

# Teachers' Omnibus 2005

Research Study Conducted for  
The Sutton Trust

October-November 2005

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# Introduction

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This document contains the summary report, computer tabulations and topline results (in the form of a 'marked-up' questionnaire) from the 2005 Teachers' Omnibus, carried out by Market & Opinion Research International (MORI). This year's survey was the fourth wave of a multi-client survey which is conducted on a broadly annual basis. Questions were placed on the study on behalf of the Sutton Trust. A similar study was carried out for the Sutton Trust as part of the Wave 3 (Autumn 2004) MORI Teachers' Omnibus, and we provide comparisons with those findings where applicable.

## Background and Objectives

Questions asked on behalf of the Sutton Trust covered the issues of:

- the use of Academies to raise standards of education in deprived areas;
- teachers' attitudes to the introduction of Post-Qualification Admission; and
- teachers' views on choice and the impact of choice.

## Methodology

The sample comprised 3,998 maintained primary and secondary schools in England and Wales, with probability of selection proportionate to size. Size of school was determined by the number of pupils on roll and was used as a proxy for the number of teachers per institution. This sampling approach was used to ensure that all teachers had an equal chance of participating in the survey. The sampling universe included county, voluntary aided/controlled and foundation schools, but excluded nursery schools, special schools and PRUs, FE and sixth form colleges.

A letter was sent to headteachers informing them of the research. Interviewers then contacted schools by telephone and attempted to secure an interview with one or more members of staff in each school (depending on the number of times the school was selected). Quotas were set on Government Office Region (GOR), phase (primary or secondary), sex and age to reflect the proportion of teachers in England and Wales known to be in each category. In addition, minimum quotas were set on subject specialism (for secondary teachers), teaching experience and most senior level of responsibility, to ensure that a broad range of teachers was interviewed.

Fieldwork for the study was conducted between 4 and 25 November 2005.

At the analysis stage, data have been weighted by phase, sex and age. The effect of weighting is shown in the computer tables.

Questions for the Sutton Trust were asked only of teachers in secondary schools. In total, 477 secondary teachers in England and Wales were interviewed.

## Layout of the Report

This report is divided into two main sections. The main section provides a summary of the survey findings. Meanwhile, the appendices contain a copy of the questionnaire marked-up with the overall results, followed by the computer tabulations, with each question analysed by three pages of sub-groups (cross-breaks).

## Guide to Computer Tabulations

### Basic Table Structure

The accompanying tables set out the findings from the study. They present the number of respondents, expressed as percentages, who gave a response to each question and are analysed against a breakdown of other key questions to show which types of people have given each response.

#### Each table contains:

- the wording of the question and the question number;
- headings for the downbreak categories;
- headings for the crossbreak categories;
- a description of who answered each question;
- the number of respondents in each crossbreak who answered the question (the base); and
- total figures.

### The downbreaks

The downbreaks are listed down the left-hand side of each table and include the range of all possible responses to a particular question. They include all the pre-coded responses that were available to the respondent.

Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' categories, or multiple responses. An asterisk (\*) denotes a value of less than 0.5%, but not zero.

Some tables also include combination scores. These are literally combined responses to two or more response categories on the same "side" of a scale. For example, very satisfied and fairly satisfied gives a combination score of "satisfied".

Net scores are also provided. This reduces the findings for each question to a single figure in every column. The net score is calculated by subtracting the

negative score from the positive score. For example, if 65% are satisfied and 20% dissatisfied, then the “net satisfied” score is +45 points.

### The crossbreaks

The crossbreaks are found across the top of the table as column headings. The crossbreaks include:

Weighted total;

Phase (Primary, Secondary);

Sex of teacher (Male, Female);

Age of teacher (24 or below, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55 or above);

Government Office Region (North East, North West incl. Merseyside, Yorkshire and Humberside, East Midlands, West Midlands, Eastern, London, South East, South West, Wales);

Country (England, Wales);

Years’ Teaching Experience (NQT/in first year of teaching, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-25 years, Over 25 years);

Subject Specialism – secondary teachers only (English; Maths; Science; ICT; Humanities; Modern Foreign Languages; Other)

Most Senior Level of Responsibility (Classroom Teacher/Subject Teacher/Form Tutor; Curriculum Co-ordinator/Assistant Head of Department/Head of Department; Key Stage Co-ordinator/Assistant Head of Year/Head of Year; Assistant/Deputy Headteacher incl. acting; Headteacher incl. acting);

Key Stage(s) taught (Foundation/Early Years/Nursery/Reception; KS1; KS2; KS3; KS4; Post-16)

Unweighted total.

Viewing the results in this way can highlight any notable differences in the responses of these different types of respondent. Cross tabulations can also be used to show relationships to different questions.

### Bases

The ‘base’ is the number of respondents answering the question.

### Confidence Intervals

When interpreting the findings, it is important to remember that the results are based on a sample of teachers working in the maintained primary and secondary school sectors, and not the entire population. Therefore, we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody had been

interviewed (the 'true' values). However, we can predict the variation between the sample results and the 'true' values from a knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given.

The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% - that is, the chances are 19 in 20 that the 'true' value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentages results at the '95% confidence interval', based on a random sample. For example, with a sample size of 477 where 30% give a particular answer, the margin of error/specified range will be plus or minus four per cent. In other words, results would lie in the range 26% to 34%, but would be most likely to be 30%, the actual finding.

Sample Size	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	$\pm$	$\pm$	$\pm$
50	8	13	14
100	6	9	10
200	4	6	7
477	3	4	5
500	3	4	4
1,000	2	3	3

*Source: MORI*

Thus, the confidence interval (or margin of error) is the amount by which the survey result could increase or decrease and still be considered to reflect the 'true' result that would have been recorded if everyone in the population had been surveyed.

Tolerances are also involved in the **comparison of results** from different parts of the sample, and between two samples. A difference, in other words, must be of at least a certain size to be considered statistically significant. The following table is a guide to the sampling tolerances applicable to comparisons.

<b>Differences required for significance at or near these percentages</b>			
	<b>10% or 90%</b>	<b>30% or 70%</b>	<b>50%</b>
	<b>±</b>	<b>±</b>	<b>±</b>
<b>Size of sample on which survey result is based</b>			
477 and 364 ( <i>teachers in 2005 versus teachers in 2004</i> )	4	6	7
250 and 220 ( <i>e.g. approximate number of female versus male teachers</i> )	5	8	9
30 and 445 ( <i>e.g. approximate number of Welsh versus English teachers</i> )	11	17	19

*Source: MORI*

Caution should be exercised when comparing percentages derived from base sizes of 99 respondents or fewer, and particularly when comparing percentages derived from base sizes of 50 respondents or fewer. In the reporting that follows, percentages which derive from base sizes of 50-99 respondents should be regarded as indicative. Where bases fall below 50 respondents, we give actual numbers (Ns), not percentages.

## Interpreting the Data

When interpreting the data, it is often helpful to start with the overall picture and then look at specific details. Look first at the total column, decide whether there appears to be anything particularly interesting and look to see whether anything is different to what you had expected. Then look at the rest of the table. Are there any major differences between sub-groups? Are things similar where you expected to find differences? Where there are significant differences between sub-groups, these are highlighted with the use of letters on the computer tabulations.

## Publication of Data

As with all our studies, findings from this survey are subject to our standard Terms and Conditions of Contract. Any press release or publication (including web-siting) of the findings requires the advance approval of MORI. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy or misrepresentation.

## Acknowledgements

It is clear that staff in schools are increasingly working under great pressure from a number of different sources. They also receive numerous requests to participate in surveys such as this. Consequently, we wish to record our gratitude to the many respondents who took part and we are indebted to all the headteachers and staff who made this survey possible.

# Summary of Findings

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A majority of teachers disagree that Academies are an appropriate way of raising educational standards in deprived areas.

Most teachers describe the introduction of post-qualification admissions as *a good idea* on the whole.

Teachers doubt the impact of the Government's "Choice Agenda". Most disagree that choice is a reality for most parents, or that it has improved school standards. And nearly half disagree that the secondary school admissions system operates fairly.

## Academies

- In 2004, respondents' views were split on whether *Academies are an appropriate way of raising standards of education in deprived areas*: then nearly four in ten teachers (36%) agreed, but the same proportion (37%) disagreed. In 2005, however, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of teachers who *disagree* that *Academies are an appropriate way of raising standards of education in deprived areas*. Overall, 53% disagree that this is so, with over one in four (27%) of all respondents *strongly* disagreeing.
- As in 2004, support for Academies tends to be lower amongst older teaching staff than amongst their younger colleagues. A third (33%) of teachers under 35 agree that *Academies are an appropriate way of raising standards of education in deprived areas*, compared to just one in five (20%) of those aged 45 or over. Correspondingly, those with 10 or fewer years' teaching experience are more likely to support Academies than teachers with 11+ years' experience (33% vs. 22% agreeing).

## Post-Qualification Admission

- There is almost unanimous support amongst teachers for PQA: over eight in ten (82%) say that, on the whole, they think it is *a good idea*.
- There is largely across-the-board support for PQA, regardless of respondents' sex, age, length of teaching experience and Government Office Region. However, some (indicative<sup>1</sup>) differences emerge by respondents' level of seniority. Assistant Heads of Year and Heads of Year are significantly less likely to say that PQA is *a good idea* (67%) compared – for example – to Assistant Heads of Department and Heads of Department (86%) or Deputy Headteachers (88%). They are also more likely

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<sup>1</sup> Some small base sizes.

to say they *don't know* whether PQA is a good idea or a bad idea. The factors driving this greater uncertainty amongst teachers of this type would warrant further investigation.

## Choice

- On the whole, teachers' responses reflect considerable scepticism about the efficacy of the Government's "Choice Agenda" in relation to schools in England and Wales.
- Only three in ten teachers (31%) agree that *School choice is a reality for most parents*. Older, more experienced teachers are significantly more likely than their younger, less experienced colleagues to *disagree* with this statement<sup>2</sup>, as are teachers in England compared to colleagues in Wales (30% versus 48%)<sup>3</sup>.
- Similarly, only three in ten teachers (31%) agree that *School choice has improved school standards*. Again, older, more experienced teachers are more likely to *disagree* with this statement.
- More teachers – but still a minority (41%) – agree that *the current system of admissions to secondary schools operates fairly*. In a politically controversial move, the Government's recent Education White Paper sets out plans for all schools to become "trust schools" with powers to set their own admissions policies. On the face of it, therefore, the survey findings would seem to imply that the majority of teachers (48%) feel admissions reform is required. What is not clear is the extent to which they support reforms as currently proposed and, again, this would warrant further investigation.
- As before, older, more experienced teachers show a greater tendency to disagree with this statement.

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<sup>2</sup> Indicative finding: some small base sizes.

<sup>3</sup> Indicative finding: small base size for Wales.

**Teachers' Omnibus Wave 4**  
**Sutton Trust (Section D)**  
**Final topline (19 December 2005)**

**Technical note:**

- Fieldwork for the MORI Teachers' Omnibus covered a representative sample of 477 secondary school teachers in England and Wales.
- Fieldwork was conducted between 4 and 25 November 2005.
- Results are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated.
- Data are weighted to the known profile of teachers in England and Wales by sex, age and phase.
- Where results do not sum to 100, this may be due to multiple responses, computer rounding or the exclusion of don't know/not stated categories
- An asterisk (\*) represents a value of less than half of one percent, but not zero.

**Respondent demographics**

Q1. **Sex**

Male .....	39
Female .....	61

Q2. **Age**

	%
24 or below .....	4
25-34 .....	28
35-44 .....	24
45-54 .....	32
55 or above .....	12

Q3. **Phase**

	%
Secondary .....	100

Q4. **GOR**

	%
North East .....	4
North West (incl. Merseyside) .....	14
Yorkshire and Humberside .....	9
East Midlands .....	9
West Midlands .....	8
Eastern .....	10
London .....	13
South East .....	17
South West .....	9
Wales .....	7

Q5. **Subject specialism**

*Base: All secondary phase teachers (477)*

	%
English .....	24
Maths .....	17
Science.....	19
ICT.....	7
Humanities .....	9
Modern Foreign Languages .....	7
Other .....	16

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Q6. **How many years' teaching experience do you have?**

	%
NQT/in first year of teaching.....	6
1-5 years .....	20
6-10 years .....	15
11-15 years.....	13
16-25 years.....	18
Over 25 years .....	28

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Q7. **What responsibilities do you currently have?**  
 Q8. **Of these, what is your most senior level of responsibility?**

	Q7	Q8
	%	%
Classroom teacher/Subject teacher	78	32
Form Tutor	13	*
Curriculum Co-ordinator	9	6
Assistant Head of Department	6	6
Head of Department	28	24
Key Stage Co-ordinator	7	6
Assistant Head of Year	9	1
Head of Year	9	8
Deputy/Assistant Headteacher/Principal (incl. acting)	8	8
Headteacher/Principal (incl. acting)	5	5
Gifted and Talented/More Able Co-ordinator	2	-
Senior Teacher	2	-
Study support/out of school hours/extra-curricular activities Co-ordinator	1	-
Advisory Teacher	1	-
Assessment, reporting and recording Performance Management/Staff Development/CPD Manager/CPD Co-ordinator	1	-
SEN Co-ordinator	1	-
Teacher Governor	1	-
Careers education Co-ordinator/Advisor	*	-
Exam Officer	*	-
HE advisor	*	-
Health and Safety Officer/ Co-ordinator/ Manager	*	-
Initial Teacher Training Mentor	*	-
Line/Middle Manager	*	-
Behaviour management Co-ordinator	*	-
Child Protection Officer/Co-ordinator/Manager	*	-
Educational visits Co-ordinator	*	-
External Advisor/Consultant	*	-
Induction Co-ordinator	*	-
Induction Mentor	*	-
Initial Teacher Training Co-ordinator	*	-
Senior Management Team	*	-
Other	5	3

Q9. **Can you tell me the Key Stages of the pupils you teach?**

	%
Foundation/Early Years/Nursery/Reception.....	*
Key Stage 1.....	1
Key Stage 2.....	6
Key Stage 3.....	90
Key Stage 4.....	91
Post-16.....	49

Section D: The Sutton Trust
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Q10. **Approximately 20 Academies have replaced failing schools in deprived areas, and the Government plans to extend the scheme to 200 schools by 2010 in a further bid to raise standards. Each Academy costs around £25 million and is owned by a private sponsor, who typically puts up £2 million, while the rest is Government funded. Academies receive state funding for ongoing costs but have significant autonomy in terms of how they are managed, the curriculum they offer, staffing, and school ethos. Both critics and proponents of Academies have pointed to these characteristics in support of their arguments.**

**How far do you agree or disagree that Academies are an appropriate way of raising standards of education in deprived areas. Do you ...?**

	%	<i>TO W3</i>
Strongly agree.....	5	6
Agree .....	21	30
Neither agree nor disagree .....	15	20
Disagree .....	26	17
Strongly disagree.....	27	20
Don't know .....	6	7

Q11. **The Government is proposing the introduction of a system whereby young people would apply to university after they received their exam results, rather than on the basis of predicted grades, a system known as Post-Qualification Admission or PQA.**

**On the whole, would you say that PQA is ...?**

	%
A good idea .....	82
A bad idea.....	14
Don't know .....	4

Q12. **How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Is that ...?**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor dis-agree	Tend to dis-agree	Strongly dis-agree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
'School choice' is a reality for most parents.....	8	23	8	34	26	1
'School choice' has improved school standards.....	7	24	9	33	25	2
The current system of admissions to secondary schools operates fairly.....	9	32	8	26	22	4