



Department
for Education

School and College Panel – December 2021 wave

Research Report

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Executive Summary

This report presents findings from the second (December 2021) wave of the School and College Panel, a panel run by IFF Research on behalf of the Department for Education.

A note on the reporting

The report covers questions asked about the individual experiences of teachers and leaders, and others asked of leaders at the school level.

Two types of weighting were applied to the data, depending on whether the questions were asking for school-level or individual-level answers from leaders and teachers. Where responses from 'leaders', 'teachers' or 'leaders and teachers' are referred to in the report, individual-level weighting has been applied. Where responses from 'schools' are referred to, leaders have answered the survey question and a school-level weighting has been applied. Further detail on the weighting approach can be found in the methodology section.

Due to the small base size of 16, responses from college leaders have not been included in this report. No college tutors were invited to take part in the December wave of the survey.

Findings from each wave should be interpreted in the context of guidelines in place at that time. At the time of the December 2021 survey, schools were fully reopened to all children, and the survey explored the experiences of school leaders and teachers since the reopening.

Caution should be taken when comparing results from previous surveys as any changes and patterns may be impacted by the guidelines in place at each timepoint.

Education Recovery

Just under two-thirds (63%) of schools were using NTP programme routes to deliver tutoring in their school, and among those not using all available routes, just over a third (37%) were intending to use some during this academic year. The school-led tutoring grant was the most common delivery route (48% currently and 22% intending to). Schools that were currently delivering tutoring funded by their school-led tutoring grant were most likely to do so via teachers permanently employed at the school (61%) or by teaching assistants (37%). Schools that were not participating in school-led tutoring this year were most likely to say the reasons for this were lack of time and resource to arrange it (29%) or lack of money to deliver it (25%).

Workforce Capacity

Schools were asked which types of staff members, if any, they were concerned about not having sufficient numbers of. Schools reported they were most concerned about not having sufficient numbers of teaching assistants and cover supervisors (two-thirds, or 67% of schools). They were also concerned about not having sufficient numbers of teaching staff (50%), supply staff (42%), non-teaching staff (37%) and leadership staff (36%).

Schools were also asked which issues they were most concerned about in relation to their workforce. The majority of schools were concerned about stress/burnout of current staff (82%) and staff absence due to COVID-19 related illness (72%). Just under two-thirds (59%) of schools were concerned about funding, while just under half (46%) were concerned about staff absence due to seasonal/flu illness. Roughly a quarter to a third of schools were also concerned about staff absence due to isolation (35%), recruitment of teachers (26%) and retention of teachers (22%).

Schools were asked an open-text question about which measures would be effective in reducing staff absences in schools over the coming term. The main measure raised by schools was the need to address unmanageable workloads and associated staff burnout or stress. Schools also highlighted a need to define and implement consistent rules regarding COVID to reduce its impact on schools. In addition, schools emphasised the need for more realistic expectations from Ofsted and DfE. Additional and quicker access to funding for staff was also highlighted by some schools.

Leader and Teacher Wellbeing

Around a third (34%) of school leaders and teachers reported feeling fulfilled in their job role to a 'high' or 'very high' degree, with a further 44% reporting they were 'somewhat' fulfilled. This is significantly lower than in April 2021, when 39% of leaders and teachers reported feeling fulfilled to a 'high' or 'very high' degree. Similar to April 2021,¹ leaders were significantly more likely to feel fulfilled to a 'high' or 'very high' degree than teachers (39% vs. 33%).

Around three in ten (29%) school leaders and teachers reported feeling happy in their job role to a 'high' or 'very high' degree, with 43% reporting they were 'somewhat' happy. Again, this is significantly lower than in April 2021, when 37% of leaders and teachers reported feeling happy to a 'high' or 'very high' degree.

Overall, over half (58%) of school leaders and teachers reported feeling a 'high' or 'very high' degree of burn out in their job role, a significantly higher proportion than in April

¹ The April 2021 wave was the last time this question was asked. It should be noted that pressures on teachers / within schools differ at different times of the year, and this should be considered when comparing the results.

2021 (48%). Over half (53%) of leaders and teachers reported feeling a 'high' or 'very high' level of frustration in their current job role, again a significantly higher proportion than in April 2021 (42%). Significantly more leaders (58%) than teachers (52%) reported this.

Two-thirds of school leaders and teachers said their workload was 'less manageable' than before the pandemic (67%). Leaders were significantly more likely to say this (79%, compared with 65% of teachers). Both leaders and teachers were significantly more likely to report this in December 2021 than in late-February 2021,² when 65% of leaders and 58% of teachers said their workload was 'less manageable'.

Flexible Working

Flexible working arrangements

Nearly all schools (97%) reported that at least one type of flexible working was used by leaders and/or teachers at their school. This was most commonly part-time working (used by 87% of schools). A majority used job shares (57%), occasional personal days off at a manager's discretion for ad hoc requests (57%), and occasional days to start late or finish early (55%).

Relatively few schools reported that 'all or nearly all' (6%) or 'a majority' (5%) of leaders and/or teachers had flexible working arrangements. Around one in eight schools (13%) indicated that 'around half' of leaders and/or teachers worked flexibly.

It was relatively uncommon for schools to say that 'none or close to none' leaders and/or teachers worked flexibly (15%).

Impact of flexible working

Among those schools offering some form of flexible working, the majority (85%) agreed to at least 'a small extent' that flexible working has had a positive impact on overall teacher and leader wellbeing. The majority (82%) also agreed to at least 'a small extent' that flexible working had helped retain teachers and leaders who might otherwise leave. Almost three-quarters (74%) of schools also agreed to at least 'a small extent' that flexible working had improved the overall productivity of teachers and leaders.

Most schools had found it difficult to offer flexible working within the existing school budget (31% found it 'very difficult', with 29% finding it 'quite difficult'). However, more schools felt the benefits of flexible working outweighed the costs (39%) than the reverse

² The late February 2021 wave was the last time this question was asked. Note that pressures on teachers and in schools differ at different times of the year, and this should be considered when comparing the results.

(23%). Almost a quarter (23%) felt the benefits and cost roughly balance; the remainder were unsure (15%).

Considerations when deciding on flexible working

Leaders were asked which factors are the most important to them when considering whether or not to allow teachers and leaders to work flexibly within their schools. A majority said the effect on others in the school was important to them (83%), while around two-thirds said that financial costs / school budget considerations (69%), teaching workforce capacity (69%), staff wellbeing and productivity (64%), and timetabling and other scheduling considerations (63%) were important considerations.

National Professional Qualifications (NPQs)

Over half of leaders and teachers (55%) said that they had heard of the new National Professional Qualifications (NPQs). Leaders were much more likely than teachers to have heard of the new NPQs (93% vs. 49%).

Nearly a fifth (18%) of those who had heard of NPQs said that they had applied to undertake one since June 2021, with those working in primary schools (20%) more likely to have applied than those in secondary schools (15%).

Among leaders and teachers that had not applied for an NPQ since June 2021, a quarter (25%) intended to apply in the future, with a third (33%) saying they didn't know, leaving two-fifths (43%) not intending to apply for an NPQ. Teachers were more likely than leaders to say they intended to apply for an NPQ (27% vs. 16%).

Workforce disability data collection

Most commonly (68%), the responsibility for collecting and reporting staff disability data fell to human resources and/or business manager(s). Only 2% of schools said that they do not collect or report staff disability data. Secondary schools were more likely than primary schools to give this responsibility to human resources and/or business managers (80% vs. 66%), with primary schools more likely to give the responsibility to senior leadership team members (24% vs. 12%).

Most commonly, schools collected disability data when a new staff member joined (60%). Over a quarter (26%) answered that they don't know how frequently the data is collected.

The responsibility for completing the Schools Workforce Census (SWC) typically fell to the same people that reported the disability data, with 66% of schools saying the responsibility lay with human resources and/or business manager(s).

Technology

Just over a third of schools (35%) planned to spend more on technology in 2022 than in 2021 (higher among schools with an Ofsted rating of 'requires improvement' than schools with an Ofsted rating of 'outstanding': 52% vs. 26% respectively). More schools (44%) did not intend to do this (higher among primary schools than secondary schools; 47% vs. 32% respectively). One in five (20%) were unsure if the spend on technology would be higher in 2022 than in 2021.

Among schools who plan to spend more on technology, the intention was usually to increase spending on end user devices such as laptops, tablets and PCs (76%), rather than basic infrastructure such as broadband (16%) and in-school connectivity (35%).

Supporting pupil mental health

Teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a range of statements regarding supporting pupils with mental health needs. The highest levels of agreement were seen across knowing how to help pupils with mental health needs access support offered by my school or college (74%) and feeling equipped to identify behaviour that may be linked to a mental health issue (72%). In comparison a minority (between 40% and 45% in each case): knew how to help pupils with mental health issues access specialist support outside of the school/college (45%); felt they had access to mental health professionals if they need specialist advice (44%) or felt that pupils are able to access to specialist support when it is needed (41%).

Levels of agreement were generally similar to previous findings, though there was a significant increase in the proportion of teachers agreeing that they know how to help pupils with mental health issues access specialist support outside of school/college (45%, compared with 40% in June 2021).

Pupil behaviour

Concern around pupil behaviour was fairly high, with 59% of teachers concerned to at least some extent about disengagement from learning and 62% about an increase in behaviour issues. Secondary teachers were more likely to be concerned about both issues to at least some extent, with 72% concerned about disengagement from learning

(compared with 47% of primary teachers), and 67% concerned about an increase in behaviour issues (compared with 58% of primary teachers).

The proportion of teachers concerned to at least some extent about disengagement from learning in December 2021 (59%) is in line with the October 2021 survey (59%), although it is a significant decrease compared with July 2021 (64%).

The proportion of teachers concerned about behaviour issues (62%) was in line with the October 2021 (60%) and July 2021 surveys (61%), but higher than in May 2021 (52%).

Teachers concerned about disengagement from learning were asked what they think are the main reasons why pupils at their school are disengaged from learning. Teachers most commonly cited pupils being regularly absent from school (e.g. from illness) as the main reason (70%). Over half of teachers also cited mental health issues and anxiety (59%) and lack of parental engagement (57%). The vast majority of teachers (98%) that were concerned about disengagement from learning felt that this disengagement was linked to disruption caused by the COVID pandemic.

Extra-curricular activities

Schools were asked which factors, if any, were significant barriers to their school improving their extra-curricular offer. Overall, 82% of schools cited at least one barrier facing them. The main barrier was a lack of staff time to run more activities (69% of schools), followed by the cost of externally provided activities (48% of schools). Primary schools were more likely to cite difficulties finding appropriate external partners (24% compared to 11%), while secondary schools were more likely to cite transport issues preventing pupils from staying after school (42% compared to 10%).

Results were very similar among teachers: 83% of teachers cited at least one barrier facing them, with lack of staff time to run more activities (74%) and cost of externally provided activities (46%) being the two most common.

Wraparound childcare

Around seven in ten (71%) primary schools offered daily supervised wraparound childcare. The majority (91%) of these schools did so both before and after school.

A quarter of schools (26%) stated that demand for before school childcare had increased in the current academic year compared to before the pandemic, while 28% said it had decreased and 36% said it had stayed the same. Results were similar in relation to demand for after school childcare: 30% felt demand for this had increased, 26% felt it had decreased and 32% said it had stayed the same.

Wraparound childcare was most frequently reported as being provided by school staff on the school site and is part of the school's governance arrangements (74%). In a quarter of primary schools (23%), childcare is provided by a private organisation on the school site within their own governance arrangements.

Breakfast club provision

Approaching two-thirds (62%) of primary and secondary schools run breakfast club provision (54% not as part of DfE's National Breakfast Club Programme, 8% as part of this Programme). A third (33%) do not run breakfast club provision.

School Food Standards

Around half of schools (51%) reported that it was easy for them to meet the School Food Standards when providing school lunches, including one in five (20%) that found it very easy. This compares with 7% finding it difficult. Relative to this, when providing other food outside of lunch 33% reported that it was easy to meet School Food Standards, while 11% found this difficult. A relatively high proportion of schools were unsure how easy it was for them to meet the School Food Standards for school lunches (20%) and for other food (29%).

Primary schools were significantly more likely to find meeting the School Food Standards easy when providing school lunches (54% vs. 35% of secondary schools), and when providing other food outside of lunch (34% vs. 26%).

Most schools (60%) faced some challenges in meeting the School Food Standards. The most common challenges faced by schools were managing the relationship with the caterer or catering contract (25%), and costs of food produce and/or delivery (24%).

Introduction

This report presents findings from the December 2021 wave of the School and College Panel, a panel of leaders and teachers designed to provide rapid feedback to the Department for Education on topical educational issues from the provider perspective.

The short survey (taking five to ten minutes to complete) covered a range of topical issues in education including education recovery, teacher wellbeing and wraparound childcare provision. A total of 1,227 school leaders and 1,720 classroom teachers participated in the December wave. In addition to this, 16 college leaders participated in the survey. However, due to the small base size, findings from college leaders have not been included in this report.

Methodology

The School and College Panel consists of a group of leaders and teachers that have agreed to participate in short regular research surveys on topical education issues. The panel comprises those from the previous School Snapshot Panel (initially recruited in late 2020/early 2021) who agreed to remain as panellists and new respondents recruited specifically to the new School and College Panel. At the time of the December survey, a third (33%) of panel members were new recruits. All college leaders were recruited at the start of the 2021/22 academic year. This is the first wave of the survey in which college leaders were invited to take part, though their results have been excluded from the report due to the small base size.

All school leaders and teachers were recruited from School Workforce Census data provided by the Department for Education. A maximum of two leaders from each chosen school were invited to take part in the December wave. In order to reduce the survey length for individual leaders, school leaders were randomly allocated to either panel A or panel B, with each panel seeing a different set of questions. Where two leaders from the same school appeared to be on the same panel, they were allocated to different panels, ensuring that two leaders from the same school did not answer the same set of questions. Teachers were selected from the full population of teachers, meaning at some schools, multiple teachers were invited to participate in the December wave.

At the time of fieldwork in December 2021, sufficient numbers of tutors from colleges had not been recruited onto the panel and for this reason, only college leaders, school leaders and school teachers were invited to take part in the survey.

The survey was administered online, with fieldwork lasting from 1 to 8 December 2021. Respondents received an email invite and two reminder emails.

The following table shows the response rate for the December survey by key group.

Table 1. Response rate by key group

	Primary Leaders	Secondary Leaders	College leaders	Primary Teachers	Secondary Teachers
Starting sample	2,378	1,635	47	2,380	2,201
Completed responses	781	446	16	933	787
Response rate	33%	27%	34%	39%	36%

Weighting

Two types of weighting were applied to the data, depending on whether questions were asking for school-level or individual-level answers from school leaders and school teachers.

School-level weighting

At the analysis stage, the school-level/leaders' data was grossed up to the overall population of schools. This process corrects for the over-sampling of secondary schools (relative to the proportion of the population that they represent) so that the findings are representative of all (in scope) state-funded schools.³

The population data for weighting was drawn from Get Information about Schools (GIAS).

Teachers / individual weighting

For the analysis on a teacher rather than a school base, the responses from school leaders and classroom teachers were combined and weighted together to the overall population of school teachers. The population data for the teachers weighting was taken from the Schools Workforce Census based on November 2020 data (the most current available data).

Panel A/B weighting approach

For the December survey, to minimise the survey length for individual respondents, primary and secondary school leaders were allocated either to group A or B, with each group receiving a different set of questions. Weights were calculated separately for panel

³ Note that no responses were received from secondary studio schools in the December wave, therefore responses are representative of all in scope state-funded schools *excluding* secondary studio schools (secondary studio schools comprise 0.1% of the total school population).

A and panel B respondents to ensure results reported from either panel A or B were representative of the overall population. This resulted in four weights being created:

- Panel A school-level
- Panel B school-level
- Panel A individual
- Panel B individual.

Teachers were not split into two different groups and therefore received all questions. Where a question was asked of leaders and teachers, the individual weight used reflected the panel the leaders were on. For example, if a question was asked to panel B leaders and all teachers – the individual weight B was used. Some questions were asked to teachers only, and therefore were not allocated to an 'A' or 'B' panel. In these instances, Panel A individual weighting was used.

Interpreting the findings

Data presented in this report is from a sample of senior leaders and teachers rather than the total population of leaders and teachers. Although the leader sample and the teacher sample have been weighted to be nationally representative (by school type and by teacher demographics), the data is still subject to sampling error. The extent of sampling error depends on the sampling approach (the closer it is to a random sample the less the sampling error), the sample size (the larger the sample the lower the likely sampling error) and the survey result (the closer to 50% the less confident statistically we are in the finding).

Given the sample size in this survey (2,325 in panel A and 2,342 in panel B), statistically we can be 95% confident that for a survey finding of 50% based on all respondents, the 'true' value (if all leaders and teachers had answered rather than a sample of 2,325 or 2,342) lies within a +/- 2.9% range of this figure (i.e. 47.1% - 52.9%). Results based on a sub-set of schools interviewed are subject to a wider margin of error. For example, for results among panel A school leaders (a base of 605), we can be 95% confident that for a survey result of 50% the sampling error is +/- 5.6%.

Differences between sub-groups and between this and previous waves are only commented on in the text if they are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, unless otherwise stated, i.e. statistically we can be 95% confident that the differences are 'real' differences and not a result of the fact that the findings are based on a sample of schools rather than a census of all schools.

Free School Meal (FSM) entitlement is used as a proxy for deprivation levels at the school. All schools in England were listed in ascending order of the proportion of their pupils that are entitled to FSM. This ordered list was then split into five equal groups (or quintiles). Quintile 1, which is referred to as the 'lowest proportion' throughout the report, represents the schools with the lowest proportion of pupils entitled to FSM. This group thus equates to the schools with the least disadvantaged/deprived pupil population. The proportion of pupils entitled to FSM increases progressively as the quintiles increase. In the report, significant differences tend to be tested between schools with the lowest proportion of FSM eligible pupils and schools with the highest proportion of FSM eligible pupils.

Due to rounding to the nearest whole number, percentages may not total to exactly 100% or precisely reflect statistics provided in the data tables.

In this report there is occasional reference to findings from previous School Snapshot Surveys (including the COVID-19 School Snapshot Survey run in May 2020). It should be noted that due to differences in methodology between the School Snapshot Survey and the School and College Panel, direct comparisons should be treated with caution.

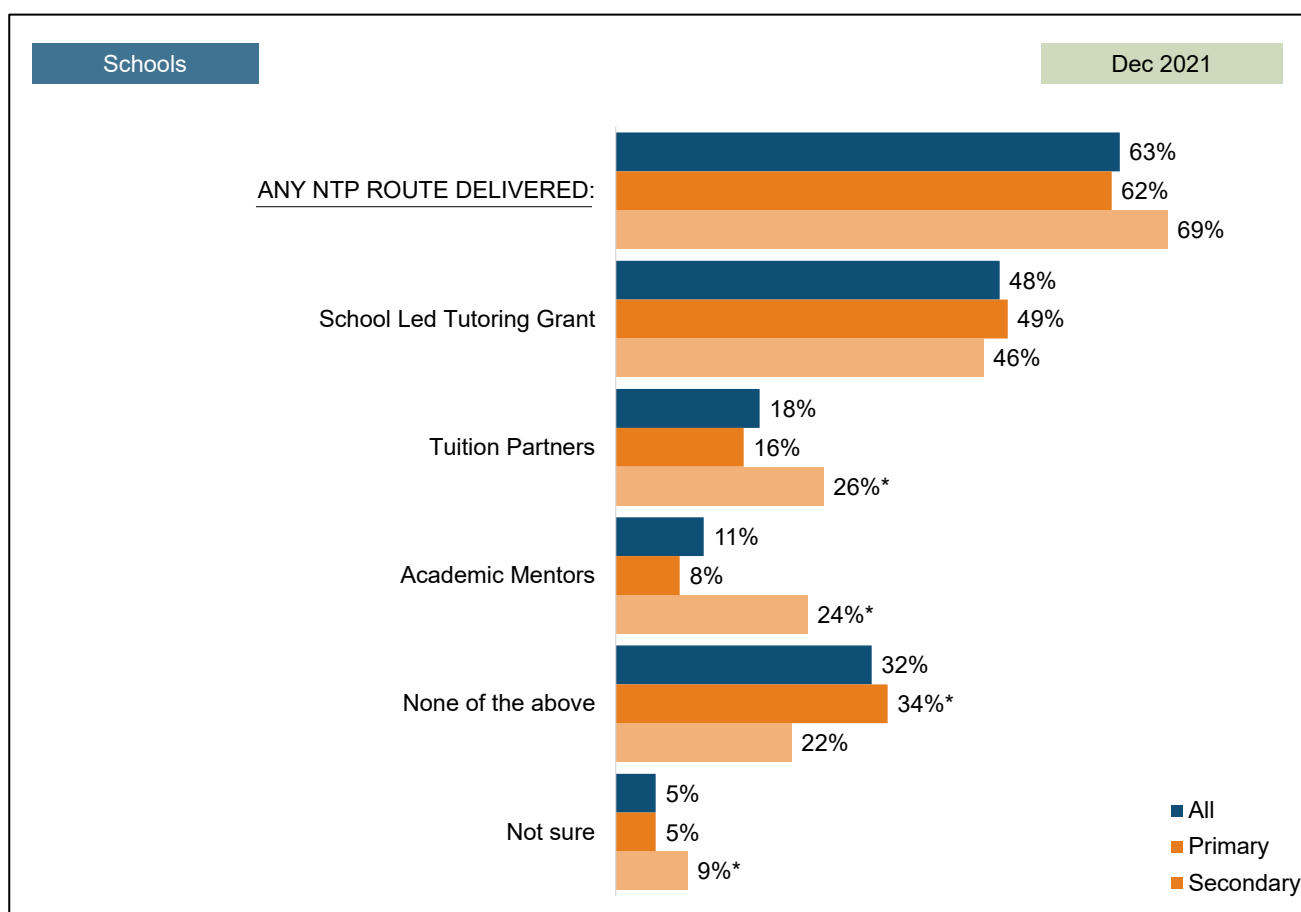
Some survey questions allow for an 'other, please specify' free-text response. At the end of fieldwork, these free-text responses are examined. They are either back-coded into existing codes or new answer codes are created to group together responses for the purpose of reporting. These newly created codes are referred to as 'spontaneous' responses in charts. New codes are only created if they account for 1% or more of answers. Responses that cannot be matched to any existing, or newly created 'spontaneous' code, are reported as 'other'. It should be noted that results on these spontaneous responses are likely to be much lower than if those responses had been presented to respondents (the latter are often referred to as 'prompted' responses).

Education Recovery

School leaders and teachers were asked about their uptake of the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) in relation to the tuition routes used, reasons why schools weren't using the NTP and which staff members were delivering the tuition.

Just under two-thirds (63%) were currently using any National Tutoring Programme route to deliver tutoring within their school. This proportion was not significantly different between primary and secondary schools (62% vs. 69%). However, as Figure 1 shows, whilst primary and secondary schools were almost equally likely to use the school-led tutoring grant (49% vs. 46%), secondary schools were significantly more likely than primary schools to be using tuition partners (26% vs. 16%) and academic mentors (24% vs. 8%).

Figure 1. National Tutoring Programme route(s) currently being delivered within their school



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. B9: All panel A leaders (n=605).

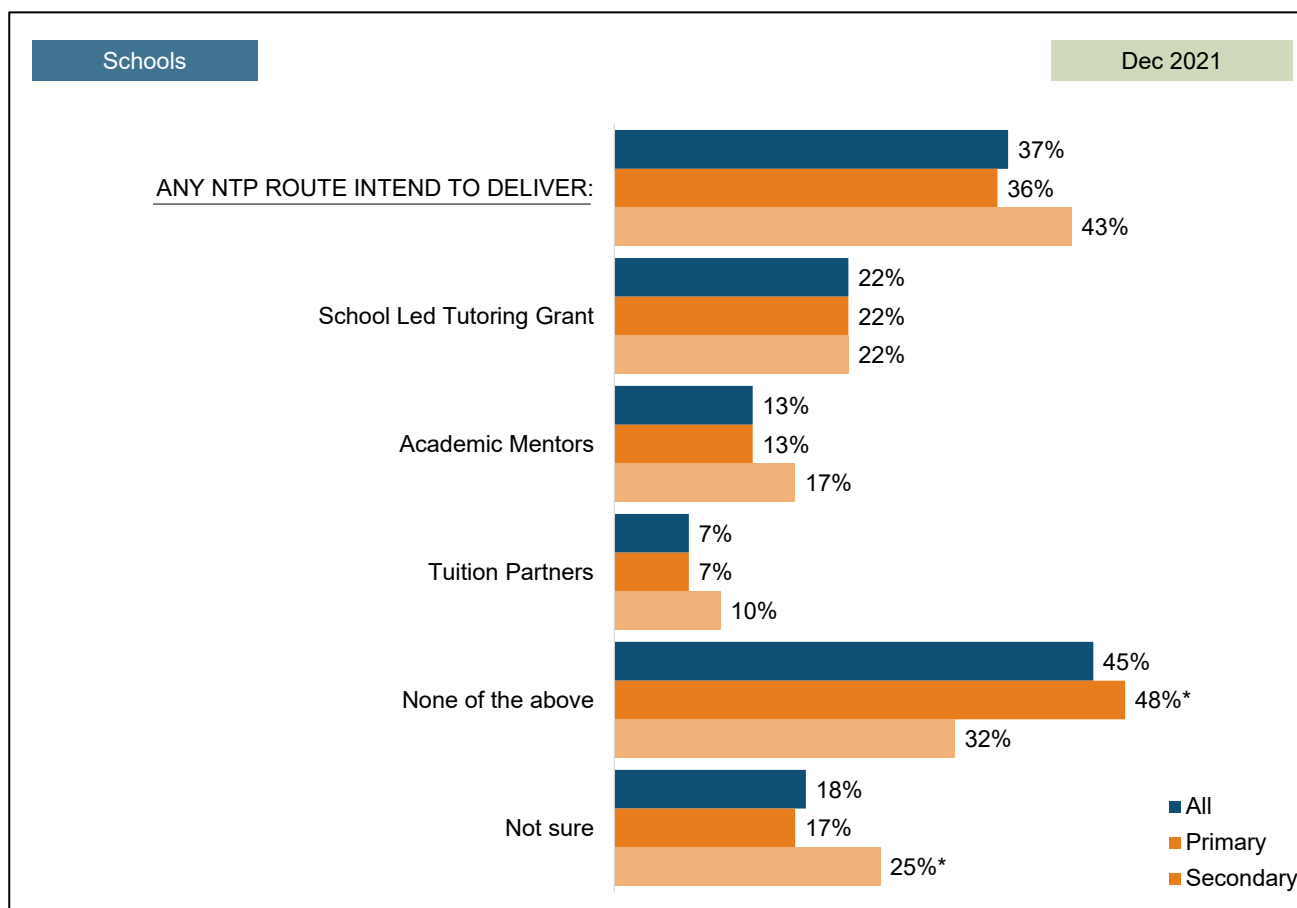
*Indicates higher statistical difference between primary and secondary schools.

The proportion using academic mentors increased steadily with an increasing proportion of pupils eligible for FSM: rising from 2% in schools with the lowest proportion of FSM eligible pupils to 15% in schools with the highest proportion of FSM eligible pupils.

Schools in urban areas were more likely to be using any of the NTP routes than schools in rural areas (65% vs. 54%); this was driven primarily by significantly higher usage of academic mentors (13% vs. 5%).

Over a third (37%) of schools not already using all the NTP routes were intending to use at least one further route during this academic year. This proportion did not vary significantly between primary and secondary schools (36% vs. 43%). Appetite to use the different routes was broadly similar for primary and secondary schools as Figure 2 shows, although primary schools were more likely than secondary to say they would not use any of them (48% vs. 32%), whilst secondary schools were more likely than primary to say they were not sure (25% vs. 17%).

Figure 2. National Tutoring Programme route(s) intend to deliver within their school during the 2021/2022 academic year



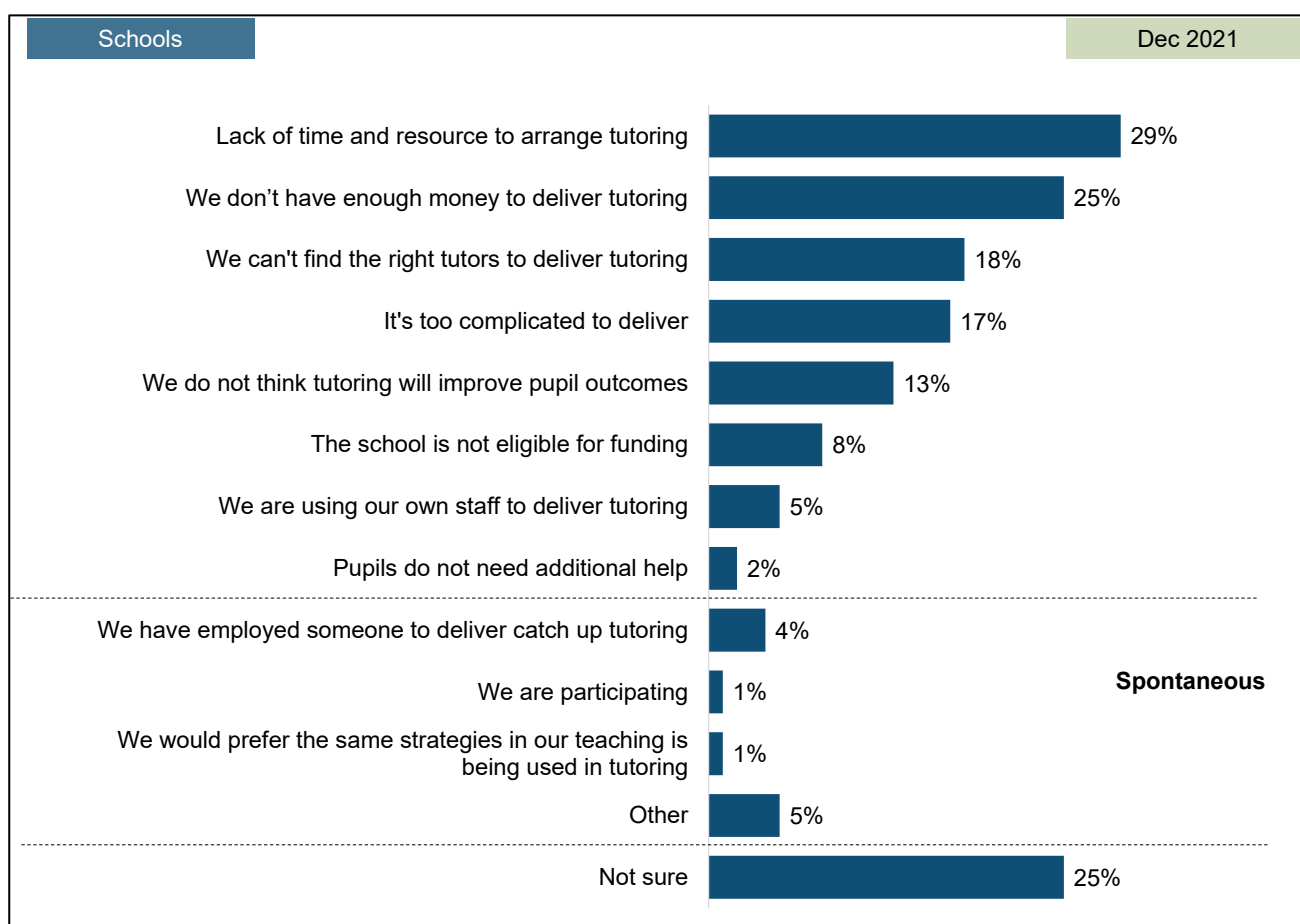
Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. B10: Panel A leaders not currently using ALL NTP routes (n=592). *Indicates higher statistical difference between primary and secondary schools.

Intention to use any of the NTP routes among schools not currently using all of them varied significantly by MAT status, with secondary MAT schools significantly more likely to be intending to use at least one further route compared to secondary non-MAT schools (48% vs. 22%).

Schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for FSM were significantly more likely than the average of all schools to say they intended to use tuition partners (12% vs. 7%).

The schools that were not already delivering tutoring through the school-led tutoring grant, nor intending to do so this academic year, were prompted with various reasons and asked which applied to them. The most common reasons were around financial and time resource: lack of time and resource to arrange it (29%) or lack of money to deliver it (25%). The next most common reasons were logistical: not being able to find the right tutors (18%) or it being too complex to deliver (17%). The full range of responses is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Reasons why schools were not participating in or planning to participate in school-led tutoring in the 2021/22 academic year



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. B11: Panel A leaders not currently using or intending to use school-led tutoring (n=188). Responses prompted unless marked as spontaneous

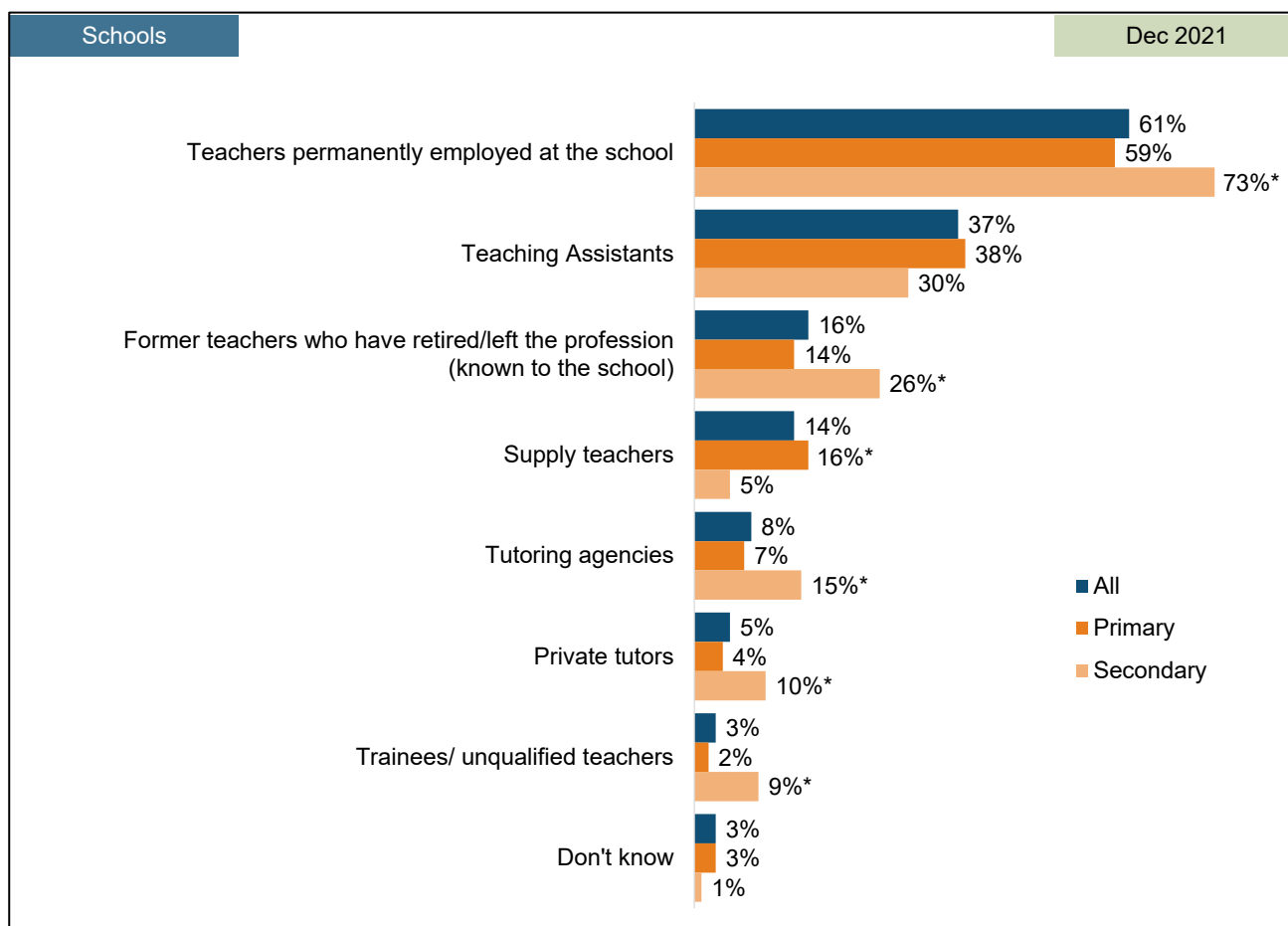
Lack of finance was more likely to be cited by schools with a lower proportion of pupils eligible for FSM, reflecting that funding for school-led tutoring was based on the proportion of pupil premium eligible pupils (which is linked to the proportion eligible for FSM):

- 50% of schools with the lowest proportion of pupils eligible for FSM gave not having enough money to deliver tutoring as a reason, falling steadily to 9% of schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for FSM
- 18% of schools with the lowest proportion of pupils eligible for FSM said the school not being eligible for funding was a reason, falling steadily to none of the schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for FSM.

By geography, rural schools were significantly more likely than urban schools to say, “we don’t have enough money to deliver tutoring (41% vs. 19%), or that, “we are using our own staff to deliver tutoring” (11% vs. 3%).

The schools that were currently delivering tutoring funded by their school-led tutoring grant were asked who was delivering this. The most common solution was for the tutoring to be provided by teachers permanently employed at the school (61%), followed by teaching assistants (37%). Figure 4 shows the full range of personnel utilised to provide the tutoring and how this varied between primary and secondary schools. Primary schools were significantly more likely to use supply teachers than secondary schools (16% vs. 5%). Conversely secondary schools were significantly more likely than primary schools to use a range of sources including former teachers known to the school (26% vs. 14%), tutoring agencies (15% vs. 7%), private tutors (10% vs. 4%) and trainees/unqualified teachers (9% vs. 2%).

Figure 4. Who is delivering the current tutoring funded by their school-led tutoring grant



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. B12: Panel A leaders currently using school-led tutoring grant (n=290). *Indicates statistical difference between primary and secondary schools. Responses less than 3% not charted.

Secondary MAT schools were significantly more likely than schools overall to use the following sources: tutoring agencies (17% vs. 8%), trainees/unqualified teachers (12% vs. 3%), graduates (7% vs. 2%).

Schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for FSM were significantly more likely than average to say they used tutoring agencies (15% vs. 8%), or former teachers who have retired/left the profession but not known to the school (4% vs. 1%).

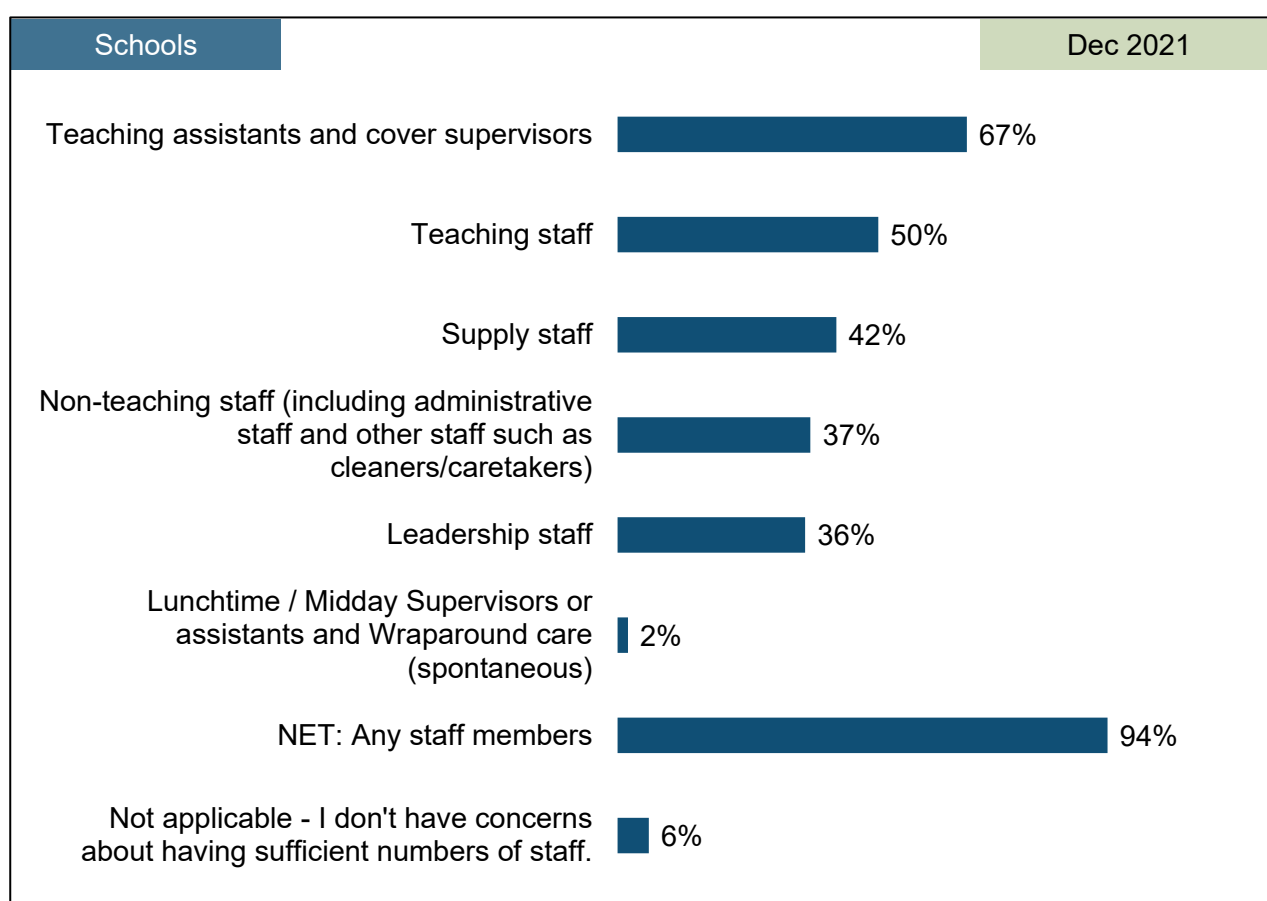
Schools rated 'outstanding' were more likely to use teachers permanently employed at the school (69%) than schools rated as 'requires improvement' (42%)

Workforce capacity

School leaders were asked questions around their concerns relating to the capacity of their workforces, and also how best to reduce staff absences.

School leaders were asked which types of staff member, if any, they were concerned about not having sufficient numbers of currently. Overall, 94% of schools reported any concern about workforce capacity. Two-thirds were concerned about not having sufficient teaching assistants and cover supervisors (67%) with this higher among primary schools than secondaries (69% compared to 56%). Schools were also quite commonly concerned about not having sufficient teaching staff (50%), supply staff (42%), non-teaching staff (37%) and leadership staff (36%).

Figure 5. Staff members where schools have concerns about having insufficient numbers of staff



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. C1: Panel B leaders (n=622). Only responses greater than 1% shown on chart.

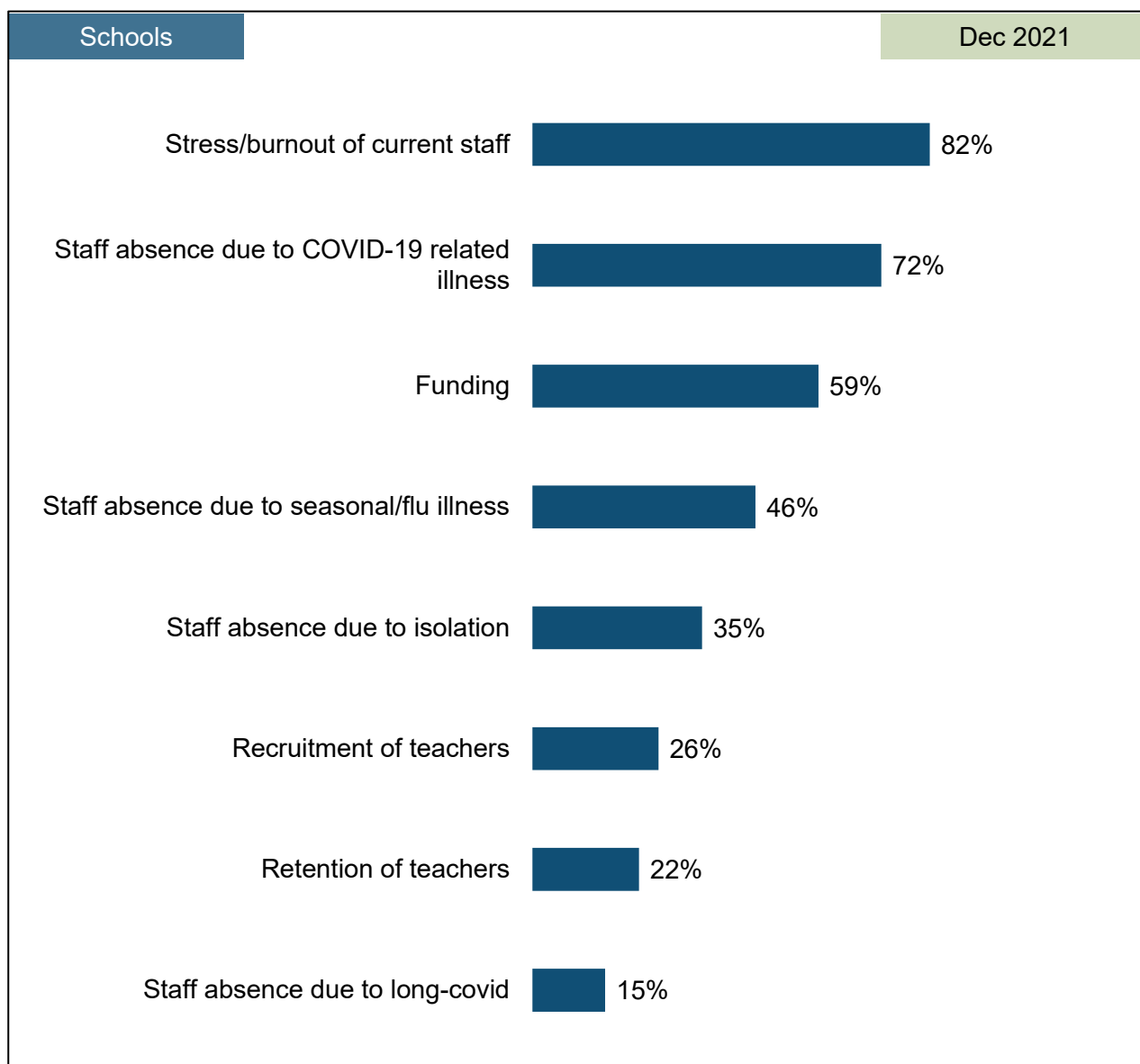
There were relatively few differences by school phase or type, though primary schools were more likely than secondary to have concerns about the number of teaching assistants and cover supervisors (69% vs. 56%).

School leaders were also asked, from a prompted list,⁴ what issues they were most concerned about in relation to their workforce. Concerns were expressed about a number of issues, primarily stress and staff absence. A majority of leaders were concerned about stress/burnout of current staff (82%), staff absence due to COVID-19 related illness (72%) and overall school funding (59%). Just under half were concerned about staff absence due to seasonal/flu illness (46%). Roughly a quarter to a third of schools were also concerned about staff absence due to COVID-19 isolation (35%), recruitment of teachers (26%) and retention of teachers (22%).

There were some differences between the concerns of primary schools and secondary schools. Primary schools were more likely than secondary to be concerned about stress/burnout (83% compared to 76%) and school funding (61% compared to 47%), whereas secondary schools were more likely than primary schools to be concerned about the recruitment of teachers (51% compared to 22%).

⁴ Leaders were provided with a list of potential answer options; Funding, staff absence due to COVID-19 related illness, staff absence due to isolation, staff absence due to seasonal/flu illness, staff absence due to long-covid, recruitment of teachers, retention of teachers, stress/burnout of current staff. They were also given an 'other – please specify' option.

Figure 6. Issues schools are most concerned about in relation to their workforce (prompted)



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. C2: Panel B leaders (n=622).
Spontaneous answers not shown (all <3%)

Reducing staff absence

Schools were asked an open-text question about what measures would be effective in reducing staff absences over the coming term. The main measure raised by schools was the need to address unmanageable workloads and associated staff burnout / stress. They explained that staff workload is currently too high and unsustainable, which is aggravated by the pressure or expectations placed on teachers, and absences amongst colleagues. This has meant many staff feel stressed and unwell, aggravated by insufficient time to recover.

“More attention to reducing workload and allowing teachers the time to get better properly after a period of absence. More focus on the mental health and wellbeing of staff.”

Primary Leader

“We have a strong staff and excellent morale in our school, however, we are being hit hard by illness and burnout.”

Secondary Leader

Schools also highlighted a need to define and implement consistent rules regarding COVID-19 to reduce its impact on schools. This included clear guidance on COVID-19 measures in schools, as well as timely guidance which provides sufficient time to prepare. They also emphasised the need for stricter COVID-19 regulations which are more effectively enforced, in particular the need for strict self-isolation rules and compulsory face coverings in schools.

“Isolation of pupils who are close contacts of Covid cases i.e. if a parent has Covid, the child should not be in school. 10 members of my staff have Covid due to children in school. Also, a coordinated plan for schools around Covid. Less of this “It’s for schools to decide”. Have a consistent plan for all to ensure staff safety”.

Primary Leader

“Mandatory wearing of masks for all students in all internal areas of schools. Clear national guidelines on isolation rather than regional/LA guidelines.”

Secondary Leader

Others emphasised the need for more realistic expectations or greater flexibility from Ofsted and DfE. They explained that staff are feeling under pressure from external sources, for example pressure to meet targets and complete paperwork, and suggested that a more understanding approach from Ofsted and DfE would be helpful, allowing schools time to focus on addressing other challenges they are facing. Some suggested pausing Ofsted inspections.

“The current Ofsted framework (and ‘Deep Dives’) is putting a lot of pressure on subject leaders in primary schools. This is adding to staff burn out and stress.”

Primary Leader

Additional and quicker access to funding for staff was also highlighted by some schools. They highlighted the need for access to sufficient funding to allow them to easily recruit staff when required (including supply teachers, cover supervisors and general additional staff).

“Lack of funding for us is crucial, we are unable to employ LSAs for more than 2 hours per morning meaning children are missing out potential learning opportunities, those who are employed are stretched to the limit doing cover for others off with COVID-19.”

Primary Leader

Schools also suggested a variety of other measures which could be implemented, including providing better protection against COVID-19 (such as vaccinations, PPE and testing), increased mental health support for staff and providing more recognition for the profession.

Others however felt that not much could be done to reduce staff absences while the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Staff illness (both COVID-19-related illness and other) is an ongoing challenge and schools do not necessarily feel there are any simple measures which could address this issue.

Leader and Teacher Wellbeing

Supporting the wellbeing and mental health of staff is a crucial element of the Department's commitment to help create a supportive culture in schools and colleges. Published on 10th May 2021, the Department made a public commitment in the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter to measure staff wellbeing at regular intervals, track trends over time, and build this evidence into policy making.⁵

Fulfilment and Happiness in job role

Around a third (34%) of school leaders and teachers reported feeling fulfilled in their job to a 'high' or 'very high' degree, with a further 44% reporting they were 'somewhat' fulfilled. This is significantly lower than in April 2021,⁶ when 39% of school leaders and teachers reported feeling fulfilled to a 'high' or 'very high' degree.

As shown in Figure 7, akin to April 2021, school leaders were significantly more likely to feel fulfilled to a 'high' or 'very high' degree than teachers (39% vs. 33%). Furthermore, secondary leaders were significantly more likely than primary leaders to report feeling fulfilled in their job to a 'high' or 'very high' degree (46% vs. 35%).

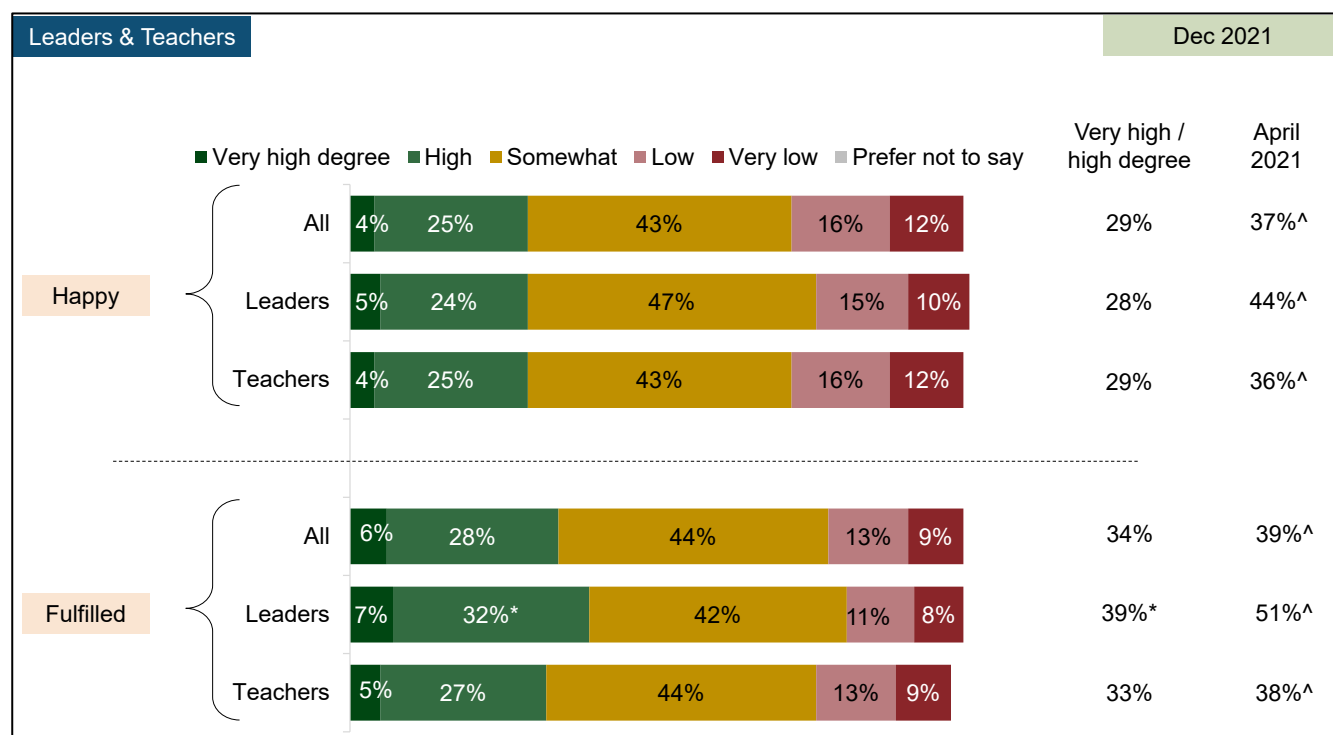
Around three in ten (29%) school leaders and teachers reported feeling happy in their job role to a 'high' or 'very high' degree, with 43% reporting they were 'somewhat' happy. This is significantly lower than in April 2021, when 37% of school leaders and teachers reported feeling happy in their job role to a 'high' or 'very high' degree. Unlike in April 2021, there were no significant differences between school leaders and teachers.

Primary leaders were significantly more likely than secondary leaders to report feeling a 'very low' degree of happiness (12% vs. 6%).

⁵ The Education Staff Wellbeing Charter can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-staff-wellbeing-charter>

⁶ Comparisons have been made with the April 2021 wave as this was the last time this question was asked. It should be noted that pressures on teachers / within schools differ at different times of the year, and this should be considered when comparing the results.

Figure 7. Happiness and fulfilment in current job role⁷



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. D1_1 & D1_2: All teachers and panel A leaders (n=2,341). April 2021 survey (n=2,159). *Indicates higher statistical difference between leaders and teachers. ^Indicates higher statistical difference between December 2021 and April 2021.

Feelings of burn out and frustration in job role

School leaders and teachers were asked the extent to which they felt burnt out and frustrated in their current job role. Over half (58%) of leaders and teachers reported feeling a 'high' or 'very high' degree of burn out in their job role, a significantly higher proportion than in April 2021 (48%). In addition, just over a quarter (27%) said they were feeling 'somewhat' burnt out.

Those who reported a 'high' degree of happiness were more likely to report a 'low' degree of burn out than those who reported a 'low' degree of happiness (20% vs. 2% respectively). This was also true for feelings of fulfilment, with those who reported a 'high' degree of fulfilment more likely to report 'low' levels of burn out than those who reported a 'low' degree of fulfilment (17% vs. 3% respectively).

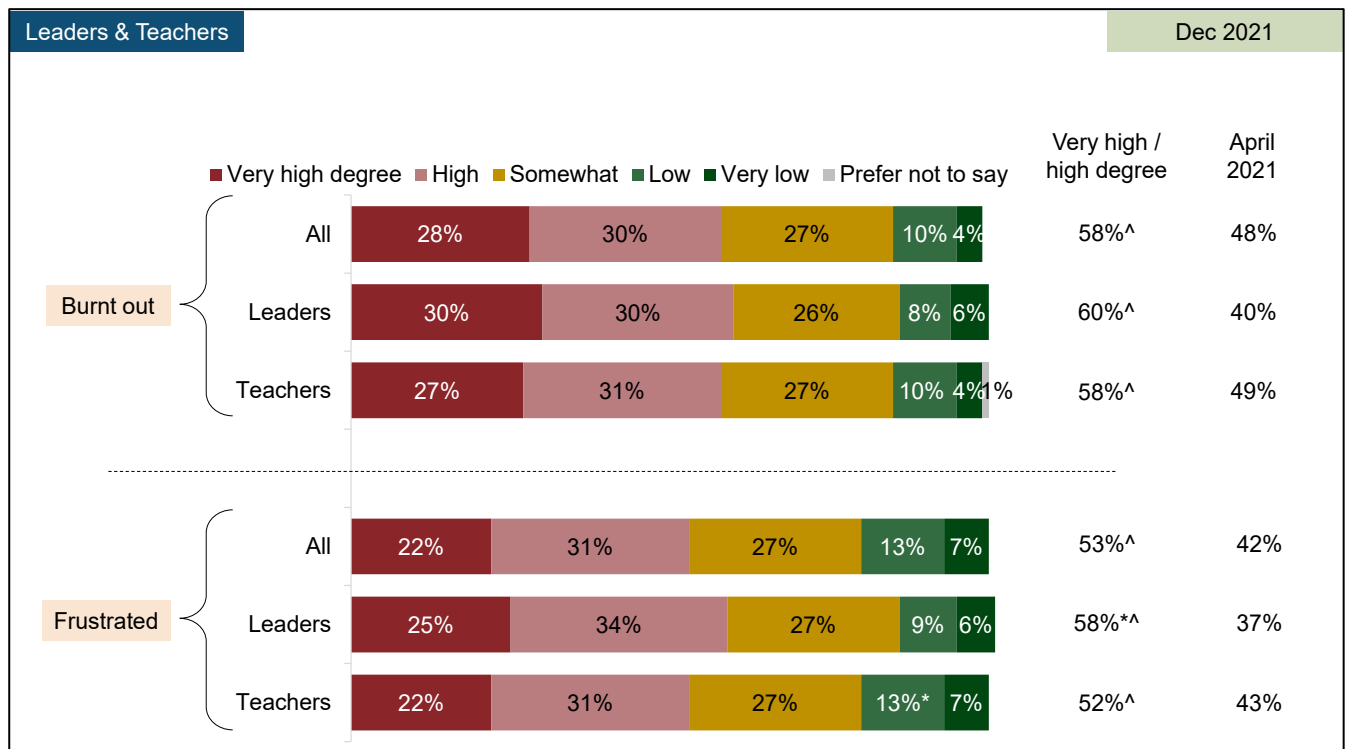
Similarly to feelings of burn out, over half (53%) of school leaders and teachers reported feeling a 'high' or 'very high' level of frustration in their current job role, a significantly higher proportion than in April 2021 (42%). Significantly more leaders (58%) than

⁷ Please note that the individual percentages shown in charts may not sum to 'net' figures due to rounding.

teachers (52%) reported this. In addition, over a quarter (27%) said they were feeling ‘somewhat’ frustrated.

Primary leaders and teachers were significantly more likely than secondary leaders and teachers to report feeling frustrated to a ‘very high’ degree (24% vs. 19%).

Figure 8. Burn out and frustration in current job role



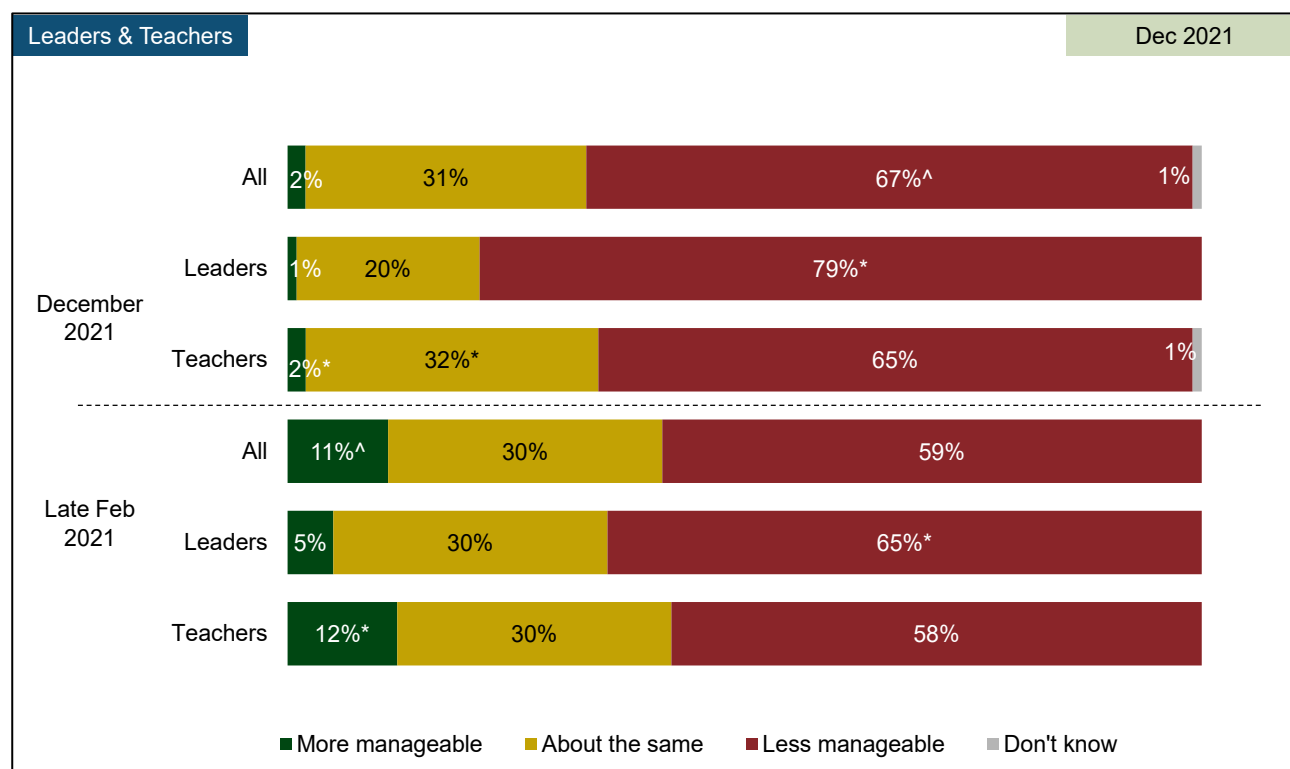
Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. D1_3 & D1_4: All teachers and panel A leaders (n=2,341). April 2021 survey (n=2,159). *Indicates higher statistical difference between leaders and teachers. ^Indicates higher statistical difference between December 2021 and April 2021.

Manageability of workload

School leaders and teachers were asked whether their workload was more or less manageable than before the pandemic, or about the same. Two-thirds (67%) said their workload was ‘less manageable’, with this response more common among leaders (79%) than teachers (65%). Both leaders and teachers were significantly more likely to report this in December 2021 than in late-February 2021,⁸ when 65% of leaders and 58% of teachers said that their workload was ‘less manageable’ than before the pandemic.

⁸ This finding is being compared to the late February 2021 wave as this was the last time this question was asked. It should be noted that pressures on teachers / within schools differ at different times of the year, and this should be considered when comparing the results.

Figure 9. Manageability of workload compared to before the pandemic



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. D2: All teachers and panel A leaders (n=2,341). Late Feb 2021 survey (n=2,580). * Indicates higher statistical difference between leaders and teachers. ^ Indicates a higher statistical difference between December 2021 and late-February 2021.

School teachers were significantly more likely than leaders to say that their workload was 'about the same' as before the pandemic (32%, compared with 20% of leaders).

Leaders of secondary non-academies were significantly more likely than leaders of secondary academies to say that their workload was 'less manageable' than before the pandemic (91% vs. 78%).

Primary teachers were more likely than secondary teachers to report that their workload had remained 'about the same' as before the pandemic (35% vs 30%). In addition, teachers at schools located in the North East were more likely than teachers in other regions to say that their workload was 'less manageable' than before the pandemic (74% vs 65% on average across regions), while teachers at schools in London were less likely than teachers in other regions to say this (56%).

Flexible Working

Expanding and promoting flexible working opportunities for school leaders and teachers is a core component of the Department's Recruitment and Retention Strategy (2019).⁹ When implemented effectively, flexible working can help to recruit, retain and motivate teachers, improve staff wellbeing and promote equality of opportunity and diversity in the workforce. There are a range of real and perceived barriers to implementing flexible working in schools and the Department is committed to expanding their evidence base and supporting schools to overcome them. Information about what the Department is doing to support school leaders, including resources and guidance, is available on GOV.UK.¹⁰

Flexible working arrangements

Leaders were asked to specify which forms of flexible working, if any, are used by any teachers and/or leaders in their schools. Nearly all schools (97%) implemented at least one type of flexible working. The most common form of flexible working was part-time working (87% of schools). Around a half of leaders also identified job shares (57%), occasional personal days off at a manager's discretion for ad hoc requests (57%), occasional days to start late or finish early to accommodate ad hoc requests (55%), and offsite planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time (47%) as forms of flexible working used by teachers and/or leaders within their schools.

A smaller proportion specified that teachers and/or leaders have the option to reclaim time off in lieu (22%) and home/remote working (formally agreed as part of directed time / timetabled hours) (17%).

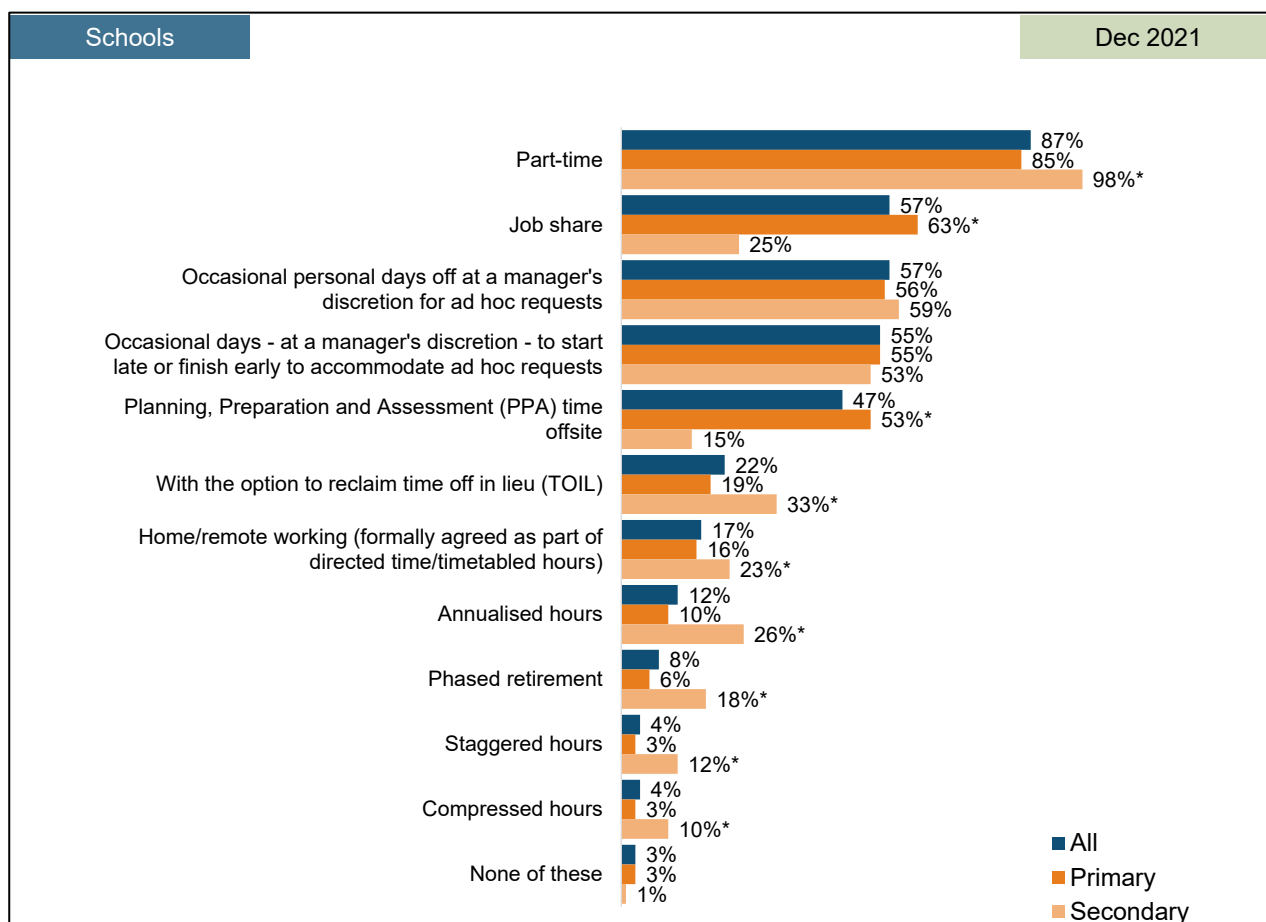
As shown in Figure 10, secondary schools were more likely to implement a range of flexible working arrangements than primary schools, though primary schools were significantly more likely than secondary schools to implement job share arrangements (63%, compared to 25% of secondary schools), and offsite planning, preparation, and assessment (PPA) time (53% compared to 15%).

⁹ The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-recruitment-and-retention-strategy>

¹⁰ Information about what the Department is doing to support school leaders, including resources and guidance, is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/flexible-working-resources-for-teachers-and-schools>

Figure 10. Forms of flexible working used by any teachers and/or leaders in the respondent's school



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. G2: Panel B leaders (n=622).

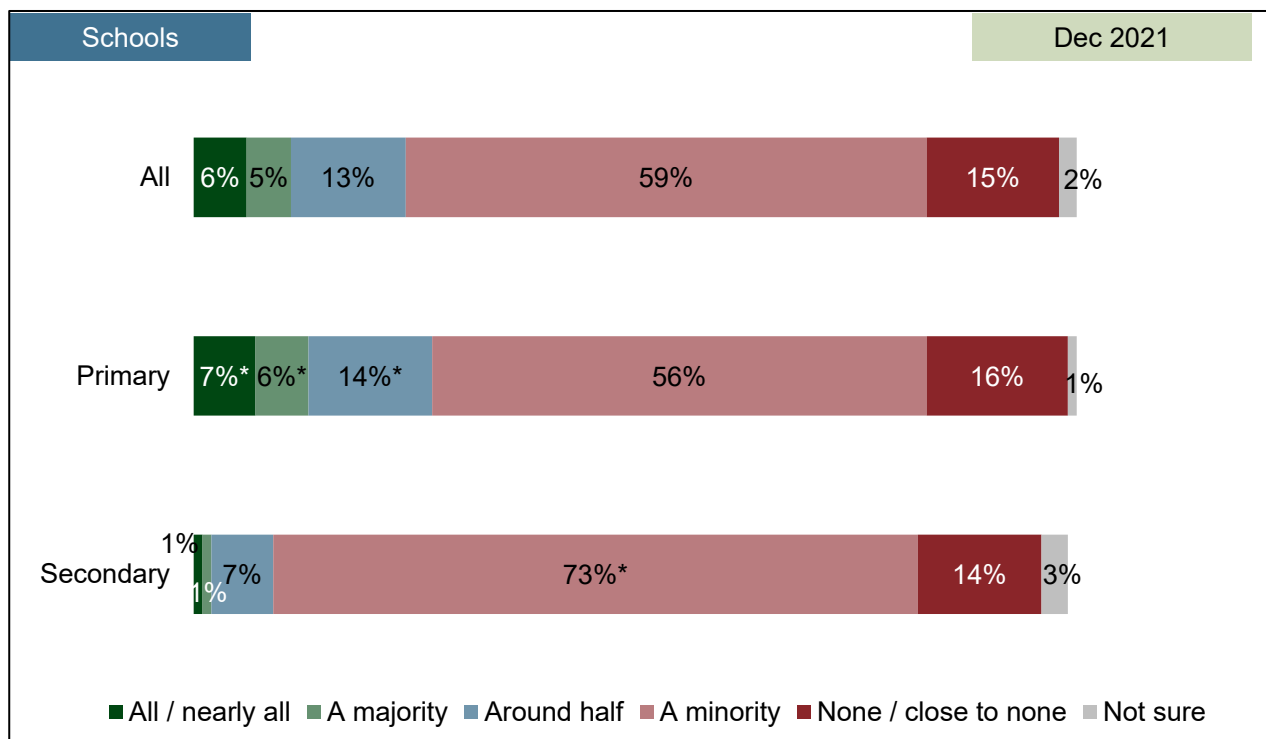
*Indicates a higher statistical difference between primary and secondary.

Leaders were asked approximately what proportion of teachers and/or leaders worked using some form of flexible working arrangement within their school. Overall, 83% reported that they had at least some teachers and/or leaders working flexibly.

As shown in Figure 11, leaders most commonly reported that 'a minority' of their teachers and/or leaders work under some form of flexible working within their school (59%), with secondary school leaders more likely to report this (73% compared to 56% of primary school leaders). However, primary school leaders were significantly more likely to state that 'all / nearly all', 'a majority', and 'around half' of teachers and/or leaders worked under some form of flexible working than secondary school leaders. There was also a difference in the quantity of flexible working arrangements between schools with different proportions of FSM eligible pupils. In particular, leaders in schools with the lowest proportion of FSM eligible pupils were significantly more likely than those in schools with the highest proportion to report that 'all / nearly all' of teachers and/or leaders work under some form of flexible working. Whilst leaders in schools with the highest proportion of FSM eligible pupils were significantly more likely than leaders in schools with the lowest

proportion to report that ‘a minority’ of teachers and/or leaders work under some of flexible working.

Figure 11. Proportion of teachers and leaders who work under some form of flexible working arrangement in the respondent’s school



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. G3: Panel B leaders (n=622).

*Indicates a higher statistical difference between primary and secondary.

Impact of flexible working

As shown in Figure 12, among those schools offering some form of flexible working, the majority agreed that flexible working had a positive impact on overall teacher and leader wellbeing (26% agreed ‘to a great extent’, 30% ‘to some extent’, and 28% ‘to a small extent’). The majority also agreed to at least some extent that flexible working had helped retain teachers and leaders who might otherwise leave (28% agreed ‘to a great extent’, 27% ‘to some extent’, and 27% ‘to a small extent’). Almost three-quarters also agreed that flexible working had improved the overall productivity of teachers and leaders (16% agreed ‘to a great extent’, 32% ‘to some extent’, and 27% ‘to a small extent’).

School leaders were slightly less positive regarding the impact of flexible working on reducing absences (with 33% saying ‘not at all’), attracting a greater number of candidates (34% saying ‘not at all’), and creating a more diverse teacher and leader workforce (40% saying ‘not at all’). Nonetheless, leaders recognised there were benefits in these areas, with over half agreeing that there was a positive impact at least ‘to a small extent’ on reducing absences (58%) and attracting a greater number of candidates

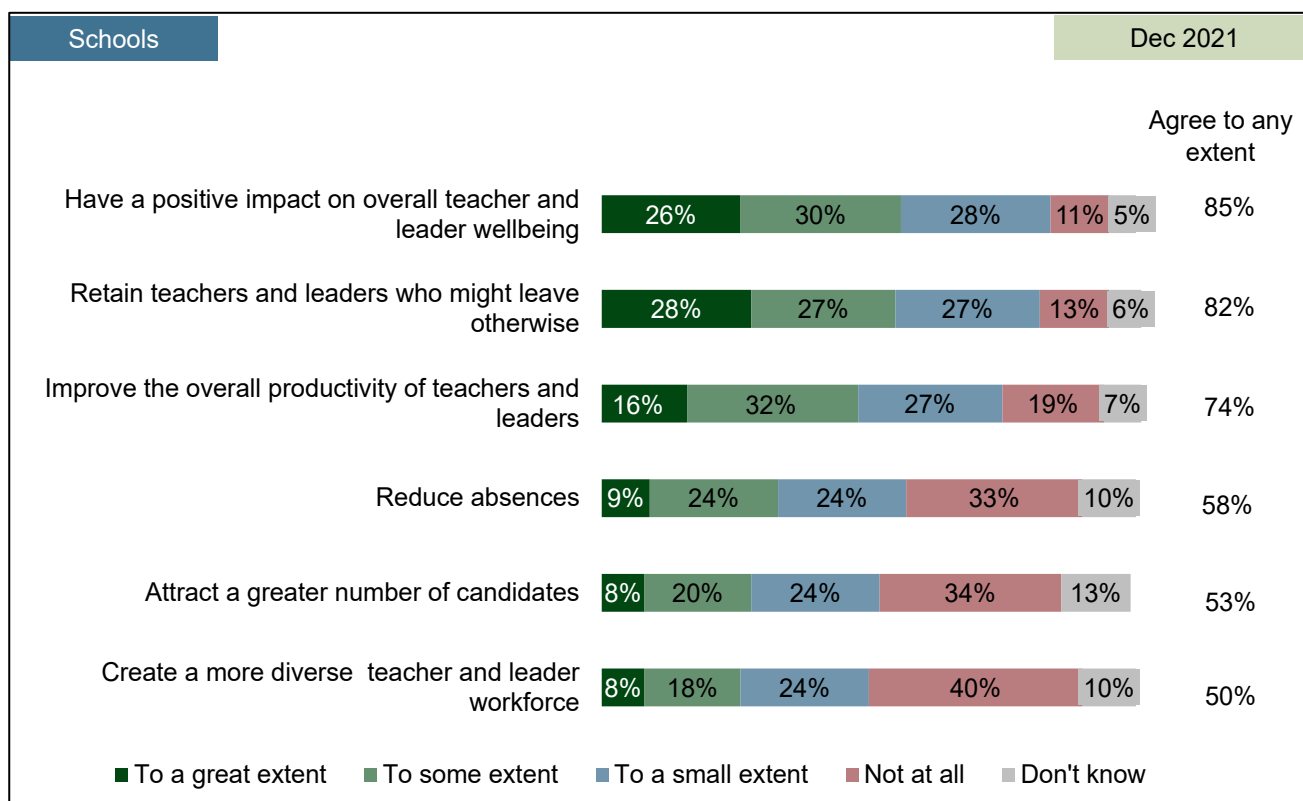
(53%), and half (50%) agreeing that there was a positive impact on creating a more diverse teacher and leader workforce.

Primary school leaders were significantly less positive than secondary school leaders regarding the impact of flexible working on attracting a greater number of candidates (51% agreeing to any extent compared to 62% of secondary schools), and creating a more diverse teacher and leader workforce (47% agreeing to any extent compared to 61%). However, primary school leaders were more positive than secondary school leaders regarding the impact on overall teacher and leader wellbeing, with 28% agreeing 'to a great extent' compared to 18% of secondary school leaders.

Leaders in schools with the highest proportion of FSM eligible pupils were also less likely to agree (to any extent) that flexible working has had an impact on:

- Attracting a greater number of candidates (42% compared to 66% of leaders in schools with the lowest proportion of FSM eligible pupils);
- Creating a more diverse teacher and leader workforce (40% compared to 63%);
- Overall teacher and leader wellbeing (78% compared to 90%);
- Improving the overall productivity of teachers and leaders (63% compared to 81%); and
- Reducing absences (47% compared to 65%).

Figure 12. Extent to which school leaders think offering flexible working has had an impact

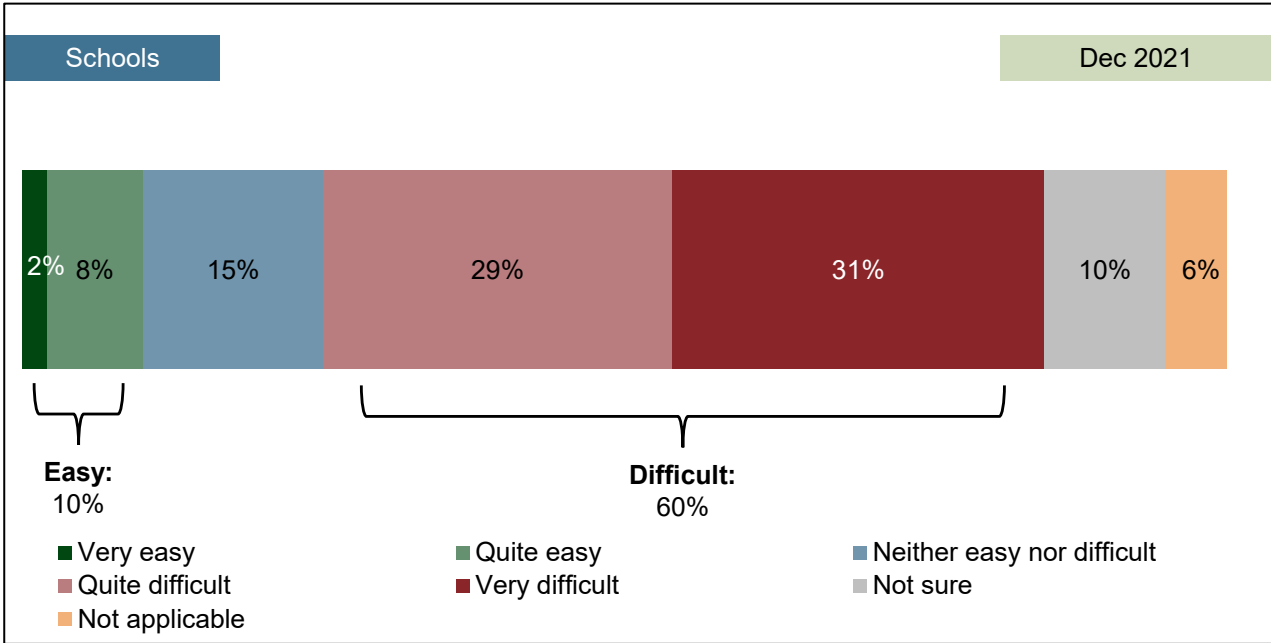


Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. G4: Panel B schools that offer flexible working (n=518).

Considerations when deciding on flexible working

Generally, schools have found it difficult to offer flexible working within the existing school budget. Most schools had found it difficult to offer flexible working within the existing school budget (31% found it 'very difficult', with 29% finding it 'quite difficult'). A minority of schools (10%) have found it easy to offer flexible working within the existing budget. Primary schools have found it somewhat harder than secondary schools (61% finding it difficult compared to 52% of secondary schools).

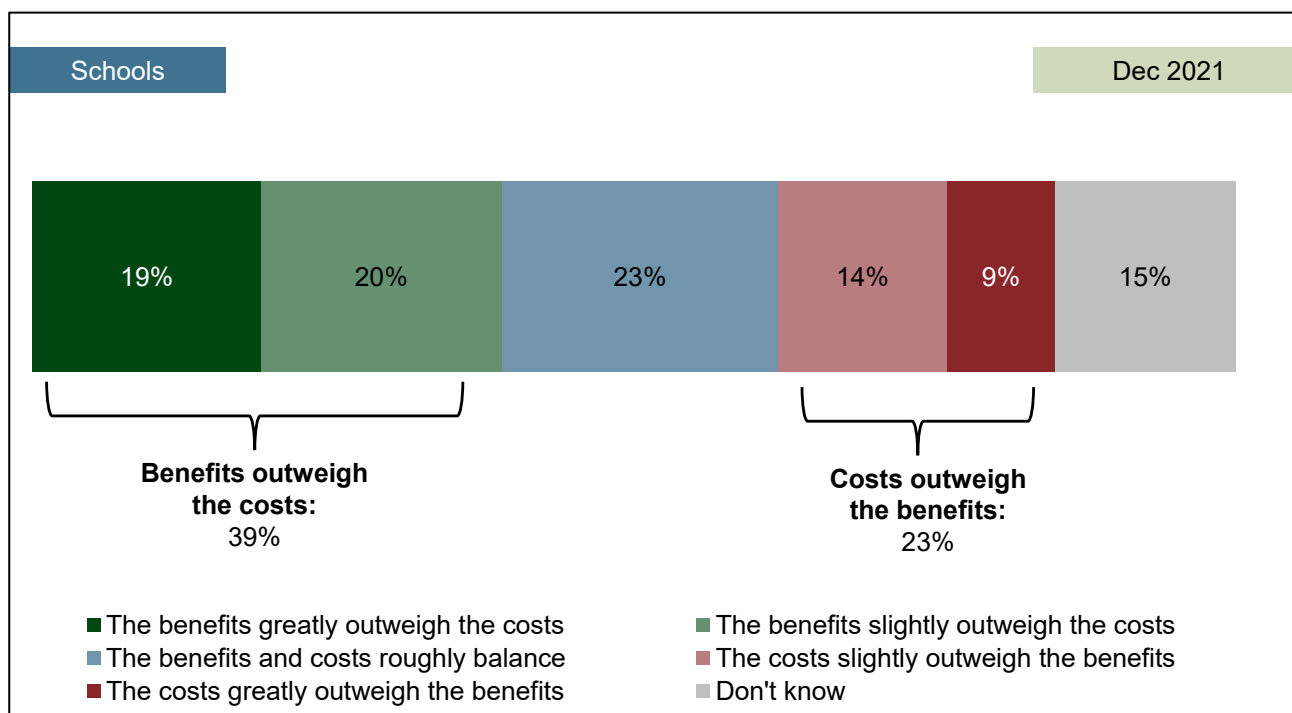
Figure 13. How easy or difficult schools have found offering flexible working within the existing school budget



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. G5: Panel B leaders (n=622).

School leaders are more positive regarding the benefits of flexible working compared to the costs, within their schools. Just over a third (39%) reported that the benefits of flexible working outweigh the costs (see Figure 14), while almost a quarter (23%) reported that the benefits and cost roughly balance. A further quarter (23%) reported that the costs outweigh the benefits.

Figure 14. School leaders' views on the extent to which the benefits of flexible working outweigh any costs



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. G6: Panel B leaders (n=622).

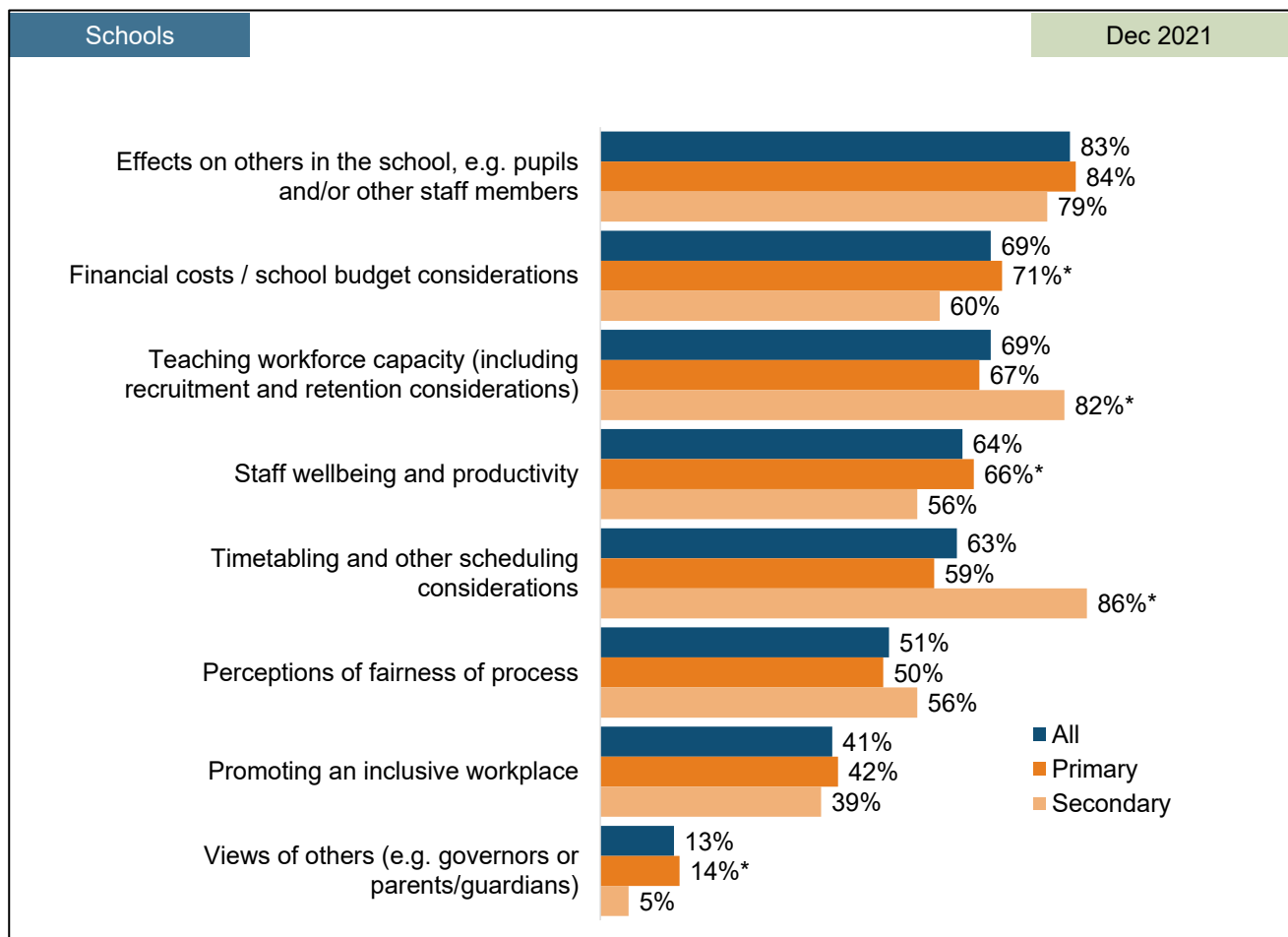
School leaders were asked which factors are the most important to them when considering whether or not to allow teachers and leaders to work flexibly within their schools (see Figure 15). School leaders indicated that they take a number of different factors into account. A majority said the effect on others in the school was important to them (83%), while around two-thirds said that financial costs / school budget considerations (69%), teaching workforce capacity (including recruitment and retention considerations) (69%), staff wellbeing and productivity (64%), and timetabling and other scheduling considerations (63%) were important to them. Perceptions of fairness of process was also important to half of schools (51%), while promoting an inclusive workplace was important to two-fifths of schools (41%).

There was a slight variation in the factors that primary and secondary school leaders consider most important when considering flexible working. Primary school leaders were more likely to state that financial costs / school budget considerations (71% compared to 60% of secondary school leaders), staff wellbeing and productivity (66% compared to 56%), and views of others (14% compared to 5%) were most important. Secondary school leaders were more likely to state that teaching workforce capacity (including recruitment and retention considerations) (82% compared to 67% of primary school leaders), and timetabling and other scheduling considerations (86% compared to 59%) were most important (see Figure 15).

Leaders in schools with the lowest proportion of FSM eligible pupils were more likely than those with the highest proportion to state that financial costs / school budget

considerations (79% compared to 58% of leaders in schools with the highest proportion of FSM eligible pupils), staff wellbeing and productivity (72% compared to 52%), promoting an inclusive workplace (55% compared to 40%), and views of others (20% compared to 8%) were most important to them.

Figure 15. Factors most important to school leaders when considering whether or not to allow teachers and leaders to work flexibly [Prompted]



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. G7: Panel B leaders (n=622).

*Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary. Only prompted responses charted.

National Professional Qualifications (NPQs)

The Department for Education accredits National Professional Qualifications (NPQs), which are designed to support teachers with their professional development. A new and updated suite of NPQs was introduced in Autumn 2021.

Awareness of NPQs

Just over half (55%) of leaders and teachers had heard about the new NPQs prior to the survey. Leaders were much more likely than teachers to have heard of the new NPQs (93% vs. 49%).

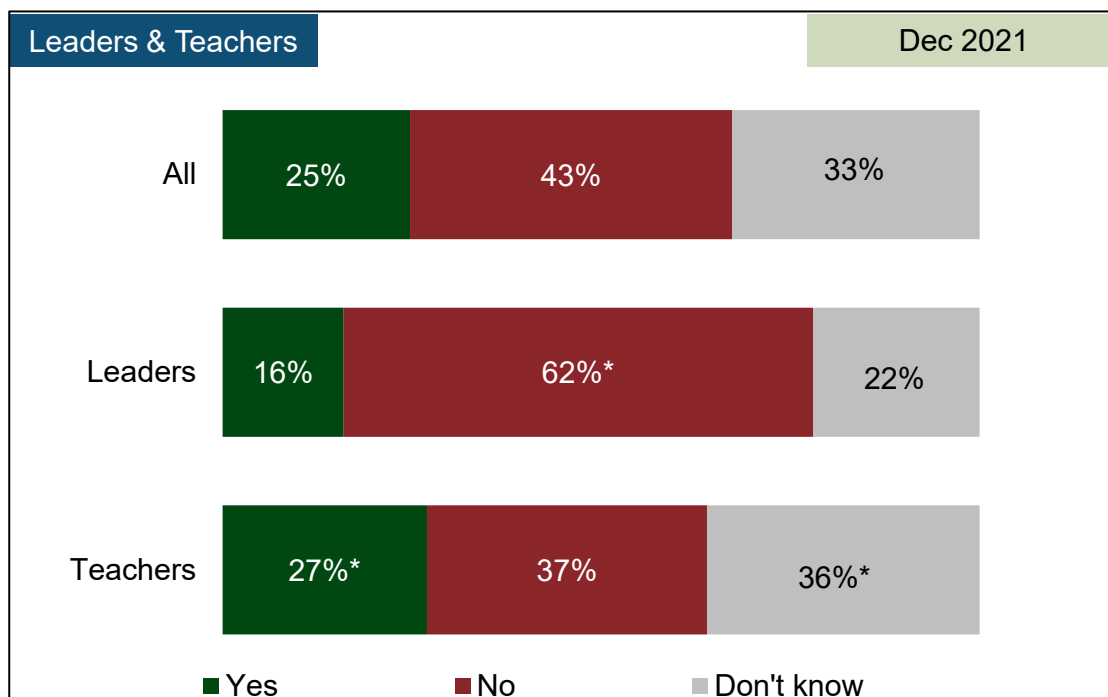
Applying for an NPQ

Those leaders and teachers that heard of the new NPQs were asked if they had applied to undertake one since June 2021. Nearly a fifth (18%) of these leaders and teachers had applied, with those working in primary schools (20%) more likely to have applied than those in secondary schools (15%).

Leaders and teachers from schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for FSM were more likely to have applied (23%), as were those working in the North East (29%).

Leaders and teachers that had not applied for an NPQ since June 2021 were asked if they intended to apply to undertake an NPQ in the future. As shown in Figure 16, a quarter (25%) did intend to apply, with a further third (33%) unsure, leaving just over two-fifths (43%) explicitly indicating that they did not intend to apply for an NPQ.

Figure 16. Whether intended to apply for NPQ in the future

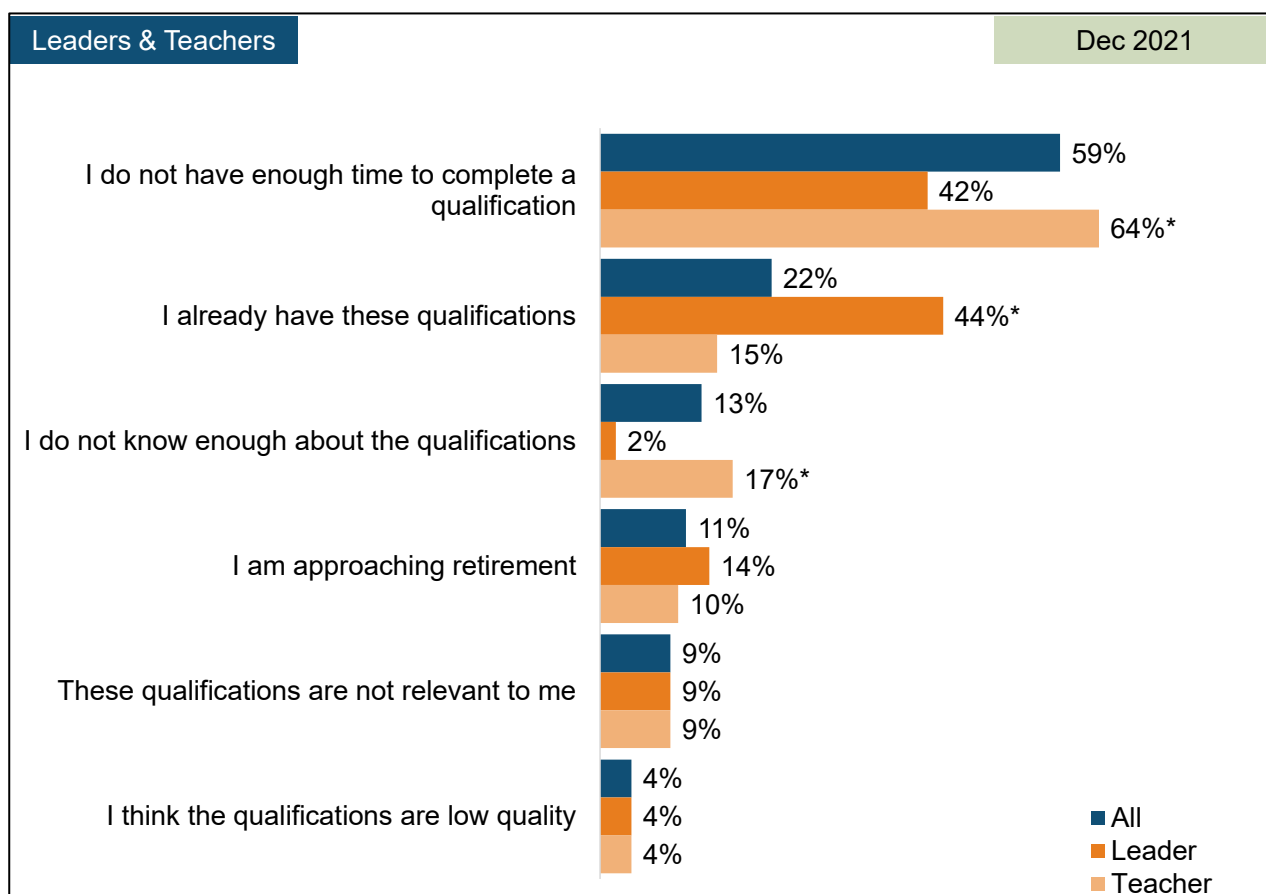


Source: School and College Panel, Dec 2021 survey. F3: Teachers and panel A leaders that have not applied for NPQ or don't know (n=1,176). *Indicates a significantly higher figure between primary and secondary schools.

Teachers were more likely than leaders to say they intended to apply for an NPQ (27% vs. 16%). Teachers with Qualified Teacher Status within the Main Pay Range were more likely than others to intend to apply (40% vs. 25% overall), with Headteachers the least likely to report intention to apply (8%).

Those that stated no intention to apply for an NPQ in the future were asked to give reason(s) why. As shown in Figure 17, the most common reason was a lack of time to complete a qualification (59%). Other key reasons were already holding an NPQ (22%), or not knowing enough about them (13%).

Figure 17. Reason given for not intending to apply for NPQ in future (prompted)



Source: School and College Panel, December survey. F4: Teachers and panel A leaders that don't intend to apply for NPQ or don't know (n=911). Responses less than 4% not charted.

*Indicates significant difference between leaders and teachers.

Leaders were more likely than teachers to say the reason for intending not to take an NPQ was already having these qualifications (44% vs. 15%). Teachers more likely than leaders to report not having enough time to complete a qualification (64% vs. 42%).

Those within a humanities subject area were more likely to report not having enough time to complete a qualification than average (71% vs. 59%), However, those who taught STEM subjects were more likely to report not knowing enough about the qualifications than average (20% vs. 13%).

Leaders and teachers in schools with an Outstanding Ofsted rating were more likely than others to cite approaching retirement as a reason for not intending to apply for an NPQ (18% vs. 11% overall). It was also more likely that those working within a Girls school (32%) gave this reason, compared to those in Boys (12%) and Mixed schools (10%).

In addition to the prompted reasons shown in the previous chart, respondents could also type in spontaneous responses. The most common of these was that the qualification

would not benefit the respondent / their school (3%). Some of the responses related to the prompted reasons already discussed, including respondents being unsure of the content of the courses and whether they would be helpful and add to their existing knowledge.

"I want to know if the NPQ will teach me things I have not already learnt through my middle leadership experience."

Primary teacher

"I currently have a MA (Ed) ... my qualifications cover pedagogy, leadership and research, so I'm not yet sure what these additional qualifications will bring."

Secondary leader

"I am keen to access academic research and apply this to my own setting, avoiding anything with the hint of prescription or top down management."

Primary leader

"I don't know how to apply or if my school leadership would support my application."

Secondary teacher

Workforce disability data collection

The Department has produced guidance for schools, entitled “The Equality Act 2010 and Schools”, to help them understand how the Equality Act affects them and how to fulfil their duties.¹¹ The guidance sets out that schools as employers are under a duty to make reasonable adjustments in relation to disability for their employees or potential employees. Schools must make reasonable adjustments to arrangements or practices to alleviate disadvantage and must also take reasonable steps to provide any necessary auxiliary aids and services.

Awareness of disability in the school workforce

This section examines how the annual return for the Department's School Workforce Census and the provision of staff disability data, is resourced within schools.

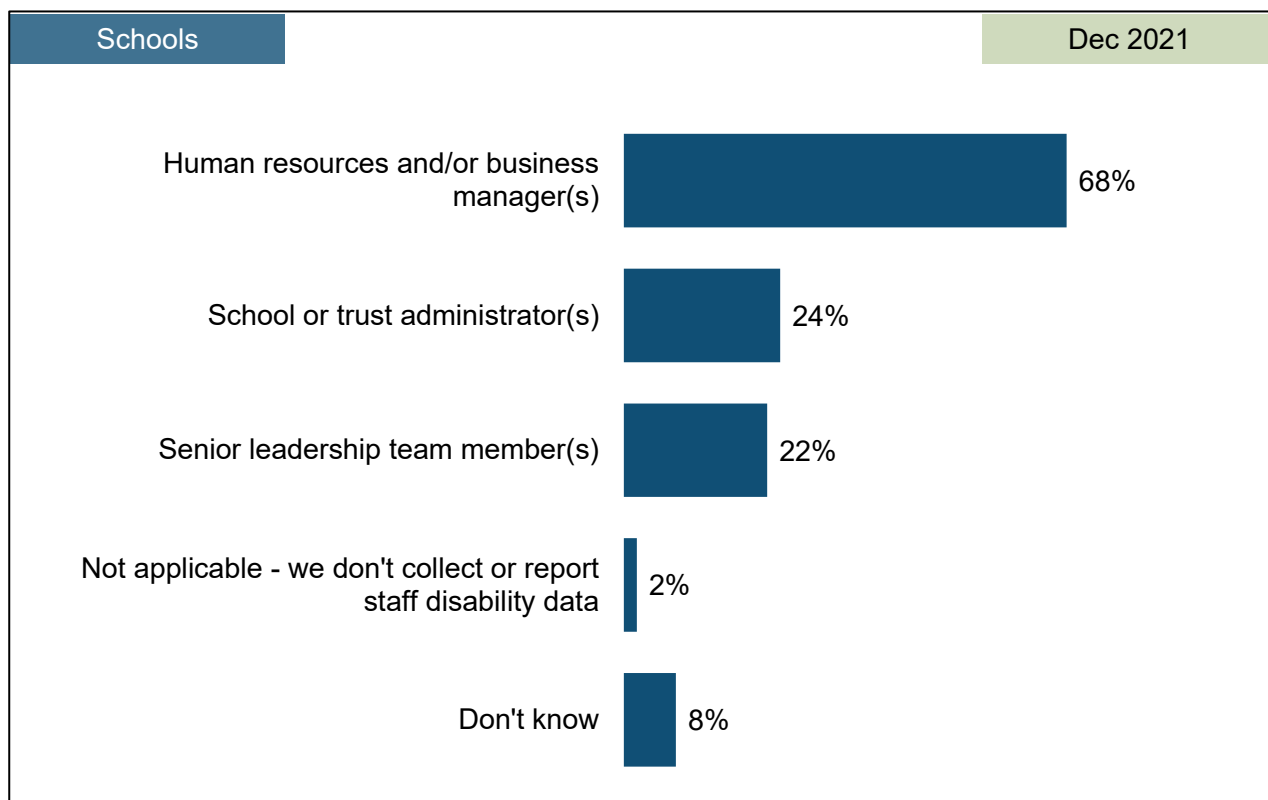
The School Workforce Census asks schools to provide information on the number of teachers that record themselves as disabled. However, the November 2020 census found that staff disability data was not reported for 52% of teachers. To understand more about why disability data is not reported, this School and College Panel survey included questions on how and when schools collect this data. These questions were answered by primary and secondary leaders.

Staff responsible for workforce disability data collection

Schools were asked to state which staff member has the responsibility for collecting and reporting staff disability data. As shown in Figure 18, this responsibility most commonly fell to human resources and/or business managers (68%). Only 2% of schools said that they do not collect or report staff disability data at all.

¹¹ The guidance can be found here:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315587/Equality_Act_Advice_Final.pdf

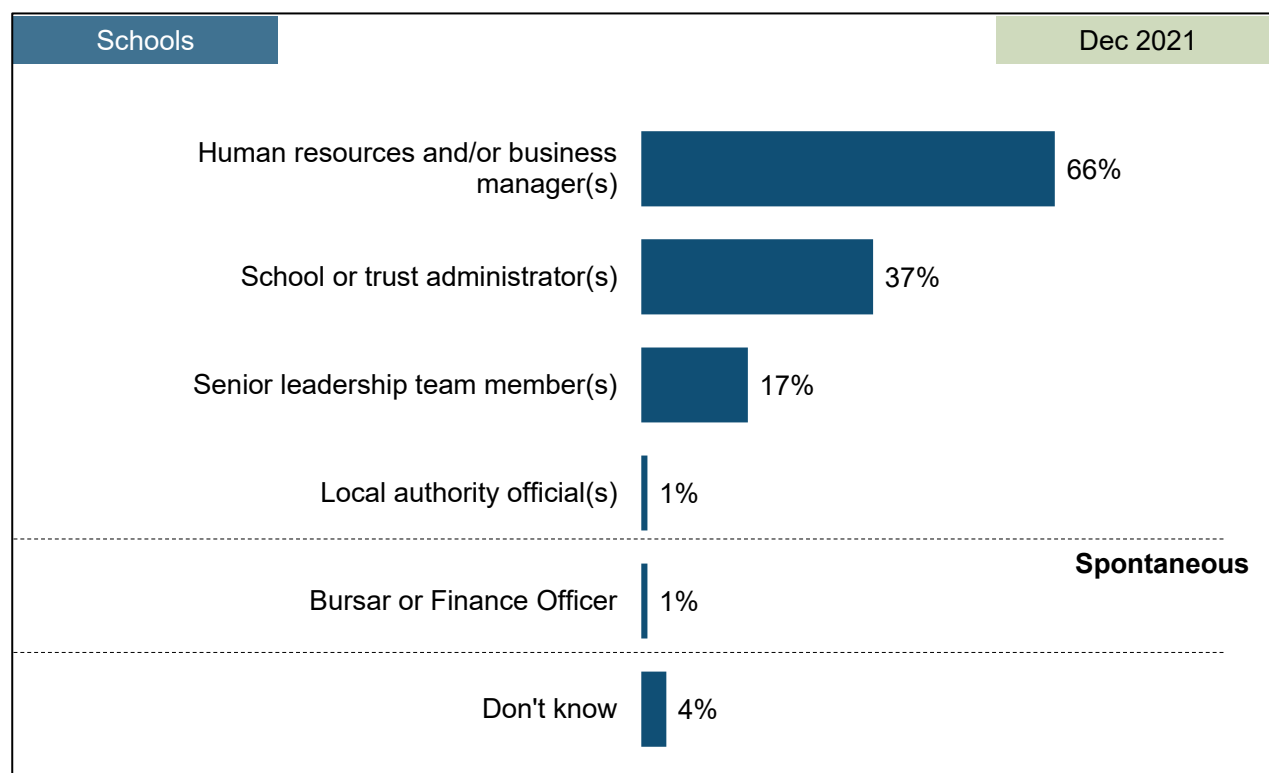
Figure 18. Staff member responsible for collecting and reporting disability data



Source: School and College Panel, December survey. E1: Panel B primary and secondary leaders (n=622). Responses less than 1% not charted.

Secondary schools were more likely than primary schools to give this responsibility to human resources and/or business managers (80% vs. 66%). Primary schools were more likely to have a senior leadership team member responsible for collecting and reporting staff disability data (24% vs. 12%).

Figure 19. Staff member responsible for completing the Schools Workforce Census



Source: School and College Panel, December survey. E3: Panel B primary and secondary leaders (n=622). Responses less than 1% not charted.

Responsibility for completing the Schools Workforce Census (SWFC) most commonly lay with human resources and/or business manager(s) (66%). This was followed by school or trust administrators (37%), and senior leadership team members (17%).

Results shown in Figures 18 and 19 indicate that the responsibility for completing the Schools Workforce Census (SWFC) and staff disability data often fell to the same people/role, typically the human resources and/or business manager(s). Just over half of schools (54%) said that human resources and/or business manager(s) were responsible for both tasks.

There were no significant differences between primary and secondary schools for this question, other than secondary leaders being more likely not to know which staff member completed the SWFC (9% vs. 3% of primary leaders).

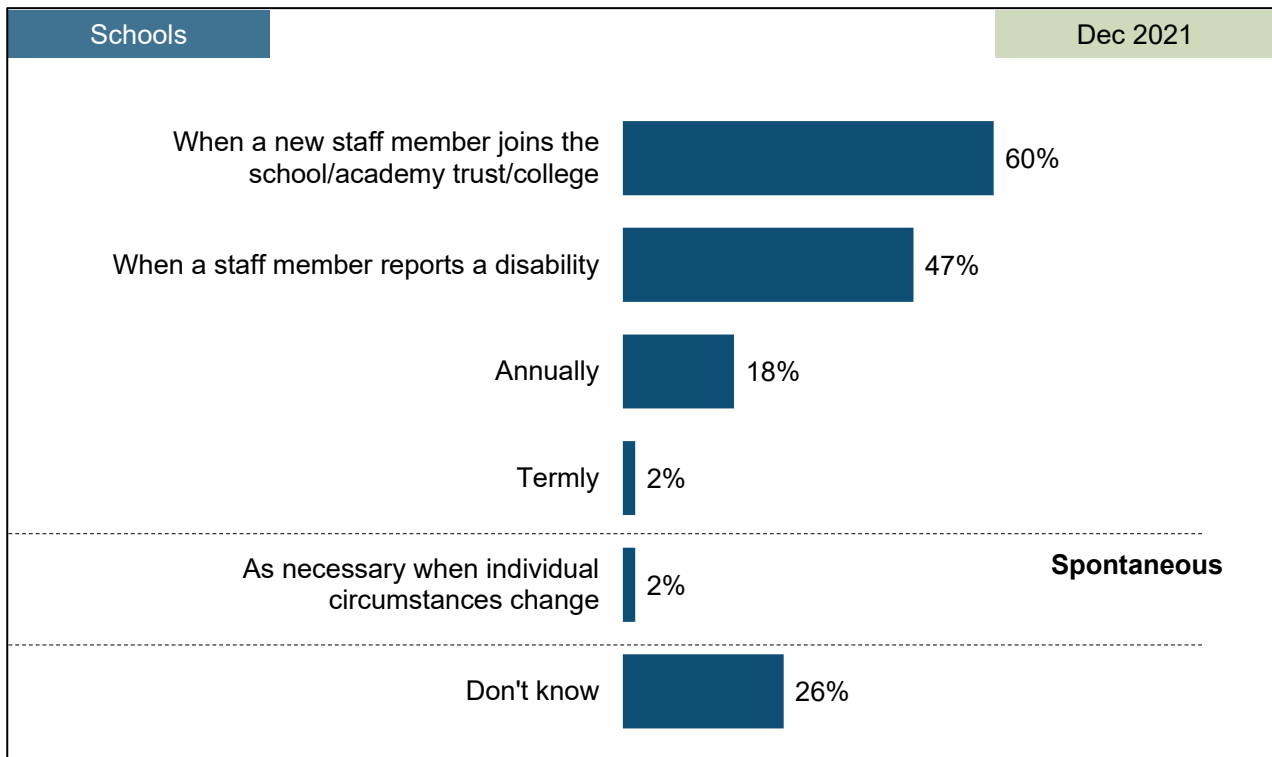
Schools with the lowest proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) were less likely than others to say school or trust administrators were responsible for completing the SWFC (27% vs. 37% overall).

Frequency of data collection of disability data

All schools that collect staff disability data (98% of those surveyed in the School and College Panel) were asked how frequently they collected this data. As Figure 20 shows,

schools most commonly report collecting this data when a new staff member joins (60%) and / or when a staff member reports a disability (47%). Over a quarter (26%) did not know how frequently the data was collected. Where a particular timeframe was given, data was more likely to be collected annually (18%) than termly (2%).

Figure 20. Frequency of collecting disability data



Source: School and College Panel, December survey. E2: Panel B primary and secondary leaders that collect disability data (n=610). Responses below 2% not charted.

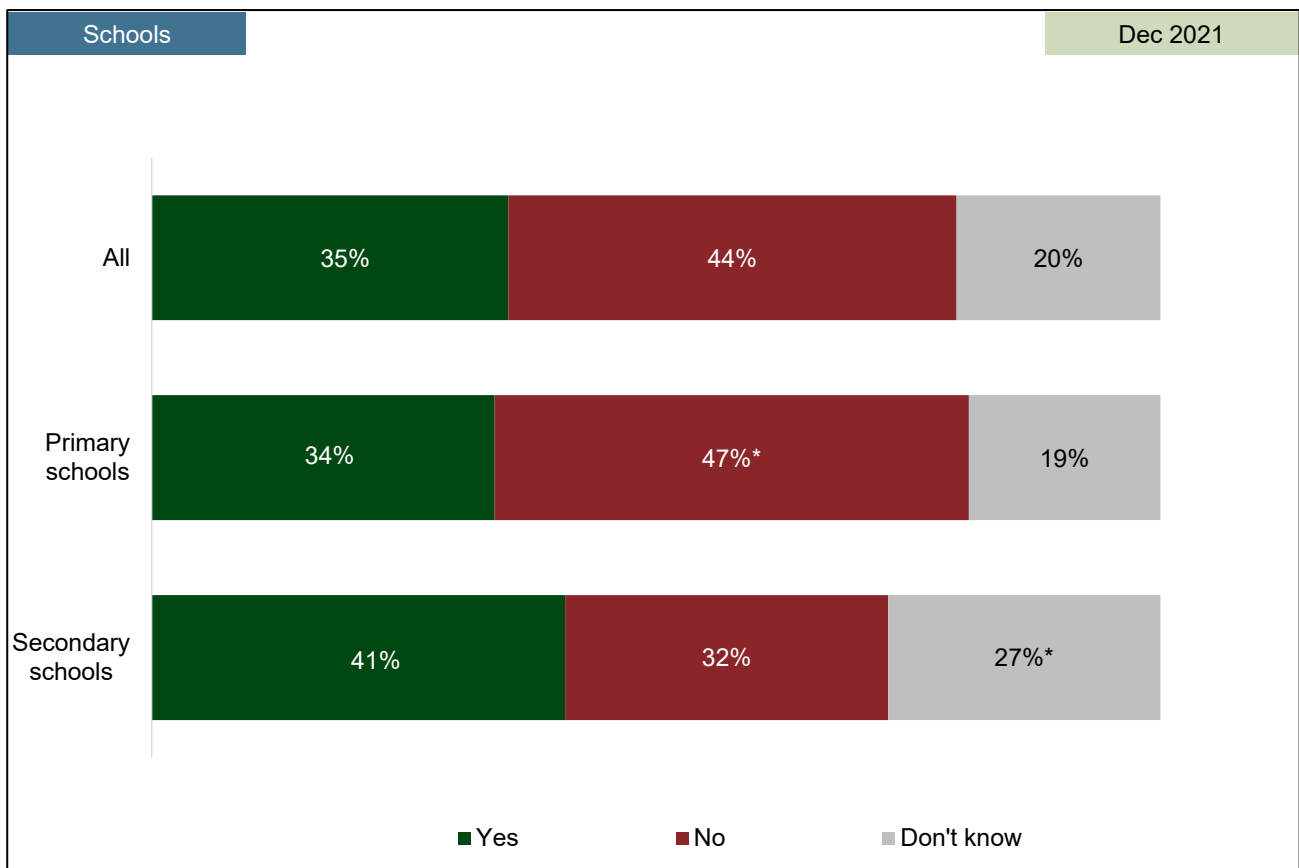
Technology

The Department for Education required data on how, if at all, schools' investment plans had changed since departmental programmes invested substantially in EdTech for schools over the course of the pandemic (including a large delivery programme of laptops). As such, this section examines schools' plan to spend on technology in 2022, including whether they intend to spend more or less than they did in 2021, and what areas of technology they planned to spend on. These questions were answered by primary and secondary school leaders.

Spending

Schools were asked whether they planned to spend more on technology in 2022 than in 2021. Just over a third (35%) did plan to spend more in 2022 than in 2021, and one in five (20%) were unsure; over two-fifths (44%) had no plans to spend more on technology in 2022 than in 2021. Figure 21 shows how these percentages differed across primary and secondary schools, with primary schools more likely to report not planning on spending more on technology in 2022 (47% vs. 32%).

Figure 21. Whether planning to spend more on technology in 2022 than in 2021



Source: School and College Panel, December survey. L1: Panel B primary and secondary leaders (n=622). *Indicates significantly higher figure between primary and secondary schools.

Secondary academies were more likely to say they planned on spending more on technology in 2022 than secondary non-academies (44% vs. 29%).

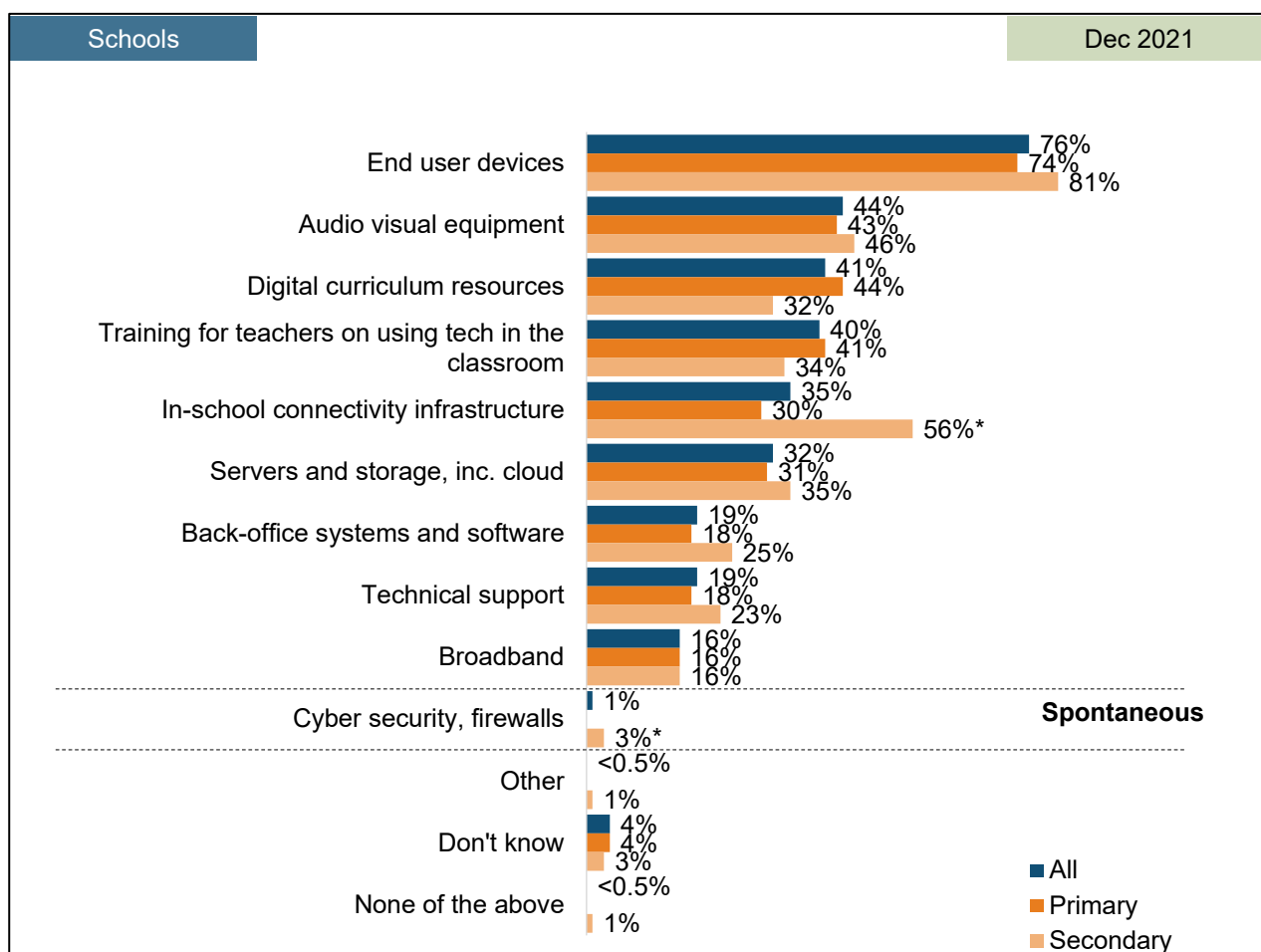
Schools with an Ofsted rating of 'Requires Improvement' were more likely than 'Outstanding' schools to plan to increase spending on technology in 2022 (52% vs. 26%).

Resource planning

Schools that planned to spend more on technology in 2022 were asked whether they planned to increase their spend on a range of specific technologies and resources in the next 12 months.

As Figure 22 shows, it was most common for these schools to plan to increase spending on end user devices, e.g. laptops, tablets and PCs (76%). This was followed by audio visual equipment (44%) and digital curriculum resources (41%). Schools were less likely to report planning increased spending on basic technical infrastructure, such as broadband (16%).

Figure 22. Whether planning to spend more on specific technologies and resources in next 12 months



Source: School and College Panel, December survey. L2: Panel B primary and secondary leaders who plan to spend more on technology in 2022 (n=224). *Indicates significantly higher figure between primary and secondary schools.

Secondary schools were significantly more likely than primary schools to report planning to spend on in-school connectivity (e.g. Wi-Fi) (56% vs. 30%), and on cyber security and firewalls (3% vs. 0%; note this was a spontaneous response rather than being one respondents could select from).

Pupil mental health

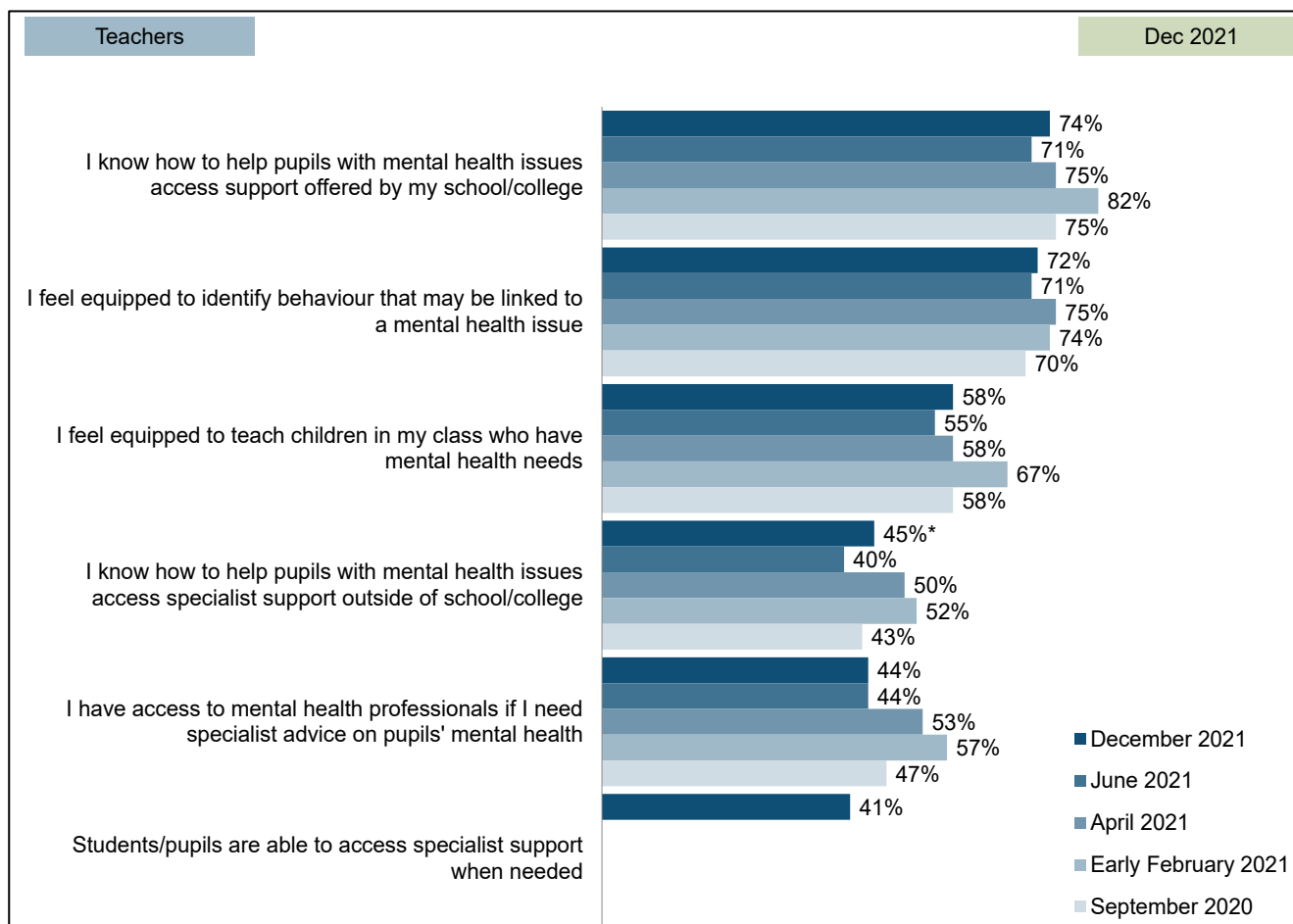
Pupil mental health and wellbeing is an ongoing priority for the Department for Education. The pandemic and associated lockdown measures have affected children and young people's mental health and wellbeing in a variety of ways. Schools and school staff being equipped to identify and respond to emerging needs is key to supporting their recovery. In May 2021, the DfE announced that funding would be made available to train a senior mental health lead in up to a third of schools and colleges in England in the next academic year. This training will give these senior leads the knowledge and skills they'll need to develop an effective whole school approach to mental health, including supporting wider school staff around pupil mental health and wellbeing.

To build or knowledge of existing levels of skills and knowledge teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a range of statements regarding their ability to support pupils with mental health needs.

The highest levels of agreement seen were in relation to knowing how to help pupils with mental health issues access support offered by their school or college (74%) and feeling equipped to identify behaviour that may be linked to a mental health issue (72%). In comparison around four-in-ten knew how to help pupils with mental health issues access specialist support outside of the school/college (45%), felt they had access to mental health professionals if they need specialist advice (44%) or that pupils are able to access to specialist support when it is needed (41%).

Agreement was in line with the previous wave for almost all statements that had been asked previously. There was a significant increase in the proportion of teachers agreeing that they know how to help pupils with mental health issues access specialist support outside of school/college (45%, compared with 40% in June 2021).

Figure 23. Teachers' agreement with statements regarding pupil mental health



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. K1: All teachers (n=1,720). June 2021 survey. K4: All teachers (n=979). April 2021 survey. H1: All teachers (n=1,130). Early February 2021. B2: All teachers (n=1,266). September 2020. All teachers (n=746). * Indicates a statistically significant difference between December 2021 and June 2021.

There is some variation by school phase. Primary teachers were significantly more likely to agree that they felt equipped to identify behaviour that may be linked to a mental health issue (75% vs. 70% of secondary teachers) and to feel equipped to teach children who have mental health needs (61% vs. 55%). On the other hand, secondary teachers were more likely to agree that pupils are able to access specialist support when needed (48% vs. 34% of primary teachers).

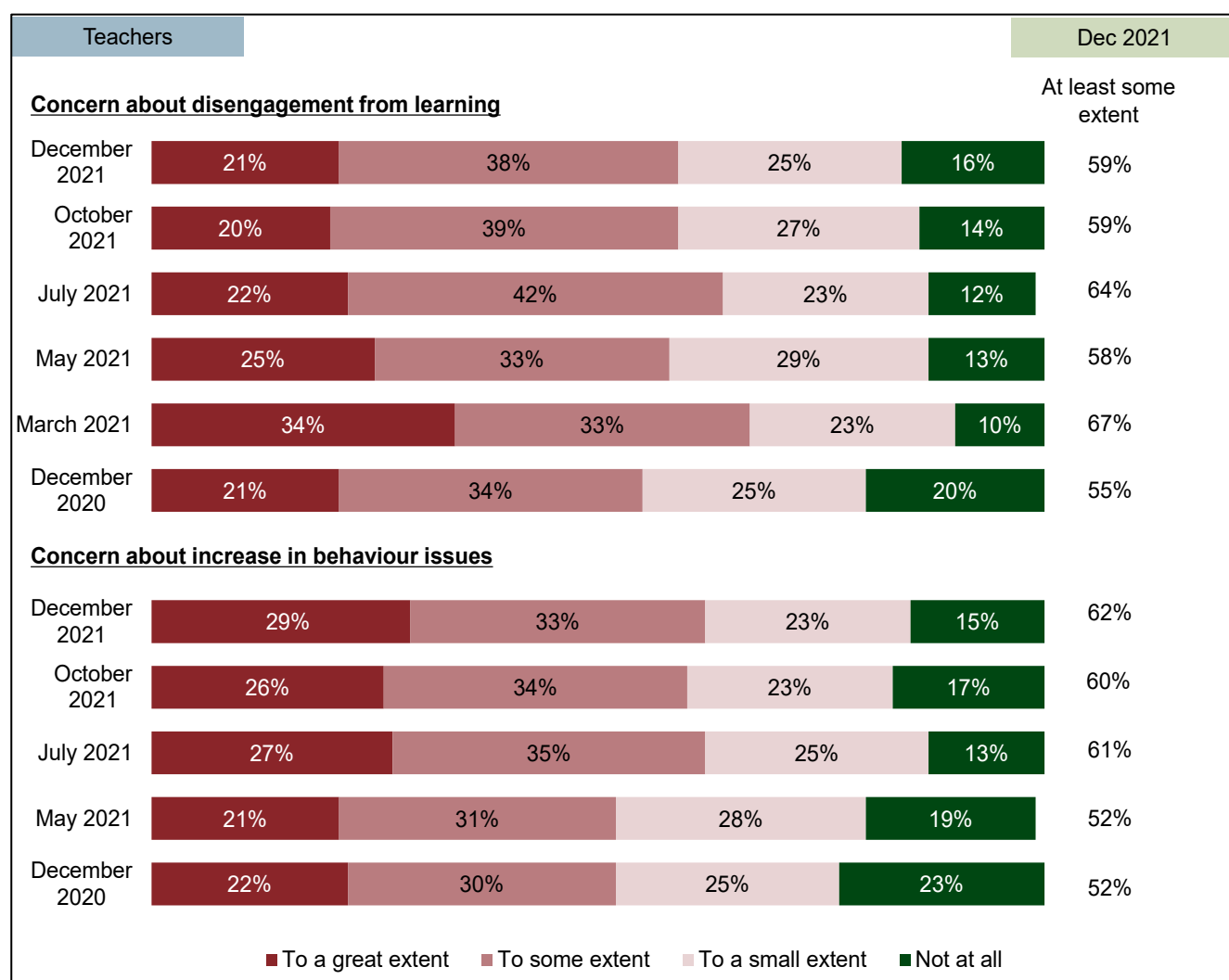
Pupil Behaviour and Engagement in Learning

Understanding concerns regarding pupil behaviour and engagement is a priority for DfE to inform best practice guidance for schools. Tracking concerns around behaviour and disengagement from learning through the COVID-19 period and beyond supports work by DfE to understand the factors that play a significant role impacting behaviour and engagement and use this understanding to adjust policy responses accordingly. Teachers were first asked in December 2020 how concerned they were about disengagement from learning and an increase in misbehaviour. This topic was subsequently asked in March, May, July, October and most recently, in December 2021.

As illustrated by Figure 24, around three-fifths of teachers were concerned to at least some extent about disengagement from learning (59%) and a similar proportion concerned, to some extent, about an increase in behaviour issues (62%).

December 2021 results for the proportion of teachers concerned to at least some extent about disengagement from learning (59%) is in line with the October 2021 survey (59%), but lower than in July 2021 (64%). The proportion of teachers concerned about behaviour issues (62%) is in line with the October 2021 (60%) and July 2021 surveys (61%), but higher than in May 2021 (52%).

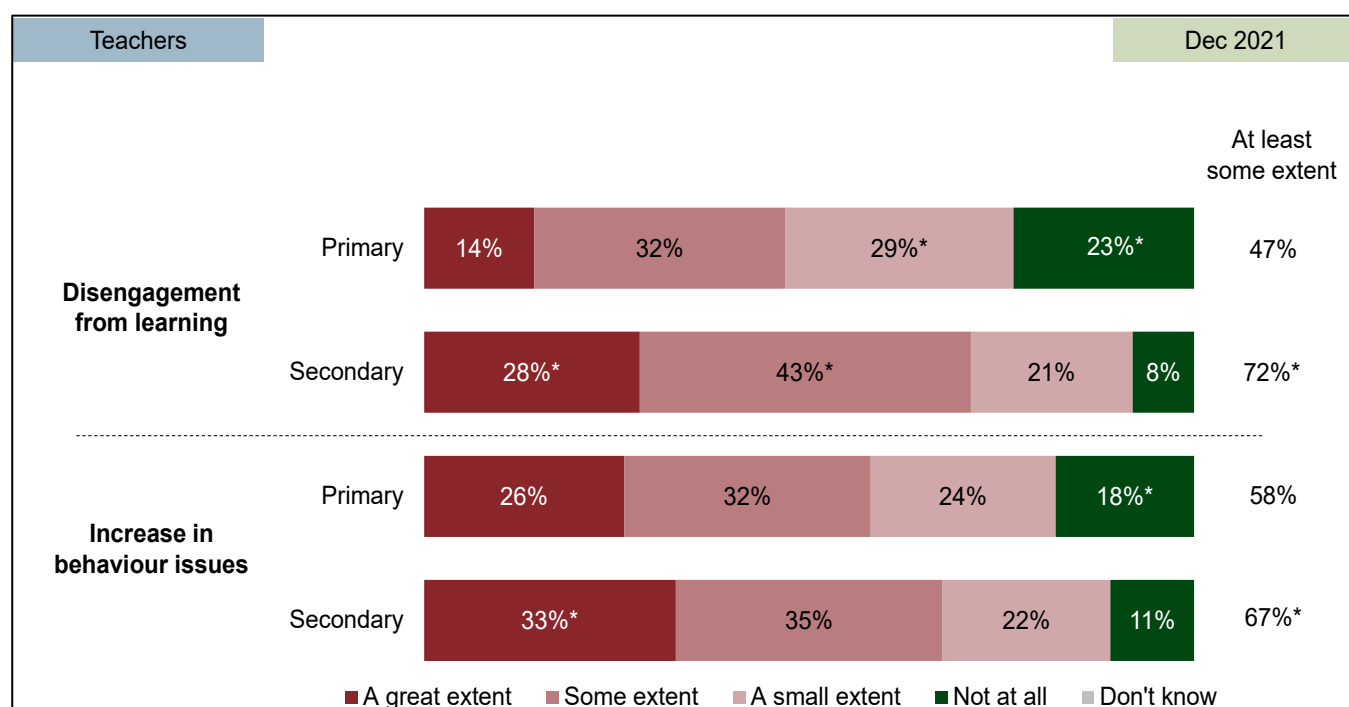
Figure 24. Extent to which teachers were concerned about disengagement from learning and an increase in behaviour issues (time series comparison)



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. N1_X: All teachers (1,720). October 2021 survey: All teachers (n=1,077). July 2021 survey: All teachers (n=934). May 2021 survey: All teachers (n=1,054). March 2021 survey: All teachers (n=1,217). December 2020 survey: All teachers (n=619).

In December 2021, secondary teachers were significantly more likely than primary teachers to be concerned about both disengagement and misbehaviour to at least some extent, with 72% concerned about disengagement from learning (compared with 47% of primary teachers), and 67% concerned about an increase in behaviour problems (compared with 58% of primary teachers). As shown in Figure 25, secondary teachers were twice as likely as primary teachers to be greatly concerned about disengagement from learning (28% vs 14%).

Figure 25. Extent to which teachers were concerned about disengagement from learning and an increase in behaviour issues (primary vs. secondary)



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. N1_X: All teachers (n=1,720).

*Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary teachers.

In terms of subgroup differences, the following teachers were more likely to be greatly concerned about both issues:

- Those at schools with the highest proportions of pupils eligible for FSM – 35% greatly concerned about an increase in behaviour issues and 26% about disengagement from learning (compared with 20% and 9% respectively among those with the lowest proportions of pupils eligible for FSM).
- Those at sponsor-led academies – 35% greatly concerned about an increase in behaviour issues and 29% about disengagement from learning (compared with 29% and 21% respectively on average).

Teachers at schools with an Ofsted rating 'requires improvement' were significantly more likely to be greatly concerned about disengagement from learning (29%, compared with 14% of teachers at schools with an Ofsted rating 'outstanding').

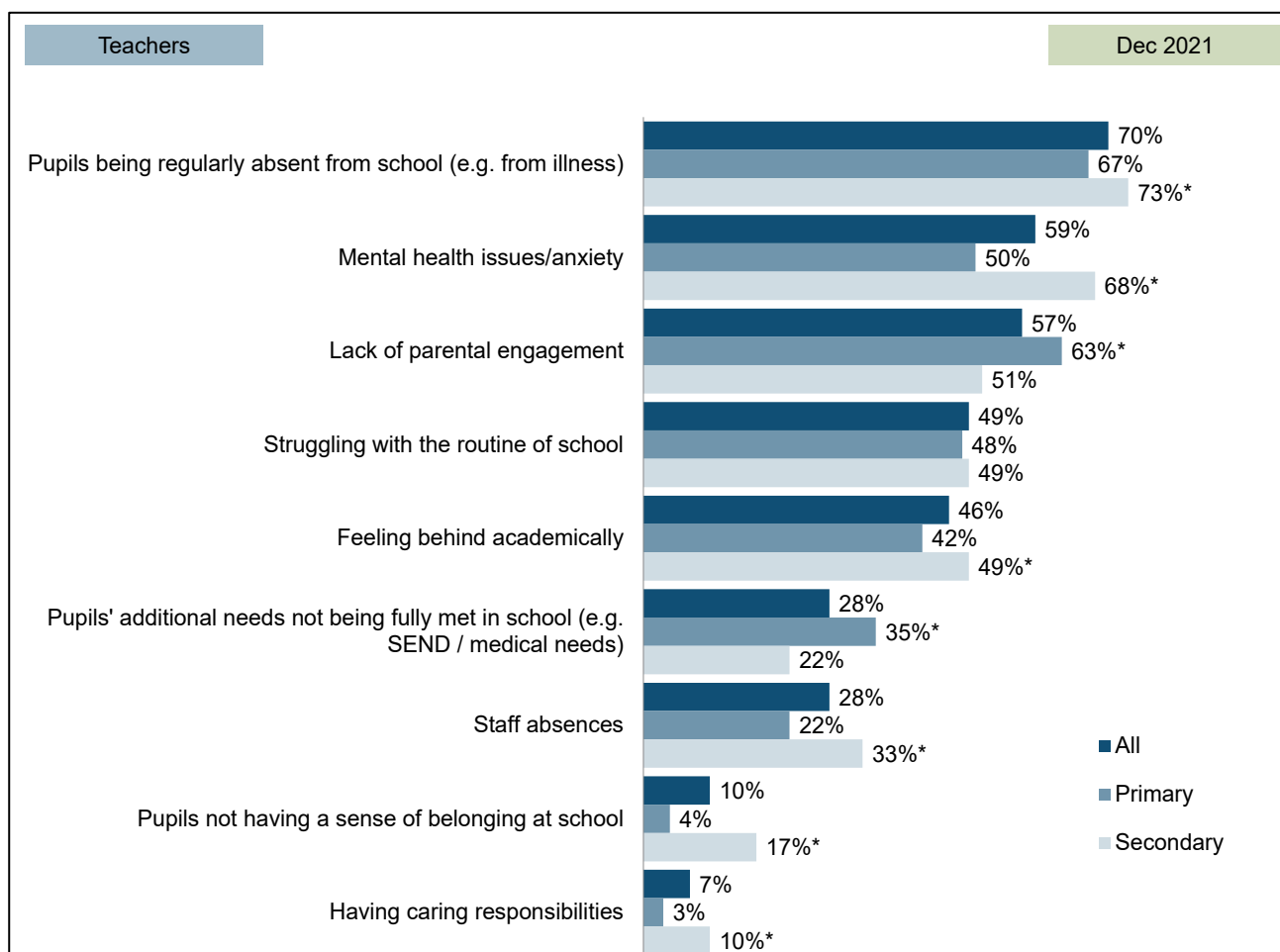
Perceived reasons for disengagement from learning

Teachers concerned about disengagement from learning were asked what they thought were the main reasons why pupils at their school were disengaged from learning.

Teachers most commonly cited pupils being regularly absent from school (e.g. because of illness) as the main reason (70%). Over half of teachers also cited mental health

issues and anxiety (59%) and lack of parental engagement (57%). The full list of reasons can be seen in Figure 26.

Figure 26. Main reasons why pupils are disengaged from learning (prompted)



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. N2: All teachers concerned about disengagement from learning (1,436). *Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary teachers.

There were notable differences between the reasons given by primary and secondary teachers. Primary teachers were significantly more likely to cite:

- Lack of parental engagement (63% vs. 51% of secondary teachers); and
- Pupils' additional needs not being fully met in school (e.g. SEND / medical needs) (35% vs. 22%).

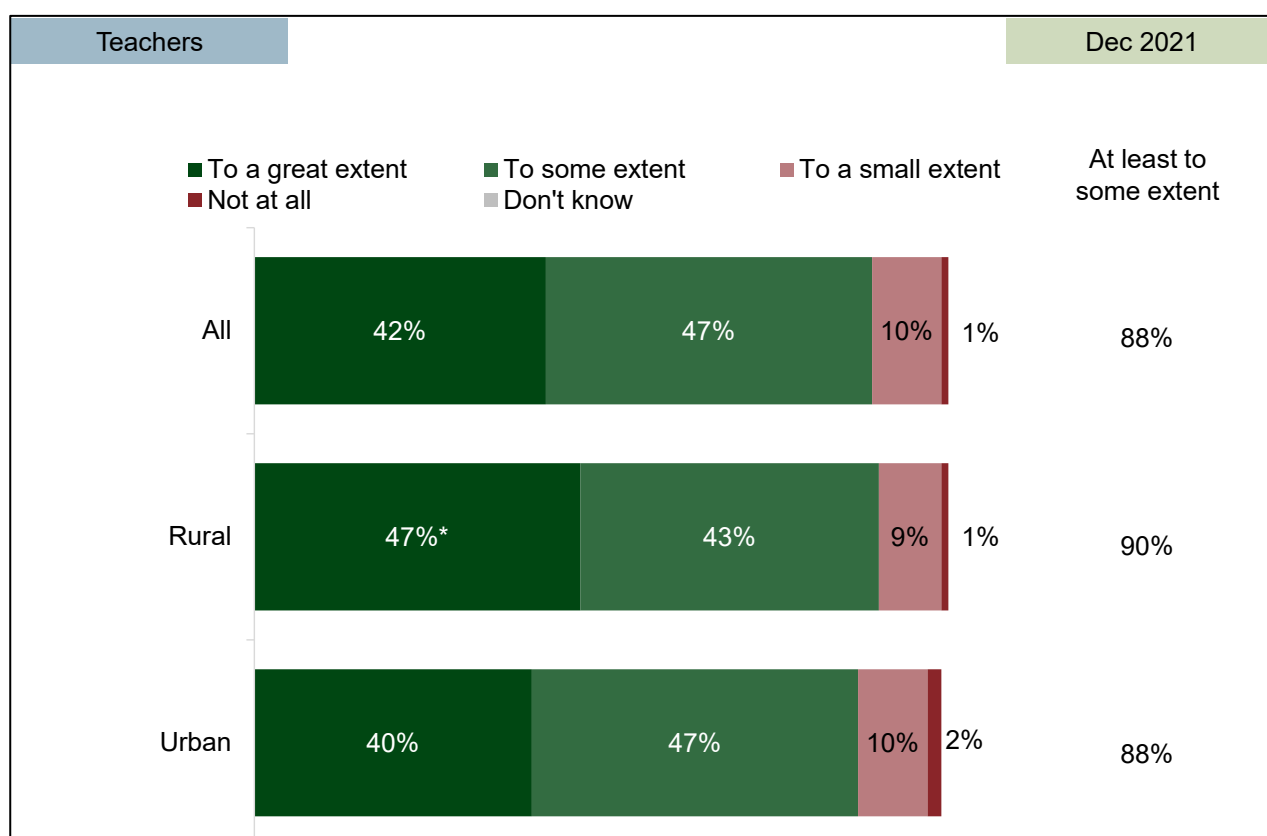
Secondary teachers were significantly more likely to cite:

- Pupils being regularly absent from school (e.g. from illness) (73% vs. 67% of primary teachers);
- Mental health issues/anxiety (68% vs. 50%);
- Pupils feeling behind academically (49% vs. 42%);

- Staff absences (33% vs. 22%);
- Pupils not having a sense of belonging at school (17% vs. 4%); and
- Having caring responsibilities (10% vs. 3%).

The vast majority of teachers concerned about disengagement from learning felt that this disengagement was linked to disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic at least to some extent (88%); around two-fifths (42%) felt that it was linked to the pandemic to a great extent. Teachers at rural schools were more likely to say that disengagement was linked to disruption caused by the pandemic to a great extent than those in urban schools (47% vs. 40% respectively), as shown in Figure 27, below.

Figure 27. Whether disengagement in learning is linked to disruption caused by COVID-19 pandemic



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. N3: All teachers concerned about disengagement from learning (1,436). *Indicates a statistically significant difference between rural and urban schools

It is worth noting that in the questionnaire, teachers concerned with disengagement from learning were asked the main reasons why pupils were disengaged with learning, but there was no follow-up question for those concerned about an increase in behaviour issues.

Extra-curricular Activities

Research suggests that extra-curricular activities are important in developing social and emotional skills, as well as providing a range of other positive outcomes (e.g., improved mental health and wellbeing, academic achievement, behaviour, and attendance at school). Schools can play a significant role in providing access to these enrichment activities through an extra-curricular offer to pupils. There is evidence¹² that during the pandemic schools have been less able to offer their usual range of activities due to COVID-19 restrictions limiting contact.

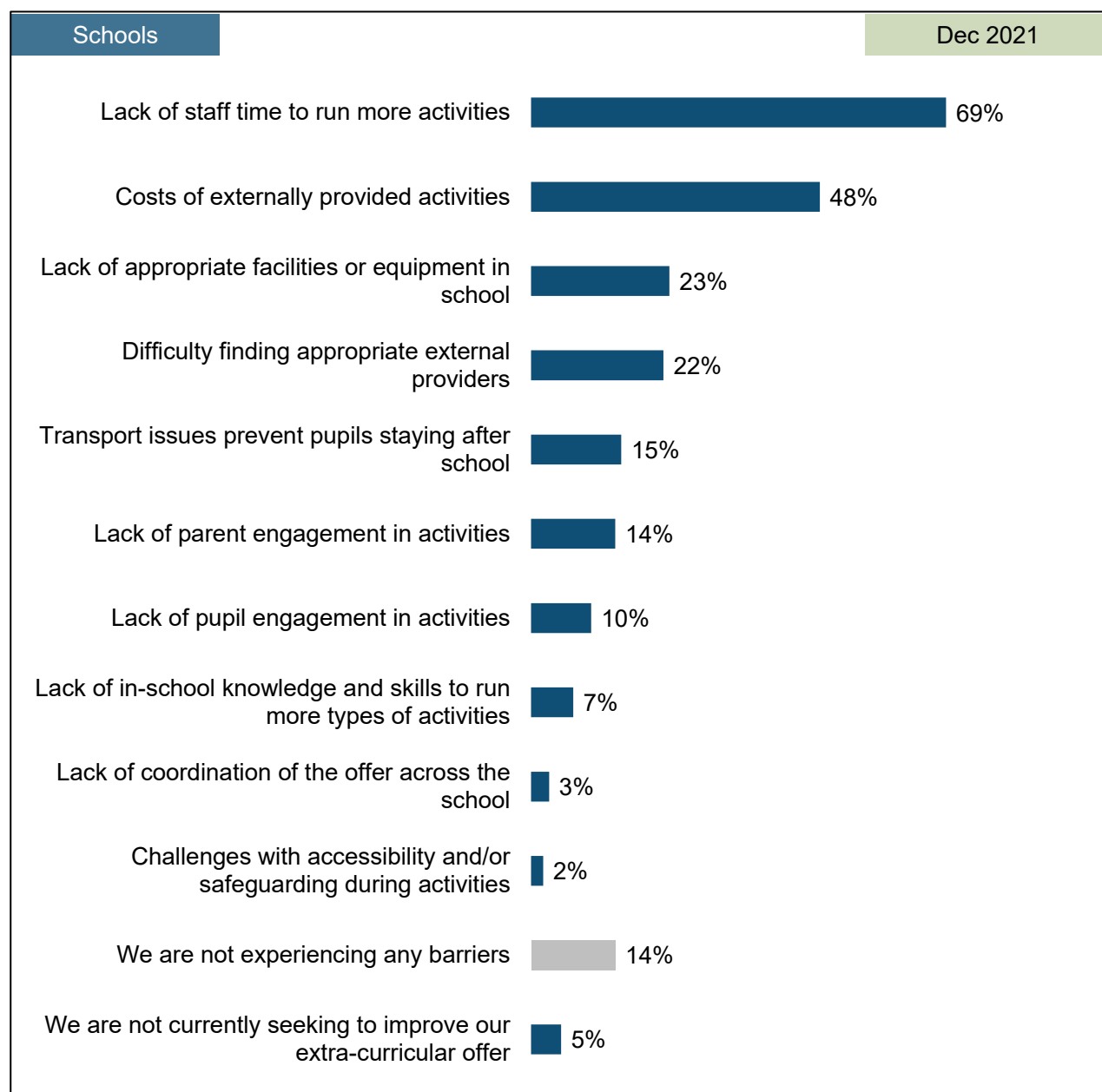
Schools were asked, from a prompted list, which factors, if any, were significant barriers to their school improving their extra-curricular offer. Overall, over four-fifths of schools (82%) reported at least one significant barrier. The main such barrier was a lack of staff time to run more activities (69% of schools), followed by the cost of externally provided activities (48%). Roughly a quarter of schools also cited lack of appropriate facilities or equipment in their school (23%) or difficulty finding appropriate external providers (22%). Schools also cited a range of other significant barriers, including transport issues preventing pupils staying after school (15%), lack of parent engagement in activities (14%) and lack of pupil engagement in activities (10%).

Primary schools were more likely to cite difficulties finding appropriate external partners (24% compared to 11%), while secondary schools were more likely to cite transport issues preventing pupils from staying after school (42% compared to 10%).

There was also a difference in the barriers faced by schools with different proportions of FSM eligible pupils. Those with the highest proportion of FSM eligible pupils were more likely than those with the lowest proportion to cite a lack of parent engagement in activities (23% compared to 3%).

¹² e.g. [The School Snapshot Survey: Summer 2019 3. Support for Pupils](#) and [COVID-19 School Snapshot Panel Findings from the June survey](#)

Figure 28. Barriers to school improving extra-curricular offer (schools) [prompted]



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. J1: Panel A leaders (n=605). Only prompted responses shown. Lack of understanding about pupil needs and interests also prompted but not charted (<1%).

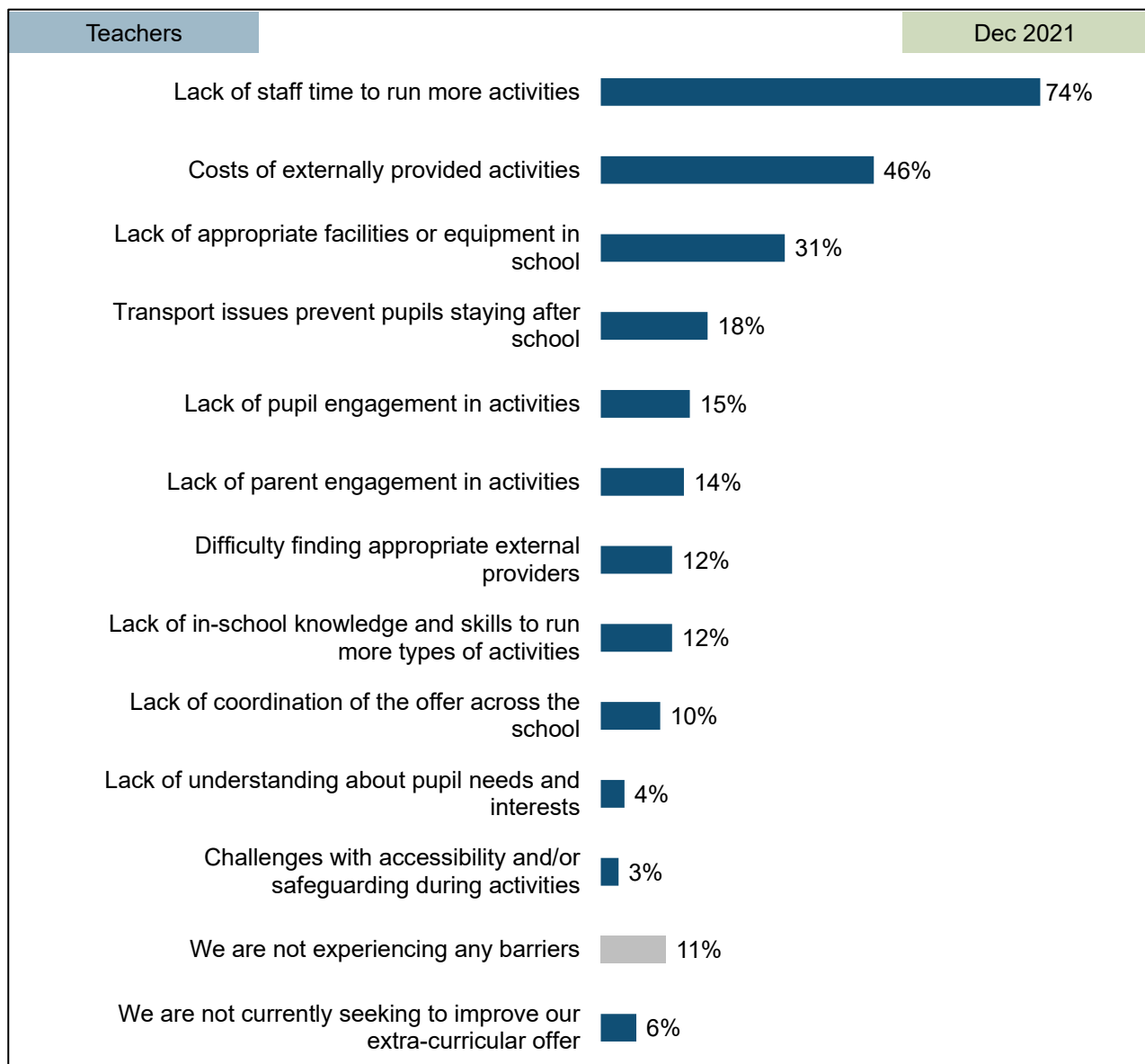
Teachers were also asked which factors, if any, were significant barriers to their school improving its extra-curricular offer. Overall, 83% of teachers cited at least one barrier facing the school (almost identical to the 82% among leaders). The two main factors highlighted by teachers were the same as those highlighted by schools; lack of staff time to run more activities (74%) and costs (46%). As with schools, teachers also cited a lack of appropriate facilities or equipment in school (31%). Teachers were slightly less likely than 'schools' to cite difficulty finding appropriate external providers (12%). Teachers also

cited a range of other barriers, including transport issues preventing pupils staying after school (18%), lack of pupil engagement in activities (15%) and lack of parent engagement in activities (14%).

There were some differences in the barriers cited by primary and secondary school teachers. Those in secondary schools were more likely to cite a lack of staff time to run more activities (77% compared to 71%), transport issues preventing pupils staying after school (29% compared to 8%), lack of pupil engagement in activities (22% compared to 8%) and lack of coordination of the offer across the school (13% compared to 8%). Teachers in primary schools were more likely to cite a lack of appropriate facilities or equipment (36% compared to 26%).

There were also some differences in the barriers faced by teachers in schools with different proportions of FSM eligible pupils. Teachers in schools with the highest proportion of FSM eligible pupils were more likely than those in schools with the lowest proportion to cite cost as a barrier (53% compared to 41%), lack of pupil engagement in activities (20% compared to 5%), lack of parent engagement in activities (26% compared to 2%) and lack of coordination of the offer across the school (15% compared to 7%).

Figure 29. Barriers to school improving extra-curricular offer (Teachers)
[prompted]



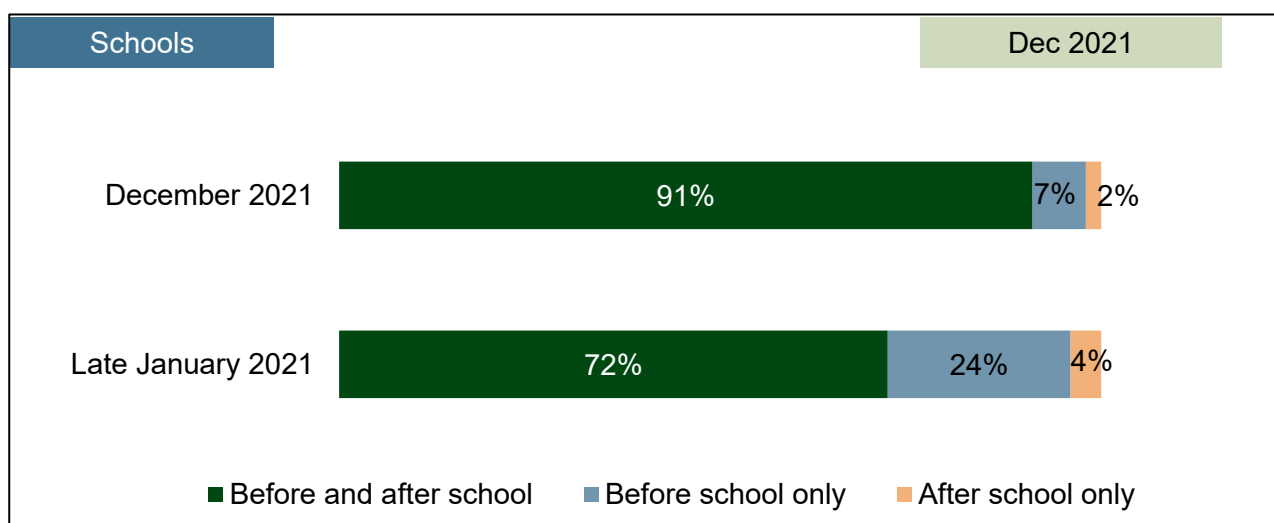
Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. J1: All teachers (n=1720). Only prompted responses shown.

Wraparound childcare

Around seven in ten (71%) primary schools indicated that they offered daily supervised wraparound childcare in December 2021 (similar to the 77%¹³ of primary schools who were offering wraparound childcare in the autumn term of 2020). The proportion is a significant increase from the 46% of primary schools who were offering daily supervised wraparound childcare in late January 2021, when school attendance restrictions were in place. Primary schools with the lowest proportion of FSM eligible pupils were more likely than those with the highest proportion to offer wraparound childcare (83% compared to 63%).

Among primary schools offering wraparound childcare, the vast majority were offering this both before and after school (91%). More offered it before school only (7%) than after school only (2%). Results indicate a marked increase compared to late January 2021 in those offering wraparound childcare both before and after school (in late January 2021 72% of primary schools offering wraparound childcare offered it at both times). This is likely because there were attendance restrictions in place in January 2021 which impacted demand for wraparound childcare.

Figure 30. Whether primary schools offered childcare before or after school, or both



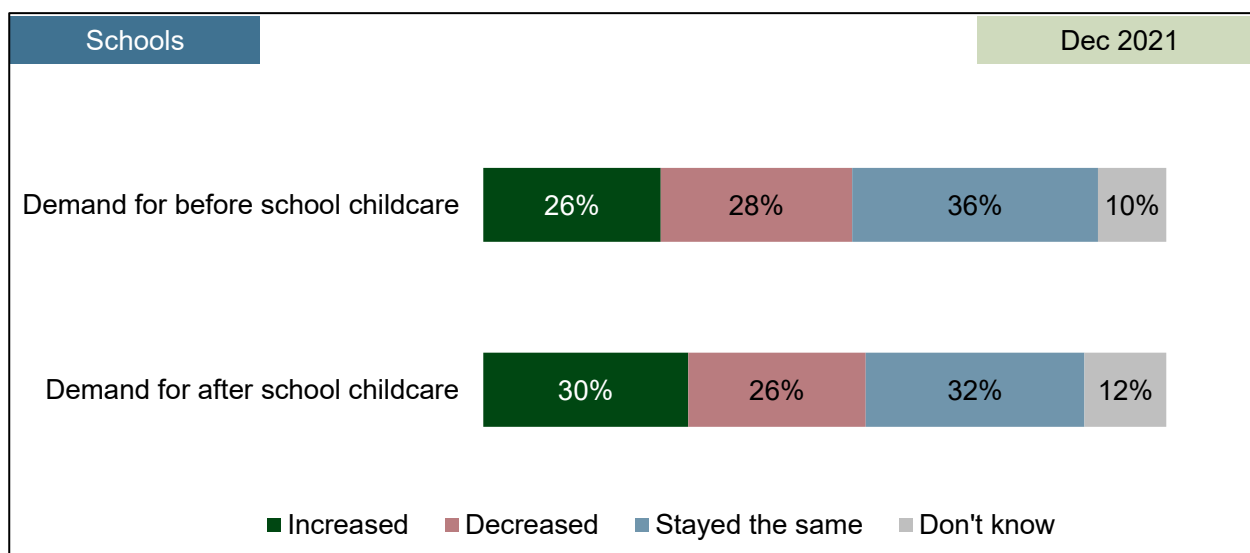
Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. M2: Panel A primary schools that offer wraparound childcare (n=281). School and College Panel, late January 2021 survey. A2: Primary schools that offer wraparound childcare (n=210)

Primary schools were asked whether the demand for before and after school childcare had changed in the current academic year compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic. A quarter of schools (26%) felt that demand for before school childcare had increased, and a similar proportion (28%) felt it had decreased - 36% said it had stayed the same.

¹³ The fall from 77% to 71% should be treated as indicative only, this is not statistically significant

Similarly for after school childcare, the proportion indicating that demand had increased (30%) was similar to the proportion saying it had decreased (26%); a third (32%) said it had stayed the same.

Figure 31. Change in demand for childcare in the current academic year compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. M3: Panel A primary schools that offer before school wraparound childcare (n=276). M4: Panel A primary schools that offer after school wraparound childcare (n=260).

Wraparound childcare is most frequently reported as being provided by school staff on the school site and is part of the school's governance arrangements (74%). In a quarter of primary schools (23%), childcare is provided by a private organisation on the school site within their own governance arrangements. Primary non-academies were more likely than primary academies to use a private organisation on the school site (27% compared to 17%). School leaders reported their wraparound childcare as being rarely provided away from the school site by either staff or a private organisation (1% in each case).

These are similar findings to the late January 2021 survey, when 77% of primary schools said they provided childcare through school staff on the school site and 21% through a private organisation on the school site.

Breakfast club provision

All schools (primary and secondary) were asked whether they currently run breakfast club provision for pupils. Approaching two-thirds (62%) of schools said they do run such provision (8% as part of DfE's National Breakfast Club Programme, 54% not part of this programme). A third (33%) do not run breakfast club provision.

Primary schools were more likely than secondary schools to run breakfast club provision (64% compared to 53%), as were schools with the highest proportion of FSM eligible pupils compared with those the lowest proportion (77% compared to 48%).

School Food Standards

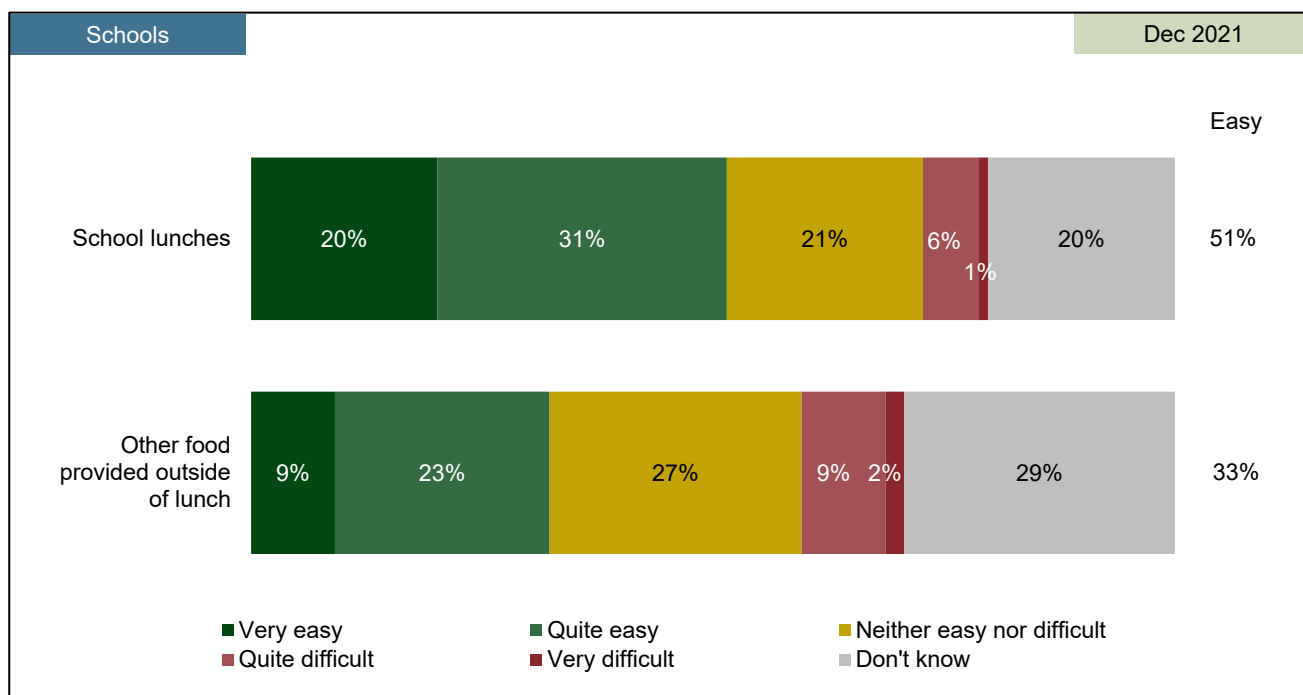
The department's School Food Standards are designed to help children develop healthy eating habits, and ensure that healthy, tasty and nutritious food and drink are available to pupils throughout the school day. The current standards came into force on January 1st 2015 and compliance is mandatory for all maintained schools (including academies) and free schools. The food-based standards specify which types of food and drinks should be served at school and how often (with an emphasis on a wide range of foods across the week using fresh, sustainable and locally sourced ingredients), but they also emphasise that food should be served in a pleasant environment where children can eat with their friends. This section aims to provide more information on the barriers in successfully implementing the standards in different types of schools.

In December 2021, schools were asked how easy or difficult it is for them to meet the School Food Standards when providing school lunches and other food provided outside of lunch.

Around half of schools (51%) reported that it was easy for them to meet the School Food Standards when providing school lunches, including one in five (20%) that found it very easy. Around, one in five schools (21%) felt that it was neither easy nor difficult. Overall 7% felt that it was difficult. One in five did not know, which may be because the school leader completing the survey was not in charge of school food.

When providing food outside of lunch, a third of schools (33%) reported that it was easy compared with 11% finding it difficult. Again quite high proportions found this neither easy nor difficult (27%) or did not know (29%).

Figure 32. Ease of meeting the School Food Standards when providing school lunches and other food



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. I1_1 & I1_2: All Panel A leaders (n=605).

There were notable differences between primary and secondary schools. Primary schools were significantly more likely to report that it was easy to meet the School Food Standards when providing school lunches (54% vs. 35% of secondary schools) whereas secondary schools were more likely to report that it was difficult (14% vs. 6% of primary schools), or that they were unsure (33% vs. 18%).

The following types of school were more likely to report that it was very easy for them to meet the School Food Standards when providing school lunches:

- Schools with the lowest proportion of pupils eligible for FSM (33% vs. 20% of schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for FSM).
- Rural schools (27% vs. 19% of urban schools).
- Schools located in the West Midlands (39% vs. 20% on average across regions; comparatively schools in London were more likely to report that it was very difficult (4% vs. 1% on average)).

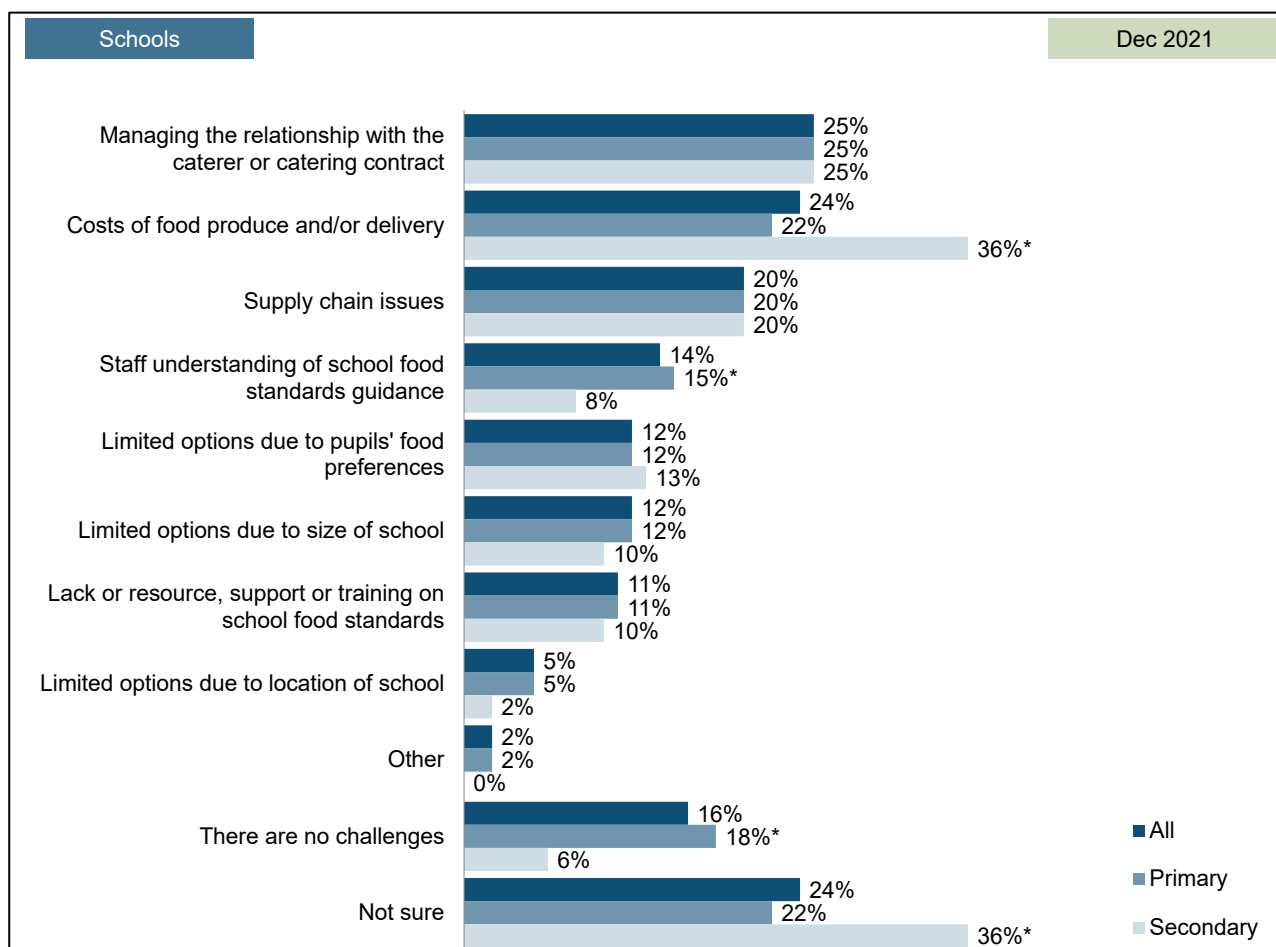
As with school lunches, primary schools were significantly more likely to say that it was easy to meet the School Food Standards when providing other food outside of lunch (34% vs. 26% of secondary schools). Secondary schools were significantly more likely to be unsure (39% vs. 27% of primary schools).

Schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for FSM were significantly more likely to report that it was difficult for them to meet the School Food Standards when providing other food outside of lunch (11% vs. 3% of schools with the lowest proportion of pupils eligible for FSM). Schools located in Yorkshire and Humber were more likely to report that it was very difficult for them to meet the School Food Standards when providing other food outside of lunch (7% vs. 2% on average across regions).

Schools were also asked which, if any, of a number of challenges they encounter in meeting the School Food Standards. Most (60%) faced some challenges in meeting the School Food Standards. The most common challenges were managing the relationship with the caterer or catering contract (25%), costs of food produce and/or delivery (24%) and supply chain issues (20%). One in six schools faced no challenges (16%), and roughly a quarter of leaders (24%) were unsure if they faced challenges or not. The full list of challenges can be seen in Figure 33.

Secondary schools were significantly more likely to cite the costs of food produce and/or delivery as a challenge in meeting the School Food Standards (36% vs. 22% of primary schools). On the other hand, primary schools were more likely to cite staff understanding of School Food Standards guidance as a challenge (15% vs. 8% of secondary schools). Primary schools were also more likely to report that they encountered no challenges (18% vs. 6%).

Figure 33. Challenges encountered by schools in meeting the School Food Standards (prompted)



Source: School and College Panel, December 2021 survey. I2: All Panel A leaders (n=605).

*Indicates statistical difference between primary and secondary leaders.



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