86%*	88%	89%	6%*	5%	4%
My job does not leave me enough time for my personal life	65%*	73%	70%	16%	13%	14%
My job negatively affects my mental health	56%*	63%	62%	21%*	16%	18%
My job negatively affects my physical health	45%*	52%	49%	31%	27%*	30%

Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. "Agree" is the sum of tend to agree and strongly agree, "disagree" is the sum of tend to disagree and strongly disagree. P3. Agreement that: 'I experience stress in my work'; 'my job does not leave me enough time for my personal life'; 'my job negatively affects my mental health'; my job negatively affects my physical health'. Single response for each statement. All module 1 (wave 1, 2022, n=3,495) (wave 2, 2023, n=2,461) (wave 3, 2024, n=2,364). The proportion of those answering, 'don't know' for all statements across 2022, 2023 and 2024 was less than 2%. *Indicates significant difference compared to 2024 survey.

Views on support for wellbeing

Teachers and leaders were also asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements about the support they had received from their managers and their school more generally. The proportion of teachers and leaders reporting that their manager supports their wellbeing has remained stable across waves but there were increases in the proportion reporting that their manager is considerate of their work-life balance and that their school provides access to teacher support schemes and/or wellbeing programmes for staff when compared to previous years, as shown in Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.2 Teachers and leaders' views on support for wellbeing



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. E2_2-3: Agreement that 'your manager is considerate of your work life balance'; 'your manager supports your wellbeing'. Single response for each statement. All teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, n=10,020). P3_5: Agreement that: 'My school provides access to teacher support and/or wellbeing programmes for staff'. Single response. All module 1 (wave 1, 2022, n=3,495) (wave 2, 2023, n=2,461) (wave 3, 2024, n=2,364). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2024 survey.

9. Future plans

Career intentions

In 2024 around one-third (34%) of teachers and leaders indicated that they were considering leaving the English state school sector in the next 12 months for reasons other than retirement. This was lower than the 36% seen in 2023 but higher than the 25% seen in 2022.

Other reported career considerations were more consistent with 2023. Compared with the 2022 survey though, teachers and leaders were:

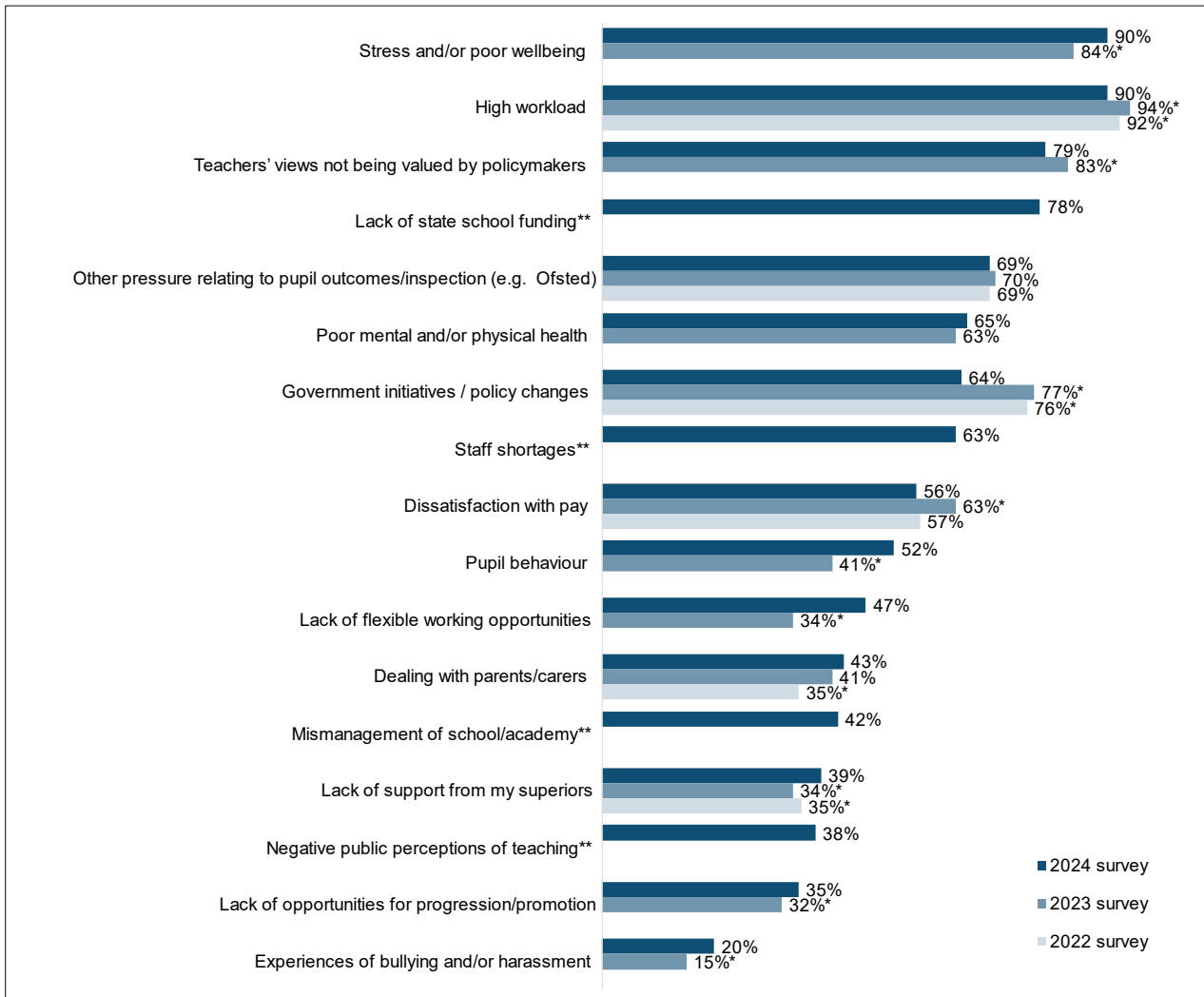
- less likely to be considering applying for a promotion in their current school in the next 12 months (26% vs. 28% in 2022)
- more likely to be considering moving to another English state school on promotion (24% vs. 22% in 2022)
- more likely to be considering moving to a job at another school at the same level (25% in 2024 vs. 22% in 2022)

For teachers and leaders not considering promotion (and not considering leaving the English state school sector) in the next 12 months, the most common reason cited for not seeking promotion continued to be concerns about the potential impact on work-life balance (30%), consistent with 2022 and 2023 (31% in each year). This was followed by teachers and leaders feeling happy at their current level (23%, up from 21% in 2023 and consistent with 24% in 2022).

Reasons for considering leaving

For teachers and leaders considering leaving the English state school sector, high workload and stress and/or poor wellbeing were the two most commonly cited reasons (both reported by 90%). This is a decrease in the proportion citing high workload (from 94% in 2023 and 92% in 2022), but an increase in the proportion citing stress and/or poor wellbeing (from 84% in 2023). A further breakdown of reasons for considering leaving can be seen in Figure 9.1.

Figure 9.1 Teachers and leaders’ reasons for considering leaving the state education sector⁴



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. M5. How important have the following factors been in making you consider leaving the state education sector (in the next 12 months)? Single response. All teachers and leaders considering leaving the state education sector (wave 1, 2022, n=2,779) (wave 2, 2023, n=3,628) (wave 3, 2024, n=3,316). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2024 survey. **Indicates new response option for 2024 survey not included in earlier waves of the survey.

⁴ Please note there was a change in wording between wave 2 and wave 3 for the statement “stress and/or poor wellbeing”. In 2024 this changed to “stress and/or poor wellbeing including having a poor work life balance”. As a result, statement are not directly comparable between years.

10. Leaving teaching in the English state school sector

Overview of leavers

Among teachers and leaders who responded to both the 2023 and 2024 surveys, 8% had left English state school teaching or leadership by 2024. This is higher than the 6% who had left between the 2022 and 2023 surveys.⁵

Of those who stated in the 2023 survey that they were considering leaving, 15% had done so by 2024. This compares with 12% who were considering leaving in 2022 and had left by 2023. Of those not considering leaving or who were not sure in 2023, 4% and 3% had left respectively by 2024, compared with 4% and 5% between 2022 and 2023.

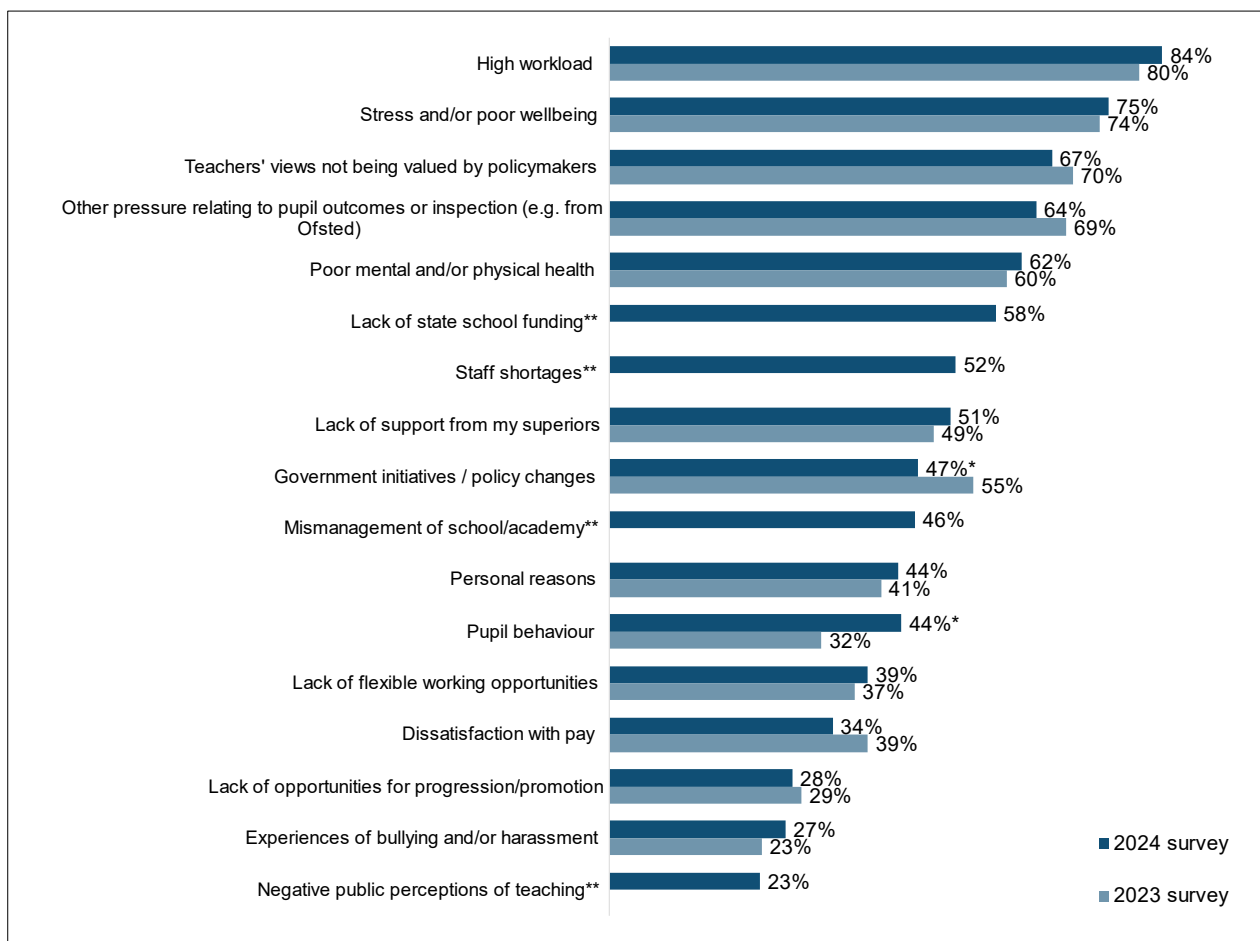
Reasons for leaving the English state school sector

For both cohorts of leavers, (those who had left between 2023 and 2024, and between 2022 and 2023), the most common reasons cited as important in contributing to their intention to leave were high workload, stress and/or poor wellbeing and teachers' views not being valued by policy makers. (Figure 10.1).

The only changes observed between the two cohorts of leavers were that those who left between 2023 and 2024 were more likely than those who had left the year before to cite pupil behaviour as an important factor in their decision (44% vs. 32%) and were less likely to cite government initiatives and policy changes (47% vs. 55%).

⁵ This may be an underestimate of the true leaver rate for the sample as it is derived from responses to the 2024 survey, and it is possible that those who had left teaching were less likely to respond (although all were encouraged to do so). For example, the leaver rate was 6% in the 2023 survey but 9.7% between the 2021 and 2022 SWC data collections and 8% in 2024 but 9.6% between the 2022 and 2023 SWC data collections.

Figure 10.1 Proportion of leavers citing different reasons for leaving the English state school education sector



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. M6. How important were the following factors in your decision to leave the state education sector? Single response. All who have left the state education sector (wave 2, 2023, n=442) (wave 3, 2024, n=520). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2024 survey. **Indicates new response option for 2024 survey not included in earlier waves of the survey.

Current working arrangements of leavers

Of all leavers between 2023 and 2024, 69% were still in employment in the 2024 survey. Leavers were most commonly still working in education in some capacity (42%, consistent with the 40% in 2023), while 31% were not working and 28% were working outside of education (both the same as 2023).

Comparison to English state school sector

Around a quarter (24%) of leavers in 2024⁶ who were still in work reported earning more than they did when compared with their role in English state sector teaching or leading, while 27% reported earning the same amount and around half (48%) reported earning less.

⁶ Those who had left the English state school sector between 2023 and 2024 surveys

Among those currently in work, leavers' average working hours per week (37.4) were lower than the average of those still teaching and leading in an English state school (49.3).

As with the previous wave, leavers in 2024 had a much more positive view on the control they had over their workload and the acceptability of their workload compared with those still teaching or leading. Three quarters (75%) of leavers agreed they had sufficient control over their own workload, compared with only 34% of those still teaching or leading. Similarly, 79% of leavers agreed their workload was acceptable compared with 22% of those still teaching or leading.

Leavers were more likely to be working flexibly when compared with those still teaching or leading in English state schools in 2024 (62% vs. 46%). However, compared with 2023, fewer leavers were working flexibly (62% vs. 70% in 2023).

Likelihood of returning

Around one-in-six leavers (18%) said they were likely to return to teaching or leading in the English state school sector within the next five years while around seven-in-ten (68%) said they were unlikely to return. These figures were consistent with those seen in 2023.



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