



Department
for Education

School and College Voice

**Technical report: 2025 to 2026 academic
year**

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Overview

The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned School and College Voice (SCV) to collect robust and quick turnaround research to support policy development. The SCV aims to help DfE make evidence-based policy decisions and to see how the views and experiences of teachers and leaders in schools and colleges change over time.

This technical report covers each element of the SCV data collection and delivery process during the 2025/26 academic year, across the recruitment phase for school teachers and leaders. Please see the [technical report covering the 2024/25 academic year](#) for information about the 2024/25 SCV. The report is divided into the following sections:

- Section 1: Overview - includes an overview of the aims of the panel and what this document covers
- Section 2: Methodology Overview - summarises the timescales for each wave and the reasons for the method selected
- Section 3: Sampling - outlines the size and structure of the starting sample and a summary of the recruitment phase
- Section 4: Questionnaire - provides details of the questionnaire development and cognitive testing of the questionnaires
- Section 5: Fieldwork - details the process for inviting panel members to participate and subsequent communication processes with panel members
- Section 6: Response Rates - outlines how many people took part in each wave and the breakdown of responses by key respondent groups
- Section 7: Weighting - a summary of the weighting approach
- Section 8: Data Processing and Analysis - an outline of the process for processing and analysing data, including which key subgroups were looked at and how significant differences were tested
- Section 9: Appendices - communications sent to panel members and additional ad hoc analysis

Methodology overview

Overview of Phase 1 and Phase 2

The research is structured into 2 broad phases.

Phase 1: the October 2025 recruitment wave invited teachers and leaders across primary, secondary, and special schools to take part in a 15-minute online survey and join the SCV. School teachers and leaders were sampled from the School Workforce Census (SWFC) and contacted via the school address by letter and/or via the school email where the school was asked to forward the email on to the sampled individual. Letters and emails were marked for the attention of the named teachers and leaders who had been sampled and invited them to take part in an online survey (push-to-web approach). This was followed by reminder emails and reminder letters. The fieldwork period lasted four weeks between 30 October and 6 November 2025.

All invite fieldwork materials can be found in Appendix C: Invitations to the SCV (recruitment) .

Phase 2: subsequent waves involve emailing panel members and inviting them to take part in regular short 5-minute surveys. At each wave, all school teachers and school leaders who had completed the recruitment survey are invited to take part. Results are weighted to be representative of the full panel.

This technical report will be updated as the results of Phase 2 are published.

Table 1 gives a breakdown of each wave of fieldwork completed, including the recruitment waves. The table outlines the number of responses achieved and the dates of the fieldwork period.

Table 1: School and College Voice (SCV) waves in 2025/26

Wave	Number of responses	Fieldwork period
Recruitment wave	2,211 school teachers; 2,206 school leaders	30 September to 6 November 2025
December 2025	991 school teachers; 828 school leaders	2 December to 15 December 2025
Replenishment 1	840 school teachers; 1,271 school leaders	21 January to 16 February 2026
January 2026	1,040 school teachers; 868 school leaders	21 January to 16 February 2026

Sampling

Schools

Sampling frame

Extracts from the 2024/25 School Workforce Census (SWFC) database were shared with Verian. The extracts consisted of two datasets:

- contract dataset - includes characteristics about the teachers and leaders (e.g., gender, age, role, contract type)
- curriculum dataset – includes subjects and the year group teachers teach

Both datasets had GIAS information appended (e.g., school name, school address, number of pupils).

The sample was drawn from the contract dataset using the following approach:

1. Ineligible schools excluded
2. Duplicate records of teachers and leaders removed
3. Variables used in explicit and implicit stratification cleaned
4. Overall sample (original issue and the reserve sample) drawn
5. Closed schools excluded, and original issue sample drawn

Excluding ineligible schools

The SWFC contract dataset supplied contained 522,348 records. A number of exclusions were applied to the file:

- School type - non-maintained establishments were excluded.
- Open/closed status - the file was filtered to only include open establishments (dated to when the SWFC was conducted - November 2024).
- Individuals' role – the file was filtered to only include leaders and teaching staff.

Additional exclusions were then applied to remove the following:

- Academy Alternative Provision
- Centrally Employed/other
- Free Schools – Alternative Pro

- LA Nursery School
- Pupil Rehabilitation/Referral Unit
- Independent schools

Any records with an ineligible school type and/or ineligible school phase were deleted from the sample frame.

The contract dataset also included a small number of institutions that were post-16 only and which therefore formed part of the college sample and not the school sample. Records for these institutions were also deleted.

Following this, the list of schools that remained in the SWFC file was compared to a list of eligible schools sourced from GIAS (the former is updated annually in November so slightly outdated, compared to the latter which is updated throughout the year). This led to the removal of 9,827 records associated with closed schools in GIAS (downloaded on 04 September 2025).

After removing all ineligible schools, the contract dataset had 498,159 records remaining.

Deduplication

There were a number of reasons why a staff member could appear more than once within the SWFC contract data. For example, some individuals teach in multiple schools and have a record for each school or may have multiple roles within the same school.

De-duplication was an iterative process, which aimed to ensure each individual (based on the staff matching reference) only appeared once in the final sample frame.

At each iteration, a different combination of variables was used to identify duplicates. The full list of variables included in the de-duplication process were:

1. StaffMatchingReference (ID for individuals in SWFC)
2. CensusYear (year when the data was collated)
3. URN (ID for institutions in SWFC)
4. SchoolType (e.g., Community school, Academy converter, Foundation school)
5. SchoolPhase (e.g., Primary, Secondary, All-through)
6. Gender
7. Age
8. QualificationDate (date of obtaining the Qualified Teacher Status)

- 9. QTStatus (whether or not an individual has Qualified Teacher Status)
- 10. ContractAgreementType (e.g., Fixed term, Permanent, Temporary)
- 11. Post (e.g., Deputy head, Classroom Teacher)

After de-duplication, 485,037 records remained. As such, 2.6% of the records were removed during de-duplication.

In the end, the final SWFC dataset used as the sampling frame had a total of 485,037 records.

Defining teacher and leader type

Primary, secondary, special leaders and special teachers were defined based on the information available in the SWFC. Details are shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

Primary and secondary teachers were defined based on information they provided within the recruitment survey. For sampling purposes, teachers in “All through” institutions were all allocated to “Secondary”, but teachers that joined the panel were re-classified to primary or secondary in the questionnaire based on their response to the survey question ‘In the current academic year, which year groups do you mainly teach?’. Teachers were defined as primary teachers if they taught only any of the following year groups: reception, year 1, year 2, year 3, year 4, year 5 or year 6. Teachers were defined as secondary teachers if they taught any of the following year groups: year 7, year 8, year 9, year 10, year 11, year 12 or year 13. If teachers taught both primary and secondary year groups they were defined as secondary teachers. This re-defined school phase variable is what was used in analysis of the survey findings.

Teachers who joined the panel and in the recruitment survey stated they held a leadership role at their school, are re-defined as school leaders and will be invited as such for future Phase 2 surveys. Similarly leaders who stated they mainly worked as a classroom teacher were redefined as school teachers for future surveys.

Table 2: Defining teacher and leader based on information in the SWFC for sampling

Role - based on variable "Post" in SWFC	Role - recoded for explicit strata
Advisory Teacher	Teacher
Apprentice Teacher	Teacher
Assistant Head	Leader

Role - based on variable "Post" in SWFC	Role - recoded for explicit strata
Classroom Teacher	Teacher
Classroom Teacher, main pay range	Teacher
Classroom Teacher, upper pay range	Teacher
Deputy Head	Leader
Executive Head Teacher	Leader
Headteacher	Leader
Leading Practitioner	Teacher

Table 3: Defining school phase based on information in the SWFC for sampling

School phase - based on variable "SchoolPhase" in SWFC	School phase - recoded for explicit strata
All-through	Secondary
Middle deemed primary	Primary
Middle deemed secondary	Secondary
Not applicable	Special
Primary	Primary
Secondary	Secondary

Stratification

The school phase (Primary/Secondary/Special) was crossed with individuals' role (Teacher/Leader) to form the six explicit strata required to draw the sample:

1. Primary school leader
2. Primary school teacher
3. Secondary school leader

4. Secondary school teacher
5. Special school leader
6. Special school teacher

The supplied SWFC variables were recoded for implicit stratification into the following strata:

- **Region where the school is located** (East Midlands / East of England / London / North-east or missing / North-west / South-east / South-west / West Midlands / Yorkshire and The Humber)
- **Quintile of the total number of pupils in the school, based on GIAS** – calculated separately for primary, secondary and special schools (1st quintile (least number of pupils) / 2nd quintile / 3rd quintile or missing / 4th quintile / 5th quintile (highest number of pupils))
- **Age of individual** (<30 / 30-39 / 40-49 / 50+ or missing)
- **Gender of individual** (Female or missing / Male)¹
- **Date of obtaining teaching qualification** (Missing / 1996 or earlier / 1997 – 2003 / 2004 – 2010 / 2011 – 2017 / 2018 onwards)
- **Main subject the secondary teacher teaches** (Art / Business and Economics / Classical Studies and Languages / Construction and Engineering / Design and Technology / English / Geography / History / IT and Computer Science / Maths / Media and Communication / Modern Languages / Performing arts / Physical Education / PSHE, Careers and Life Skills / Religious Studies / Science / Social Sciences / Other Humanities / Other / Secondary teacher with missing curriculum data / Non secondary teacher)

Selecting the fresh sample

Within each of the six strata, the sample frame was sorted by the following variables (in the order presented) prior to drawing the fresh sample:

- region where the school is located
- quintile of the school pupil number
- age of individual
- gender of individual

¹ It is conventional where volumes of missing data in a variable is low, to combine the missing category into another category of the same variable. Where missing data forms a more substantial proportion of the data, it is given its own category.

- date of obtaining teaching qualification
- main subject (for secondary teachers only)

A systematic sample was then selected within each of the six strata.

As with previous years of the School and College Voice surveys conducted since 2023, no cap was applied on the number of individuals who could be sampled from each institution.

Table 4: Number of sampled participants within each strata

Explicit strata	Population size	Number of sampled individuals (original issue and reserve sample)
Primary school leader	38,791	22,694
Primary school teacher	192,965	27,633
Secondary school leader	25,593	25,593
Secondary school teacher	203,160	26,752
Special school leader	4,192	4,192
Special school teacher	20,336	20,336
Total	485,037	127,200

Selecting the original issue fresh sample

The staff matching reference number and URN of the 127,200 selected fresh cases was then shared with DfE. DfE then transferred the name of each sampled individual, as well as the up-to-date school establishment status. This revealed that the sampled records included 4 individuals from schools that had closed since the GIAS data was downloaded and used to exclude closed schools (on 04 September 2025).

After excluding individuals sampled at a school which had closed since GIAS was last downloaded, the remaining sample was implicitly stratified as previously, and the original issue cases were selected using a systematic sampling approach within the six explicit strata.

Table 5 shows the number of individuals in each stratum excluded from the study (due to their school closing), the number allocated to original issue, and the number allocated to the reserve sample. A reserve sample was selected that was of a similar size and design to the original issue. This was selected to be used to replenish the panel during the academic year to maintain the panel size.

Table 5: Number of individuals in each stratum excluded from the panel

Explicit strata	Number of sampled individuals (incl. closed schools)	Number of sampled individuals (excl. closed schools)	Number of original issue	Number of reserve
Primary school leader	22,694	22,693	13,261	9,432
Primary school teacher	27,633	27,630	9,350	18,280
Secondary school leader	25,593	25,593	16,932	8,661
Secondary school teacher	26,752	26,752	10,068	16,684
Special school leader	4,192	4,192	4,192	N/A
Special school teacher	20,336	20,336	7,030	13,306
Total	127,200	127,196	60,833	66,363

School replenishment

Verian and DfE agreed to replenish panel twice, in January 2026 and again in May 2026. Replenishment was designed to ensure that at the remaining waves of the 2025/26 study, Verian achieved as close to the target effective sample size as possible for each of the six reporting groups (primary leaders, primary teachers, secondary leaders, secondary teachers, special leaders and special teachers). The target effective sample size was c.385 for each of the six groups, to generate estimates with 95% confidence intervals that are no more than $\pm 5\%$ pts.

January 2026 replenishment

To calculate the number of individuals to invite for the January replenishment, Verian estimated the effective sample sizes that were likely to be achieved for each of the six reporting groups at remaining 2025/26 survey waves. This estimation was done for the ongoing sample (i.e. individuals who were already recruited to the panel) and took into account:

- the response rate of the initial survey invite in 2025/26,
- future likely attrition based on observed response patterns from the existing

research waves of the 2025/26 panel and all past research waves of the 2024/25 panel,

- the impact of non-response weighting (based on design effects observed at the previous waves of the 2024/25 panel)

Once the sample sizes (and effective sample sizes) that would likely be achieved at remaining waves from the ongoing panel was estimated, the volume of replenishment sample to issue for each reporting group was then calculated to compensate, as far as possible, for the shortfall expected from the ongoing panel in relation to the effective sample size target.

The January replenishment was then designed to have two parts: drawing a sample from the reserve sample, and recontacting non-responding leaders from the original recruitment survey.

Drawing a fresh sample from the available reserve sample

Fresh sample was randomly selected from the reserve sample available for each of the six strata, with an exception for special leaders which were all selected for the initial recruitment wave. For consistency, the sampling approach used for the January replenishment was largely the same as that used for the initial recruitment wave. This involved explicit stratification by the six reporting groups. The number sampled from each stratum varied depending on the expected shortfall relative to the target. Within each stratum, the same variables were used to sort the sample frame as for the original issue sample selection and a random systematic sample was then drawn.

Re-contacting non-responding leaders from the original recruitment survey

To maximise leader sample sizes further, leaders who were invited to the original recruitment wave but did not respond, were also all selected for the January replenishment wave.

The number of individuals who were invited in the January replenishment wave is given in Table 6, which is split by the two parts described above.

Table 6 Number of individuals invited in the January replenishment wave

Explicit strata	Selected from reserve sample	Re-contacted from original sample	Total
Primary Leader	5,000	12,393	17,393
Primary Teacher	3,000	2	3,002

Explicit strata	Selected from reserve sample	Re-contacted from original sample	Total
Secondary Leader	5,000	15,982	20,982
Secondary Teacher	2,500	6*	2,506
Special Leader	0 ⁺	3,804	3,804
Special Teacher	4,300	1	4,301
Total	19,800	32,188	51,988

* These individuals did not respond during the initial recruitment but got in contact and requested to be invited again.

⁺ All special leaders were selected for the initial recruitment wave, so no one from this stratum could be selected as fresh cases from the reserve sample.

Allocation to contact mode

With the aim of maximising response from the reserve sample as far as possible, Verian planned to send a letter invite to all fresh cases selected from the reserve sample. Also, a letter reminder was sent to a random selection of 50% of the non-respondents (the remaining 50% of the non-respondents were sent email reminders only). This experimental design would allow the evaluation of the impact of letter reminder compared with email reminder on survey response and therefore would provide evidence for designing the contact strategy for future survey recruitment.

Leaders that did not respond to the initial recruitment and that were re-invited to the January replenishment were allocated to be invited by email only. Given that these individuals had already chosen not to respond to the study it was felt that sending them another letter was likely to offer poor value for money.

Once all individuals were allocated to one of the two invitation modes ('letter + email' or 'email only'), school burden (measured by the number of emails that schools had to forward to their sampled members of staff) was checked and the contact approach refined.

For schools that had more than 10 emails to forward, the number of email invites was capped at 10, by re-allocating some individuals from the email only (or letter + email) contact strategy to letter only². Additionally, for schools that had less than 10 emails to

² For secondary schools, the cap was set at 12 as many more individuals from secondary schools were selected to be issued in the January replenishment (compared to primary and special schools) and there

forward, Verian reassigned some who were previously allocated to letter only to now receive both emails and letter while maintaining the school-level email cap of 10³. This decision was made to increase the opportunities of contacting the sampled members and therefore to maximise the achieved sample sizes.

Table 7: January replenishment contact mode

Explicit strata	Letter and emails	Emails only	Letter only
Primary school leader	4,984	12,349	60
Primary school teacher	2,992	2	8
Secondary school leader	4,551	15,678	753
Secondary school teacher	2,469	6	31
Special school leader	0	3,764	40
Special school teacher	3,303	1	997

Table 8: Number of sampled participants within each strata at January replenishment

Explicit strata	Issued sample size	Recruited to panel
Primary school leader – reserve sample	5,000	327
Primary school teacher – reserve sample	3,000	261
Secondary school leader – reserve sample	5,000	334
Secondary school teacher – reserve sample	2,500	229
Special school leader – reserve sample	0	0

were not many such schools. A school-level email of 10 would mean too many sampled members of staff in the secondary schools would be switched to receive only one invitation (email invitation only or letter invitation only), which likely leads to a lower response rate (compared to using email and letter invitations simultaneously).

³ For secondary schools, this was set to 12 as explained earlier.

Explicit strata	Issued sample size	Recruited to panel
Special school teacher – reserve sample	4,300	349
Primary school leader – recontact sample	12,393	208
Primary school teacher – recontact sample	2	0
Secondary school leader – recontact sample	15,982	317
Secondary school teacher – recontact sample	6	0
Special school leader – recontact sample	3,804	85
Special school teacher – recontact sample	1	0

Questionnaire

Ahead of the recruitment wave, DfE gathered provisional questions from policy teams across the Department, reviewed submissions and sent provisional questionnaires (one questionnaire for teachers and one for leaders) to Verian. Verian and DfE then worked together to develop and refine the questions until they were ready for cognitive testing. Questions to be cognitively tested were decided jointly by DfE and Verian, depending on the complexity of the question and answer codes and whether the question was new for the particular wave.

A similar process is followed ahead of each Phase 2 survey wave.

Cognitive testing

Cognitive testing was undertaken to test areas of the questionnaire in more depth. The objectives of cognitively testing the questions were to understand whether questions were worded correctly, to be consistently and easily understood by the target audiences. Response lists were also tested to ensure these were appropriate and if there was anything that was missing.

A free find recruitment approach was used for the cognitive testing at the recruitment wave, where respondents were sourced from recruiter databases. Interviews were conducted with 12 leaders and 15 teachers. Leaders were given a £80 gift voucher to thank them for their time and teachers received £50. Additional rounds of cognitive testing are carried out before each Phase 2 survey wave. For these, respondents are sourced from panellists who had agreed to be contacted for additional research when they joined the panel.

Questionnaire checking

After cognitive testing, a report from Verian was delivered to DfE with recommended changes and the final questionnaire was signed-off by DfE. The length of the questionnaire was also reviewed to ensure it was no longer than 15 minutes for the recruitment wave and up to 7 minutes for each research wave. Once the questionnaire was signed off, it was scripted into the web survey. This web survey was checked extensively by the Verian research team. Once initial checks were complete, “dummy” data was run through the online survey and downloaded as a raw data file. The routing of each question was then double checked using this data. Finally, after all amendments had been made, the survey was signed off by a senior researcher in the Verian team.

Fieldwork

Recruitment surveys: Initial invites

Fresh teachers and leaders in schools were invited to complete the initial recruitment survey to join School and College Voice, via a survey weblink using unique log-in details.

Schools were firstly sent a 'warm-up' notification from GOV.UK Notify to explain that they would be receiving a number of emails and letters to forward on to selected staff members. On 30 September 2025, Verian sent invitation emails and letters to school teachers and leaders. Invite letters were sent to all fresh sample.

Invitation emails to named teachers and leaders were sent to the primary contact email address that DfE held for the school. Due to the large numbers of individuals selected at some schools, a cap of a maximum of 10 emails per school for primary and special, and 12 emails per school for secondary was introduced to minimise the burden on school administrators.

Both the invitation letter and email explained what being part of the panel would involve, why the research was important and that it was being carried out by Verian on behalf of Department for Education. They provided further information about how respondents were chosen, instructions on how to complete the recruitment survey (including log-in details) and the contact information for Verian. Invites for primary, secondary, special teachers and primary leaders explained that upon joining the panel, they could expect to be invited to further short surveys across the 25/26 academic year.

Recruitment surveys: Reminder invites

Reminder emails were sent flexibly to schools during fieldwork to encourage response. The emails provided the same information as the invite letter and email and included instructions to complete the survey (including log-in details).

Invites to subsequent research waves

For each research wave in Phase 2, panellists receive an invitation email alerting them to the fact that a new survey is ready to be completed. The email invites reintroduce the research to the respondents, thank them for their time, and give them information about the research and the contact details for Verian and the DfE. Panellists were asked during the recruitment survey whether they wanted prenotification of an upcoming survey wave. Where panellists opted in for prenotification, an email is sent up to a week before each research wave, advising another survey will begin shortly. An example of the invitation

email is included in Appendix C of this report. The content of the email is largely consistent for each research wave.

Special school teachers and leaders were not invited to all subsequent research waves. This was decided to keep the margins of error as small as possible across the academic year.

School replenishment: Initial invites

Teachers and leaders in schools were invited to complete the replenishment survey waves to join School and College Voice, via a survey weblink using unique log-in details. The first replenishment survey took place in January 2026.

For the January replenishment, the initial invitation approach was similar to the recruitment, where schools were firstly sent a 'warm-up' email to explain that they would be receiving a number of emails to forward on to selected staff members. Invitation emails and letters were sent out across 21 January and 22 January 2026.

The invite approach varied depending on the sample type, as discussed in the Sampling chapter. The recontact sample (those who had been invited to join the panel during the previous recruitment waves but had not joined) were sent invitation emails. Only a very small number of the recontact sample were invited by letter, where the number of emails sent to the school exceeded 10^4 . The reserve sample were all sent invitation letters and emails.

School replenishment: Reminder invites

Similarly to the initial recruitment, reminder emails were sent flexibly to schools during fieldwork to encourage response. The reminder emails provided the same information as the invite letter and email and included instructions to complete the survey (including log-in details).

In addition to reminder emails, at the January 2026 replenishment 50% of all reserve cases were sent a letter reminder.

Respondent website

Verian created a website for the SCV to host more information about the research. Respondents were directed to this website in all communications. Respondents could log in to access the recruitment survey via the website, as well as access information about

⁴ As described earlier, for secondary schools, the email cap was 12.

the survey, frequently asked questions, the privacy policy and information about how to contact Verian.

Helpdesk support

Verian set up a project email mailbox which was shared with panel members in the recruitment survey invite, reminder invite and all subsequent communications with panellists. A freephone number was also set up, with a recorded voicemail box for panel members to use which was monitored frequently. Mailbox activity was checked daily by a member of the team at Verian. All queries were dealt with in 1 to 2 working days.

Escalations

The Department for Education and Verian have an agreed process for escalating any concerning responses recorded in the panel surveys. A list of terms which could raise concern was agreed between DfE and Verian (including but not limited to 'suicide', 'abuse', 'depression' and 'eating disorder'). Subsequently at each wave, Verian review any open text responses recorded by respondents against this list of terms, as well as for responses which are concerning but do not explicitly use one of these terms. If any responses mention a term or are flagged as concerning, they are reviewed by the research team at Verian and flagged up to the Verian project manager and director for review. These checks are conducted daily during research waves and daily for the first ten working days of recruitment waves and at least once a week for the remainder of recruitment fieldwork. The frequency of checks was based on response patterns, as a high proportion of responses are completed in the first ten days of fieldwork.

In cases where a response has mentioned one of the agreed terms, but Verian does not identify evidence of direct harm or threat of harm to the respondent, Verian send an email with support links to the respondent. In cases where a response from teachers or leaders discloses safeguarding concerns or other evidence of direct harm or threat of harm to the respondent or others, then Verian escalate this case to DfE. DfE contact the respondent's school or college designated safeguarding lead to make them aware of the survey response.

In the rare occurrence a respondent presents an immediate threat to harm themselves or others, then Verian will contact the emergency services.

The survey communications with respondents and the privacy policy inform respondents that these steps could be taken by Verian and DfE. A page with links to support services is also presented to all respondents at the end of each survey.

Opt outs

Panellists were able to opt out of the research at any point by contacting Verian via the email mailbox or freephone number. The email address and freephone number is included in all survey invitations and reminders, as well as on the website.

Response rates

Table 9 and Table 11 show the number of teachers and leaders who have taken part in the recruitment wave. Table 10 and Table 12 show what response rate this equates to.

Quotas were not applied to ensure that everyone who was invited to take part in the research was able to.

Response rates for the October 2025 panel recruitment

The overall response from contacting 28,933 school teachers and 24,831 school leaders was 9%. The response rates by major subgroups for each subsequent research wave are shown in Table 10 and Table 12 below.

Response rates for recruitment are calculated based on all participants who were invited to join the panel. Response rates for research waves are calculated based on all those who joined the panel, and ongoing panellists who remained on the panel from 2023/24. Response rates are typically lower in the recruitment survey compared to subsequent research surveys, when invited participants have already expressed an interest in further surveys.

Table 9: Number of teachers who completed each wave

Wave	Fieldwork period	All school teachers	Primary teachers	Secondary teachers	Special school teachers
Recruitment	30 September to 6 November 2025	2,211	877	888	446
December 2025	2 December to 15 December 2025	991	494	497	N/A
January 2026	21 January to 16 February 2026	1,040	409	448	183

Wave	Fieldwork period	All school teachers	Primary teachers	Secondary teachers	Special school teachers
Replenishment 1	21 January to 16 February 2026	840	261	230	349

Table 10 Percentage of teachers who completed each wave

Wave	Fieldwork period	All school teachers	Primary teachers	Secondary teachers	Special school teachers
Recruitment	30 September to 6 November 2025	8%	9%	9%	6%
December 2025	2 December to 15 December 2025	58%	58%	58%	N/A
January 2026	21 January to 16 February 2026	48%	48%	52%	42%
Replenishment 1	21 January to 16 February 2026	9%	9%	9%	8%

Table 11 Number of leaders who completed each wave

Wave	Fieldwork period	All school leaders	Primary leaders	Secondary leaders	Special school leaders
Recruitment	30 September to 6 November 2025	2,206	868	950	388

Wave	Fieldwork period	All school leaders	Primary leaders	Secondary leaders	Special school leaders
December 2025	2 December to 15 December 2025	828	370	458	N/A
January 2026	21 January to 16 February 2026	868	359	393	116
Replenishment 1	21 January to 16 February 2026	1,271	535	651	85

Table 12 Percentage of leaders who completed each wave

Wave	Fieldwork period	All school leaders	Primary leaders	Secondary leaders	Special school leaders
Recruitment	30 September to 6 November 2025	6%	7%	6%	9%
December 2025	2 December to 15 December 2025	46%	43%	48%	N/A
January 2026	21 January to 16 February 2026	40%	42%	41%	31%
Replenishment 1	21 January to 16 February 2026	3%	3%	3%	2%

Demographic profile of recruited respondents

Following the recruitment survey the SCV panel was formed of 4,417 school teachers and leaders. The profile of school teachers and leaders is shown in Table 13 and Table 14.

Due to the way that school phase was defined within the survey, there is a small proportion of secondary teachers who also teach primary year groups (reception to year 6). Teachers were defined as primary teachers within the survey if they taught only reception, year 1, year 2, year 3, year 4, year 5 or year 6. Teachers were defined as secondary teachers if they taught any of the following year groups: year 7, year 8, year 9, year 10, year 11, year 12 or year 13. If teachers taught both primary and secondary year groups they were defined as secondary teachers.

Table 13: Profile of school teachers on the 2025/26 panel

Profile characteristic	All teachers	Primary school teachers	Secondary school teachers	Special school teachers
Base	2,211	877	888	446
Teacher of Reception	221	177	NA	44
Teacher of year 1	246	187	NA	59
Teacher of year 2	251	179	NA	72
Teacher of year 3	289	191	NA	98
Teacher of year 4	311	209	NA	102
Teacher of year 5	317	193	NA	118
Teacher of year 6	325	203	NA	114
Teacher of year 7	890	NA	716	174
Teacher of year 8	905	NA	725	180
Teacher of year 9	943	NA	758	185
Teacher of year 10	1001	NA	806	195
Teacher of year 11	979	NA	796	183
Teacher of year 12	519	NA	427	92
Teacher of year 13	492	NA	407	85
Academy	1197	387	659	151
Non-academy	1014	490	229	295
MAT	1063	381	505	177
Non-MAT	1148	496	383	269
Region: East Midlands	174	63	77	34
Region: East of England	334	127	144	63
Region: London	299	131	120	48
Region: North-east	110	39	35	36
Region: North-west	245	92	88	65
Region: South-east	418	156	186	76
Region: South-west	221	96	89	36
Region: West Midlands	209	83	75	51
Region: Yorkshire and the Humber	199	89	74	36

Base: All school teachers on the panel after the recruitment survey (2,211).

Source: SWFC / SCV 2024 recruitment teacher survey. [For [SUBJECT] / In the current academic year], which year groups do you mainly teach?

Table 14: Profile of school leaders on the 2025/26 panel

Profile characteristic	All leaders	Primary school leaders	Secondary school leaders	Special school leaders
Base	2,206	868	950	388
Academy	1136	323	696	117
Non-academy	1070	545	254	271
MAT	992	306	552	134
Non-MAT	1214	562	398	254
Region: East Midlands	175	58	89	28
Region: East of England	299	119	139	41
Region: London	346	127	158	61
Region: North-east	116	47	40	29
Region: North-west	239	115	79	45
Region: South-east	412	167	181	64
Region: South-west	205	75	93	37
Region: West Midlands	206	85	80	41
Region: Yorkshire and the Humber	206	75	91	40

Base: All school leaders on the panel after the recruitment survey (2,206).

Source: SWFC

Weighting

Weighting was applied to the school teachers and leaders data, which is set out in this section.

October 2025 panel recruitment

The weighting approaches for both teachers and leaders are consistent with the approach used in the past two years of School and College Voice (2023/24 and 2024/25). For both school leaders and school teachers, the weighting followed a two-stage process – design weighting, followed by raking.

Design weighting was used to compensate for the disproportionate sample design. As stated in the sampling section, different groups were sampled with varying probabilities. This was to improve the precision of survey estimates and to account for varying anticipated response rates for these subgroups. There were six explicit strata, and design weights were computed for each of them by inverting the sampling probability:

- Primary leader
- Primary teacher
- Secondary leader
- Secondary teacher
- Special leader
- Special teacher

The second stage consisted of **raking** the interview sample to ensure that the sample profile matched the population profile at the margins across a range of variables. The design weight was used as input to the raking. The resulting weights are *base weights*.

The weighting targets were based on population counts from the SWFC database used to draw the survey sample. The weighting included the following variables (for detail on how these were defined see the Stratification section):

- Region where the school is located
- Quintile of the school pupil number (banded within stratum)
- Age of individual (banded)
- Gender of individual

- Date of obtaining teacher status qualification (banded)
- Ofsted rating
- School type

Quintiles of school pupil numbers were banded as follows:

Quintile 1 = <880 Secondary, =<106 Special, =<204 Primary

Quintile 2 = Secondary 881 -1088, Special 107 – 148, Primary 205 – 285

Quintile 3 = Secondary 1089 – 1294, Special 149 – 192, Primary 286 – 404

Quintile 4 = Secondary 1295 – 1534, Special 193 – 253, Primary 405 – 467

Quintile 5 = Secondary 1535+, Special 254+, Primary 468+

The weighting targets were specified separately for primary, secondary and special teachers and leaders. This ensures that the sample for each group is representative of their respective populations.

The following weights were produced:

1. A weight for primary leaders
2. A weight for primary teachers
3. A weight for secondary leaders
4. A weight for secondary teachers
5. A weight for special leaders
6. A weight for special teachers
7. A weight for primary and secondary leaders (excluding leaders in special schools)
8. A weight for primary and secondary teachers (excluding teachers in special schools)
9. A weight for primary, secondary, and special leaders (i.e. all leaders)
10. A weight for primary, secondary, and special teachers (i.e. all teachers)

Weighting panel survey waves after recruitment

For each survey wave after the initial recruitment survey, an additional stage of weighting is required to ensure that the responding sample at each wave is representative of the population. This stage of weighting compensates for systematic differences in attrition/response rates between subgroups of the recruited panel.

After each ongoing panel survey, six logistic regression models are developed, each of which is based on the data corresponding to one of the six explicit strata (i.e. Primary/Secondary/Special by Leader/Teacher). Developing models separately for the strata ensures that (1) within each stratum the sample distribution closely follows the population profile with respect to the variables used in the model, and (2) the strata are in the right balance relative to one another.

Those logistic regression models are used to estimate response probabilities and have the following structure:

Outcome = responded/not responded to the survey (binary status)

Base = all members of each target population that were recruited to the panel (through the recruitment wave or, in later the replenishment waves)

Weight = the 'base weight' calculated for the recruited panel (as outlined above)

The variables used in the weighting of the recruitment wave are also used as predictors in the logistic regression models for estimating the response probabilities at subsequent waves:

- Region where the school is located
- Quintile of the school pupil number (banded within stratum)
- Age of individual (banded)
- Gender of individual
- Date of obtaining teacher status qualification (banded)
- Ofsted rating
- School type

The set up of the regression models for leaders and teachers were largely the same. The only difference between them was the coding for one variable – the date of obtaining teacher status qualification. While teachers have five categories in this variable (1996 or earlier or Missing / 1997 – 2003 / 2004 – 2010 / 2011 – 2017 / 2018 onwards), leaders

have four categories (1996 or earlier or Missing / 1997 – 2003 / 2004 – 2010 / 2011 onwards) due to a very small number of leaders gaining their qualification after 2018.

The estimated panel surveys response probabilities are inverted to generate attrition weights. The final weight is then calculated by multiplying the attrition weights with the base weights derived after raking. This final step ensures that the weighting compensates for the initial disproportionate sample design and systematic non-response at the recruitment survey.

As part of the quality checks, the final weights at each wave are applied to the panellists at that wave, and then the weighted sample profile is compared to the population with regards to the weighting variables. This comparison is conducted for six strata separately. These checks confirm that the weighting broadly corrects for imbalances in the weighting variables.

Weighting for SCV replenishment

After each wave, a new base weight was generated for all individuals recruited to the panel. This involved design weighting to compensate for the variation in sampling probabilities between the six strata (reporting groups). Raking was then used to ensure the sample profile (overall and within each of the six groups) matched the population profile at the margins. This weighting process was exactly the same as that used for the initial recruitment survey recruitment as described above.

As for earlier waves, regression modelling was used to model attrition and to adjust the base weight to compensate for observable bias caused by non-response / panel attrition.

Design effects and effective sample size

The overall design effect of the weights used for teacher level analysis at the recruitment survey taking into account the weighting has been estimated as 1.21. The design effect is estimated as 1.04 for primary teacher analysis, 1.08 for secondary teacher analysis, and 1.13 for special teacher analysis. Design effects for all research waves are shown in Table 15.

The design effects were calculated as $(1 + \text{cov}(W)^2)$ – where $\text{cov}(W)$ is the coefficient of variation of the weights.

Table 15: Design effects for all school teacher surveys

Phase	Base (unweighted)	Design effect
Recruitment – overall teachers	2,211	1.21
Recruitment – primary teachers	873	1.04
Recruitment – secondary teachers	892	1.08
Recruitment – special teachers	446	1.13
December 2025 – overall teachers	991	1.10
December 2025 – primary teachers	494	1.11
December 2025 – secondary teachers	497	1.08
January 2026 (including replenishment) – overall teachers	1,880	1.35
January 2026 (including replenishment) – primary teachers	670	1.05
January 2026 (including replenishment) – secondary teachers	678	1.07
January 2026 (including replenishment) – special teachers	532	1.13

The overall design effect for the weights used for leader level analysis at the recruitment survey taking into account the weighting has been estimated as 1.31. The design effect is estimated as 1.12 for primary leader analysis, 1.17 for secondary leader analysis, and 1.14 for special leader analysis. Design effects for all research waves are shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Design effects for all school leader surveys

Phase	Base (unweighted)	Design effect
Recruitment – overall leaders	2,206	1.31
Recruitment – primary leaders	868	1.12
Recruitment – secondary leaders	950	1.17
Recruitment – special leaders	388	1.14
December 2025 – overall leaders	828	1.31
December 2025 – primary leaders	370	1.21
December 2025 – secondary leaders	458	1.22
January 2026 (including replenishment) – overall leaders	2,139	1.24
January 2026 (including replenishment) – primary leaders	894	1.14

Phase	Base (unweighted)	Design effect
January 2026 (including replenishment) – secondary leaders	1,044	1.13
January 2026 (including replenishment) – special leaders	201	1.22

Data processing and analysis

Verian produced a data processing specification for how the raw survey data should be processed into an individual (row-level) response dataset and aggregated summary tables. Open questions were coded to a coding specification also created by Verian.

The table specification contained a list of cross-breaks corresponding to key sub-groups of interest, such as 'School Phase'. These cross-breaks were agreed in discussion with DfE. The specification also detailed the base that should be used to analyse each question.

The data tables contain both weighted and unweighted totals, and display percentages corresponding to weighted responses for question codes. The aggregated summary tables are published along with reports.

For reporting purposes, the weighted totals for all respondents are presented. Respondents are also split by phase, except in instances where presenting by phase would result in a small base size. Aside from phase, no sub-group analyses are presented in the reports for most topics.

Questions with fewer than 30 responses before weighting are not included in reports. Complete findings are in the published data tables.

Data checking

The Verian research team checked all data outputs for the research. For the individual response dataset, each variable was checked against a raw dataset download and the individual response dataset specification. Amendments were recorded in the specification, marked as completed by data processors, then marked as checked by the research team. These included checking that:

- all variables were present and in the correct order
- for each variable, the number and percentage giving each response matched the raw individual response dataset
- derived variables were correctly calculated
- base sizes were as specified
- question wording matched the table titles
- recoding of numeric questions were correct where banded amounts were shown
- all variables contained the correct number of respondents

- panellists had not 'flat-lined' through the survey by consistently selecting 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say' answer codes

Researchers also carried out the same checking process for the aggregated summary tables. The tables were compared to raw files with any amendments logged in the specification form. Cross-breaks were checked for correct bases and sense-checked against the variable they were derived from. Summary tables containing multiple variables were also checked to ensure they matched against the variables they derived from, while all numeric questions, re-coded or back-coded questions were also fully checked. Table titles and fieldwork dates were checked to ensure they matched the specification.

Verbatim coding was carried out by an experienced coding team, separately to the main data checks described above. This included checking that responses were appropriate for the question, whether question codes matched-up between different audiences and that the answers given had been assigned the correct code. At least 10% of each new code-frame was checked by the Verian research team mid-way through fieldwork when there was a substantial number of responses, and again at the end of fieldwork. Coding was added once all other data edits had been made. Frequencies of coded variables were then checked against the final agreed code-frame.

Verian carried out additional checks once both the aggregated summary tables and individual response datasets were finalised. These checks focused on base sizes and cross-break checking, but also included spot checks of all data tables and back-coding. A senior team member then carried out final spot checks on the tables.

Margins of error

The data tables include 'Confidence Intervals' to account for the fact that the survey is based on a subset of the population. A 95% Confidence Interval is a margin of error around an estimate, which gives a range of values within which you can be 95% confident that the true mean will lie. For instance, if 1,000 people are interviewed, and 500 (50%) of them say that they agree with a statement, then you can be 95% confident that true proportion of people who agree with the statement is between 50% +/- 3% (47%, 53%).

The analysis of Confidence Intervals within SCV uses the Complex Samples Module within the analytical software package, Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) to correct for these effects.

Accompanying data tables

A set of aggregated summary tables for each research wave have been published alongside these reports. They include data for teachers and leaders for each recruitment and research wave. They include confidence intervals, total responses and responses by key subgroups for each data set. For further guidance on how to interpret these tables, please see the covering pages of the data tables.

Appendices

Appendix A: Target population size

The weighting targets used for each group are provided in the tables below:

Table 17: Population profile of school teachers

Population characteristic	Primary Teacher	Secondary Teacher	Special Teacher
Region: East Midlands	8.7%	8.5%	7.6%
Region: East of England	11.8%	11.8%	10.7%
Region: London	15.1%	16.0%	15.4%
Region: North East / Missing	4.7%	4.5%	6.4%
Region: North West	13.3%	12.6%	13.5%
Region: South East	16.6%	16.4%	17.3%
Region: South West	9.5%	9.6%	9.4%
Region: West Midlands	10.5%	11.2%	11.5%
Region: Yorkshire and The Humber	9.7%	9.4%	8.0%
Number of pupils: 1st quintile* (least number of pupils)	18.1%	19.2%	18.9%
Number of pupils: 2nd quintile	18.6%	19.6%	19.2%
Number of pupils: 3rd quintile / Missing	22.8%	20.9%	21.5%
Number of pupils: 4th quintile	20.1%	20.2%	20.0%
Number of pupils: 5th quintile (highest number of pupils)	20.4%	20.2%	20.3%
Age: <30	21.8%	20.5%	16.0%
Age: 30-39	36.4%	32.1%	35.4%
Age: 40-49	24.7%	26.8%	26.6%
Age: 50+ / Missing	17.2%	20.6%	22.0%
Gender: Female / Missing	87.7%	66.0%	78.8%
Gender: Male	12.3%	34.0%	21.2%
Obtained QTS**: 1996 or earlier / Missing	10.6%	14.3%	23.3%
Obtained QTS: 1997 – 2003	10.7%	11.5%	9.6%
Obtained QTS: 2004 – 2010	17.7%	19.8%	16.5%
Obtained QTS: 2011 – 2017	28.5%	22.2%	22.5%
Obtained QTS: 2018 onwards	32.5%	32.2%	28.1%
Ofsted rating: Good	74.9%	67.3%	52.7%
Ofsted rating: Missing	8.5%	5.0%	6.8%

Population characteristic	Primary Teacher	Secondary Teacher	Special Teacher
Ofsted rating: Outstanding	11.9%	17.2%	35.3%
Ofsted rating: Requires improvement / Serious Weaknesses / Special Measures	4.8%	10.4%	5.1%
Academy school	45.0%	77.2%	38.5%
Community school	33.9%	7.9%	44.9%
Foundation school	3.2%	4.1%	9.5%
Free School	1.7%	5.1%	7.0%
Voluntary school	16.2%	5.7%	0.0%

*Quintiles calculated at individual teacher / leader level within stratum

** QTS: Qualified Teacher Status

Table 18: Population profile of school leaders

Population characteristic	Primary Leader	Secondary Leader	Special Leader
Region: East Midlands	8.7%	8.6%	8.0%
Region: East of England	11.1%	10.8%	9.6%
Region: London	14.5%	16.8%	15.8%
Region: North East / Missing	5.0%	4.6%	6.9%
Region: North West	14.9%	12.7%	15.0%
Region: South East	15.0%	15.0%	16.2%
Region: South West	8.8%	9.2%	8.8%
Region: West Midlands	11.4%	12.7%	11.2%
Region: Yorkshire and The Humber	10.8%	9.6%	8.3%
Number of pupils: 1st quintile* (least number of pupils)	22.8%	24.0%	24.5%
Number of pupils: 2nd quintile	21.2%	20.7%	20.5%
Number of pupils: 3rd quintile / Missing	21.1%	20.6%	20.4%
Number of pupils: 4th quintile	17.8%	18.3%	17.9%
Number of pupils: 5th quintile (highest number of pupils)	17.0%	16.4%	16.7%
Age: <30	1.1%	1.2%	0.9%
Age: 30-39	27.2%	28.7%	25.4%
Age: 40-49	40.6%	44.9%	42.1%
Age: 50+ / Missing	31.2%	25.2%	31.7%

Population characteristic	Primary Leader	Secondary Leader	Special Leader
Gender: Female / Missing	78.7%	54.3%	71.7%
Gender: Male	21.3%	45.7%	28.3%
Obtained QTS**: 1996 or earlier / Missing	18.6%	16.0%	21.1%
Obtained QTS: 1997 – 2003	26.5%	25.0%	22.6%
Obtained QTS: 2004 – 2010	31.9%	35.5%	31.1%
Obtained QTS: 2011 onwards	23.1%	23.5%	25.1%
Ofsted rating: Good	74.2%	67.3%	51.3%
Ofsted rating: Missing	8.8%	5.4%	8.7%
Ofsted rating: Outstanding	11.9%	15.8%	34.2%
Ofsted rating: Requires improvement / Serious Weaknesses / Special Measures	5.1%	11.6%	5.8%
Academy school	45.3%	76.4%	38.5%
Community school	32.8%	7.4%	44.0%
Foundation school	3.0%	4.5%	8.2%
Free School	1.8%	6.2%	9.4%
Voluntary school	17.1%	5.5%	0.0%

*Quintiles calculated at individual teacher / leader level within stratum

** QTS: Qualified Teacher Status

Appendix B: Variables used for analysis

School phase – All leaders and special teachers were analysed based on their phase (primary, secondary, special) based on data from the SWFC (variable 'SchoolPhase'). Leaders from 'all-through' schools were analysed as secondary leaders. Primary and secondary teachers were defined as primary or secondary teachers based on their response to the survey question 'In the current academic year, which year groups do you mainly teach?'. For more information, see the

Sampling section.

Age – Data from the SWFC based on the following variable:

Age

Ethnicity - Data from the SWFC based on the following variable:

Ethnicity_Major

Gender - based on the survey question 'Demogs_gender':

- Which of the following best describes your gender?

Disability status – based on the survey questions 'Demogs_ifdisability' and 'Demogs_disabilitylimit'. Respondents were coded as 'yes' if they said they had a condition or illness that did reduce their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

- Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?
- Does your condition or illness / do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?

Urban / rural – Data from the SWFC based on the school address.

Academy status – Data from the SWFC based on the following variable. Schools were analysed as an academy if this variable was coded as 'Academies'.

- EstablishmentTypeGroup

MAT status - Data from the SWFC based on the following variable. Schools that were coded as 'supported by a multi-academy trust' were analysed as having a MAT status. All other schools were analysed as not having a MAT status.

- TrustSchoolFlag

FSM / FME quintile – Derived from data in GIAS from August 2024 based on the following variable. Quintiles were created to reflect the distribution of schools, so that 20% of schools fell into each quintile. Quintiles for primary, secondary and special schools were derived separately. Teachers and leaders were allocated to the quintile of their school.

- PercentageFSM

Appendix C: Invitations to the SCV (recruitment)

Invite to school leaders

Email to mainstream leaders



Email subject: FAO [LeaderFname] [LeaderLname]: Join School and College Voice

Ref: [userid]

Dear [LeaderFname],

Join the School and College Voice: make the voice of [primary/secondary] leaders heard with the Department for Education

I am writing to tell you about some important research we are doing sponsored by the Department for Education (DfE) and invite you to join a panel of teachers and leaders from schools across England. The survey is being carried out by Verian, an independent research organisation.

By joining this panel, it is an opportunity to share your experiences and help to ensure that the voices of [primary/secondary] leaders in [area] like you are heard at the heart of education policy-making.

If you take part, you will be invited by email to complete short surveys across the 2025/26 academic year and all survey responses will be treated confidentially. The first survey covers a range of topics including parental engagement with schools and exclusion rates.

The surveys are voluntary, quick and easy to fill out.

- The initial registration survey will take around 10 minutes to complete
- You will be invited to shorter surveys every term, each is optional and takes around 5 minutes to complete

Please click on the button below to complete the registration survey.

[START SURVEY BUTTON]

Findings from our surveys are regularly published on Gov.uk. Search for school and college voice to see previous reports and how teacher and leader experiences have shaped these.

I very much hope that you will be able to take part in this important research. Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Michele Weatherburn, Chief Social Researcher, Department for Education

Why have I been selected to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this research as you are a leader in a school in England. Your details were randomly selected from the School Workforce Census. This database is maintained by the DfE. Verian have been given permission to use the contact details for research.

I have taken part in a panel like this before, can I take part again?

Yes, we would appreciate if you take part in the panel regardless of whether you have taken part in a survey like this before. You may have been part of a former panel run by DfE, the School and College Panel. This has now ended and is proceeded by the School and College Voice.

Will my responses be confidential?

Your survey responses will be treated confidentially in line with UK Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The survey will cover some sensitive and personal topics such as mental health, but you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to. Your answers will not be shared with anyone from your school unless something you disclose indicates a safeguarding concern. For more information on your privacy, please visit [REDACTED].

What will happen to the results of the surveys?

The results of the surveys will be used by DfE to inform future policies. Your answers will be grouped with those from thousands of other school leaders who take part in the research. The results will be written up in published reports in which it will be impossible to identify you or your school. Quotes from individual written survey responses may be published, however these will be fully anonymous, with any personal identifiers removed.

How are the DfE researchers working to reduce burden on schools?

We are mindful of the pressures schools are experiencing and in line with DfE's commitment to reduce the burden on schools the research panel will only cover essential information that will be used to inform policy decisions.

Who is conducting this research?

The Department for Education (DfE) has commissioned Verian to carry out this survey on their behalf. Verian is an independent research organisation and is a full member of the Market Research Society with a strong track record of conducting high quality research. www.veriangroup.com

For more information, please visit the website FAQs at [REDACTED]

To talk to someone about the research or ask not to be contacted further about this research, please contact Verian on:

✉ Email: [REDACTED]

☎ Telephone (between 9am and 5pm on Monday to Friday): [REDACTED]

Email to special school leaders



Department
for Education

verian 

Email subject: FAO [LeaderFname] [LeaderLname]: Join School and College Voice

Ref: [userid]

Dear [LeaderFname],

Join the School and College Voice: make the voice of special school leaders heard with the Department for Education

I am writing to tell you, as a special school leader, about some important research we are doing sponsored by the Department for Education (DfE) and invite you to join a panel of teachers and leaders from schools across England. This research is being carried out by Verian, an independent research organisation.

We know that special schools can operate differently to many other schools, so we are focusing on topics that are especially relevant to working at special schools and where your insight can make an impact on DfE policymaking. For instance, in our first survey we ask about support staff training, career progression, and school transportation for pupils with SEND.

"It is vital that we understand experiences in special schools so that we can build the right tools to support the sector. Every teacher and leader participating in the SCV helps us to make better informed policy on SEND and AP." – Claire Burton, Director SEND and AP

If you take part, you will be invited by email to complete short surveys across the 2025/26 academic year and all survey responses will be treated confidentially.

The surveys are, voluntary, quick and easy to fill out.

- The initial registration survey will take around 10 minutes to complete
- You will be invited to shorter surveys every term, each is optional and takes around 5 minutes to complete

Please click on the button below to complete the registration survey.

[START SURVEY BUTTON]

I very much hope that you will be able to take part in this important research. Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Michele Weatherburn, Chief Social Researcher, Department for Education

Why have I been selected to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this research as you are a leader in a school in England. Your details were randomly selected from the School Workforce Census. This database is maintained by the DfE. Verian have been given permission to use the contact details for research.

I have taken part in a panel like this before, can I take part again?

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What will happen to the results of the surveys?

The results of the surveys will be used by DfE to inform future policies. Your answers will be grouped with those from thousands of other school leaders who take part in the research. The results will be written up in published reports in which it will be impossible to identify you or your school. Quotes from individual written survey responses may be published, however these will be fully anonymous, with any personal identifiers removed.

How are the DfE researchers working to reduce burden on schools?

We are mindful of the pressures schools are experiencing and in line with DfE's commitment to reduce the burden on schools the research panel will only cover essential information that will be used to inform policy decisions.

Who is conducting this research?

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For more information, please visit the website FAQs at [REDACTED]

To talk to someone about the research or ask not to be contacted further about this research, please contact Verian on:

✉ Email: [REDACTED]

☎ Telephone (between 9am and 5pm on Monday to Friday): [REDACTED]

Letter to school leaders



FAO: [LeaderFname] LeaderLname]

{SchColName}

{Address Line 1}

{Address Line 2}

{Address Line 3}

{Postcode}

{Date letter sent}

Ref: {userid}

Dear [LeaderFname],

Join the School and College Voice: make the voice of [primary/secondary] leaders heard with the Department for Education

I am writing to tell you about some important research we are doing sponsored by the Department for Education (DfE) and invite you to join a panel of teachers and leaders from schools across England. The survey is being carried out by Verian, an independent research organisation.

By joining this panel, it is an opportunity to share your experiences and help to ensure that the voices of [primary/secondary] leaders in [area] like you are heard at the heart of education policy-making.

If you take part, you will be invited by email to complete short surveys across the 2025/26 academic year and all survey responses will be treated confidentially. The first survey covers a range of topics including parental engagement with schools and exclusion rates.

The surveys are voluntary, quick and easy to fill out.

- The initial registration survey will take around 10 minutes to complete
- You will be invited to shorter surveys every term, each is optional and takes around 5 minutes to complete

How to take part

- 1 Go to [REDACTED] or scan the QR code on a smartphone
- 2 Enter your username: [userid]
- 3 Enter your passcode [passcode]

Findings from our surveys are regularly published on Gov.uk. Search for school and college voice to see previous reports and how teacher and leader experiences have shaped these.

I very much hope that you will be able to take part in this important research. Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Michele Weatherburn, Chief Social Researcher, Department for Education

Why have I been selected to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this research as you are a leader in a school in England. Your details were randomly selected from the School Workforce Census. This database is maintained by the DfE. Verian have been given permission to use the contact details for research.

I have taken part in a panel like this before, can I take part again?

Yes, we would appreciate if you take part in the panel regardless of whether you have taken part in a survey like this before. You may have been part of a former panel run by DfE, the School and College Panel. This has now ended and is proceeded by the School and College Voice.

Will my responses be confidential?

Your survey responses will be treated confidentially in line with UK Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The survey will cover some sensitive and personal topics such as mental health, but you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to. Your answers will not be shared with anyone from your school unless something you disclose indicates a safeguarding concern. For more information on your privacy, please visit [REDACTED]

What will happen to the results of the surveys?

The results of the surveys will be used by DfE to inform future policies. Your answers will be grouped with those from thousands of other school leaders who take part in the research. The results will be written up in published reports in which it will be impossible to identify you or your school. Quotes from individual written survey responses may be published, however these will be fully anonymous, with any personal identifiers removed.

How are the DfE researchers working to reduce burden on schools?

We are mindful of the pressures schools are experiencing and in line with DfE's commitment to reduce the burden on schools the research panel will only cover essential information that will be used to inform policy decisions.

Who is conducting this research?

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For more information, please visit the website FAQs at [REDACTED]

To talk to someone about the research or ask not to be contacted further about this research, please contact Verian on:

✉ Email: [REDACTED]

☎ Telephone (between 9am and 5pm on Monday to Friday): [REDACTED]

Invite to school teachers

Email to mainstream teachers



Email subject: FAO [TeacherFname] [TeacherLname]: Join School and College Voice

Ref: [userid]

Dear [TeacherFname],

Join the School and College Voice: make the voice of [primary/secondary] teachers heard with the Department for Education

I am writing to tell you about some important research we are doing sponsored by the Department for Education (DfE) and invite you to join a panel of teachers and leaders from schools across England. The survey is being carried out by Verian, an independent research organisation.

By joining this panel, it is an opportunity to share your experiences and help to ensure that the voices of [primary/secondary] teachers in [area] like you are heard at the heart of education policy-making.

If you take part, you will be invited by email to complete short surveys across the 2025/26 academic year and all survey responses will be treated confidentially. The first survey covers a range of topics including parental engagement with schools and recognising special educational needs.

The surveys are voluntary, quick and easy to fill out.

- The initial registration survey will take around 10 minutes to complete
- You will be invited to shorter surveys every term, each is optional and takes around 5 minutes to complete

Please click on the button below to complete the registration survey.

[START SURVEY BUTTON]

Findings from our surveys are regularly published on Gov.uk. Search for school and college voice to see previous reports and how teacher and leader experiences have shaped these.

I very much hope that you will be able to take part in this important research. Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Michele Weatherburn, Chief Social Researcher, Department for Education

Why have I been selected to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this research as you are a teacher in a school in England. Your details were randomly selected from the School Workforce Census. This database is maintained by the DfE. Verian have been given permission to use the contact details for research.

I have taken part in a panel like this before, can I take part again?

Yes, we would appreciate if you take part in the panel regardless of whether you have taken part in a survey like this before. You may have been part of a former panel run by DfE, the School and College Panel. This has now ended and is proceeded by the School and College Voice.

Will my responses be confidential?

Your survey responses will be treated confidentially in line with UK Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The survey will cover some sensitive and personal topics such as mental health, but you don't have to answer any questions you don't want to. Your answers will not be shared with anyone from your school unless something you disclose indicates a safeguarding concern. For more information on your privacy, please visit [REDACTED].

What will happen to the results of the surveys?

The results of the surveys will be used by DfE to inform future policies. Your answers will be grouped with those from thousands of other school teachers who take part in the research. The results will be written up in published reports in which it will be impossible to identify you or your school. Quotes from individual written survey responses may be published, however these will be fully anonymous, with any personal identifiers removed.

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✉ Email: [REDACTED]

☎ Telephone (between 9am and 5pm on Monday to Friday): [REDACTED]

Email to special school teachers



Email subject: FAO [TeacherFname] [TeacherLname]: Join School and College Voice

Ref: [userid]

Dear [TeacherFname],

Join the School and College Voice: make the voice of special school teachers heard with the Department for Education

I am writing to tell you, as a special school teacher, about some important research we are doing sponsored by the Department for Education (DfE) and invite you to join a panel of teachers and leaders from schools across England. This research is being carried out by Verian, an independent research organisation.

We know that special schools can operate differently to many other schools, so we are focusing on topics that are especially relevant to working at special schools and where your insight can make an impact on DfE policymaking. For instance, in our first survey we ask about support for managing challenging classroom situations and parental engagement with schools.

"It is vital that we understand experiences in special schools so that we can build the right tools to support the sector. Every teacher and leader participating in the SCV helps us to make better informed policy on SEND and AP." – Claire Burton, Director SEND and AP

If you take part, you will be invited by email to complete short surveys across the 2025/26 academic year and all survey responses will be treated confidentially.

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Please click on the button below to complete the registration survey.

[START SURVEY BUTTON]

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Yours sincerely,

Michele Weatherburn, Chief Social Researcher, Department for Education

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Letter to school teachers



FAO: {TeacherFname} {TeacherLname}
{SchColName}

{Address Line 1}

{Address Line 2}

{Address Line 3}

{Postcode}

{Date letter sent}

Ref: {userid}

Dear [TeacherFname],

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For more information, please visit the website FAQs at [REDACTED]

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✉ Email: [REDACTED]

☎ Telephone (between 9am and 5pm on Monday to Friday): [REDACTED]

Appendix D: Glossary

FSM – Free School Meal. Eligibility for FSM is used as a proxy for socioeconomic status. Schools with a higher proportion of pupils eligible for FSMs are considered to be in greater socioeconomic deprivation than those with a smaller proportion of pupils who were eligible for FSMs.

GIAS - Get Information about Schools - The Get Information about Schools database is a register of educational establishments in England and Wales, including academies, free schools, maintained schools, independent schools, further education colleges (further education and sixth form corporations, specialist designated colleges and special post 16 institutions) and higher education institutions.

IDACI – Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index – An index that measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families. It is a subset of the Income Deprivation Domain which measures the proportion of the population in an area experiencing deprivation relating to low income. The definition of low income used includes both those people that are out-of-work, and those that are in work but who have low earnings (and who satisfy the respective means tests).

LSOA – Lower Layer Super Output Areas – Small geographic areas that are designed to be of a similar population size, with an average of approximately 1,500 residents or 650 households. There are 32,844 Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in England. They were produced by the Office for National Statistics for the reporting of small area statistics.

MAT - multi-academy trust - Multi-academy trusts (MATs) are not-for-profit companies that run more than one academy. Not all academies are part of a multi-academy trust

School URN (unique reference number) – a unique reference number that is allocated to all schools.

SWFC - School Workforce Census - The School Workforce Census is a database of staff employed by schools compiled by the Department for Education. Data is collected annually and is the department's primary source of data on school staff, and informs departmental policy on pay and the monitoring of the effectiveness and diversity of the school workforce.



Department
for Education

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