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School Snapshot Panel

Findings from the July, September and December 2020 surveys

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IFF Research Ltd

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Executive Summary

This report brings together findings from three waves of research conducted with teachers and leaders about their experiences in the summer and autumn terms 2020. The three waves used the Teacher and Leader Panel and were conducted in July, September and December 2020.

A note on the reporting

The report covers questions asked about the individual experiences of teachers and leaders, and others asked of leaders about their school's experience.

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

Findings from each wave should be interpreted in the context of guidelines in place at that time. During summer 2020 a national lockdown was in place and only children of key workers and vulnerable children were able to attend. During this time shielding guidance was also in place for the clinically extremely vulnerable. As the summer term progressed, there was a staggered reopening of year groups, with children in reception, years 1 and 6 being the first groups able to return. Shielding guidance remained in place. From September, attendance was mandatory for all pupils, with the exception of some clinically extremely vulnerable children who were advised not to attend. From 2nd December, only some clinically extremely vulnerable children were advised to attend.

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

Leaders' and teachers' concerns

Leaders and teachers were most concerned about the following areas of school life in the summer[1] and autumn 2020:

- Staff wellbeing (95%, 97% and 97% concerned in July, September and December 2020 surveys, respectively)

[1] In July survey, leaders and teachers were asked to think about concerns for the next term: "To what extent, if at all, are you concerned about the following areas in relation to your school fully reopening to all pupils from September 2020". Subsequent waves asked about current concerns.

- Pupil attendance due to authorised absence (92%, 95% and 94%)
- Ensuring appropriate social distancing for staff and pupils (95%, 94% and 94%).

The proportion of leaders and teachers concerned ‘to a great extent’ about staff wellbeing rose from 40% in July to 58% in December.

Concerns remained high throughout the autumn term for a range of other areas such as providing remote education for pupils unable to attend school (89% in July and December) and teacher absence (88% in July and 90% in December). However, a few areas were of less concern in the latter part of the term. For instance, concern for pupil access to specialist services, although still high, decreased from 94% in July to 86% in December 2020.

School attendance

In July, 92% of leaders and teachers were concerned about pupil attendance due to authorised absence and 94% were concerned about unauthorised absence when schools fully reopened in September.

Concern about pupil attendance (both authorised and unauthorised absence) remained high throughout the autumn term, although concerns about unauthorised absence dropped from 94% in July to 84% in December. Upwards of four-in-five leaders and teachers across all three surveys were concerned to a great extent, some extent or a small extent about both areas of absence, though the proportion greatly concerned was higher for authorised absence than for unauthorised absence.

The proportion of leaders and teachers concerned to a great extent about authorised absence steadily (and significantly) increased over time: from 16% in July, to 32% in September, and 41% in December. In contrast, the proportion of leaders and teachers greatly concerned about unauthorised pupil absence has decreased slightly across the three survey waves (23% in July to 18% in December).

In December 2020, on average, schools reported that 8% of pupils were currently unable to attend school due to lockdown and self-isolation. Secondary school leaders reported a greater proportion of their pupils were currently unable to attend school than primary leaders (12% on average, compared with 8% within primary schools). There was a similar trend for classroom teachers, with secondary teachers reporting that twice as many of their pupils were currently unable to attend school compared with primary school teachers (19%, compared with 9%).

In December 2020, the most common approach schools had taken to address pupil absence was communicating with parents/carers of specific pupils (78%) followed by developing remote education resources (72%).

Transport

Concern about pupils' home-to-school transport decreased between the summer and autumn term: leaders and teachers were significantly less likely to report they were concerned (to at least a small extent) about this in the September survey (55%), compared with the July 2020 survey (64%).

Protective measures against infection spread

School leaders and teachers were very concerned about ensuring appropriate social distancing for staff and pupils throughout 2020 (between 94% and 95% of leaders and teachers were concerned about this in each of the three surveys).

Compared to other protective measures such as social distancing, concern about availability of PPE was less prevalent among leaders and teachers. Concern about this also significantly decreased between the summer and autumn term, from 69% in July 2020 to 60% in September 2020.

Remote learning

Most leaders and teachers were concerned about providing remote education for pupils unable to attend school during 2020. In all surveys, around nine-in-ten leaders and teachers reported any concern (89% in July, 91% in September and 89% in December 2020).

In the December 2020 survey, teachers said the key barriers to remote learning were a lack of pupil engagement (77%) and pupils lacking adequate home learning resources (73%).

In the September 2020 survey, schools were split about the impact of remote learning on the curriculum. Just over half (54%) said the range of subjects being taught in school was about the same as would be typically taught, whilst just under half (46%) said it was not as broad. Around half (49%) of schools reported they were able to teach the curriculum with about the same level of detail, although this was less likely amongst primary compared to secondary schools (46% vs. 68%).

Despite these concerns, however, in September most (85%) schools agreed that they had suitable contingency plans to allow for effective remote education.

To support pupils with unsuitable digital access to receive remote learning, in September, schools most commonly provided printed resources or textbooks (89%). Digital devices – either those provided by the school directly (48%) or through Government schemes (47%) – were the next most common ways schools provided remote learning to these pupils.

In the December 2020 survey, the vast majority (85%) of teachers set work for pupils learning from home at least weekly, but fewer provided feedback at least weekly (69%).

By December, most teachers set work using online platforms such as Google Classroom (89%) and by emailing pupils about assignments (63%). They were less likely to set work using take-home physical workbooks and worksheets (44%) and recorded lessons (36%).

Less than three in ten (28%) teachers in the December survey used Oak Academy resources in their remote education provision. Of these, three-quarters (74%) considered them to be good or excellent.

In December, teachers most commonly provided feedback in two ways: individual written feedback (57%) and marked work (52%). Although use of online platforms to set work was high, these were far less likely (8%) to be used to provide feedback to pupils.

In the December and September 2020 surveys, teachers were asked whether they thought that because of school closures their pupils were behind in their learning compared to where they expected them to be at this stage of their education. Although nearly all (97%) teachers said some pupils were behind in December 2020, teachers were significantly more positive about their pupils learning than they were in September 2020. In September 2020 36% of teachers reported that almost all pupils were behind in their learning. By December this had fallen to 29%.

Uptake of COVID-19 education initiatives

In December 2020, just over a third (36%) of all leaders reported that their school had applied to participate in the National Tutoring Programme. Significantly more secondary (53%) than primary (32%) schools had applied to participate. Nearly twice as many schools reported that they would participate in the tutoring partner element (52% of those who have applied / considered participating in the Programme) than the academic mentor element (27%).

The main reason school leaders gave for not considering applying to the National Tutoring Programme was because they did not think the programme would improve pupil outcomes (61%).

SEND

In December 2020, teachers had mixed views about how well equipped they were to support pupils with SEND during the COVID-19 pandemic. Just over a third (37%) of all teachers agreed they were equipped to support these pupils, whilst a similar proportion (35%) disagreed (with the remainder unsure).

The most common barrier to supporting pupils with SEND reported by teachers in December 2020 was having enough time to provide the additional support required by these pupils (80%). The second most common barrier was pupils with SEND not having access to technology and equipment (41%).

Pupil behaviour

In September 2020, a similar proportion of schools reported that the amount of disruptive behaviour in their school had increased (22%) as reported it had decreased (20%). However, overall leader and teacher concern about pupil behaviour increased during the autumn term (from 70% expressing any concern in September to 75% in December 2020).

In the September 2020 survey nearly all teachers (99%) reported experiencing low-level disruption that distracts other pupils from learning (e.g. talking out of turn) and four-in-five (79%) had dealt with inappropriate physical contact, such as pushing, punching and fighting.

When disciplinary action was needed, engagement with pupils' parents or carers was the most frequently used measure reported in the December survey (71% of all schools adopted this approach). Over a third (34%) reported they had issued a fixed period exclusion (suspension) in the last four weeks before the December survey, while 4% reported they had issued a permanent exclusion (expulsion).

Childcare during the term

At the time of the December 2020 survey, most (78%) primary schools offered daily supervised wraparound childcare during the school term. This was more likely to be provided by staff on the school premises and included as part of the school's governance (78%) than by a private organisation on the school site with their own governance arrangements (21%).

Most schools with childcare provision offered both before and after school care (79%). Around one-in-five said they offered it before school only (18%) or after school only (3%).

COVID-19 had brought about a change in supervised wraparound care for most primary schools. Since the start of the pandemic 65% reported a change, more often a decrease (56%) than an increase (9%) in provision.

Health and wellbeing

In December 2020, most (73%) schools reported that the delivery of the physical education (PE) curriculum had changed compared to last autumn term. The vast majority

(90%) of these schools now offered different or modified activities. Overall, 19% of schools had increased their delivery of PE, while 15% of schools had reduced it.

A lack of availability of appropriate inside space was the most common reason schools gave for reducing their curriculum PE (reported by 71% of these schools). Just over one-in-three (37%) reported that lesson time was now spent making sure changing and/or activities were COVID-19 secure.

Pupil mental health and wellbeing was covered in all three waves. The vast majority of leaders and teachers were concerned about offering appropriate mental health support for pupils to at least a small extent in all three surveys (95% in July; 92% in September; but down significantly to 87% in December 2020).

A similar trend was present in concern about access to specialist services, such as CAMHS, Children's Social Care Services, or educational psychology services:94% reported this is a concern in July; 94% in September; but down significantly to 86% in December 2020.

Workforce

In September 2020, over two-thirds (69%) of schools had experienced short-term staff shortages (of 2 weeks or less) since the start of term and a further 10% of schools had experienced long-term staff shortages (greater than 2 weeks).

The most common action in response to short-term staff shortages was to find cover using existing staff in the school (reported by 92% of schools with short-term staff shortages). Over half (54%) of schools with short-term staff shortages employed supply staff to provide cover.

In December 2020, around half (53%) of schools had changed the number of trainee placements they hosted, with one-fifth (20%) of schools reporting that it increased and one-third (33%) reporting it had decreased. Primary schools were significantly more likely to report a reduction in the number of trainee placements compared to the previous academic year (36% of primary schools vs. 20% of secondary schools).

In December 2020, less than half of leaders and teachers were satisfied with life, with only 43% giving a positive score (between 7-10).

In December 2020, leaders and teachers were around twice as likely to be satisfied with their job than dissatisfied (60% vs. 32% respectively).

Information and guidance

in the July 2020 survey most (66%) leaders and teachers agreed that they had access to appropriate information and guidance about schools reopening. Of those that disagreed, guidance on social distancing in schools was the most common area where leaders and teachers felt more guidance would have been useful (78%).

Introduction

The report details findings from the three surveys conducted with the Teacher and Leader Panel in the summer and autumn 2020 terms, a panel of leaders and teachers established to provide rapid feedback from previous waves of the School Snapshot Survey.[2]

These five-to-ten-minute surveys covered a range of topical issues in education in a time that was profoundly impacted by COVID-19. This period covered both the first lockdown when schools were closed to most pupils, the period when schools were closed for summer holidays, and the second national lockdown in England (through which schools remained open).

Methodology

The Teacher and Leader Panel consists of a group of teachers and leaders that have agreed to participate in short, regular research surveys on topical issues in education. Teachers and leaders agreed to be part of the panel following their involvement in the School Snapshot Survey. The School Snapshot Survey was a biannual omnibus survey, run in the winter and summer school terms with primary and secondary school leaders and teachers, covering a range of educational topics.

The surveys were administered online and the fieldwork period for each was short, (between one and two weeks). In all three surveys, leaders and teachers received an email invite and two reminder emails.

The fieldwork periods for each survey was as follows:

- **July Survey**: 17th July – 4th August
- **September Survey**: 28th September – 7th October
- **December Survey**: 8th December – 15th December.

The tables below show the response rate for leaders and teachers, within each school phase, for each of the three surveys. The response rate for the December survey was significantly lower for all groups, as detailed in table 3.

[2] Leaders and teachers agreed to participate in the panel when they completed the School Snapshot Survey, a biannual survey conducted by IFF Research since Winter 2017, with the aim of improving understanding of the opinions of leaders and teachers in primary and secondary schools on a range of educational topics.

Table 1. Response rate by key group (July Survey)

	Primary Leaders	Secondary Leaders	Primary Teachers	Secondary Teachers
Starting sample	815	821	873	984
Complete surveys	315	382	346	472
Response rate	**39%**	**47%**	**40%**	**48%**

Table 2. Response rate by key group (September Survey)

	Primary Leaders	Secondary Leaders	Primary Teachers	Secondary Teachers
Starting sample	815	821	873	984
Complete surveys	368	397	312	435
Response rate	**45%**	**48%**	**36%**	**44%**

Table 3. Response rate by key group (December Survey)[3]

	Primary Leaders	Secondary Leaders	Primary Teachers	Secondary Teachers
Starting sample	815	821	873	984
Complete surveys	167	226	260	359
Response rate	**21%**	**28%**	**30%**	**36%**

Weighting

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

[3] This survey was run by IFF Research, unlike the July and September surveys which were run by the Department for Education in-house.

The following weighting profiles take the December Survey data as an example. The same approach was adopted for the July and September Surveys.

School-level weighting

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

The population data for weighting was drawn from Get Information about Schools (GIAS). The following population figures were used:

Table 4. Population data (from Get Information about Schools)

Number of schools	Primary[4]	Secondary[5]	Grand Total
Academy converter	5,609	1,592	5,691
Academy sponsor led	5,609	745	2,255
Community school	6,031	357	6,388
Foundation school	558	177	735
Free schools	198	194	392
Voluntary aided school	4,395	230	2,899
Voluntary controlled school	4,395	30	1,756
Studio school	-	24	24
Technical college	-	48	48
Grand Total	**16,791**	**3,397**	**20,188**

[4] Includes middle deemed primary schools.
[5] Includes all through and middle deemed secondary schools.

Table 5. Achieved surveys (unweighted)

Number of schools	Primary	Secondary	Total
Academy converter	46[6]	121	298
Academy sponsor led	46[7]	27	93
Community school	72	31	192
Foundation school	5	15	36
Free schools	3	12	21
Voluntary aided school	41	15	100
Voluntary controlled school	41	1	44
Studio school	-	1	1
Technical college	-	3	2
Total	**167**	**226**	**393**

Table 6. Grossing factors by cell

Number of schools	Primary	Secondary
Academy converter	121.9	13.2
Academy sponsor led	121.9	27.6
Community school	83.8	11.5
Foundation school	111.6	11.8
Free schools	66.0	16.1
Voluntary aided school	107.2	15.3
Voluntary controlled school	107.2	30.0

[6] Due to the relatively small number of responses compared with the population, for the purposes of weighting the December 2020 data, primary academy converter / sponsor led schools were combined, as were primary voluntary aided / controlled schools. This reduced the relative grossing factor of these school types to an appropriate level.

[7] Due to the relatively small number of responses compared with the population, for the purposes of weighting the December 2020 data, primary academy converter / sponsor led schools were combined, as were primary voluntary aided / controlled schools. This reduced the relative grossing factor of these school types to an appropriate level.

Studio school	-	24.0
Technical college	-	16.0

Teachers / individual weighting

For the analysis on a teacher rather than a school base, the responses from leaders and classroom teachers were combined and weighted together to the overall population of teachers. The population data for the teachers weighting was taken from the Schools Workforce Census based on November 2019 data (the most current available data).

The calculations for this element of the weighting are shown in the table below:

Table 7. Population data (from Schools Workforce Census)

	Classroom teachers	School leaders	Total
Primary	205,758	41,994	247,752
Secondary	197,108	23,480	220,588
Total	**402,866**	**65,474**	**468,340**

Table 8. Achieved surveys (unweighted)

	Classroom teachers	School leaders	Total
Primary	260	167	427
Secondary	359	226	585
Total	**619**	**393**	**1,012**

Table 9. Weights applied by cell

	Classroom teachers	School leaders
Primary	1.710	0.54
Secondary	1.186	0.224

Interpreting the findings

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

Given the sample size in the research (1,012), statistically we can be 95% confident that for a survey finding of 50% based on all respondents, the 'true' value (if all leaders and teachers had answered rather than a sample of 1,012) lies within a +/- 3.1% range of this figure (i.e. 46.9% - 53.1%). Results based on a sub-set of schools interviewed are subject to a wider margin of error. For example, for results among school leaders, we can be 95% confident that for a survey result of 50% the sampling error is +/- 4.9%.

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

When comparing results by academy status or by phase (i.e. primary schools vs. secondary schools) it is worth noting that in the general population of schools the majority of secondaries (69%) are now academies whereas only 33% of primaries are.

Free School Meal (FSM) entitlement is used as a proxy for deprivation levels at the school. All schools in England were listed in ascending order of the proportion of their pupils that are entitled to FSM. This ordered list was then split into five equal groups (or quintiles). Quintile 1, which is referred to as the 'lowest proportion' throughout the report represents the schools with the lowest proportion of pupils entitled to FSM. This group thus equates to the schools with the least disadvantaged/deprived pupil population. The proportion of pupils entitled to FSM increases progressively as the quintiles increase. Schools in the 'highest proportion' quintile (quintile 5), represent the schools with the highest proportion of pupils entitled to FSM, i.e. having the greatest level of disadvantage in the local population. In the report, significant differences tend to be tested between schools with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils and schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils.

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

Reported combinations in the charts or text (e.g. ‘agree’ as a combination of ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’) have been calculated using the data and not percentages. This means that the combination may not always equal the sum of the individual responses presented in a chart or text, due to rounding.

In this report there is occasional reference to findings from the COVID-19 School Snapshot Survey. The COVID-19 School Snapshot survey replaced the summer 2020 wave of the School Snapshot Survey as it sought to understand the opinions of leaders (1,576) and teachers (997) in primary and secondary schools on a range of educational topics while schools were closed to the majority of students during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Fieldwork took place between 13 May – 31 May 2020.

There is also reference to findings from the Department for Education’s (DfE) COVID-19 Interim Report for the Parent and Pupil Panel (PPP). The PPP was established following the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting school closures, in order to assist the DfE conduct robust, quick turnaround research to assess the on-going views and experiences of parents and pupils from reception to year 13 from the start of the 2020/21 academic year. The interim report covers four waves of the PPP including the:

- August 2020, recruitment wave: a 15-minute online survey carried out between 13 August – 1 September 2020 with 7,191 parents and 5,327 secondary pupils
- September 2020: a c.5-minute online survey carried out between 16-20 September 2020 with 4,005 parents. No pupils took part in this wave
- September/October 2020 a c.5-minute online survey carried out between 30 September – 4 October 2020 with 3,491 parents and 1,780 secondary pupils
- Late October 2020: a c.5-minute online survey carried out between 30 October–1 November 2020 with 3,542 parents and 1,661 secondary pupils.

Leaders' and teachers' concerns

Questions to understand leaders' and teachers' key concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on schools were included in all 3 waves of the Teacher and Leader Panel in 2020.[8] Leaders and teachers were given a list of potential areas of concern and asked to rate their level of concern regarding each area (a great extent, some extent, a small extent or not at all).This section sets out the overarching views of leaders and teachers on potential areas of concern. Later in the report, specific areas are covered in more detail, breaking down responses by leaders and teachers.

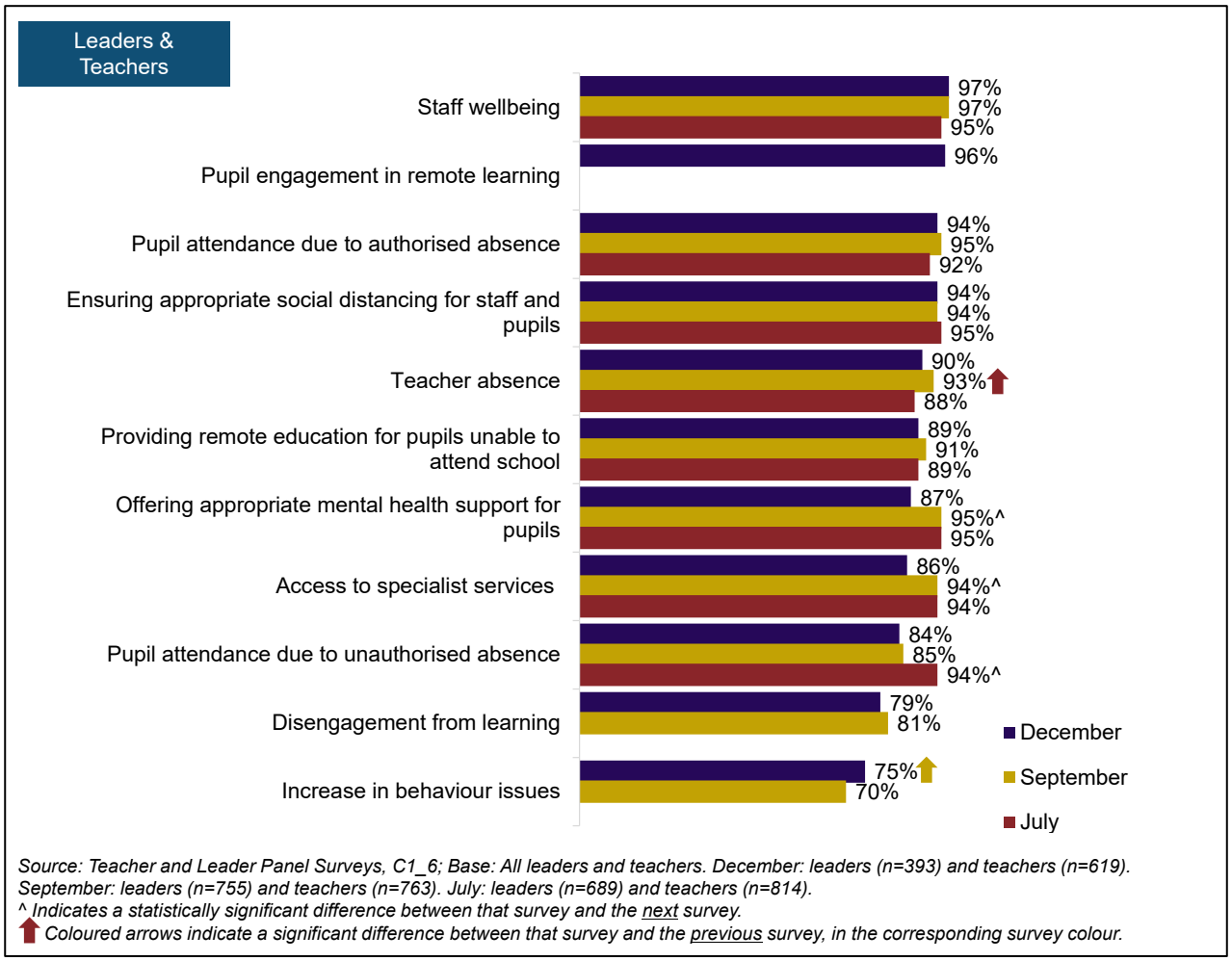
The majority of leaders and teachers were concerned about a range of areas of school life during 2020 (see Figure 1). They were consistently most concerned about:

- Staff wellbeing (95%, 97%, 97%) in July, September and December 2020 surveys, respectively)
- Pupil attendance due to authorised absence (92%, 95%, 94%)
- Ensuring appropriate social distancing for staff and pupils (95%, 94% and 94%).

Though still high, some areas of school life became less of a concern in the latter part of 2020, including access to specialist services (the proportion concerned for this decreased from 94% in July to 86% in December); and pupil attendance due to unauthorised absence (down from 94% July to 84% in December 2020).

[8] Note the wording of this question was slightly different in the July 2020 survey, reflecting school closures in the summer 2020 term. In July, the question text was: "*To what extent, if at all, are you concerned about the following areas in relation to you school fully reopening to all pupils from September 2020?"*. For the September and December surveys, the question text was changed to: *"To what extent are you concerned about the following areas, if at all?"*

Figure 1. Proportion of leaders and teachers that were concerned to any extent about the following[9]



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel Surveys, C1_6; Base: All leaders and teachers. December: leaders (n=393) and teachers (n=619). September: leaders (n=755) and teachers (n=763). July: leaders (n=689) and teachers (n=814).
^ Indicates a statistically significant difference between that survey and the next survey.
Coloured arrows indicate a significant difference between that survey and the previous survey, in the corresponding survey colour.

[9] Not all the areas were covered in each of the three surveys, dependent on how pertinent they were at the time of the survey running. This chart shows all the areas that were asked of leaders and teachers in the December 2020 survey.

School attendance

School attendance is an ongoing concern for school leaders and teachers. This issue has been particularly acute during COVID-19, given self-isolation protocol and COVID-19-related anxiety. The 2020 Teacher and Leader Panel Surveys covered pupil attendance from schools' and teachers' perspective, as well as the actions schools were taking to address pupil absence.

As part of the country's response to COVID-19, on 23rd March 2020, following national lockdown, education and childcare settings closed except for those classed as priority groups (vulnerable young people and children of critical workers).[10] From 1st June 2020, primary schools were able to welcome back children in nursery, reception, year 1 and year 6, in smaller class sizes; nurseries and other early years providers, including childminders, were able to begin welcoming back children of all ages, and (from 15th June) secondary schools and colleges were able to provide some face-to-face support for year 10, year 12, and 16-19 college students due to take key exams and assessments next year (with later flexibility to offer the equivalent to older learners taking the same exams).

Pupils in all year groups were expected to attend school full time from the start of the autumn term 2020. For the period reported on here, school attendance was mandatory. The Department were clear that parents would not be penalised if their child's non-attendance at school was as result of following clinical or public health advice relating to coronavirus (COVID-19). Pupils with symptoms or with a confirmed positive test of coronavirus (COVID-19) were and are unable to attend school. Pupils who were formally identified as clinically extremely vulnerable were still advised that they ought to attend school unless they were receiving direct paediatric or NHS care and had been advised specifically by their GP or clinician not to attend an education setting. Where pupils, parents and households were reluctant or anxious about attending school, schools were encouraged to bear this in mind and put the right support in place to address this.

Concern about pupil absence (authorised and unauthorised)

Concern about pupil absence (both authorised[11] and unauthorised) was high among leaders and teachers in July, September and December. It should be noted that in the July survey, leaders and teachers were asked to think about anticipated concerns for

[10] There are a number of occasions when an absence should be authorised by the school as set out in Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended 6 (2). They include when a leave of absence has been granted by the school; due to sickness or unavoidable cause; or for a necessary religious observance. In August 2020, a new type of 'non-attendance' was added to regulations to be used when pupils' absence was due to following certain public health advice and law related to coronavirus-COVID 19. In completing this survey schools will likely have interpreted this as authorised absence.

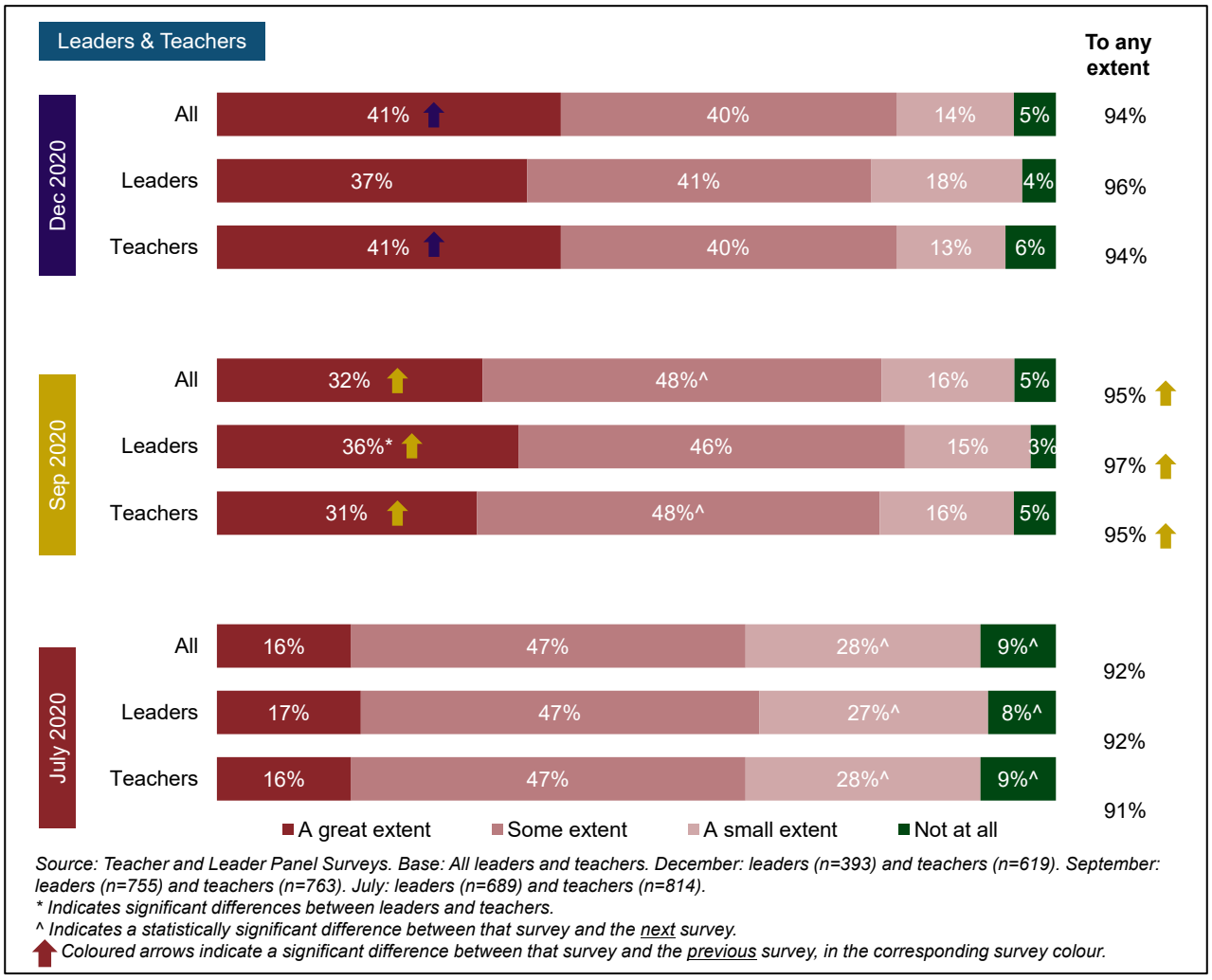
September when schools reopened fully. In the autumn term, attendance was mandatory for all pupils and therefore leaders and teachers in the September and December surveys could report on actual (rather than anticipated) experiences.

Upwards of four-in-five leaders and teachers across all three surveys were concerned to a great extent, some extent or a small extent about authorised and unauthorised absence. In December two-fifths (41%) of leaders and teachers reported that they were concerned to a great extent about authorised absences and just under a fifth (18%) were greatly concerned about unauthorised absence.

The proportion of leaders and teachers that reported being greatly concerned about authorised absence has steadily (and significantly) increased over time. In July, 16% of leaders and teachers were concerned to a great extent about anticipated authorised absences when schools reopened. As can be seen in Figure 2 this concern increased when schools reopened in the autumn term: in the September survey 32% of leaders and teachers reported a great deal of concern about authorised absence, rising to 41% in the December survey.

In contrast, the proportion of leaders and teachers that were greatly concerned about unauthorised pupil absence reduced when schools reopened in September (see Figure 3). For instance, in July, a third (33%) of leaders reported being greatly concerned about unauthorised absences when schools reopened. By the time of the September survey, only 18% of leaders reported being greatly concerned about unauthorised absences. This remained fairly stable through to December (19% of leaders greatly concerned). A similar pattern was present among teachers.

Figure 2. Extent to which leaders and teachers were concerned with pupil authorised absence over time

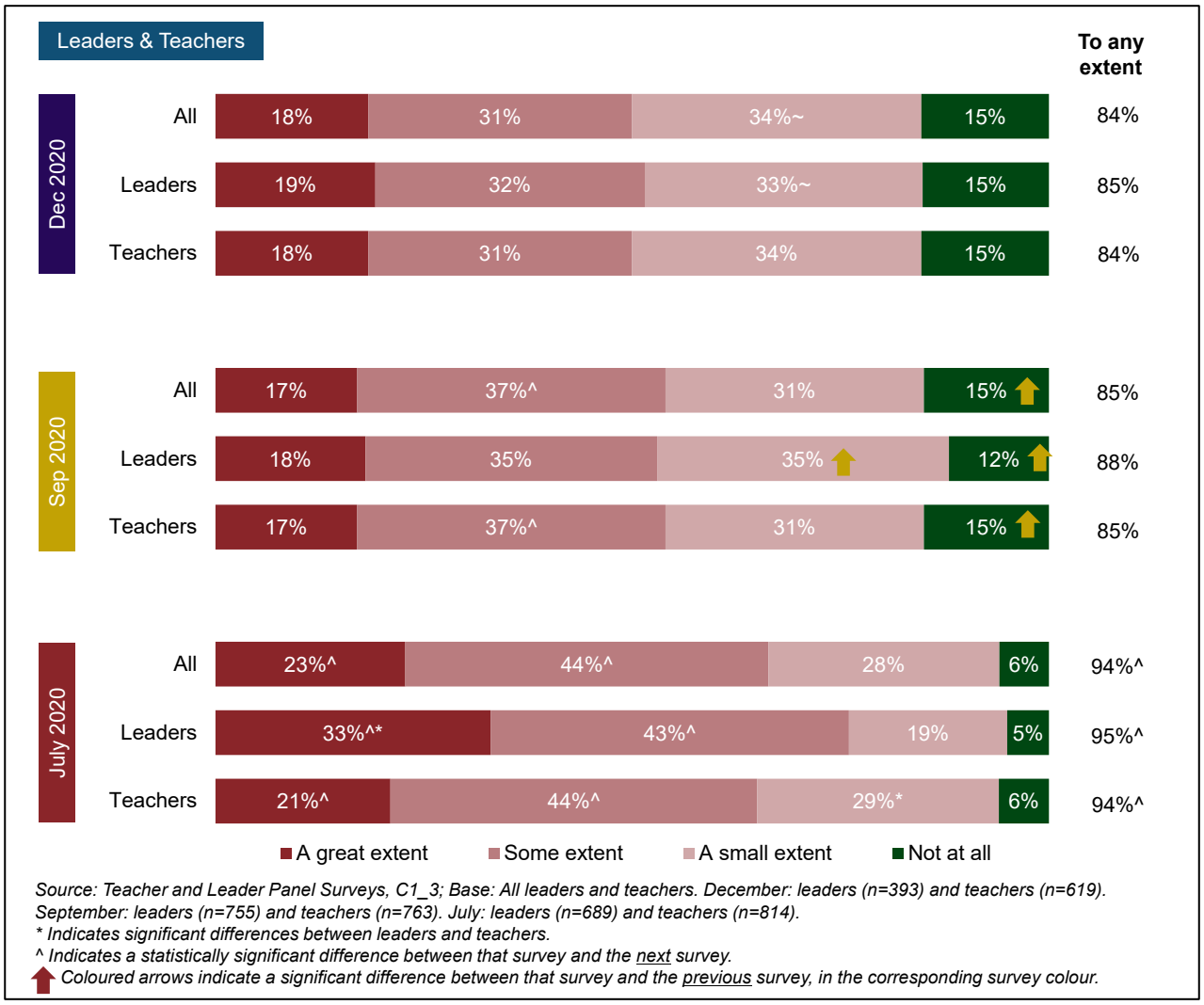


Source: Teacher and Leader Panel Surveys. Base: All leaders and teachers. December: leaders (n=393) and teachers (n=619). September: leaders (n=755) and teachers (n=763). July: leaders (n=689) and teachers (n=814).
** Indicates significant differences between leaders and teachers.*
^ Indicates a statistically significant difference between that survey and the next survey.
Coloured arrows indicate a significant difference between that survey and the previous survey, in the corresponding survey colour.

In December 2020, the following groups of leaders and teachers were significantly more likely to report a great level of concern about authorised pupil absences:

- Secondary leaders and teachers (52%, vs. 31% of primary leaders and teachers)
- Leaders and teachers working in schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for FSMs (51% vs. 36% of those working in schools with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils)
- Leaders and teachers working in urban schools (44% vs. 29% in rural schools).

Figure 3. Extent to which leaders and teachers were concerned with pupil unauthorised absence over time



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel Surveys, C1_3; Base: All leaders and teachers. December: leaders (n=393) and teachers (n=619). September: leaders (n=755) and teachers (n=763). July: leaders (n=689) and teachers (n=814).
** Indicates significant differences between leaders and teachers.*
^ Indicates a statistically significant difference between that survey and the next survey.
Coloured arrows indicate a significant difference between that survey and the previous survey, in the corresponding survey colour.

There were no subgroup differences for great concern about unauthorised pupil absences.

Pupil attendance (leaders)

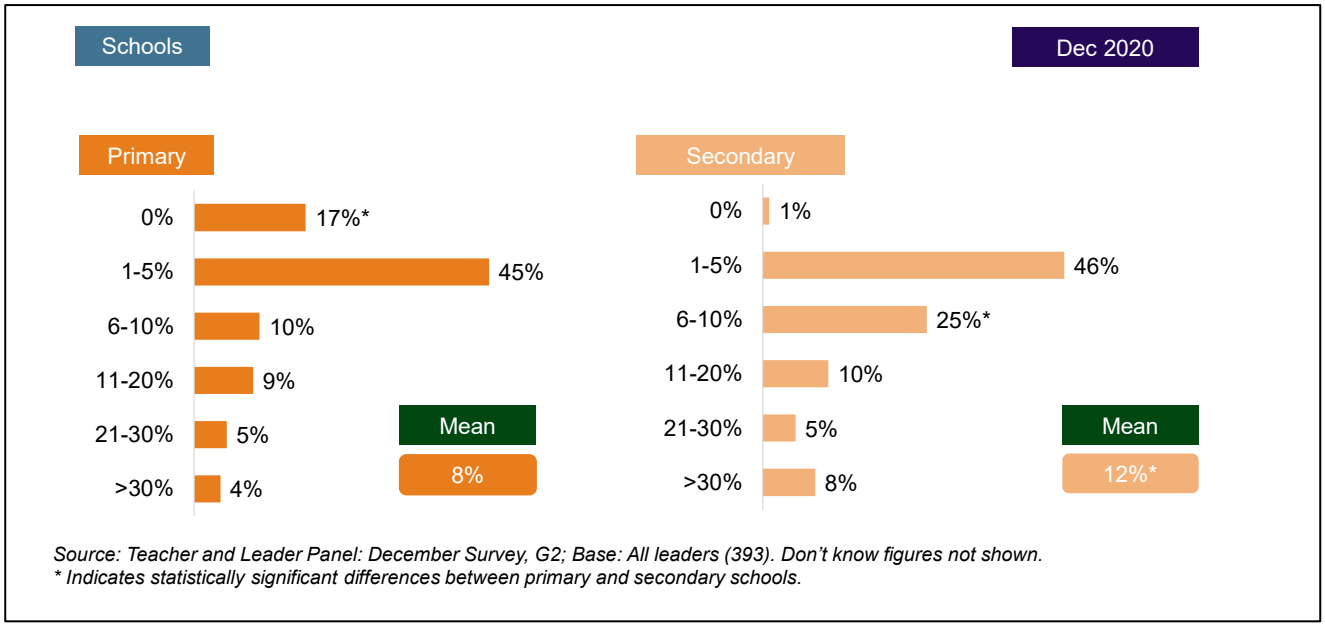
In the December survey, on average, schools reported that 8% of pupils were currently unable to attend school due to lockdown and self-isolation. Schools most commonly reported that between 1% and 5% of their pupils were unable to attend (with 46% reporting this). This appears to be a lower estimate of pupil non-attendance than parents reported for their children in years 1-11 in the late October wave of the Parent and Pupil Panel.[12] Two percent of parents indicated that their child had not physically attended school at all during the last two weeks of the October half term, whilst 5% said that they

[12] Please see the DfE COVID-19 Interim Report for the Parent and Pupil Panel.

had attended on some days, 9% said they had attended on most days, leaving 84% reporting attendance for everyday of the last fortnight.

There were key differences by phase, as shown in Figure 4, with secondary schools significantly more likely to report that a greater proportion of their pupils were currently unable to attend school (12% on average) than primary schools (8%).

Figure 4. Proportion of pupils reported by schools as currently unable to attend school due to further lockdown or self-isolation, by school phase



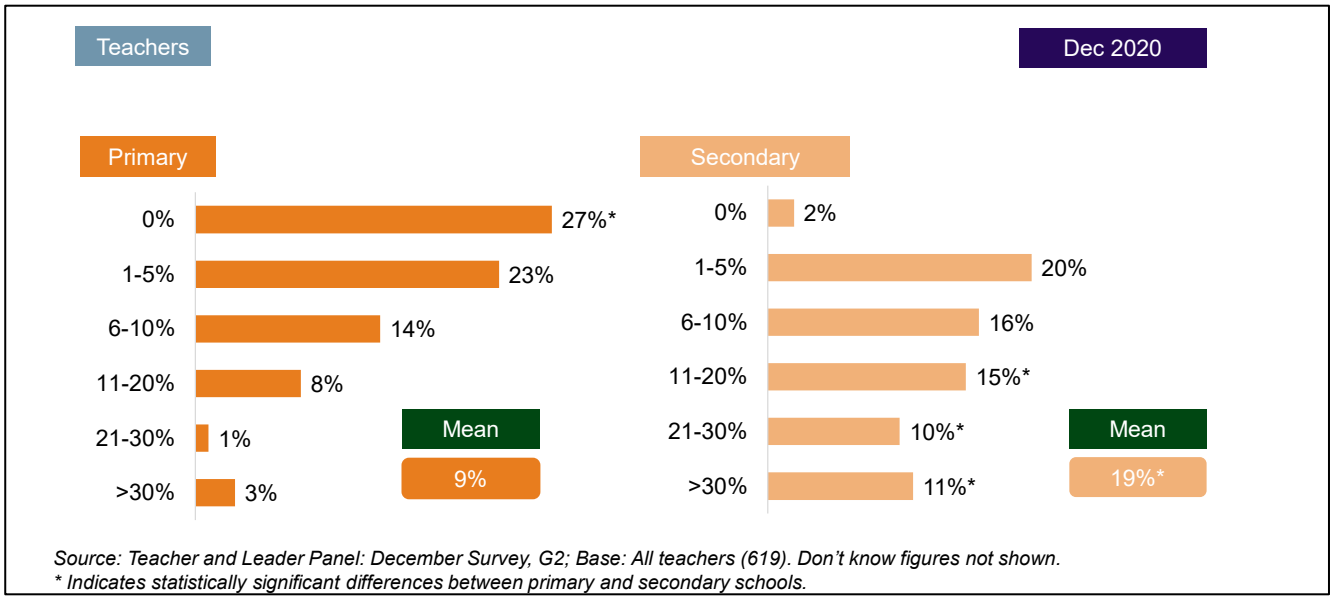
Source: Teacher and Leader Panel: December Survey, G2; Base: All leaders (393). Don't know figures not shown.
** Indicates statistically significant differences between primary and secondary schools.*

Pupil attendance (teachers)

In the December 2020 survey, teachers reported that on average 14% of the pupils they normally teach were currently unable to attend school, with a quarter (23%) reporting that more than 10% of pupils were not attending. This seems to align more closely with parents' views of school attendance in October, as discussed in the leaders' section of pupil attendance.

Differences by phase were more pronounced for teachers than leaders. On average, secondary teachers reported that 19% of the pupils they would normally teach were unable to attend school, twice the figure for primary teachers (9%).

Figure 5. Proportion of pupils reported by teachers as currently unable to attend classes due to further lockdown or self-isolation, by school phase



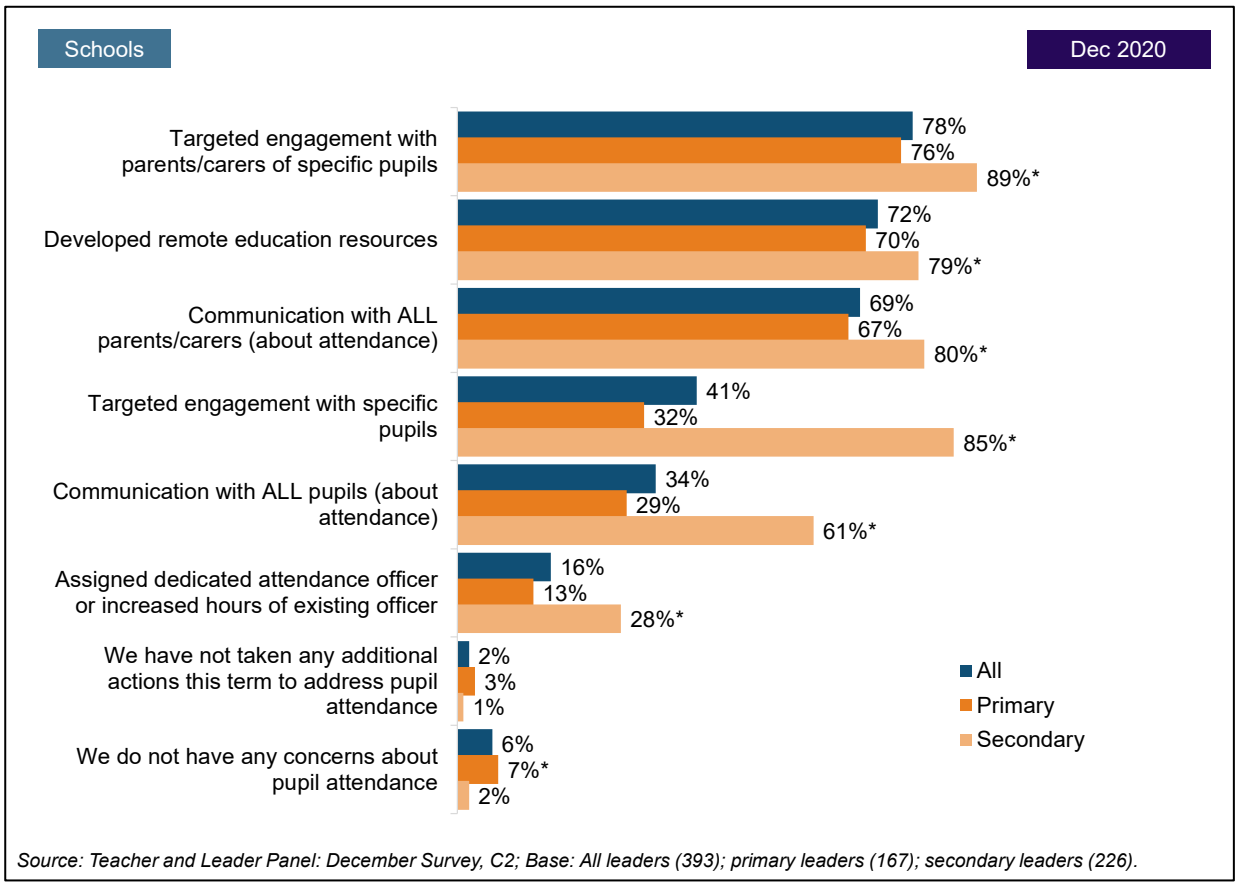
Source: Teacher and Leader Panel: December Survey, G2; Base: All teachers (619). Don't know figures not shown.
** Indicates statistically significant differences between primary and secondary schools.*

Teachers based in urban schools reported a significantly higher average proportion of pupils currently unable to attend school (15%, compared with 9% of teachers based in rural schools).

Addressing pupil absence

Schools had taken a range of actions to prevent or address pupil absence, with communication with parents being the most common approach (see Figure 6). Between seven and eight in 10 schools had communicated with parents/carers of specific pupils (78%) or all parents (69%). Indeed, 87% of schools had engaged in some form of communication with parents. The other common action, taken by roughly three-quarters (72%) of schools, was the development of remote education resources.

Figure 6. Actions taken by schools to prevent or address pupil absence during the autumn 2020 term



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel: December Survey, C2; Base: All leaders (393); primary leaders (167); secondary leaders (226).

Differences by phase were prominent, with secondary schools significantly more likely to report the full range of actions to address pupil absence than primary schools (see Figure 6). This is reflected in the higher mean number of actions taken by secondary schools (4.3) than primary (3.0).

As shown in Figure 6, primary schools were more likely to report having no concerns about pupil attendance (7% vs. 2% of secondary schools), as were the following schools:

- Schools with the lowest proportion of FSM eligible pupils (16% vs. 0% among those with the highest proportion)

- Schools rated as outstanding by Ofsted (23% vs. 0% rated as requiring improvement).

Additional support to help reduce rates of unauthorised and authorised absence

In the September 2020 survey, leaders and teachers who expressed concern about pupil absence were asked an open-text question about what additional support they would find useful to help reduce rates of unauthorised and authorised pupil absence. This was asked in the context of school attendance being mandatory for all pupils, with the exception of some clinically extremely vulnerable children who were advised by a clinician not to attend.

Support to reduce unauthorised absence

In relation to unauthorised pupil absence, the support leaders and teachers most commonly reported that they would find useful related to information and guidance, specifically clear, consistent and timely COVID-19 guidance on issues including school attendance rules, self-isolation, symptoms and testing. This would give leaders and teachers clarity on pupil absence guidance that they could relay to parents and pupils.

"Clearer guidance from DfE and Public Health England regarding the protocol for sending students and staff to self-isolate. This will mean that parents have more confidence in the school's ability to reduce the spread of the virus."

Another key theme for leaders and teachers centred around additional resources and support from a range of organisations and people. Most common among these was funding for schools to address unauthorised absence (e.g. additional staff, calling parents, home visits), local authority support (to help schools reach parents and families) and Education Welfare Officer resource (to encourage reengagement with school).

Dedicated outreach to parents. We used to have a team specially directed to work with the local community yet after funding was cut this disappeared a few years ago.

The other broad theme reported by leaders and teachers centred around a perceived need for a better functioning national COVID-19 response more generally. Within this theme, leaders and teachers most commonly reported that an increased availability and speed of testing would be most beneficial in helping them address unauthorised absence. Others felt that a more effective track and trace system was needed.

Support to reduce authorised absence

Similar themes were raised by leaders and teachers in relation to the support they would find most useful to address authorised absence. However, unlike support for addressing unauthorised absence, responses were dominated by two key themes.

These were: availability and speed of COVID-19 testing (if this led to shorter or no isolation periods) and clear, consistent and timely COVID-19 guidance. The majority of leaders and teachers mentioned wanting one of these two forms of support. This suggests that the means of addressing authorised absence is more clear-cut for schools than unauthorised absence.

Clarity of and timely guidance from PHE and DfE - there is too much conflicting advice. More financial resources to enable deep cleaning and to cover absent staff to ensure educational provision can continue effectively.

"Swift turnaround of test results. If children have had a temperature of 37.8 and above - with all the coughs and colds in school, there is an anxiety that children have COVID-19 when they have a temperature. A quick turnaround of test results will bring the children back into school faster following a negative test result."

Staff absence

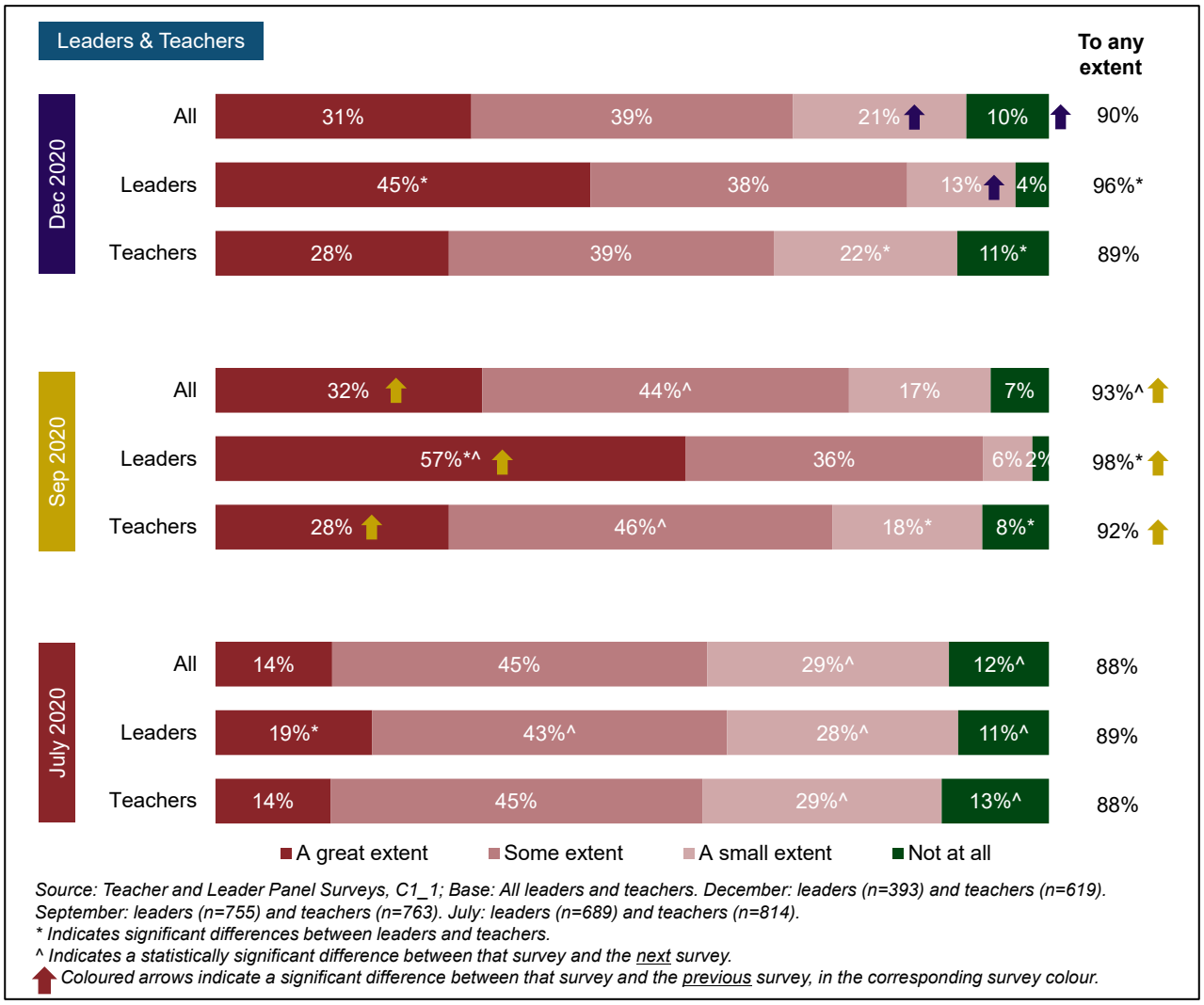
Staff absence was an ongoing concern for leaders and teachers throughout the 2020 autumn term. Around nine-in-ten leaders and teachers were concerned (to a great, some or small extent) about this issue in each of the three surveys.

Concern fluctuated significantly over the time period covered. The proportion of leaders and teachers that reported it as a concern peaked in September 2020 (93%, up significantly from 88% in July 2020) but then fell to 90% in December 2020 (a statistically significant decrease from the September 2020 survey).

The proportion of all leaders and teachers who said staff absence was a great concern more than doubled between July and September (from 14% in July to 32% in September) and remained high in December (31%).

Leaders were more concerned about staff absence than teachers. In September, more than half of leaders considered staff absence to be a great concern (57%) compared with 28% of teachers. This reduced slightly to 45% of leaders in December 2020.

Figure 7. Extent to which leaders and teachers were concerned with teacher absence over time



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel Surveys, C1_1; Base: All leaders and teachers. December: leaders (n=393) and teachers (n=619). September: leaders (n=755) and teachers (n=763). July: leaders (n=689) and teachers (n=814).
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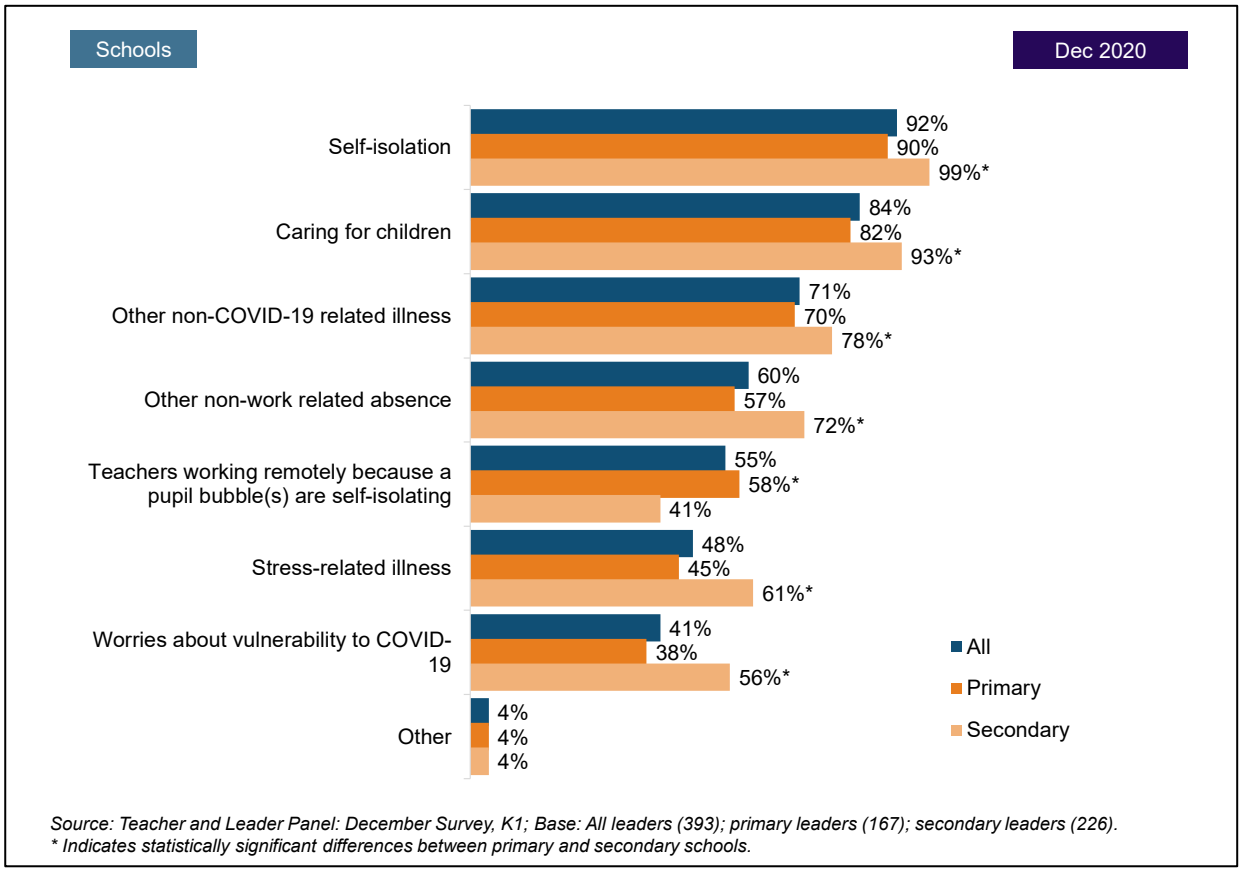
Reasons for staff absence

In the December 2020 survey, schools indicated that there had been a range of reasons for staff absence since September 2020. Five reasons were selected by over half of schools (see Figure 8). The most prominent of these was self-isolation (a reason in 92% of schools), followed by caring for children (84%). These figures suggest the direct impact of COVID-19 on staff working patterns has been substantial.

Differences between primary and secondary schools were marked with secondary schools significantly more likely to report reasons for staff absence than primary schools. This may in part simply reflect that secondary schools are on average much larger than primaries and have more teachers.

Of particular concern is the fact that 48% of schools reported stress-related illness as a reason for staff absence (rising to 61% in secondary schools).

Figure 8. Reasons given by schools for staff absence since September 2020



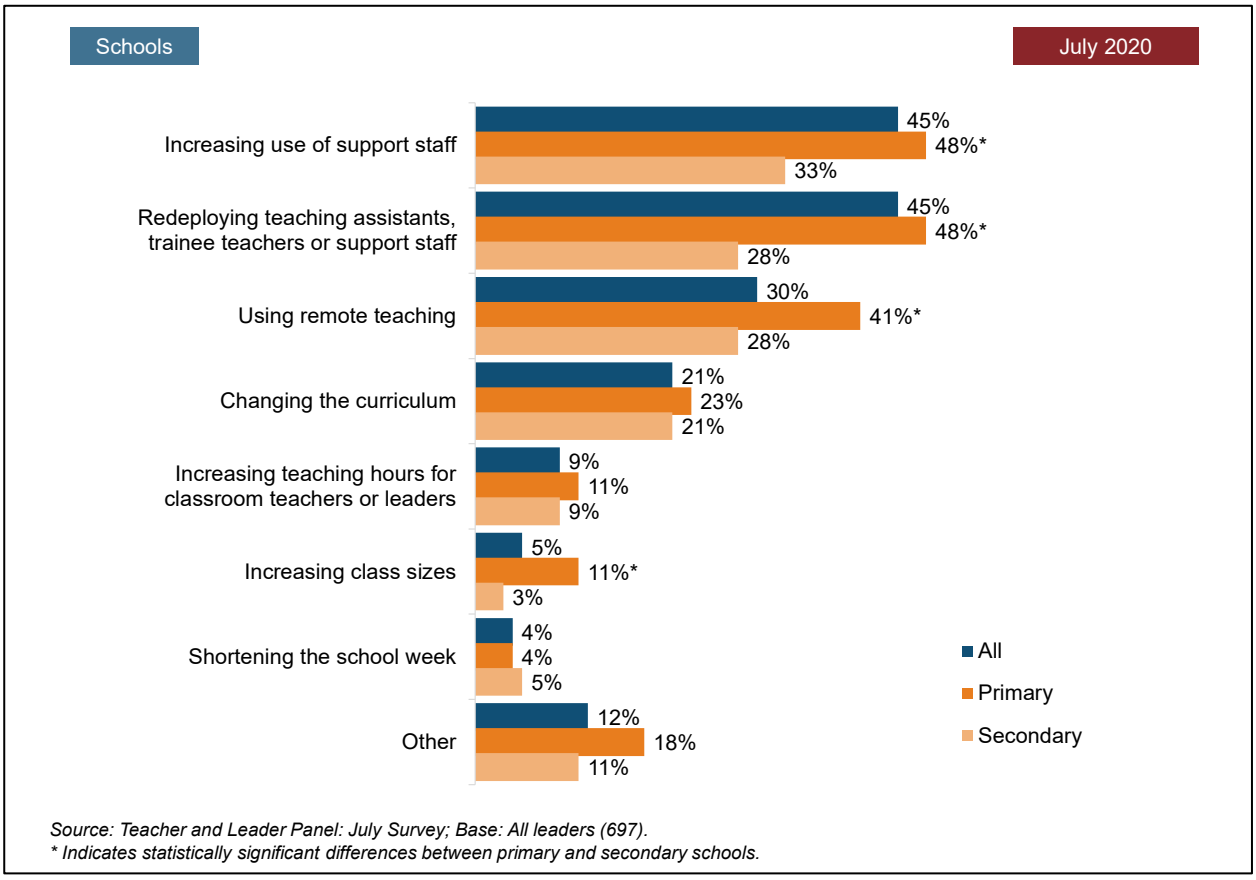
Source: Teacher and Leader Panel: December Survey, K1; Base: All leaders (393); primary leaders (167); secondary leaders (226).
** Indicates statistically significant differences between primary and secondary schools.*

Actions taken to manage staff absence

Schools reported taking a range of actions to manage potential staff absence in the July 2020 survey, although none of the actions had been taken by more than half of schools (see Figure 9). Increasing support staff resource was the most likely action taken by schools, either by increasing use (45%), or redeploying existing resource (also 45%).

There were differences by phase in the strategies employed, with primary schools more likely to take actions to manage potential staff absence.

Figure 9. Actions taken by schools to manage potential staff absence, by school phase



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel: July Survey; Base: All leaders (697).
** Indicates statistically significant differences between primary and secondary schools.*

There were few other sub-group differences, although non-academy schools were more likely to report increasing the use of support staff (49%) than academy schools (40%).

Transport

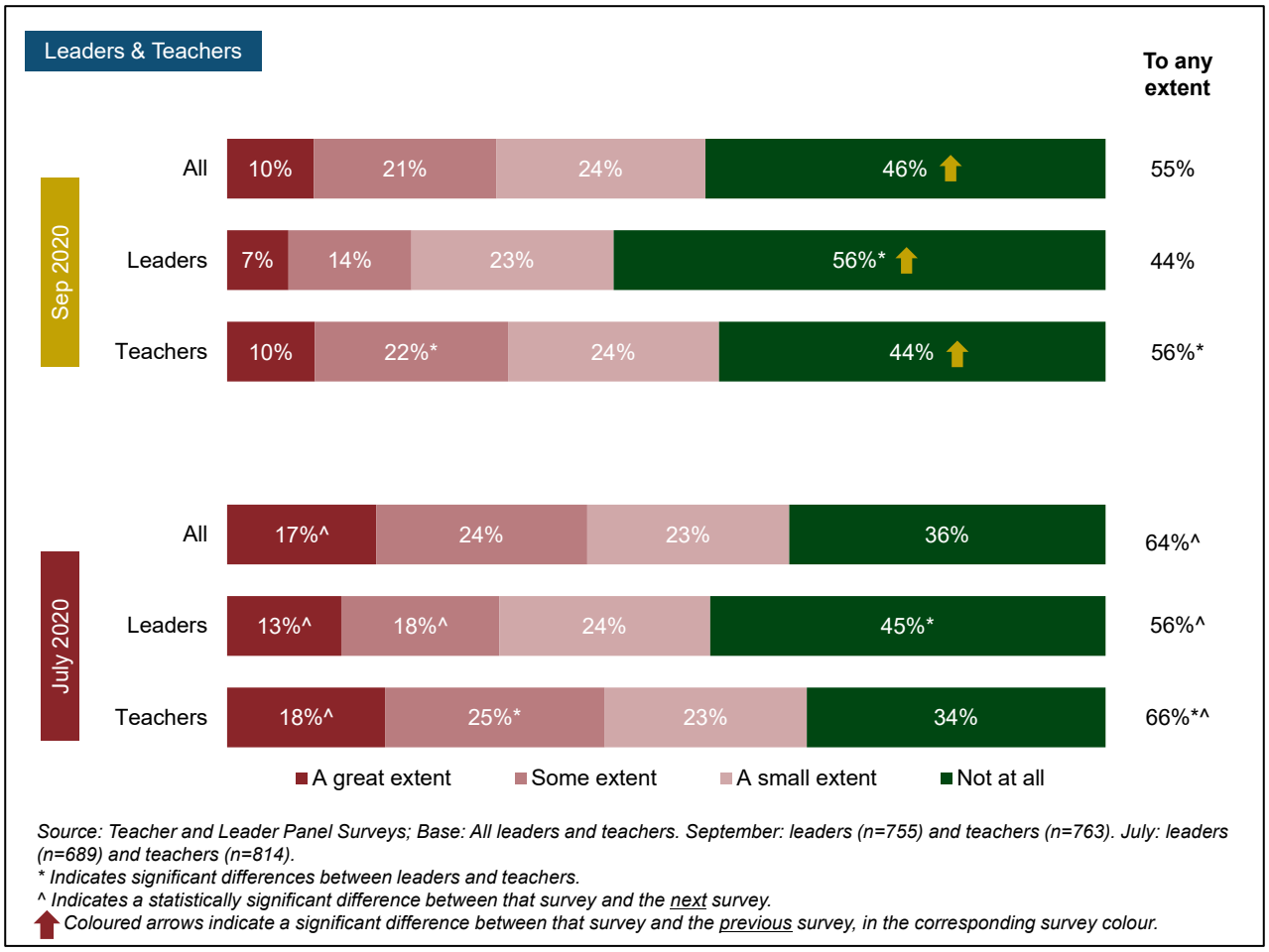
DfE and others across government worked to assess the extent to which transport was a potential constraint on a full re-opening and return to school or college in the Autumn. The reduced capacity of public transport due to social distancing requirements alongside a wider return to work was a particular concern. Additional funding was allocated to local authorities in line with estimated need to allow them to procure additional transport capacity for dedicated home to school and college transport; whilst guidance for local authorities on operating home to school and college transport was also published prior to re-opening in September

Compared to other areas, concern about pupils' home-to-school transport was less prevalent among leaders and teachers. It was also an area of concern that decreased over time; leaders and teachers were significantly less likely to report this in the September 2020 survey (55%) than in July (65%).

Across both surveys, teachers were significantly more likely to consider it a concern (to at least a small extent) than leaders (56%, compared with 44% of leaders in September 2020), see Figure 10. According to the Parent and Pupil panel in late September/October, the two most common modes of transport to school, as reported by parents were on foot (56%) and private car or van (44%). Fewer than one-in-ten pupils were said to use the dedicated school bus (7%), public bus (7%) or bicycle (6%).[13]

[13] Please see the DfE COVID-19 Interim Report for the Parent and Pupil Panel.

Figure 10. Extent to which leaders and teaches were concerned about pupils' home-to-school transport



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel Surveys; Base: All leaders and teachers. September: leaders (n=755) and teachers (n=763). July: leaders (n=689) and teachers (n=814).
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Protective measures against infection spread in schools

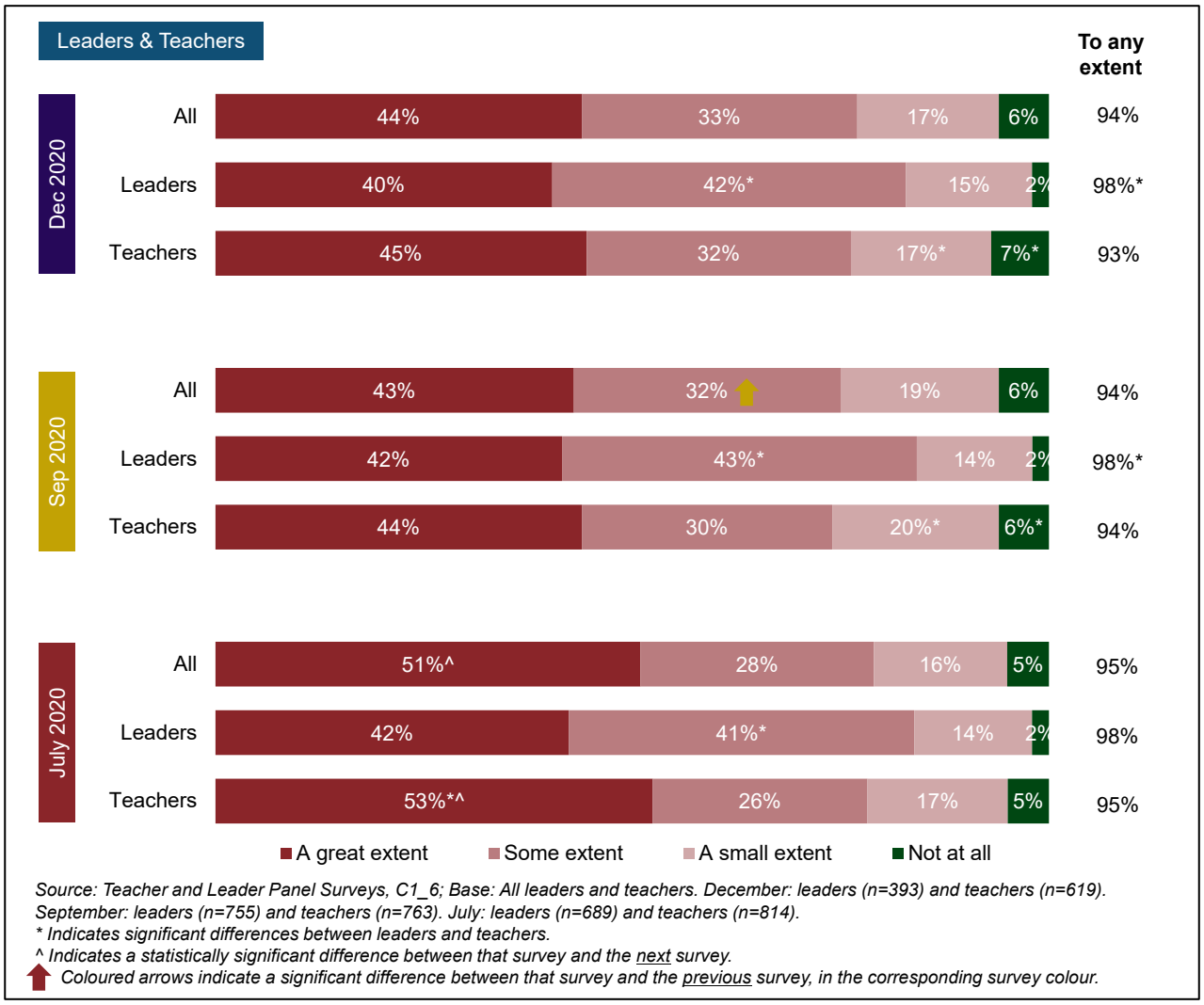
This section of the report explores school leaders and teachers concern about maintaining social distancing in schools as well as the availability of PPE.

Social distancing

School leaders and teachers were very concerned about ensuring appropriate social distancing for staff and pupils. Almost all respondents to the July, September and December surveys were concerned to some extent, with 95% concerned to any extent in July, 94% in September and 94% in December.

Although the overall proportion of school leaders and teachers with some concern about social distancing remained unchanged across surveys in the autumn and summer term, the proportion considering it a great concern fell from 51% in July to 43% and 44% in September and December 2020. It should be noted that the July survey asked about anticipated concerns when schools reopened in the autumn term so direct comparison between July and September/December waves should be made with caution.

Figure 11 Extent to which leaders and teachers were concerned about ensuring appropriate social distancing for staff and pupils



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel Surveys, C1_6; Base: All leaders and teachers. December: leaders (n=393) and teachers (n=619). September: leaders (n=755) and teachers (n=763). July: leaders (n=689) and teachers (n=814).
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The differences between leaders and teachers were more marked in the December 2020 survey, when teachers were significantly more likely not to be concerned at all about ensuring appropriate social distancing for staff and pupils (7%) compared to 2% of leaders.

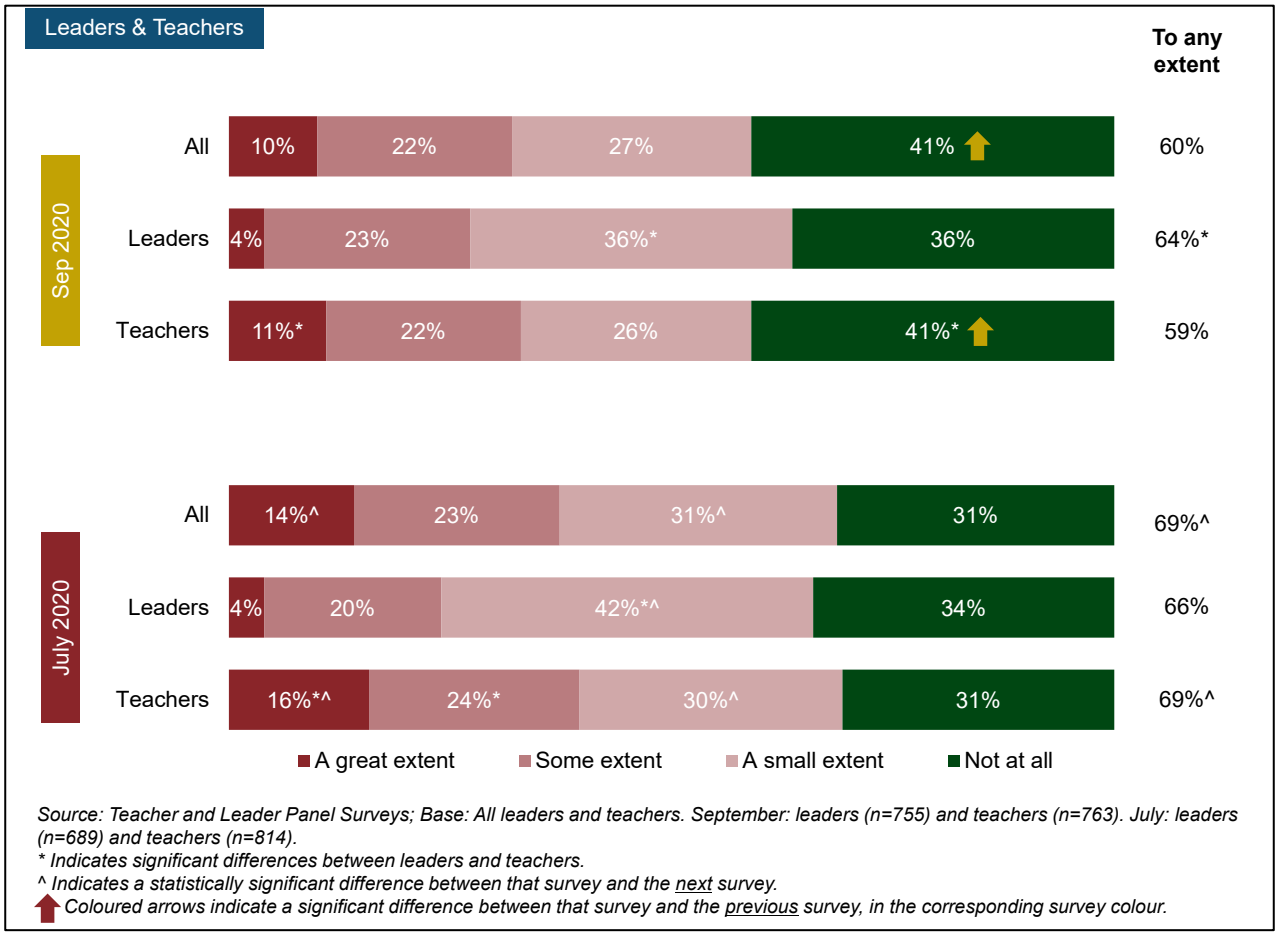
In the December 2020 survey, secondary leaders and teachers were significantly more likely to report social distancing as an area of great concern (50%) compared to primary leaders and teachers (39%).

Close to half (49%) of leaders and teachers from schools with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils were concerned to a great extent about ensuring appropriate social distancing for staff and pupils, significantly more than the third (32%) of leaders and teachers in schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils that said the same.

Availability of PPE

Compared to other protective measures such as social distancing, concern about availability of PPE was less prevalent among leaders and teachers. Concern about this also significantly decreased between the autumn and summer term, from 69% in July 2020 to 60% in September 2020. This change was reflected in the responses of teachers, who were significantly less likely to be concerned about this in September 2020 (59%) than in July (69%). Leaders were more likely to be not at all concerned by the availability of PPE than teachers in both surveys (36% compared with 41% of teachers in September 2020).

Figure 12. Extent to which leaders and teachers were concerned about availability of PPE



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel Surveys; Base: All leaders and teachers. September: leaders (n=755) and teachers (n=763). July: leaders (n=689) and teachers (n=814).
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Secondary leaders and teachers were more likely than primary leaders and teachers to report they were concerned about availability of PPE in both surveys (62%, compared with 57% in September 2020).

Remote Education

The Department initially set out its remote education expectations for the autumn term within the schools' guidance for full opening which was published on 2 July. In October, the Secretary of State issued a temporary continuity direction making it clear that schools have a duty to provide remote education for state-funded, school-age children whose attendance would be contrary to government guidance or law around coronavirus (COVID-19). The Direction also requires schools to have regard to the remote education guidance.

The schools guidance for full opening published in July also set out expectations for curriculum. Schools were expected to teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects from the start of the autumn term, with the ability to make use of existing flexibilities to create time to cover the most important missed content.

In light of further developments in schools' remote education provision and the changing course of the virus, the Department updated the remote education expectations on 3 December 2020 and again on 7 January 2021 in response to national lockdown and restricted school attendance.

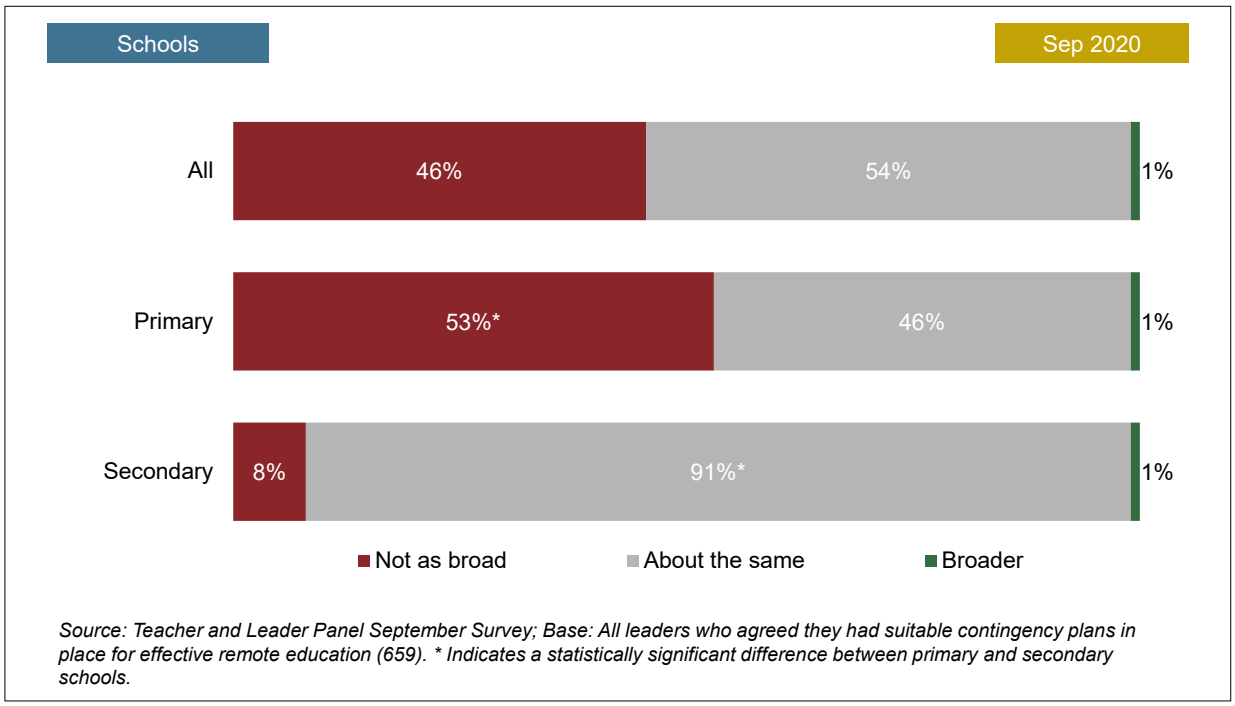
A package of support has been available to schools and colleges throughout the pandemic to help them meet the remote education expectations, accessed via the Get Help with Remote Education page on gov.uk.

Across all three surveys, leaders and teachers provided their views on the issue of remote education for pupils who were learning at home during the pandemic, including any concerns they had and barriers to successful remote education.

Remote education compared with the normal curriculum

In the September 2020 survey, leaders were asked how remote delivery of the curriculum compared to the normal delivery of the curriculum at their school. Just over half of schools reported that the range of subjects taught was about the same as what would typically be taught in school (54%), and just under half thought the range of subjects taught was not as broad (46%) – 1% reported that it was broader.

Figure 13. How the range of subjects taught compared to the normal curriculum in September 2020

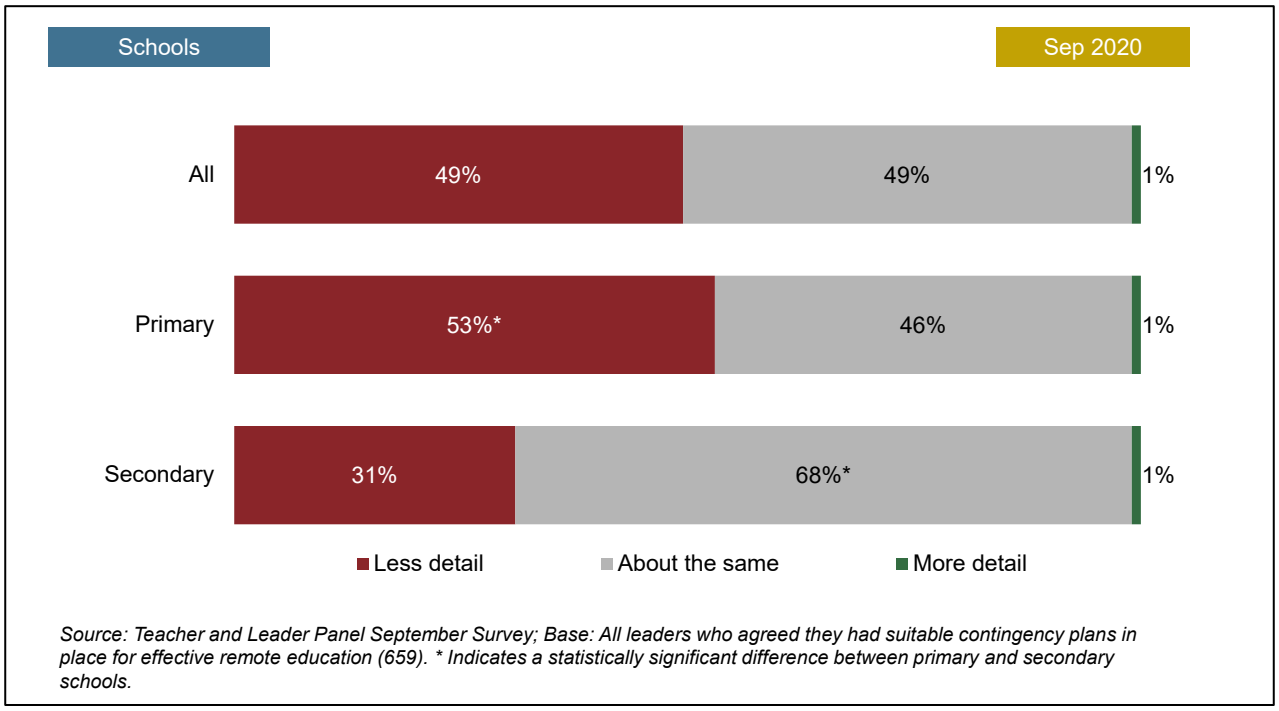


*Source: Teacher and Leader Panel September Survey; Base: All leaders who agreed they had suitable contingency plans in place for effective remote education (659). * Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary schools.*

The difference between primary and secondary schools was stark, with significantly more secondary schools offering the same breadth in subjects than primary schools (91% vs. 46%). Where the offering was not the same it was nearly always reported to be narrower in remit (53% of primary schools reported that the remote education delivered was not as broad as the normal curriculum, in comparison to just 8% of secondary schools).

Schools were evenly split in terms of the proportions that said that the level of detail taught in remote education was about the same as the normal curriculum (49%), and those who reported it was less detailed (49%).

Figure 14. How the level of detail taught compared to the normal curriculum in September 2020



*Source: Teacher and Leader Panel September Survey; Base: All leaders who agreed they had suitable contingency plans in place for effective remote education (659). * Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary schools.*

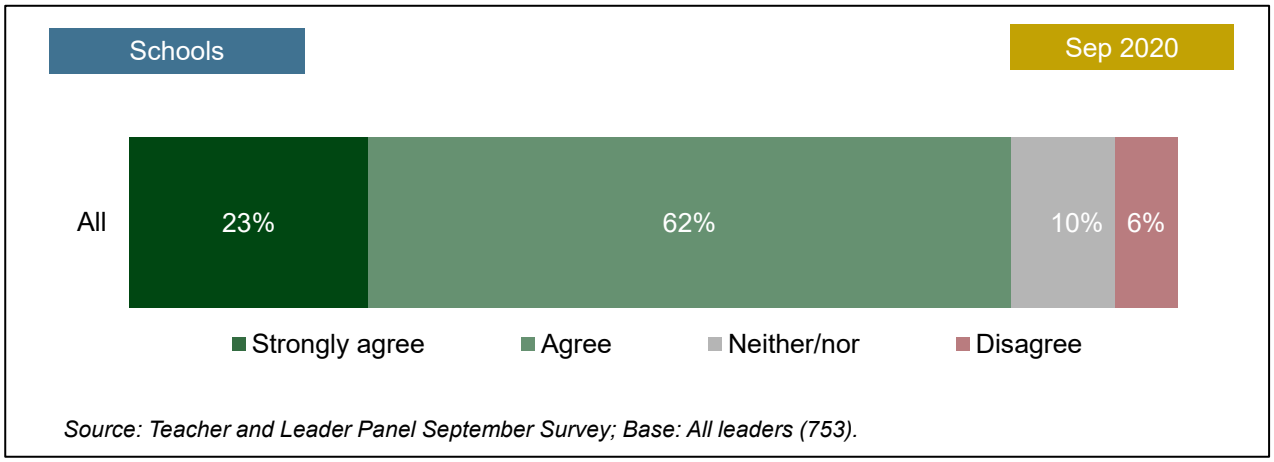
Significantly fewer primary schools (46%) reported that they were able to teach remote material with the same level of detail compared to secondary schools (68%).

Contingency plans for effective remote education September 2020

In July 2020, the Department asked schools to integrate remote education into school curriculum planning for the autumn term, recognising remote education to be an essential component in the delivery of the school curriculum for some pupils, alongside classroom teaching, or in the case of a local lockdown.

Most schools tended to feel that they had suitable contingency plans in place to allow for effective remote education when they were asked about this in September 2020. In total, 85% of schools agreed or strongly agreed that they were prepared. Just 6% disagreed that they had effective contingency plans in place.

Figure 15. Extent to which leaders agreed that their school had contingency plans in place to support effective remote education

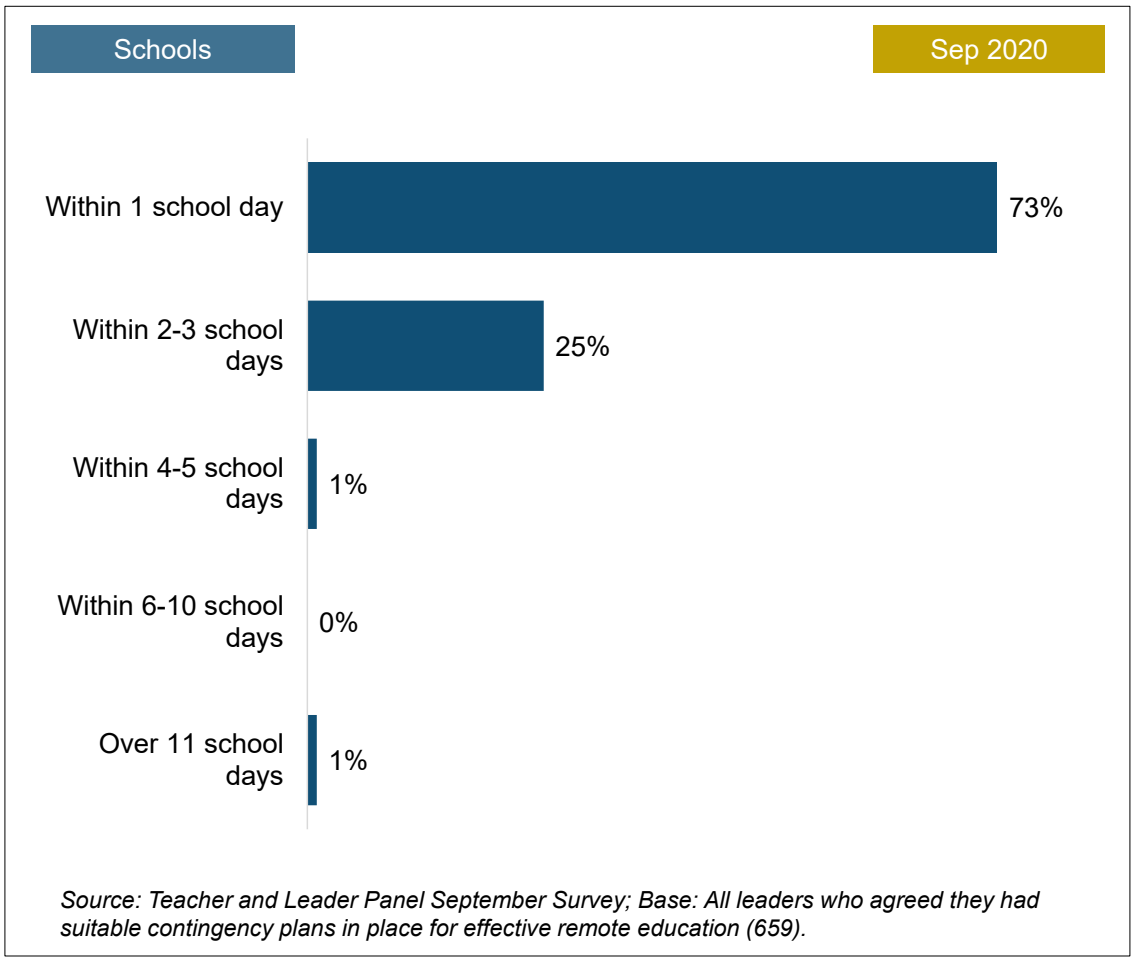


Source: Teacher and Leader Panel September Survey; Base: All leaders (753).

Secondary schools were significantly more likely than primary schools to have contingency plans in place to provide remote education in September (92% vs. 84%), as were schools with an outstanding Ofsted rating (96% vs. 85% 'good' rating, 74% 'requires improvement').

Most schools with such contingency plans in place stated that they were able to action them within one school day (73%), and one quarter (25%) within two to three days (Figure 16).

Figure 16. Time it would take for schools to action contingency plans for remote education



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel September Survey; Base: All leaders who agreed they had suitable contingency plans in place for effective remote education (659).

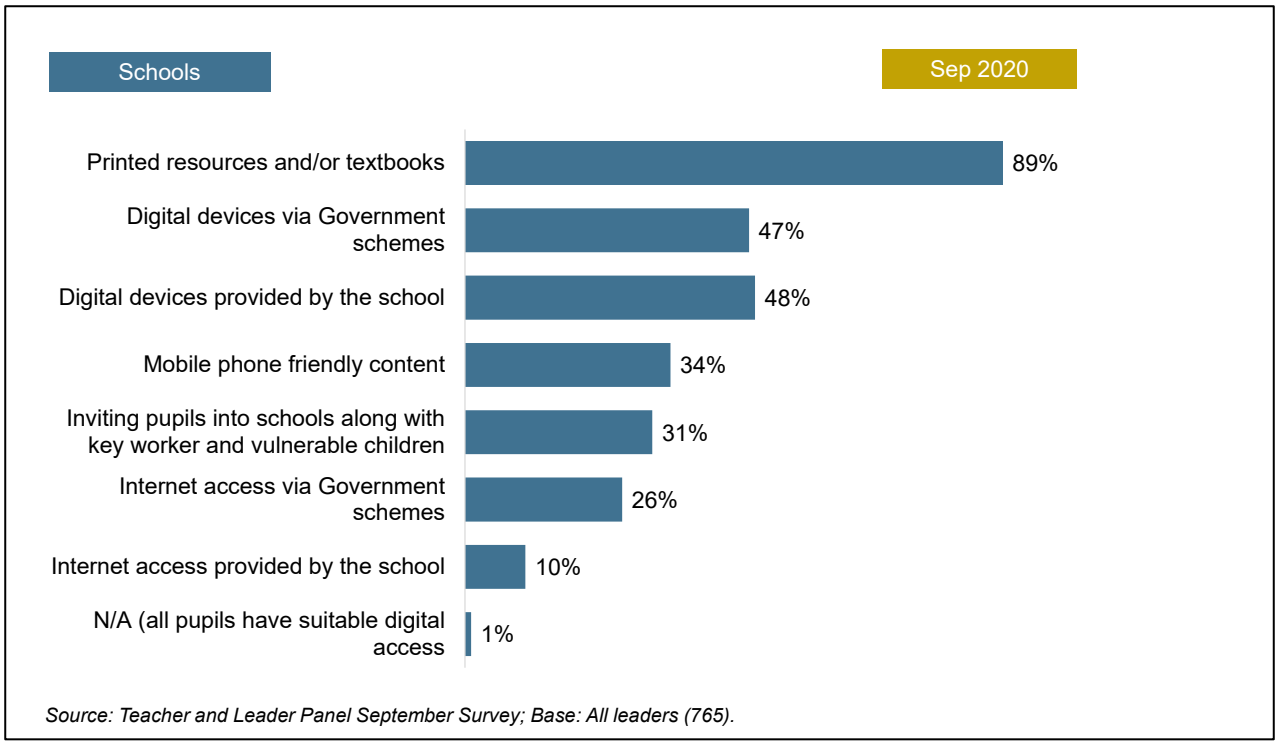
Schools with the lowest proportion of pupils eligible for FSMs were significantly more able to action remote learning contingency plans within one day than those with the highest proportion of FSM pupils (83% vs. 65%).

Digital access for remote education

In September 2020, schools were asked what types of provision they planned to deliver, in the event of remote learning being required, for pupils who lack digital access at home. By far the most common type of provision was printed resources and/or textbooks (89%). Nearly half of all schools provided digital devices, such as tablets/laptops, through Government schemes (47%). A similar percentage reported the provision of digital devices, such as tablets/laptops, by the school directly (48%). A third offered mobile phone friendly content (34%) and 31% invited pupils without suitable digital access into school along with key worker and vulnerable children.

Findings from the Pupil and Parent Panel indicate that devices have been provided to those who needed them. In October 2020, 92% reported that their child had access to a device that they could use for at least three hours a day, a significant improvement on the 88% of parents that said this when asked in September. In September 2020, eight percent of all parents said their child had received a device (laptop or tablet) or help to access the internet for home learning (9%).[14]

Figure 17. Types of provision for pupils with unsuitable digital access to receive remote education



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel September Survey; Base: All leaders (765).

Differences by school phase were prominent here. Primary schools were significantly more likely to provide printed resources (92% vs. 71% of secondary schools) while secondary schools were more likely to offer:

- Laptops or tablets via Government schemes (79% secondary vs. 41% primary)
- Laptops or tablets from the school directly (67% secondary vs. 44% primary)
- Access to school along with key worker and vulnerable children (44% secondary vs. 29% primary)
- Internet access via Government schemes (63% secondary vs. 20% primary)
- Internet access via the school (35% secondary vs. 6% primary).

[14] Please see the DfE COVID-19 Interim Report for the Parent and Pupil Panel.

Schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for FSM were more likely to provide laptops or tablets *via Government schemes* (60% vs. 34% of schools with the lowest proportion FSM). In contrast, laptops or tablets *provided by the schools* were significantly more likely to be provided at schools with the lowest proportion of pupils eligible for FSMs (52% vs. 36% of those with the highest proportion) and in London (70% vs. the 48% average across all regions).

Internet access was also significantly more likely to be provided via Government schemes in schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for FSMs (40% vs. 18% of those with the lowest proportion).

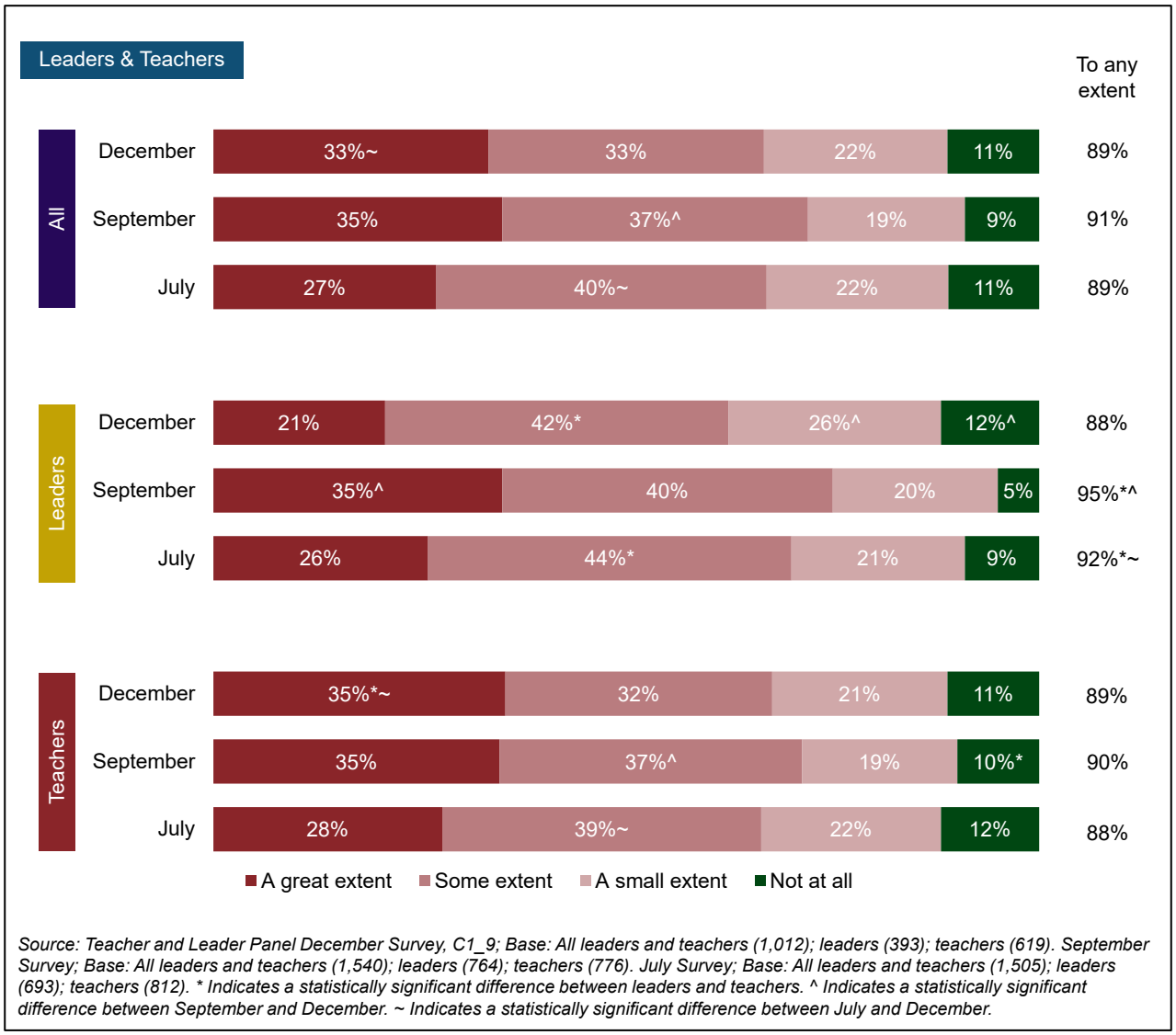
Concerns about providing remote education

In all three surveys, leaders and teachers were asked how concerned they were about providing remote education for pupils unable to attend school.

The overall proportion considering this to be a concern remained consistent between July and December 2020. At each wave, around nine-in-ten leaders and teachers reported at least a little concern (89% in July; 91% in September; 89% in December 2020).

Between September and December 2020, the proportion of leaders who said that providing remote education was a great concern fell considerably (from 35% to 21%). However, the proportion of teachers feeling that this was a great concern remained at a similar level (35% in both waves). Hence in December 2020 more teachers were greatly concerned about providing remote education than leaders.

Figure 18. Extent of leaders' and teachers' concern about providing remote education for pupils unable to attend school across all three surveys



*Source: Teacher and Leader Panel December Survey, C1_9; Base: All leaders and teachers (1,012); leaders (393); teachers (619). September Survey; Base: All leaders and teachers (1,540); leaders (764); teachers (776). July Survey; Base: All leaders and teachers (1,505); leaders (693); teachers (812). * Indicates a statistically significant difference between leaders and teachers. ^ Indicates a statistically significant difference between September and December. ~ Indicates a statistically significant difference between July and December.*

Leaders and teachers in London were significantly more likely than those from other regions to say that they were concerned to a great extent about providing remote education (43% vs. 33%).

Among leaders only, concern increased as Ofsted rating decreased. In December, leaders at outstanding schools were significantly less likely to report that remote education was an issue that they were greatly concerned about than leaders at schools requiring improvement (11% vs. 44%).

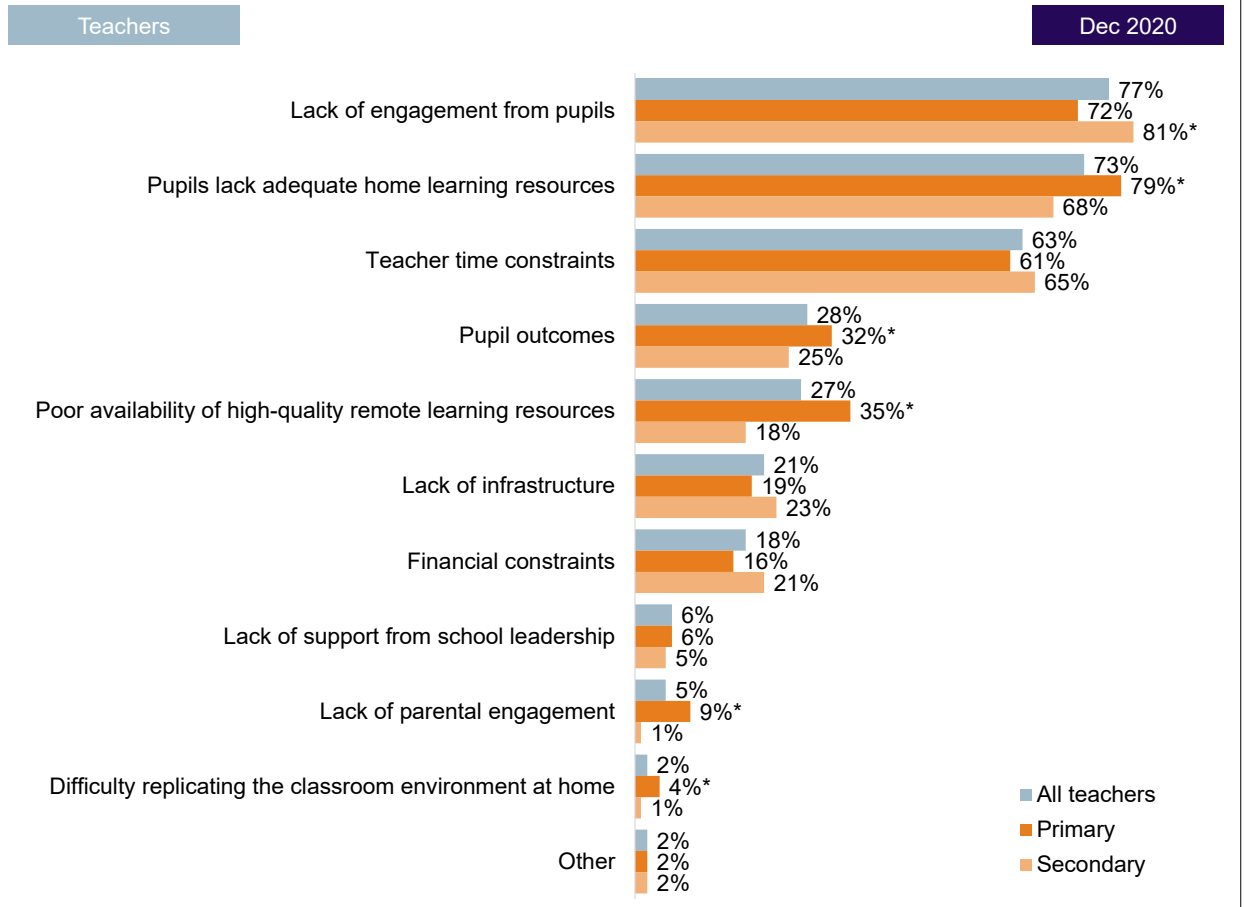
Teachers' specific concerns around providing remote education

In the December 2020 survey, teachers were asked which specific concerns they had about providing remote education.

The main concerns related to pupil engagement and access to resources when learning at home; around three-quarters said a lack of engagement from pupils (77%) and pupils lacking adequate home learning resources (73%) were concerns. It was also common for teachers to be concerned about constraints on teacher time, with close to two-thirds (63%) citing this as an issue.

About a quarter of teachers reported concern with pupil outcomes (28%), poor availability of high-quality remote learning resources (27%) and a lack of infrastructure (21%).

Figure 19. Teachers' specific concerns around providing remote education in December 2020



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel December Survey, G1; Base: Teachers who said remote education was a concern (597); primary teachers (247); secondary teachers (350). Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary teachers.*

The concerns of primary and secondary teachers differed to some extent. Notably, secondary teachers were significantly more likely to report a lack of engagement from

pupils (81% vs. 72% of primary teachers), whereas primary teachers were more likely to mention the following:

- Pupils' access to adequate home learning resources (79% vs. 68% of secondary teachers)
- Pupil outcomes (32% vs. 25%)
- Poor availability of high-quality remote learning resources (35% vs. 18%)
- A lack of parental engagement (9% vs. 1%)
- Difficulty replicating the classroom environment at home (4% vs. 1%).

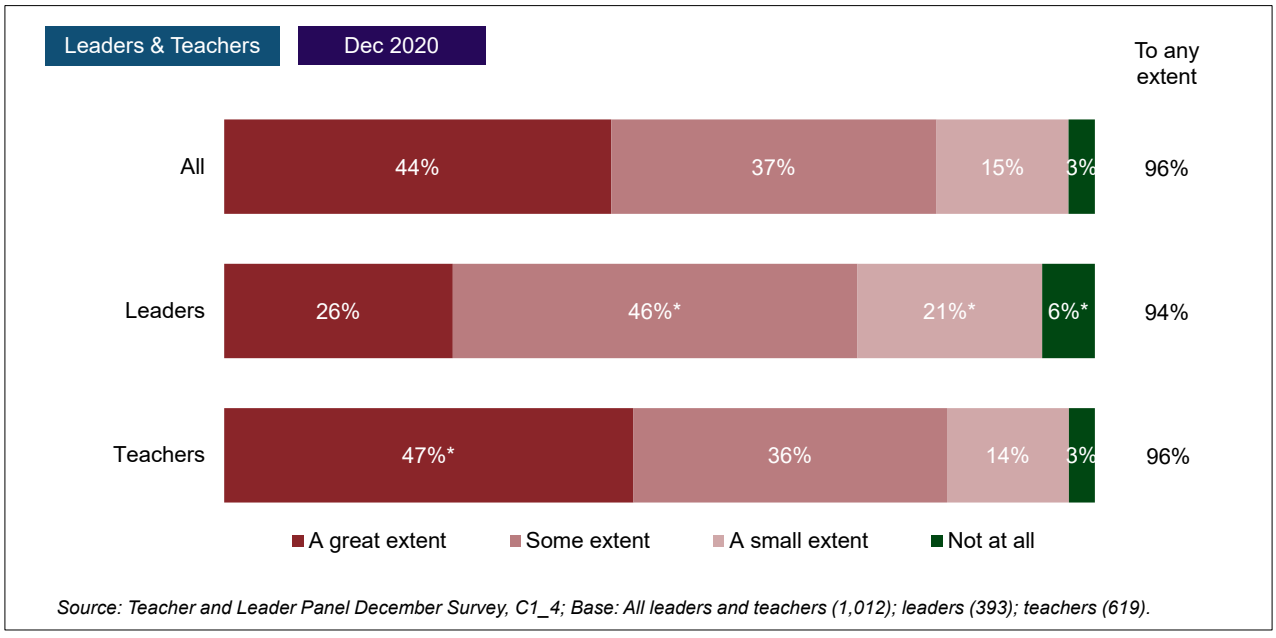
Additionally, there was a particular concern for secondary teachers in London around poor availability of high-quality remote learning resources, with 34% of London based secondary teachers reporting this compared to 18% of secondary teachers overall.

Pupil engagement in remote education

In the December 2020 survey, leaders and teachers were asked to indicate the extent of their concern around pupil engagement in remote learning.

For both leaders and teachers, concern was high; 44% reported a great deal of concern about pupil engagement in remote learning and 37% said they were somewhat concerned. An additional 15% felt slightly concerned about the issue.

Figure 20. Extent of leaders' and teachers' concern about engagement in remote learning in December 2020



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel December Survey, C1_4; Base: All leaders and teachers (1,012); leaders (393); teachers (619).

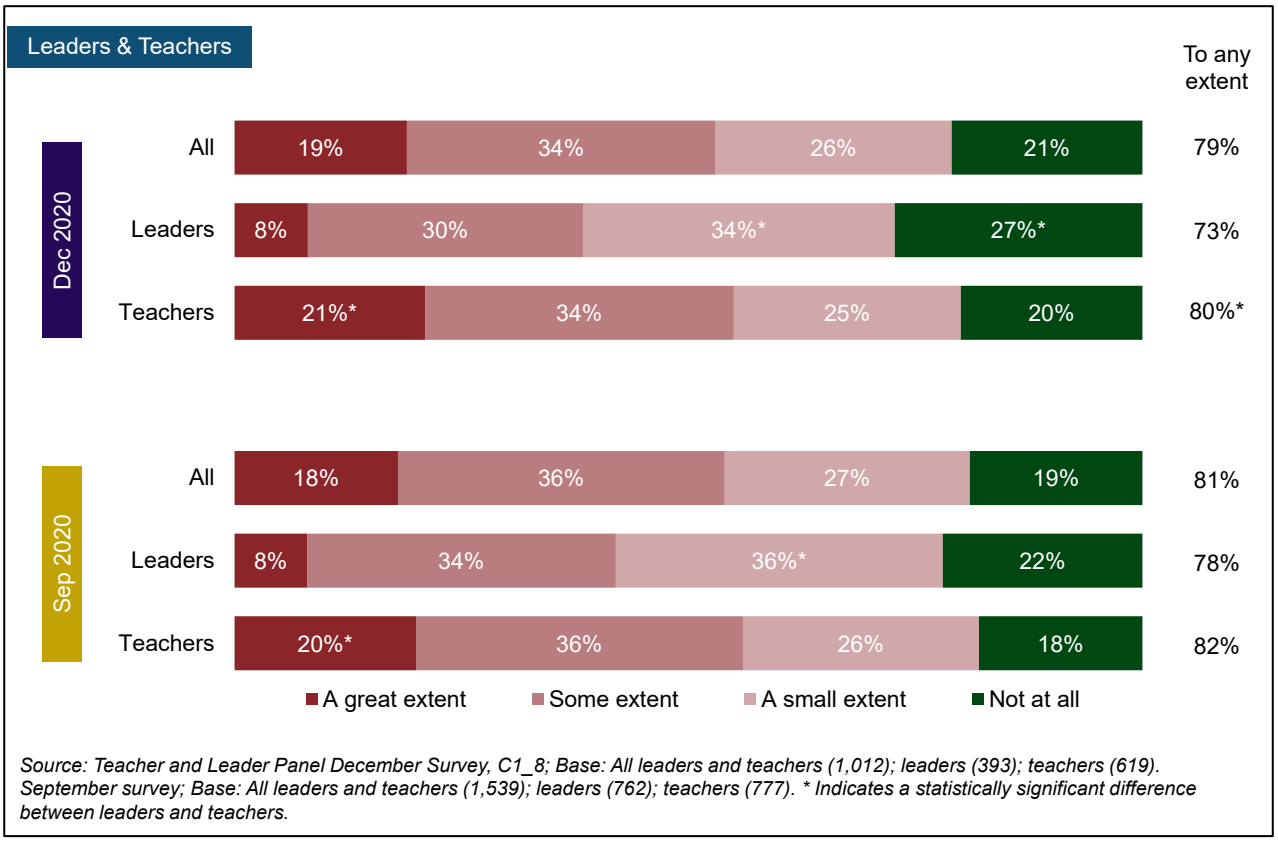
While overall levels of concern were comparable between leaders and teachers (94% and 96% respectively) teachers tended to show a greater degree of concern. For example, just under half (47%) of teachers were *greatly* concerned about pupil engagement in remote learning in December 2020, compared to about a quarter (26%) of leaders.

In addition, leaders and teachers at secondary schools were significantly more likely than those at primary schools to show a great deal of concern about pupil engagement (48% vs. 40%).

Leaders and teachers at schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils were more likely to say they were greatly concerned about engaging pupils in remote education (62% vs. 35% of schools with the lowest proportion). It was also higher amongst leaders and teachers at schools with Ofsted ratings of requires improvement compared to those at outstanding rated schools (55% vs. 40%).

In the September and December 2020 surveys, leaders and teachers were also asked about their concern around disengagement in remote education (Figure 21). Overall, the proportions of leaders and teachers reporting any degree of concern were comparable between the two waves (81% in September 2020 and 79% in December 2020).

Figure 21. Extent of leaders' and teachers' concern about disengagement from remote education – December and September 2020



*Source: Teacher and Leader Panel December Survey, C1_8; Base: All leaders and teachers (1,012); leaders (393); teachers (619). September survey; Base: All leaders and teachers (1,539); leaders (762); teachers (777). * Indicates a statistically significant difference between leaders and teachers.*

In September and December 2020 teachers were more likely than leaders to report that they were concerned to a great extent about the disengagement of pupils from remote education (20% vs. 8% in September, and 21% vs. 8% in December).

It was also the case in December that leaders and teachers from secondary schools were significantly more likely to report being concerned to a great extent than those from primary schools (25% vs. 14%), with leaders and teachers in secondary non-academy schools more likely to report concern regarding disengagement from learning than those in secondary academy schools (31% vs. 21%).

Leaders and teachers at schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils were more than twice as likely to be greatly concerned about disengagement from remote learning than those in schools with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils (32% vs. 15%). Leaders and teachers at urban schools were also significantly more likely than those working at schools in rural areas to report a great level of concern (21% vs. 12%).

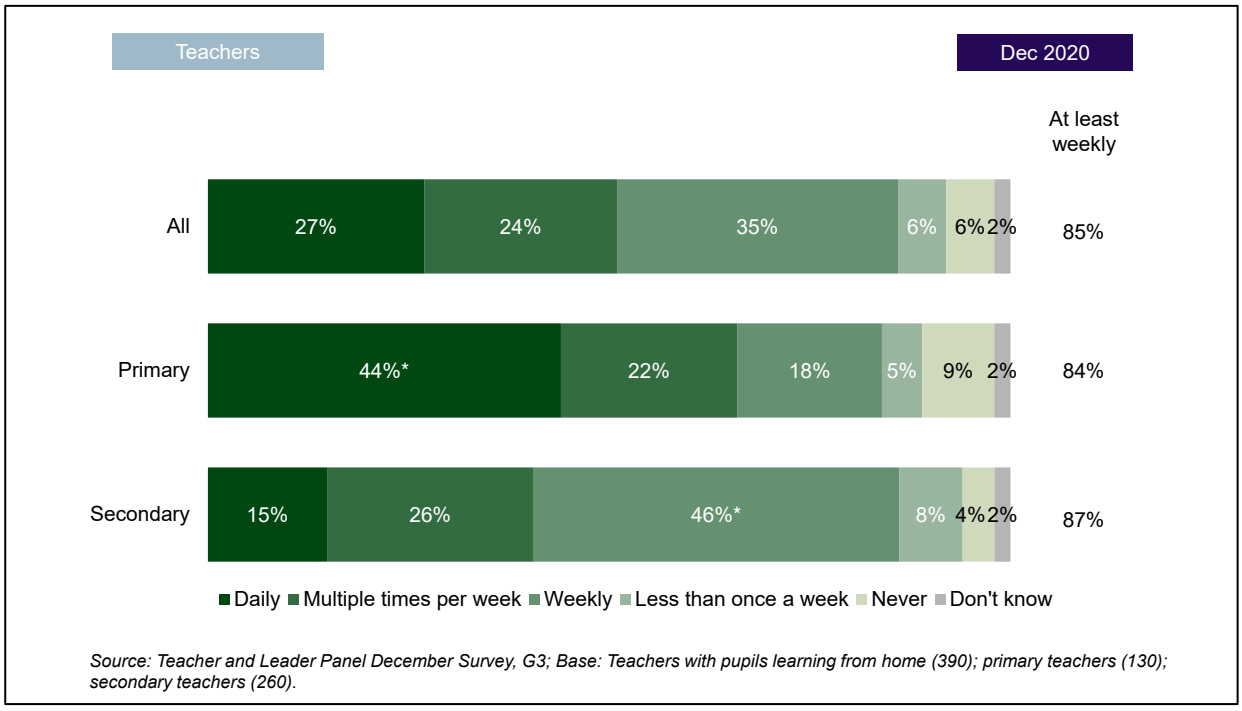
Setting work and providing feedback

In the December 2020 survey, teachers with pupils learning at home were asked a series of questions concerning setting work and providing feedback. The questions focused on how often teachers set work and subsequently provided feedback, as well as the methods used to do so.

Frequency that teachers expect pupils learning at home to return set work

The majority of teachers (85%) expected pupils working from home to return work to them at least weekly, however the frequency of these expectations did vary a lot as shown by Figure 22.

Figure 22. Frequency that teachers expected pupils learning at home to return set work



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel December Survey, G3; Base: Teachers with pupils learning from home (390); primary teachers (130); secondary teachers (260).

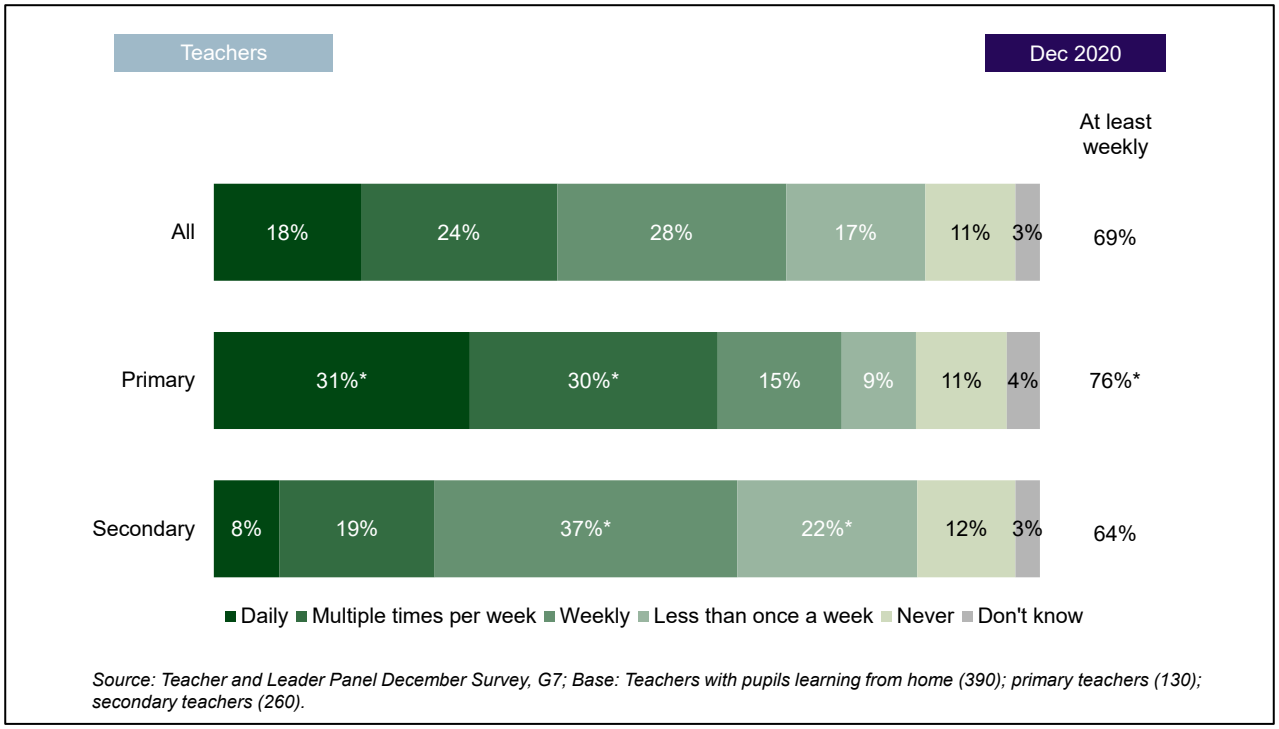
Some differences emerged by school phase, with primary teachers expecting returned work significantly more often than secondary teachers (44% of primary teachers expected it daily, vs. 15% of secondary teachers). Secondary teachers were much more likely to request that work was returned weekly (46% vs. 18% of primary teachers). This may be due of course to secondary school pupils being set more substantial pieces of work that take longer to complete. Primary teachers were significantly less likely than secondary teachers to ask for work back at all (88% vs. 94%).

Teachers at schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for FSMs were significantly more likely to expect completed work less than once a week than teachers at schools with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils (16% vs. 6%).

Frequency that teachers provided feedback for pupils at home

Teachers were also asked how often they provided feedback for those pupils learning at home that returned completed work. Again, responses here varied considerably, but around two-thirds (69%) of teachers stated they offered feedback to pupils at least once a week.

Figure 23. Frequency of teacher feedback given to pupils learning at home



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel December Survey, G7; Base: Teachers with pupils learning from home (390); primary teachers (130); secondary teachers (260).

In line with the trends observed by school phase in terms of the frequency that teachers set work, primary and secondary teachers also differed with regards to the frequency they provided feedback. Primary teachers were significantly more likely to give feedback daily (31% vs. 8%) or multiple times per week (30% vs. 19%), whereas secondary teachers were more likely to provide feedback weekly (37% vs. 15%) or less than once a week (22% vs. 9%).

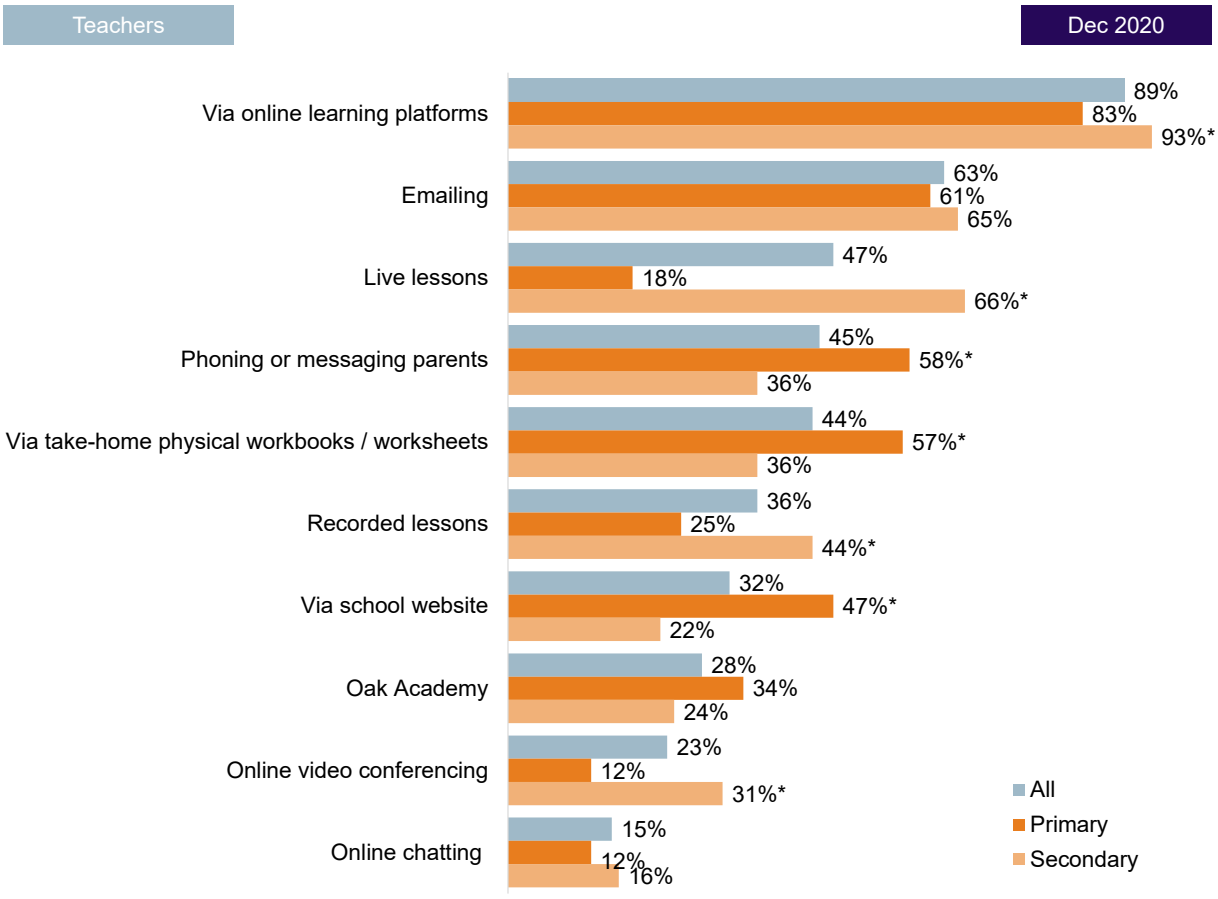
At secondary academies, teachers provided feedback more frequently than those at non-academies (67% provided feedback at least weekly vs. 56% of secondary non-academy teachers).

Methods used to set work for pupils at home

A wide range of methods were used by teachers to set work for pupils, as shown in Figure 24.

Overall, 89% of teachers set work via online platforms and 63% emailed pupils about assignments. Other methods used by at least one-third of teachers, included live lessons (47%), phoning or messaging parents (45%), take-home physical workbooks and worksheets (44%) and recorded lessons (36%).

Figure 24. Methods used by teachers to set work for pupils learning at home



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel December Survey, G7; Base: Teachers with pupils learning from home who return work (360); primary teachers (115); secondary teachers (245). Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary teachers.*

Secondary teachers were significantly more likely than primary teachers to use the following:

- Online learning platforms (93% vs. 83%)
- Live lessons (66% vs. 18%)
- Recorded lessons (44% vs. 25%)

- Online video conferencing (31% vs. 12%).

Conversely, primary teachers were significantly more likely to mention:

- Phoning or messaging parents (58% vs. 36%)
- Take-home physical workbooks and worksheets (57% vs. 36%)
- The school website (47% vs. 22%).

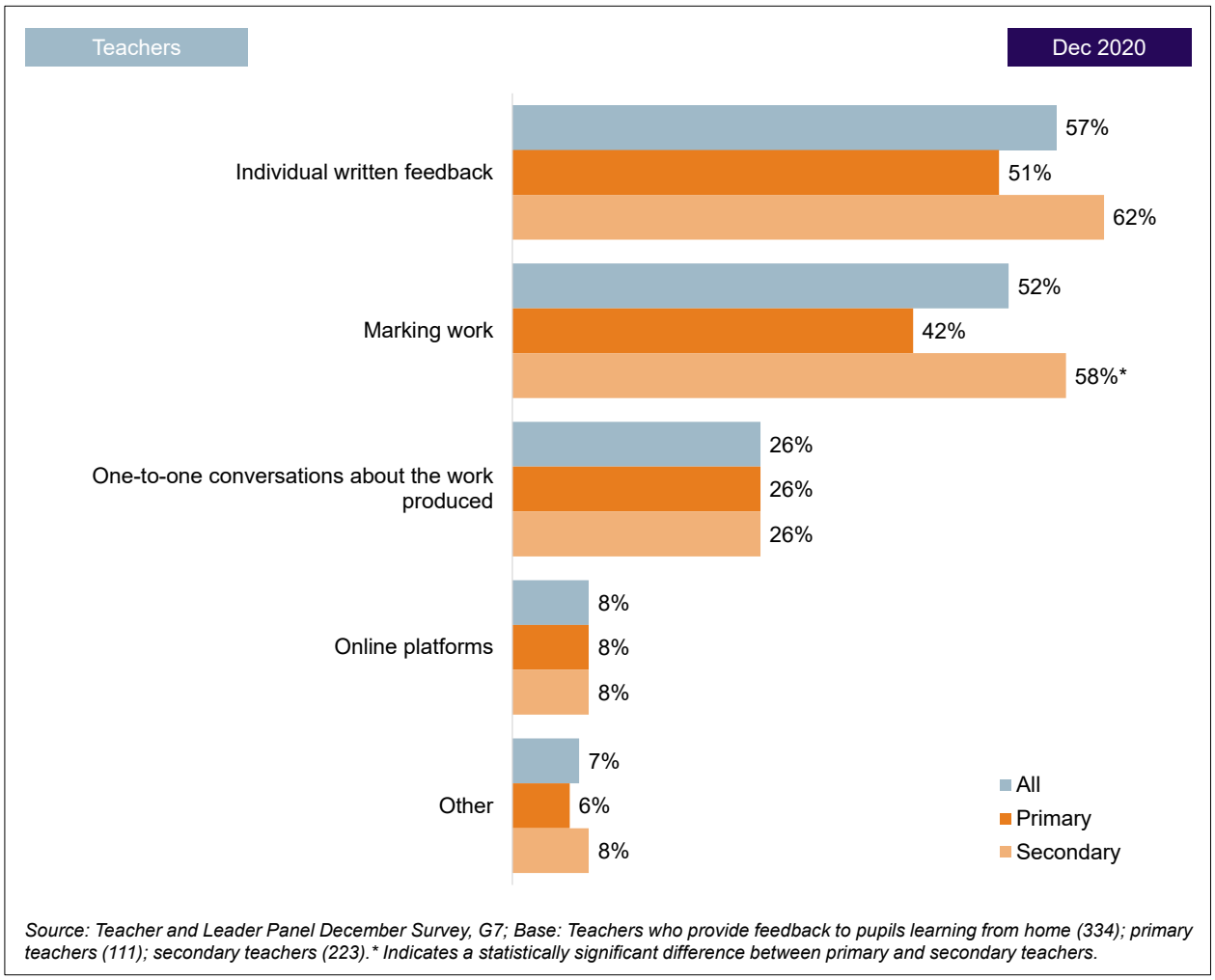
Amongst secondary teachers, there were a few notable differences by Ofsted rating. Teachers at outstanding schools were significantly more likely than those at schools requiring improvement to use live lessons (83% vs. 61%) and less likely to assign take-home physical workbooks and worksheets (17% vs. 44%).

Meanwhile among primary schools, teachers working at non-academies were significantly more likely than those at academies to utilise online chats, such as instant messaging, to set work (18% vs. 4%).

Methods used to provide feedback for pupils at home

When it came to returning work to pupils learning at home, teachers tended to prefer using more traditional forms of feedback; over half of all teachers said they had offered individual written feedback (57%) and marked work (52%). A further quarter (26%) held one-to-one conversations about the completed work with pupils, and a minority had used online platforms (8%).

Figure 25. How teachers provided feedback for pupils learning at home that returned work



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel December Survey, G7; Base: Teachers who provide feedback to pupils learning from home (334); primary teachers (111); secondary teachers (223). Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary teachers.*

The methods used by teachers to provide feedback were consistent across primary and secondary schools. However, secondary teachers were significantly more likely to mark work than primary teachers (58% vs. 42%).

Furthermore, a few significant differences emerged by academy status:

- Primary academy teachers were more likely to use online platforms than their non-academy counterparts (15% vs. 3%)
- Secondary non-academy teachers were more likely than academy teachers to have one-to-one conversations with pupils (31% vs. 18%).

Oak National Academy

Oak National Academy is an online classroom and resource hub that was developed to support remote education, in response to school closures to the majority of pupils during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department has made £4.84 million available for Oak both for the summer term of the academic year 2019-20, and then for the 2020-21 academic year. It provides teachers with free video lessons and resources for pupils from reception through to year 11. Specialist content for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is also available.

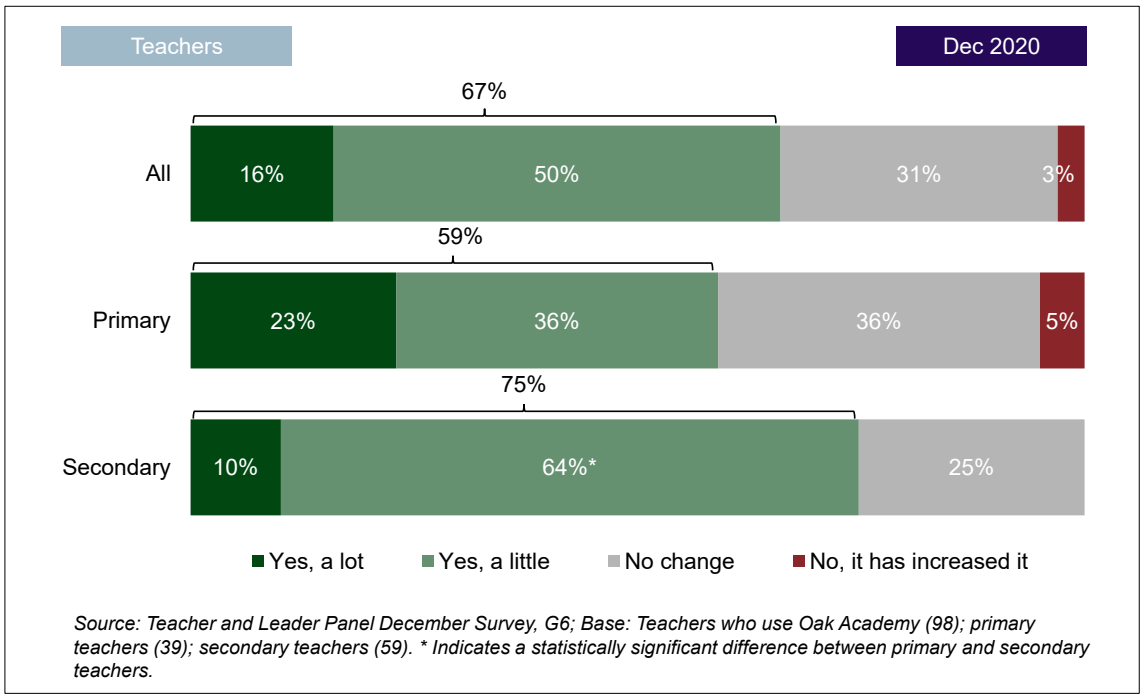
The department has provided this funding to help schools switch from classroom teaching to remote provision immediately in case of coronavirus restrictions or self-isolation. Oak will remain a free optional resource for 2020-21.

In the December 2020 survey, teachers with pupils learning from home were asked which methods they had used to set work for them. Oak Academy was used by 28% of teachers providing remote education.

Most teachers who had used Oak Academy thought it provided good quality lessons; around two-thirds rated the lessons as good (66%), while a fifth said the quality was satisfactory (22%). A further 8% said the lessons were excellent. In comparison 3% thought they were poor.

The majority (67%) of teachers that used Oak Academy reported that it reduced their workload. Half (50%) of the teachers that had used Oak Academy reported that their workload had reduced a little bit, while a further 16% said it had reduced by a lot. One-third (31%) had seen no change and 3% reported an increased workload as a result of using Oak Academy.

Figure 26. Extent that Oak Academy reduced teachers' workloads in December 2020



*Source: Teacher and Leader Panel December Survey, G6; Base: Teachers who use Oak Academy (98); primary teachers (39); secondary teachers (59). * Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary teachers.*

Patterns of response did differ slightly between primary and secondary teachers with more secondary teachers using Oak Academy noticing at least some reduction in their workload than primary teachers (75% vs. 59%).

Catch-up learning

The government have announced a £650m catch-up premium which aims to support schools to make up for the impact of time outside of the classroom. The funding is expected to be spent on the additional activities required to support children and young people to catch up after a period of disruption to their education.

Schools will receive £80 per head for mainstream schools and £240 per head for special schools and alternative provision. The Department has applied additional weighting to specialist settings, recognising the significantly higher per pupil costs they face. Schools are expected to use this as a single total and to prioritise spending based on need.

To help schools make the best use of this funding, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has published a support guide for schools with evidence-based approaches to catch up and a further school planning guide: 2020 to 2021.

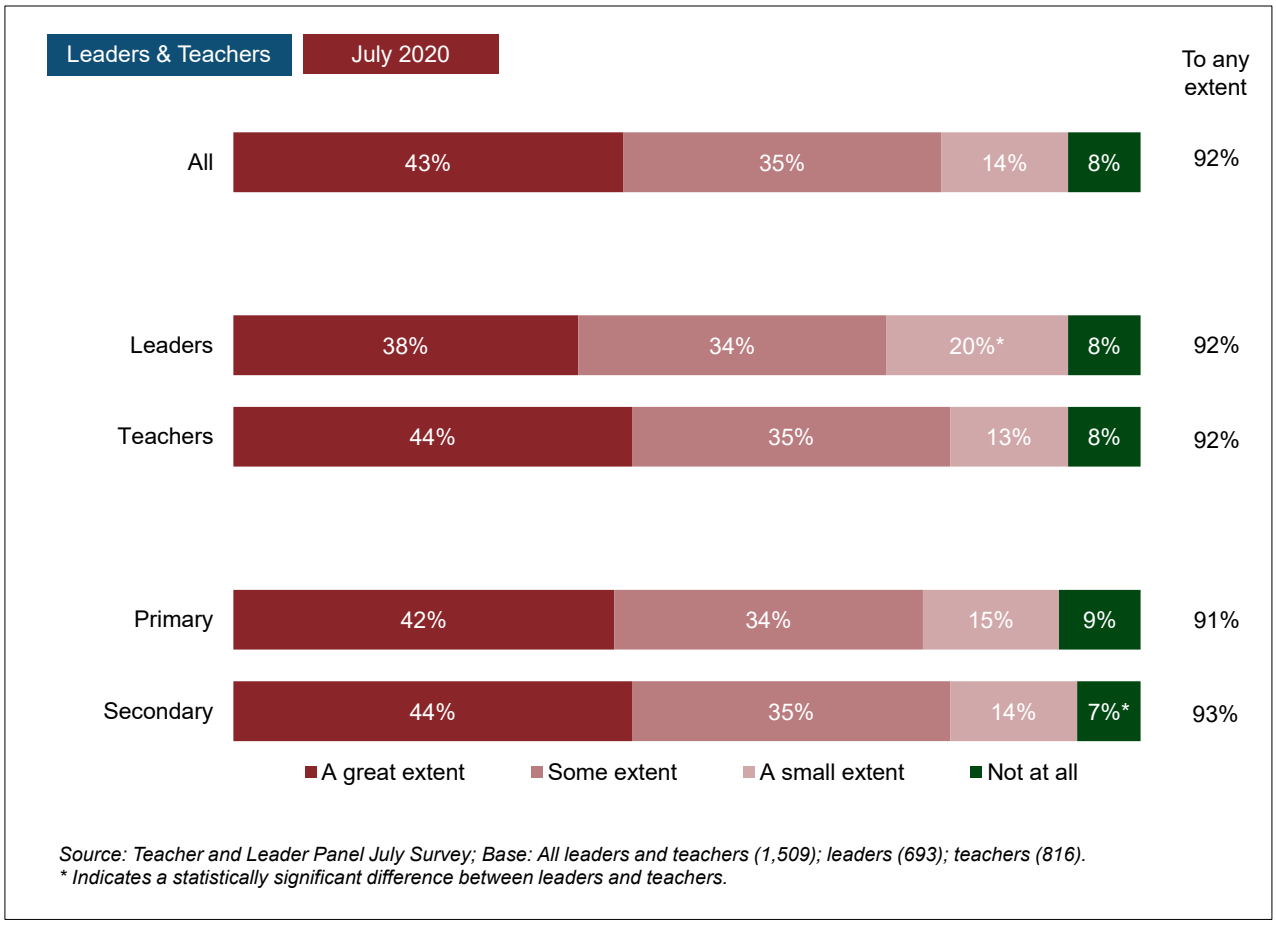
Alongside this, the catch-up package (£1bn) includes a new £350m National Tutoring Programme for disadvantaged pupils. This will increase access to high-quality tuition for

the most disadvantaged young people, helping to accelerate their academic progress and tackling the attainment gap between them and their peers.

Teachers' concern around delivering the curriculum in the context of learning loss

In the July 2020 survey, the vast majority (92%) of leaders and teachers expressed some concern about delivering the curriculum in a way that suited the progression of all pupils (in the context of learning loss). Nearly half (43%) of the leaders and teachers said they had a great deal of concern, 35% reported some concern and 14% were slightly concerned.

Figure 27. Extent of leaders' and teachers' concern around delivering the curriculum in a way that suits the progression of all pupils in July 2020



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel July Survey; Base: All leaders and teachers (1,509); leaders (693); teachers (816).
** Indicates a statistically significant difference between leaders and teachers.*

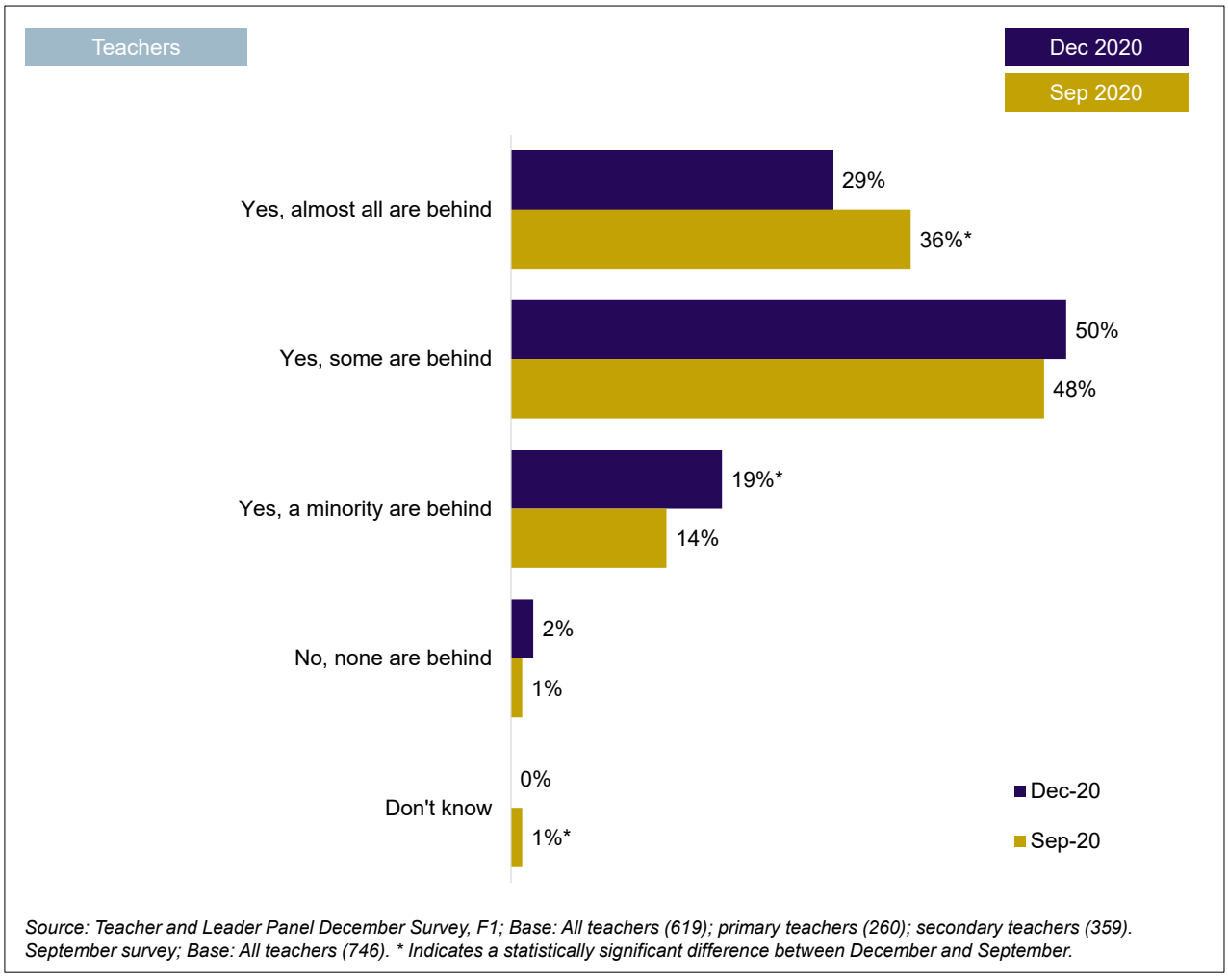
At the overall level, there were no significant differences between the proportion of leaders and teachers at primary or secondary level reporting any concern about how to deliver the curriculum in a way that supported all pupils. There was some indication that leaders were slightly less concerned than teachers, as 20% of leaders were only concerned to a small extent compared with 13% of teachers. However, teachers were not significantly more likely to report a great extent of concern than leaders.

Pupils behind on learning

In the September and December 2020 surveys, teachers were asked whether they thought their pupils were behind in their learning compared to where they expected them to be at this stage of their education, as a result of school closures.

Nearly all teachers (97%) said that at least a minority of pupils were behind in December 2020. Between September and December 2020 there was a significant decrease in the proportion of teachers reporting that almost all pupils were behind in their learning (36% in September 2020 vs. 29% in December 2020), and an increase in the proportion of teachers saying that only a minority of their pupils (14% vs. 19%) were behind.

Figure 28. Whether teachers felt that pupils were behind in their learning



*Source: Teacher and Leader Panel December Survey, F1; Base: All teachers (619); primary teachers (260); secondary teachers (359). September survey; Base: All teachers (746). * Indicates a statistically significant difference between December and September.*

In December 2020, secondary teachers teaching STEM[15] subjects were particularly concerned about their pupils. Half (49%) of all teachers who taught a STEM subject reported that almost all pupils were behind in their learning (which was significantly

[15] Maths, Science, IT or Computer Science classified as 'STEM' subjects. History, Geography, Religious Studies or English classified as 'Humanities'.

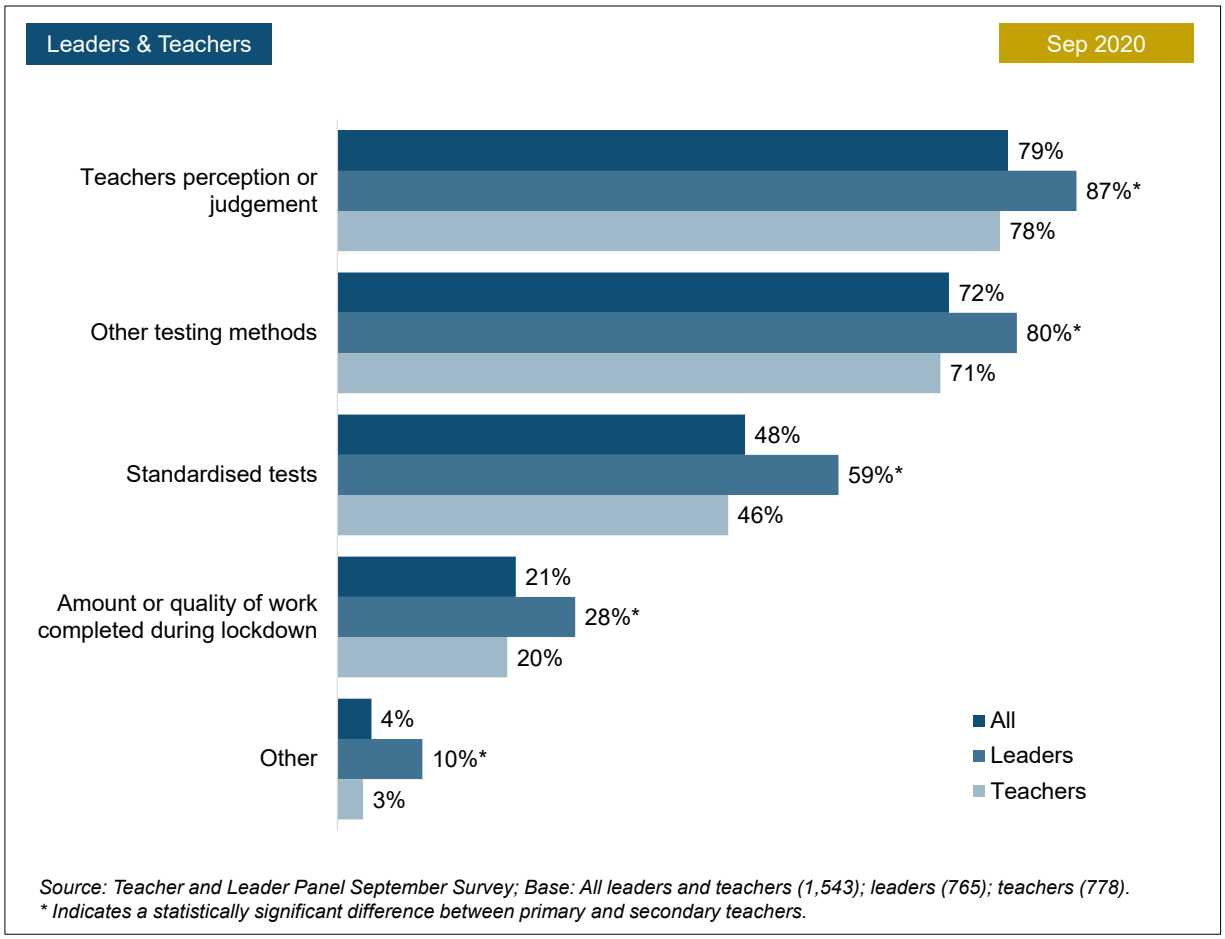
higher than the 20% of humanities teachers and 35% of teachers of other subjects who said the same).

Methods used to assess where pupils were in their learning

In the September 2020 survey, leaders and teachers were asked which methods they were considering using to assess where pupils were in their learning.

The majority (79%) of leaders and teachers said their school was considering basing assessments on teachers' own perception or judgement of how a child was doing. Slightly fewer leaders and teachers (72%), reported that their school may use other testing methods, such as informal classroom tests, for example. Around half (48%) of the leaders and teachers mentioned using standardised tests, and 21% had considered assessing pupils based on the amount or quality of work completed during lockdown.

Figure 29. Methods schools considered to assess pupils learning in September 2020



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel September Survey; Base: All leaders and teachers (1,543); leaders (765); teachers (778).
** Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary teachers.*

As shown in Figure 29, leaders were significantly more likely than teachers to say their school had considered any of the methods listed.

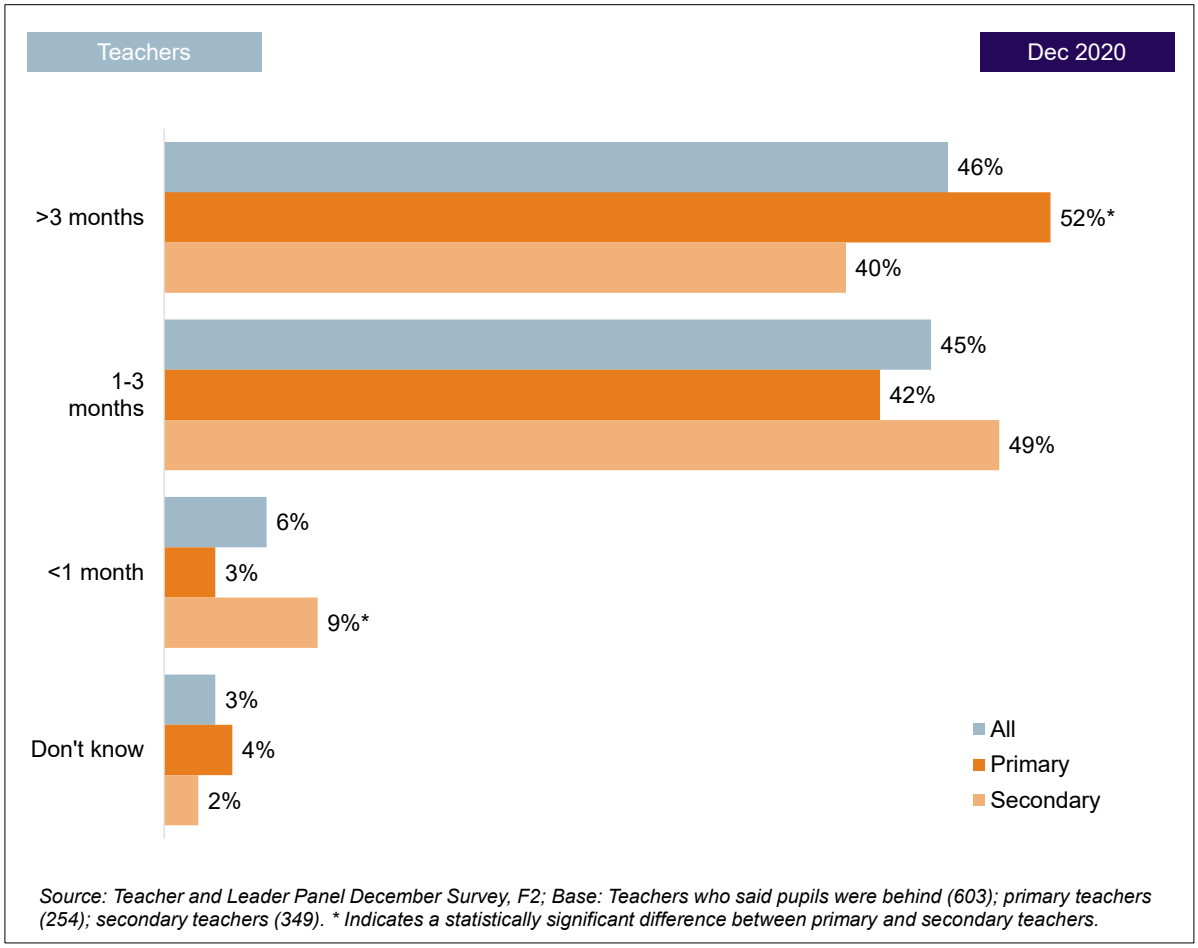
Additionally, leaders and teachers from primary schools were significantly more likely to state they were considering using teachers' perception or judgement than those in secondary schools (87% vs. 71%). Leaders and teachers in secondary schools were more likely to be considering:

- Standardised tests (59% vs. 37% of primary leaders and teachers)
- Amount or quality of work completed during lockdown (30% vs. 13% of primary leaders and teachers).

The extent of lost learning time

In December 2020, the vast majority of teachers who said pupils were behind felt they were at least one month behind, with just under half stating the delay was between one and three months (45%) or more than three months (46%). In comparison, 6% of teachers said that the interruption to pupils' learning meant that they were less than one month behind.

Figure 30. How far behind teachers felt pupils were in their learning



*Source: Teacher and Leader Panel December Survey, F2; Base: Teachers who said pupils were behind (603); primary teachers (254); secondary teachers (349). * Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary teachers.*

Although more secondary than primary pupils were thought to be behind in their learning, the actual period of time lost was greater for primary than secondary pupils – half (52%) of primary teachers reported a delay of more than three months which is significantly higher than the 40% of secondary teachers who reported the same. Secondary teachers were significantly more likely to report a delay of less than one month (9% vs. 3% of primary teachers).

Regionally, teachers in the North West were significantly more likely to report a learning delay of more than three months (59% vs. the 46% average across all regions) while teachers in the West Midlands were significantly less likely to report this (33% vs. the 46% average).

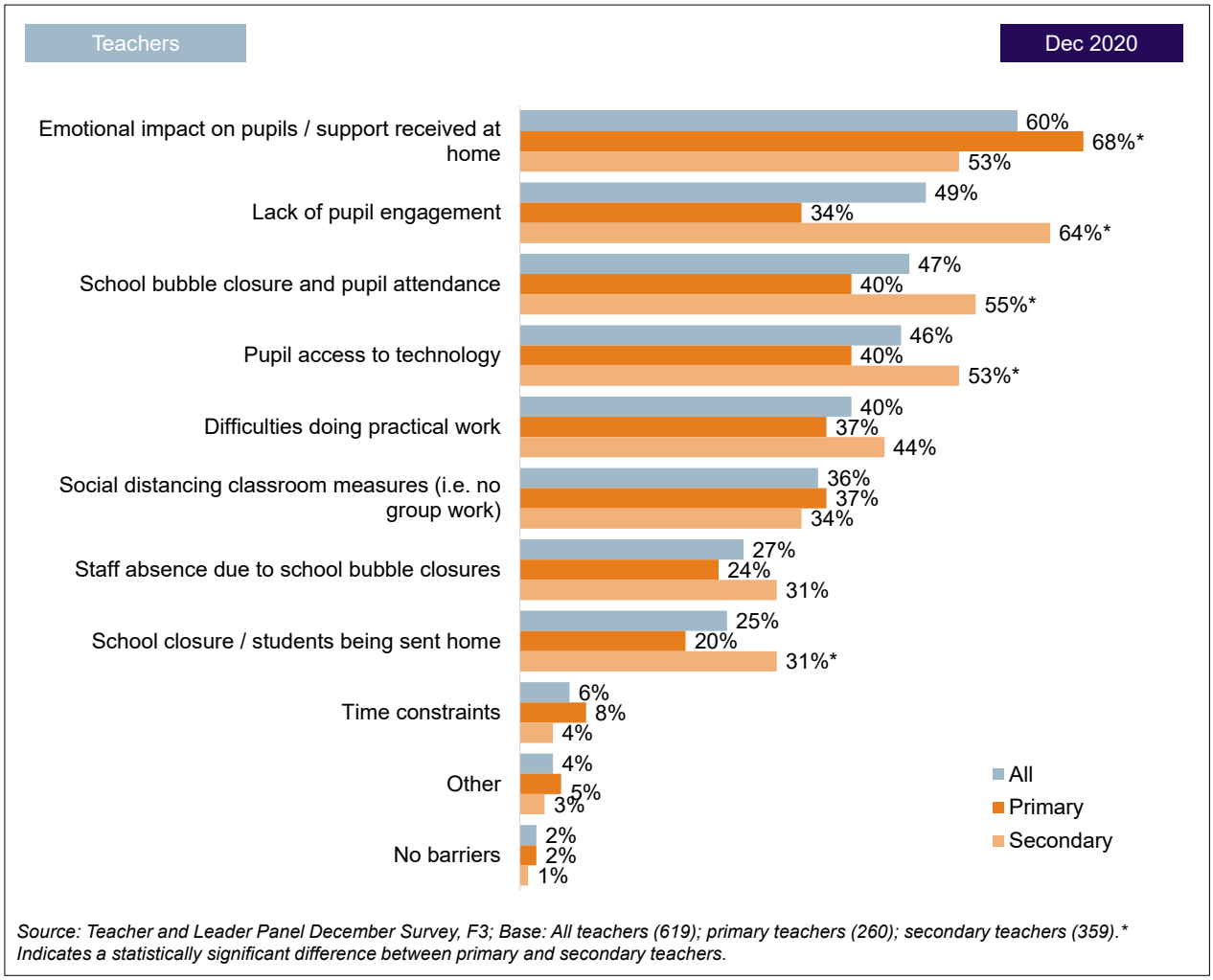
Barriers to pupils catching up on lost learning

In the December 2020 survey, all teachers were asked what the barriers were to catching pupils up on lost learning time due to the pandemic.

A wide range of barriers were mentioned, with the most frequently cited relating to the emotional impact of the pandemic on pupils and the support they receive at home to minimise this. Three-fifths (60%) of teachers felt the emotional impact on pupils presented a significant challenge in terms of catching up with lost learning.

Other common barriers included a lack of pupil engagement (49%), school bubble closure and pupil attendance (47%), pupil access to technology (46%), difficulties doing practical work (40%) and social distancing measures in the classroom (36%). Figure 31 shows the full list of barriers.

Figure 31. Barriers to catching pupils up on lost learning time



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel December Survey, F3; Base: All teachers (619); primary teachers (260); secondary teachers (359). Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary teachers.*

School phase had a considerable impact on the types of barriers that were mentioned. For example, the emotional impact of the pandemic on pupils was considered a barrier to pupils catching up on lost learning time by significantly more primary than secondary teachers (68% vs. 53%). On the other hand, all of the following potential barriers were more likely to be mentioned by secondary teachers:

- A lack of pupil engagement (64% vs. 34%)
- School bubble closure and pupil attendance (55% vs. 40%)
- Pupil access to technology (53% vs. 40%)
- School closure/pupils being sent home (31% vs. 20%).

For teachers at primary academies, pupil access to technology was more commonly felt to be an issue than it was for those at primary non-academies, (50% vs. 33%). This was also the case for teachers working at schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils in comparison to those at schools with the lowest proportion (53% vs. 37%).

Furthermore, school bubble closure and pupil attendance were significantly more likely to be mentioned by teachers in urban schools than those in rural schools (51% vs. 32%). It should be noted that COVID-19 infection rates were typically higher in urban areas, therefore teachers in these areas were more likely to have experienced school bubbles being sent home.

Uptake of COVID-19 Education Initiatives

In July 2020, the Government announced a £650 million Catch Up Premium for schools to aid recovery from lost learning, alongside a £350 million National Tutoring Programme (NTP) to provide additional, targeted support for those pupils who need the most help.[16,17]

The NTP programme for 5-16 year olds will increase access to high-quality tuition for pupils this academic year. The programme has two pillars: approved Tuition Partners will offer high quality subsidised tuition to schools and schools in the most disadvantaged areas will be supported to employ in-house Academic Mentors With Tuition Partners, participating schools will be able to access subsided high-quality tutoring from an approved list of tuition partners that are subject to quality, safeguarding and evaluation standards. Through the Academic Mentors, participating schools can employ trained graduates to provide intensive catch-up support to their pupils, allowing teachers in these schools to focus on their classrooms.

In addition to the NTP programme, funding will also be provided to support small group tuition for 16-19 year olds and the improvement of early language skills in reception class.

In the December 2020 survey, schools were asked about their awareness of the National Tutoring Programme and the Catch Up Premium.

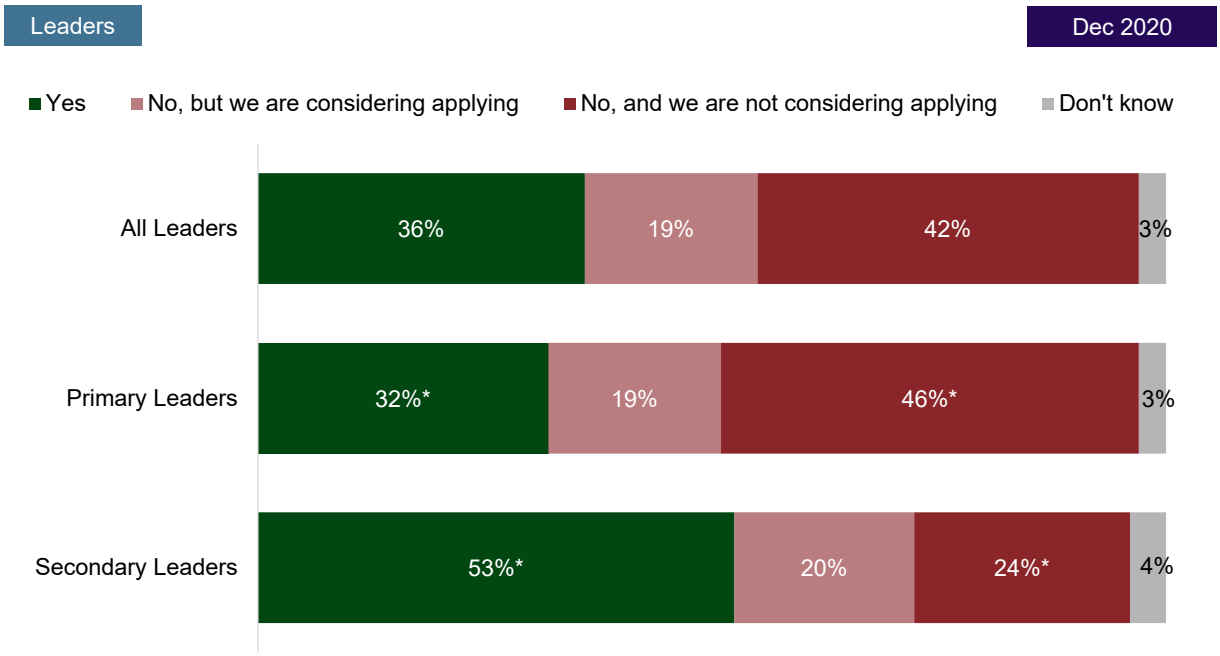
Most schools were aware of both the Catch-up premium and the National Tutoring Programme; 94% of leaders were aware of each initiative, with consistent awareness across phases (94% of primary leaders and 93% of secondary leaders).

[16] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/catch-up-premium-coronavirus-covid-19/catch-up-premium
[17] https://nationaltutoring.org.uk/

National Tutoring Programme

In December 2020, just over a third (36%) of all leaders reported that their school had applied to participate in the National Tutoring Programme (see Figure 32). A fifth (19%) had not applied but were considering it.

Figure 32. School applications for the National Tutoring Programme

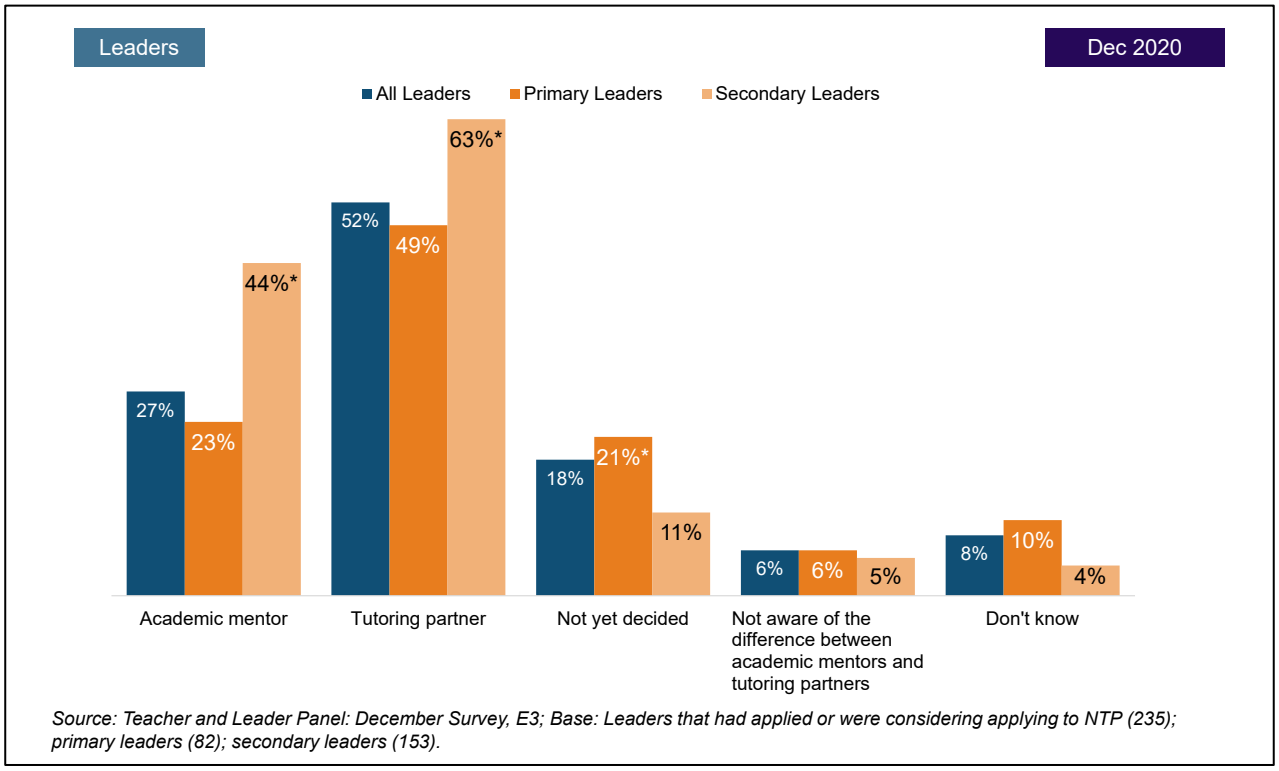


Source: Teacher and Leader Panel: December Survey, E2; Base: All leaders that are aware of NTP (375) ; primary leaders (159); secondary leaders (216).

Significantly more secondary (53%) than primary (32%) schools had applied to participate in the programme.

Nearly twice as many schools that had applied or were considering applying reported that they would participate in the tutoring partner element (52%) than reported they would participate in the academic mentor element (27%) of the NTP.

Figure 33. Elements of the National Tutoring Programme schools planned to participate in

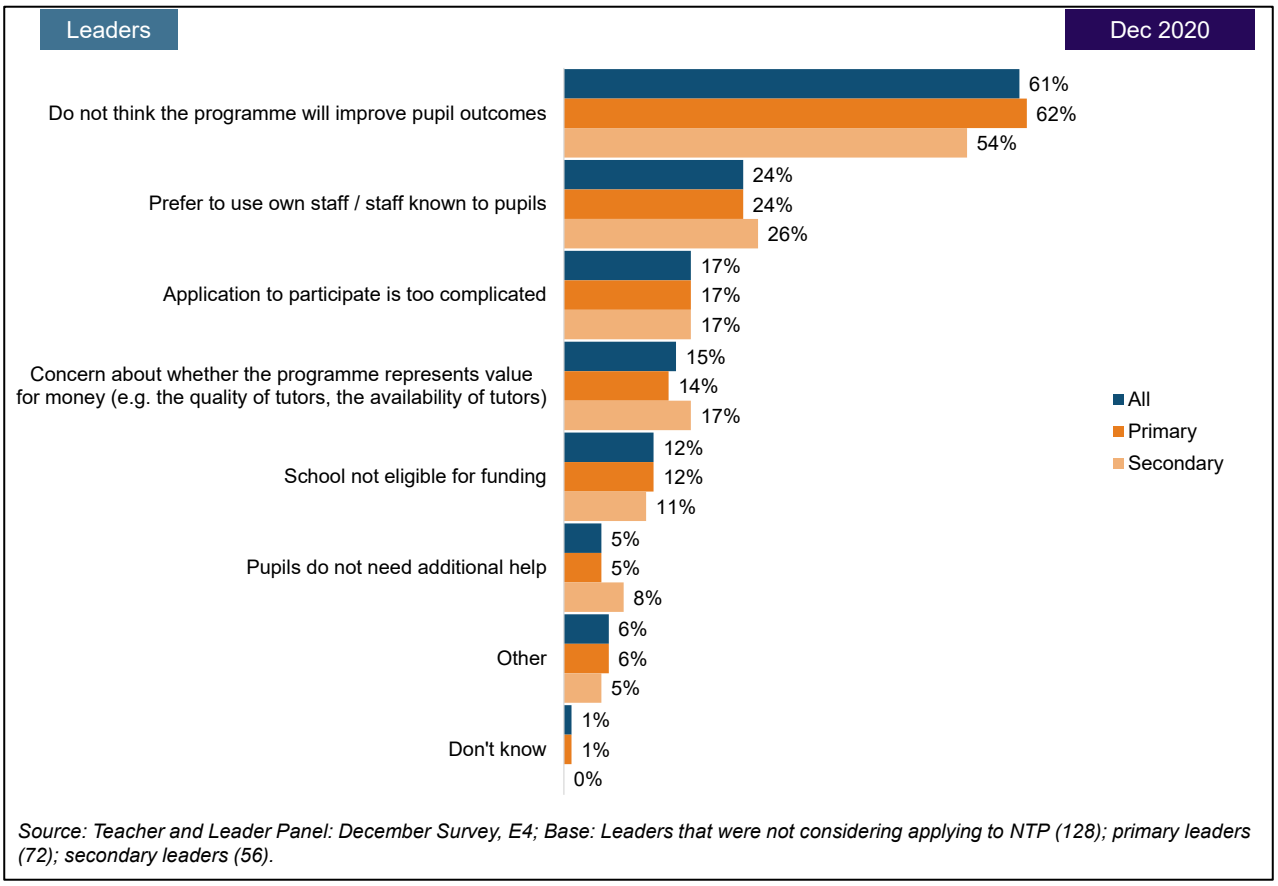


Source: Teacher and Leader Panel: December Survey, E3; Base: Leaders that had applied or were considering applying to NTP (235); primary leaders (82); secondary leaders (153).

Significantly more secondary than primary schools had applied for tutoring partners (63% vs 49%) and academic mentors (44% vs. 23% of primary schools). At the time of the survey (December 2020), primary school leaders were significantly more likely not to have decided which elements they would apply for (21% vs. 11% of secondary schools).

The main reason why school leaders had not considering applying to the National Tutoring Programme was that they did not think the programme would improve pupil outcomes (61%). The next most common reason was preferring to use their own staff or staff known to pupils (24%). Other reasons are shown in Figure 34.

Figure 34. Reasons schools have not applied for the NTP



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel: December Survey, E4; Base: Leaders that were not considering applying to NTP (128); primary leaders (72); secondary leaders (56).

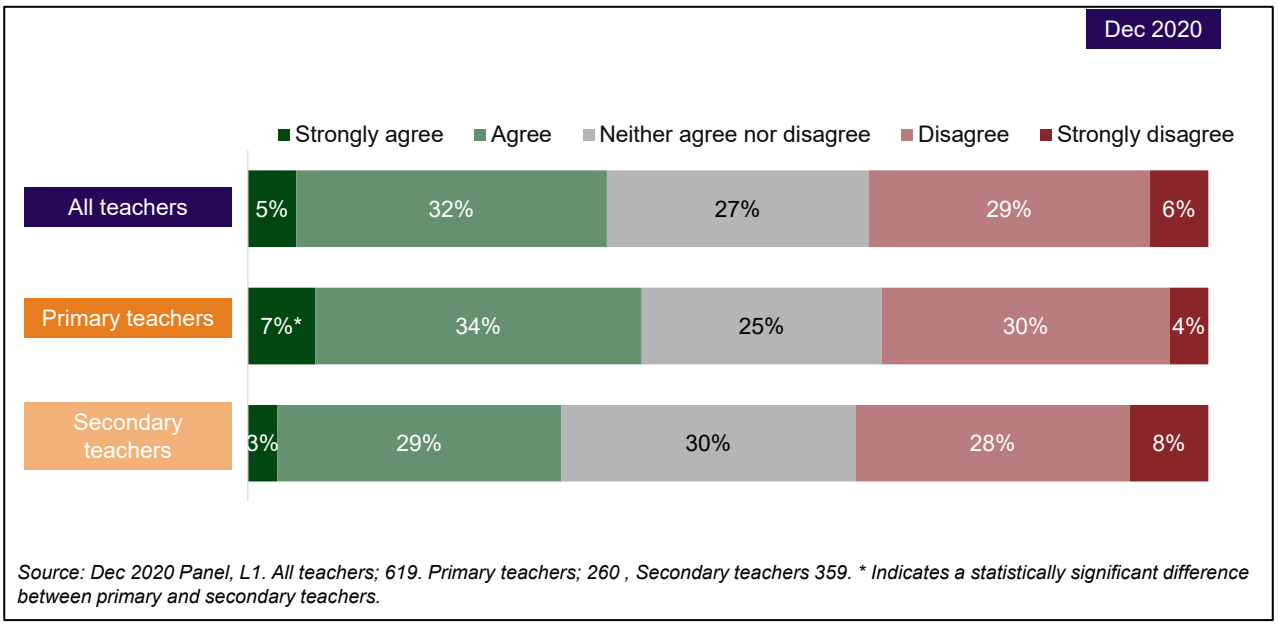
SEND

This section covers teacher confidence in feeling equipped to support pupils with SEND, and any barriers to meeting the needs of these pupils faced by teachers.

Extent that teachers felt equipped to support pupils with SEND

In December 2020 teachers had mixed views about how well equipped they were to support pupils with SEND during the COVID-19 pandemic. Over a third (37%) of all teachers either agreed or strongly agreed they were equipped to support pupils, while a similar proportion (35%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this. About a quarter (27%) of teachers sat in the middle as they reported that they neither agree nor disagree that they felt equipped to support pupils with SEND (27%).

Figure 35. Extent that teachers felt equipped to support pupils with SEND during COVID-19



*Source: Dec 2020 Panel, L1. All teachers; 619. Primary teachers; 260 , Secondary teachers 359. * Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary teachers.*

Primary teachers were significantly more likely to agree or strongly agree that they felt equipped to support pupils with SEND during the COVID-19 crisis than secondary teachers (41% vs. 33%). Just over a third of primary teachers (34%) and secondary teachers (36%) disagreed that they felt equipped to support pupils with SEND.

Classroom teacher views on the barriers to effective support

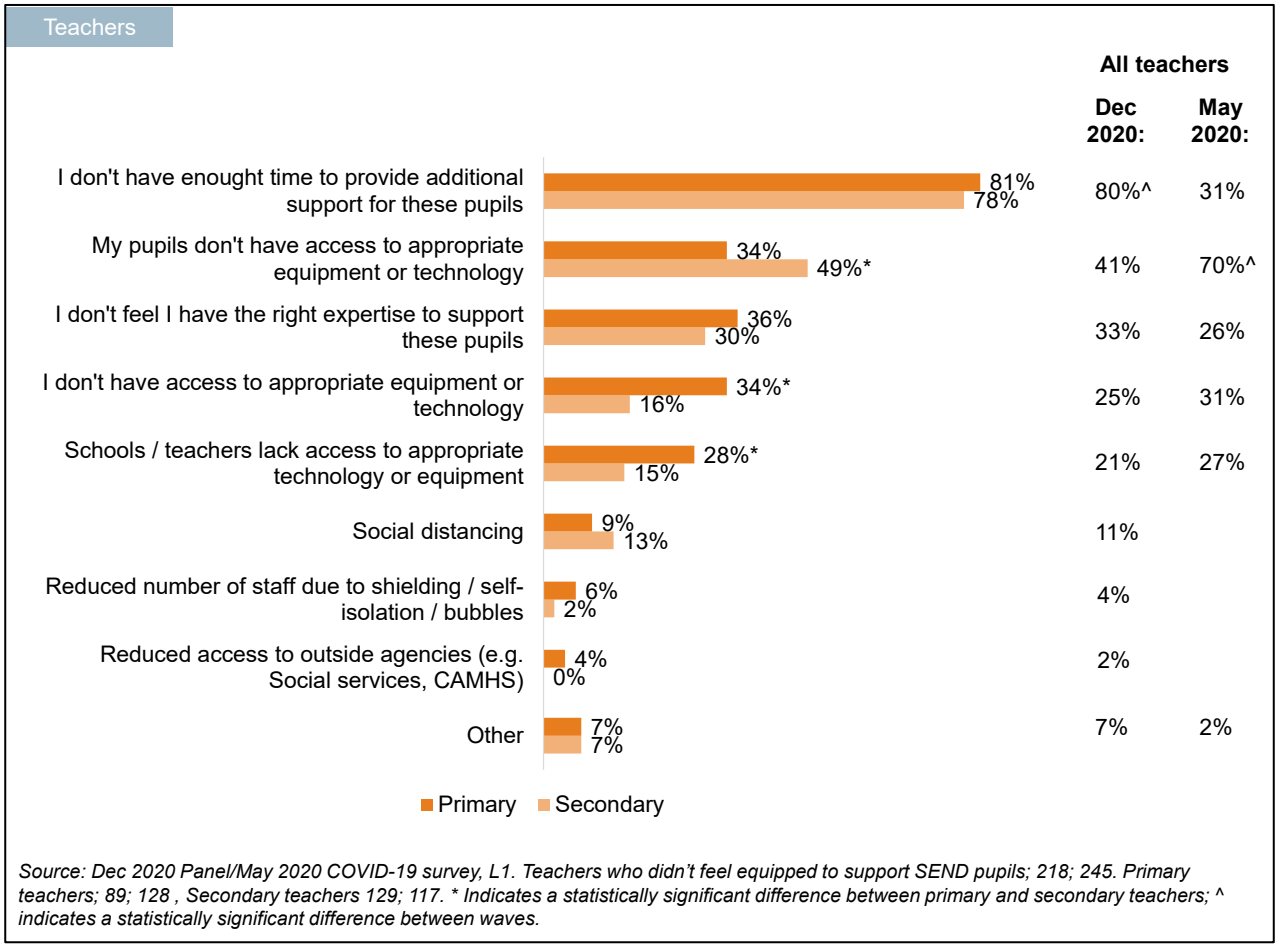
Teachers that did not feel equipped to support pupils with SEND were asked what barriers they faced in meeting the needs of these pupils. As can be seen at Figure 36 the

most commonly mentioned barriers teachers reported in December 2020 differed to the barriers reported in May 2020 in the COVID-19 School Snapshot Survey.[18]

These findings indicate that more pupils with SEND had access to the technology and equipment that they needed in December 2020, as a significantly smaller proportion of teachers (41%) mentioned this as a barrier in December 2020 than in May 2020 (70%). Although less of an issue, it was still the second most mentioned barrier in December 2020.

In contrast, having enough time to provide the additional support required by pupils with SEND was more commonly mentioned by teachers as a barrier in December 2020 than it was in May 2020 (80% vs. 31%). The other barriers mentioned by teachers (as shown on Figure 36) are consistent with May 2020.

Figure 36. Barriers to meeting the needs of pupils with SEND



*Source: Dec 2020 Panel/May 2020 COVID-19 survey, L1. Teachers who didn't feel equipped to support SEND pupils; 218; 245. Primary teachers; 89; 128 , Secondary teachers 129; 117. * Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary teachers; ^ indicates a statistically significant difference between waves.*

In December 2020 there were some significant differences in the barriers encountered by primary and secondary teachers. Secondary teachers were significantly more likely than

[18] The COVID-19 School Snapshot report also looked at school level views of barriers to supporting pupils with SEND. Please refer to the report for more context around barriers faced by schools.

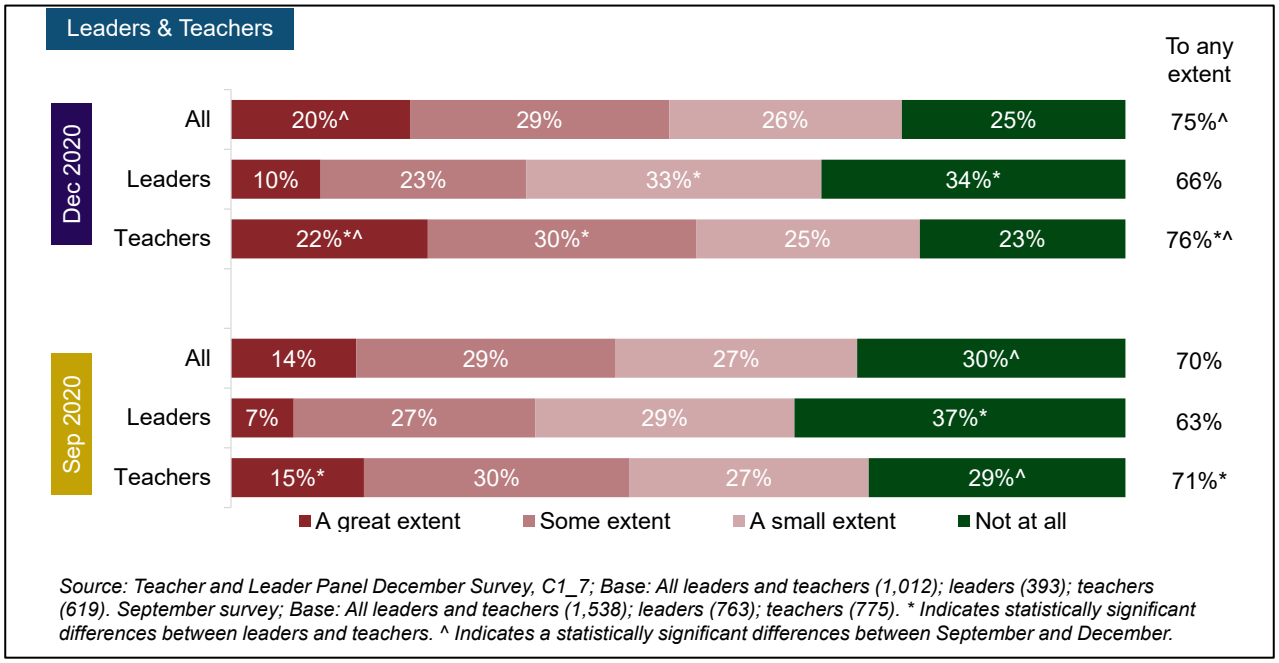
primary teachers to report that pupils did not have access to appropriate equipment or technology (49% vs. 34%). On the other hand, primary teachers were significantly more likely than secondary teachers to report that they themselves did not have access to appropriate equipment or technology (34% vs. 16%), and that schools or teachers lacked access to appropriate equipment or technology (28% vs. 15%). These differences by school phase are new since the May 2020 COVID-19 School Snapshot survey. In the May 2020 survey, the only significant difference by school phase was that primary school teachers were more likely to report that lack of engagement or support from parents was a barrier (9% vs. 3% of secondary teachers).

Pupil Behaviour

In September 2020, DfE published advice for school leaders to support the re-engagement of pupils and the return of orderly and calm environments in which all pupils can achieve and thrive. The guidance made it clear that schools should consider updating their behaviour policy, and clearly communicate expectations or procedures to staff, pupils and parents, especially when considering restrictions on movement within school and new hygiene rules. DfE guidance also discussed schools identifying pupils who had additional needs, were reluctant or anxious about returning, or at risk of disengagement, and develop plans – including with other agencies – to support their return. The disciplinary powers that schools currently have, including expulsion and suspension, remained in place. Schools and colleges had the discretion to require face coverings in communal areas if they believed that it was right in their circumstances. If there were concerns about a child or young person behaving contrary to the behaviour policy, schools' disciplinary powers remained in place to address this.

From September to December 2020, there was a statistically significant increase in the proportion of leaders' and teachers' who expressed a concern about an increase in behaviour issues, from 70% in September to 75% in December 2020. This was driven by a significant increase in respondents who were greatly concerned (14% in September 2020 vs. 20% in December 2020).

Figure 37. Extent of concern about an increase in behaviour issues – December and September 2020



*Source: Teacher and Leader Panel December Survey, C1_7; Base: All leaders and teachers (1,012); leaders (393); teachers (619). September survey; Base: All leaders and teachers (1,538); leaders (763); teachers (775). * Indicates statistically significant differences between leaders and teachers. ^ Indicates a statistically significant differences between September and December.*

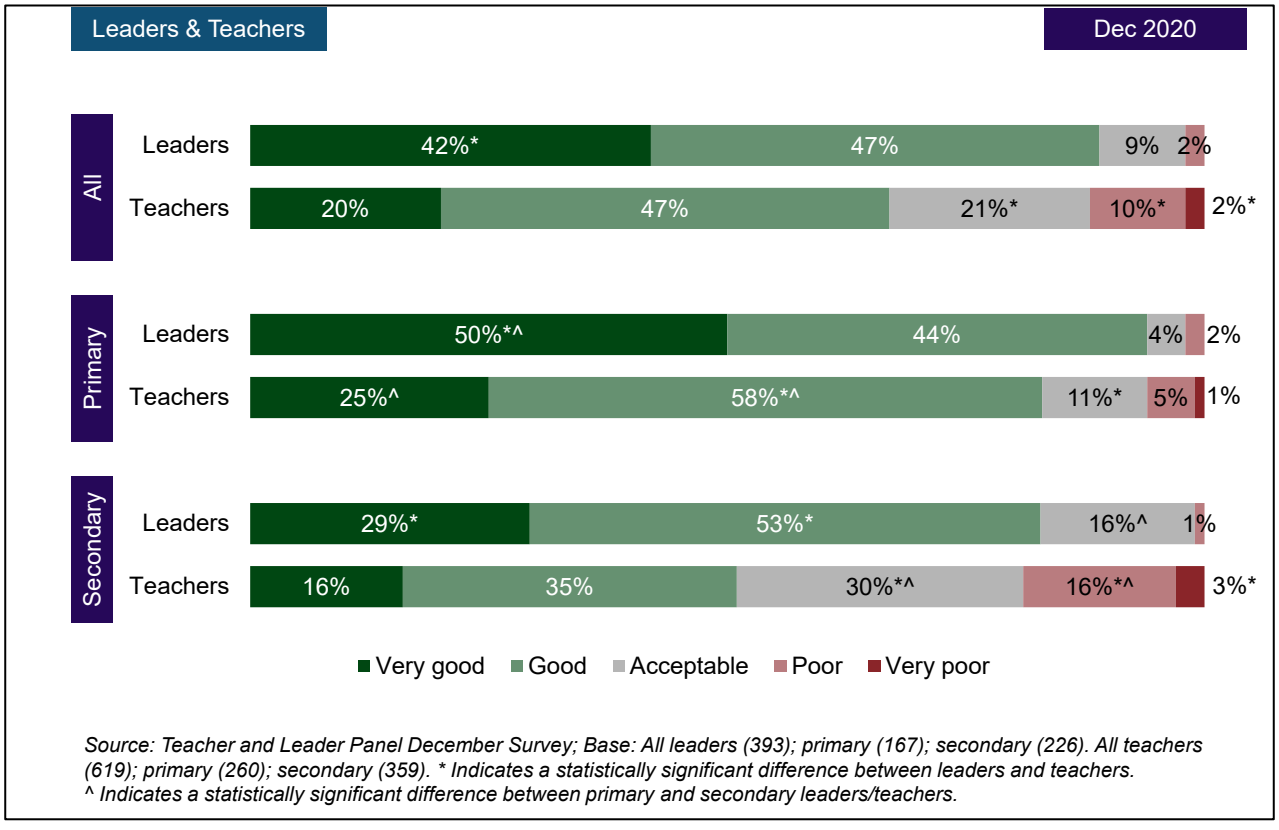
Teachers have remained about twice as likely as leaders to report that they were concerned to a great extent about an increase in behaviour issues (22% vs. 10% in December 2020 and 15% vs. 7% in September 2020).

In both surveys secondary leaders and teachers were significantly more likely to be concerned than primary leaders and teachers (85% vs. 66% in December 2020 and 72% vs. 67% in September 2020).

As discussed later in the report, secondary leaders and teachers were also more likely than primary leaders and teachers to report they would find more guidance on addressing behaviour issues useful.

Leaders generally rated pupil behaviour at school as being better than teachers; with 42% of all leaders rating it as 'very good' (compared with 20% of all teachers). A small minority of leaders (2%) said that behaviour in their school was poor and 9% rated pupils' behaviour as 'acceptable'. In contrast, 2% of teachers rated pupil behaviour as 'very poor', 10% as 'poor', and 21% as 'acceptable'.

Figure 38. Leader ratings of pupil behaviour at their school



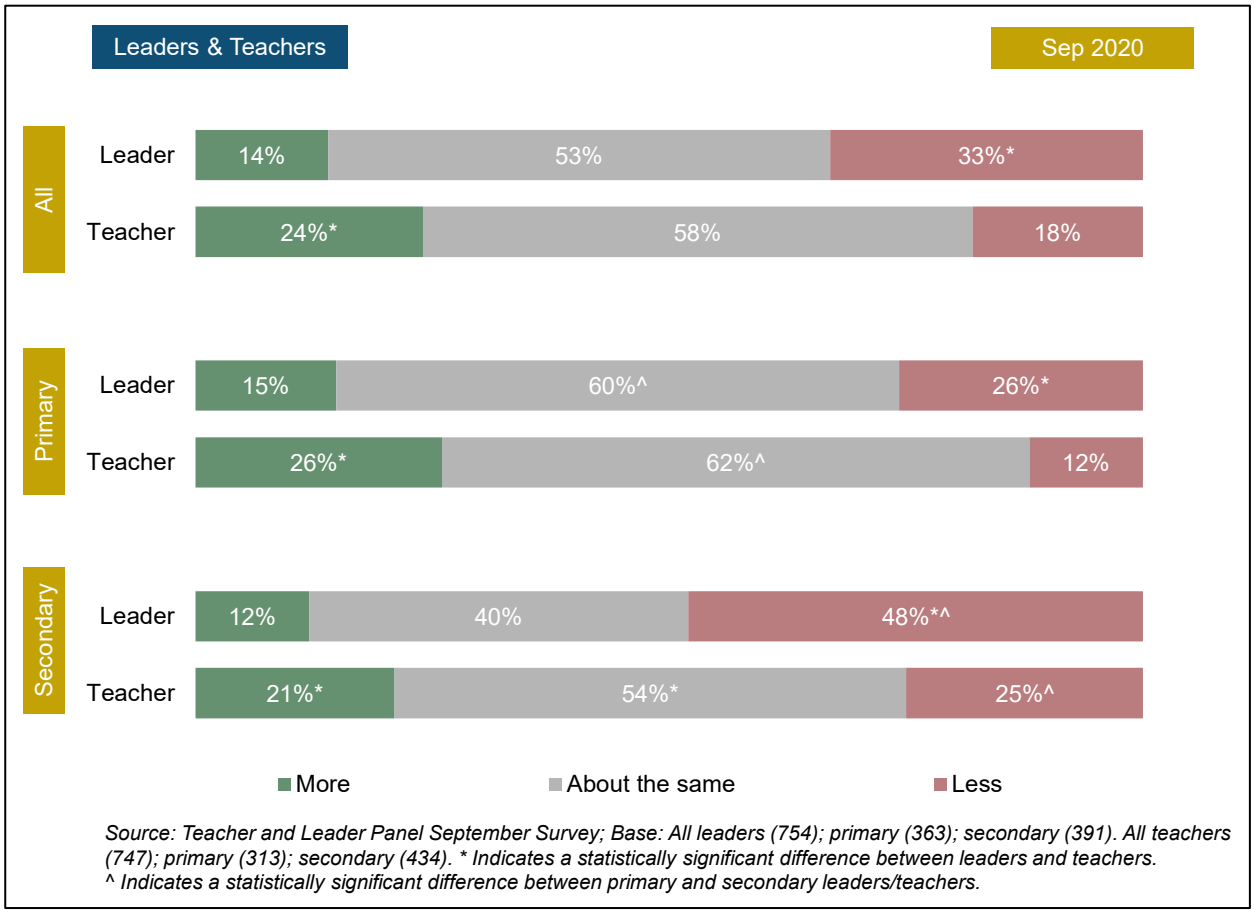
*Source: Teacher and Leader Panel December Survey; Base: All leaders (393); primary (167); secondary (226). All teachers (619); primary (260); secondary (359). * Indicates a statistically significant difference between leaders and teachers. ^ Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary leaders/teachers.*

Ratings of pupil behaviour were more positive at primary schools among both leaders and teachers. Primary school leaders were nearly twice as likely as secondary school leaders to report that their pupil behaviour was very good (50% vs. 29%). Primary school teachers were significantly more likely than secondary school teachers to rate pupil

behaviour as very good (25% vs. 16%) or good (58% vs. 35%), while secondary teachers were significantly more likely to rate it as acceptable (30% vs. 11%) or poor (16% vs. 5%).

In September 2020, more than half (57%) of all leaders and teachers felt that the amount of disruptive behaviour had stayed the same since the previous year. Whereas around one-fifth of leaders reported an increase (22%) or a decrease (20%).

Figure 39. Extent to which leaders and teachers felt disruptive behaviour compared with the same time the previous year



*Source: Teacher and Leader Panel September Survey; Base: All leaders (754); primary (363); secondary (391). All teachers (747); primary (313); secondary (434). * Indicates a statistically significant difference between leaders and teachers. ^ Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary leaders/teachers.*

Teachers were significantly more likely than leaders to report an increase in disruptive behaviour compared with the previous year (24% vs. 14%).

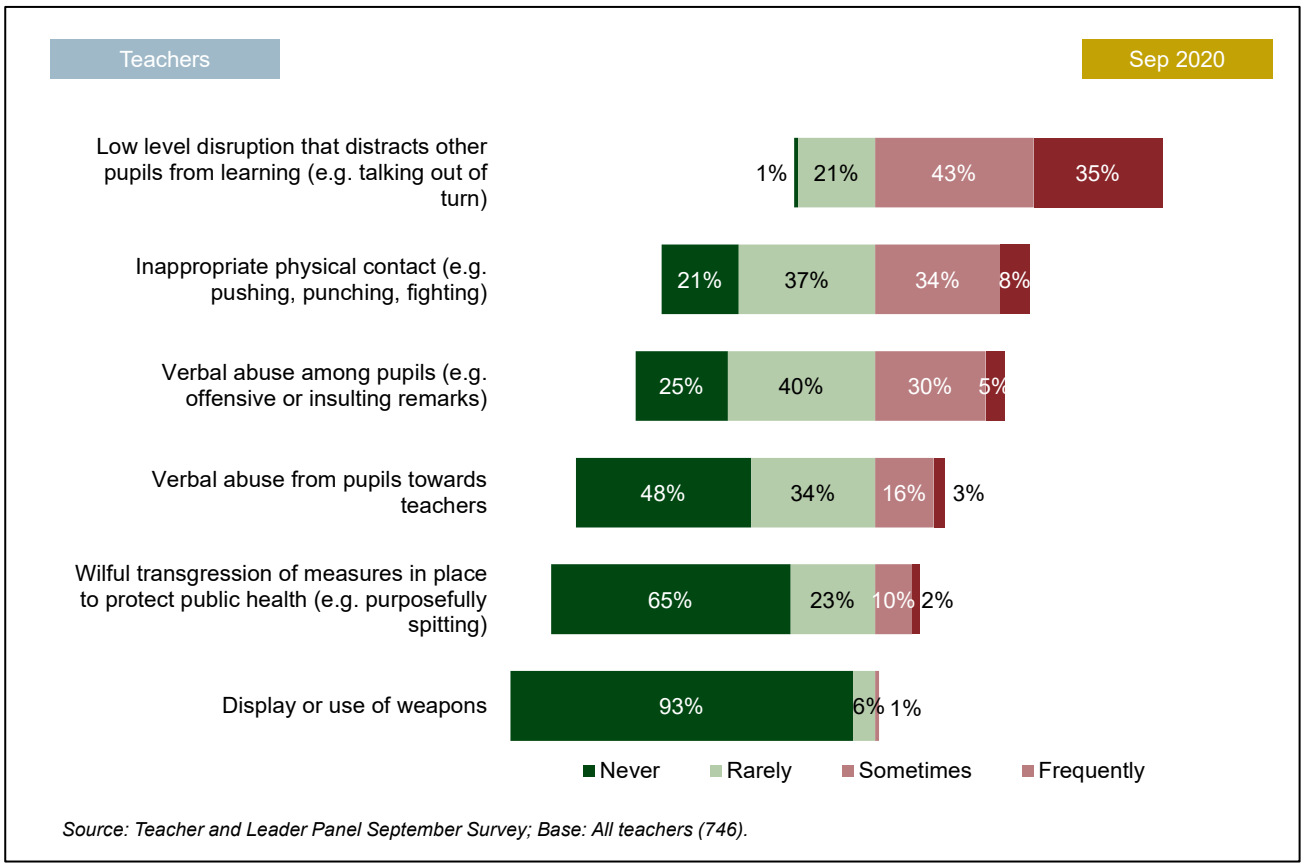
Leaders and teachers were significantly more likely to say that disruptive behaviour had increased if they were from:

- Primary schools (25% vs. 20% from secondary schools), although as previously discussed primary leaders and teachers remain less likely to be concerned about behaviour
- Rural schools (28% vs. 21% from urban schools)

- Schools where groups of pupils have not needed to self-isolate (24% vs. 17% of schools which have).

In September 2020, nearly all (99%) teachers had experienced low-level disruption that distracts other pupils from learning (e.g. talking out of turn), in the last 4 weeks. Furthermore, 79% had dealt with inappropriate physical contact, such as pushing, punching and fighting, 75% had dealt with verbal abuse among pupils and 52% with verbal abuse towards teachers. Over a third (35%) had experienced willful transgressions against public health measures and a minority of teachers reported pupil's either displaying or using weapons (7%).

Figure 40. Extent to which teachers experienced different types of behaviour in the past month[19]



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel September Survey; Base: All teachers (746).

The main sub-group differences related to school phase, FSM status and school location. For example, secondary teachers were significantly more likely than primary teachers to have experienced:

- Verbal abuse among pupils (83% vs. 68%)

[19] Please note there was no set definition for weapons in the 'Display or use of weapons' response option at this question.

- Verbal abuse from pupils towards teachers (59% vs. 45%)
- Willful transgression of health measures (44% vs. 27%)
- Display or use of weapons (8% vs. 5%).

Incidents of verbal abuse among pupils and directed towards teachers were significantly more common amongst:

- Teachers at schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils compared to those with the lowest (86% vs. 72% primary: 65% vs. 47% secondary)
- Teachers at urban schools compared to rural schools (76% vs. 69% primary: 55% vs. 42% secondary).

Finally, teachers at schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils were also more likely to experience inappropriate physical contact (89% vs. 74% of those with the lowest proportion).

Dealing with poor behaviour

In the December 2020 survey, school leaders were asked to think back over the four weeks prior to taking part in the research and consider whether pupils had behaved in a way which had warranted disciplinary action and which, if any, of the measures listed, they had used in response.

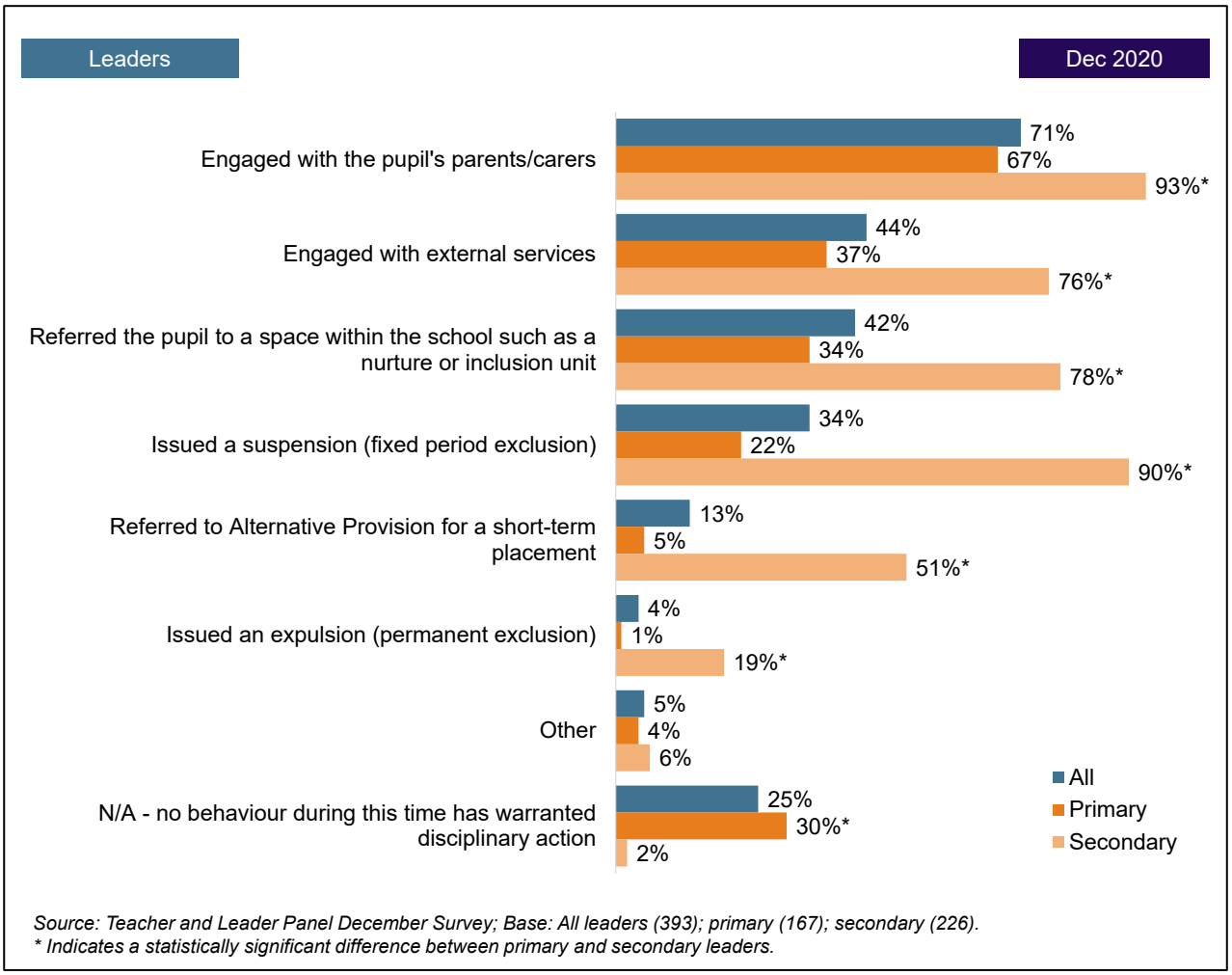
Overall, three-quarters of leaders (75%) had experienced pupils behaving in a way that warranted disciplinary action during the four-week period they were asked about.

The types of measures used by schools when disciplinary action was needed in response to poor behaviour varied widely. By far the most frequently used measure in the four weeks running up to the December 2020 survey was engagement with pupils' parents or carers, with nearly three-quarters (71%) of all schools adopting this approach. Lower proportions of schools had engaged with external services (44%), referred a pupil to a space within the school such as a nurture or inclusion unit (42%) or issued suspensions 34%).[20]

Differences by school phase were marked. As shown in Figure 41, secondary schools were significantly more likely than primary schools to have used at least one of the measures – reflecting the finding that 30% of primary schools had not experienced a situation that required disciplinary action over the 4-week period compared to 2% of secondary schools.

[20] The terms 'expulsion' and 'suspension' is what legislation refers to as an 'exclusion'.

Figure 41. Measures used by schools to respond to behaviour that warranted disciplinary action in the last four weeks – December 2020



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel December Survey; Base: All leaders (393); primary (167); secondary (226).
** Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary leaders.*

In addition, schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils were significantly more likely than those with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils to have done the following:

- Engaged with external services (67% vs. 47%)
- Referred pupils to an internal space within the school (59% vs. 33%)
- Issued a suspension (50% vs. 26%)
- Referred to Alternative Provision in the short-term (21% vs. 6%).

Following on from this, leaders who had issued a suspension in the four weeks prior to the December 2020 survey were asked how the number of suspensions compared to the same time in the previous year. In December, 44% of leaders who had issued a suspension stated there had been an increase in the number, while 20% reported a decrease. One-third (36%) said there had been no change.

Primary schools that had issued suspensions in the previous four weeks were significantly more likely to report an increase in the number of suspensions from the previous year compared to secondary schools (52% vs. 33%). In contrast, secondary schools were more likely to report a decrease (34% vs. 9% of primary schools).

Childcare during the term

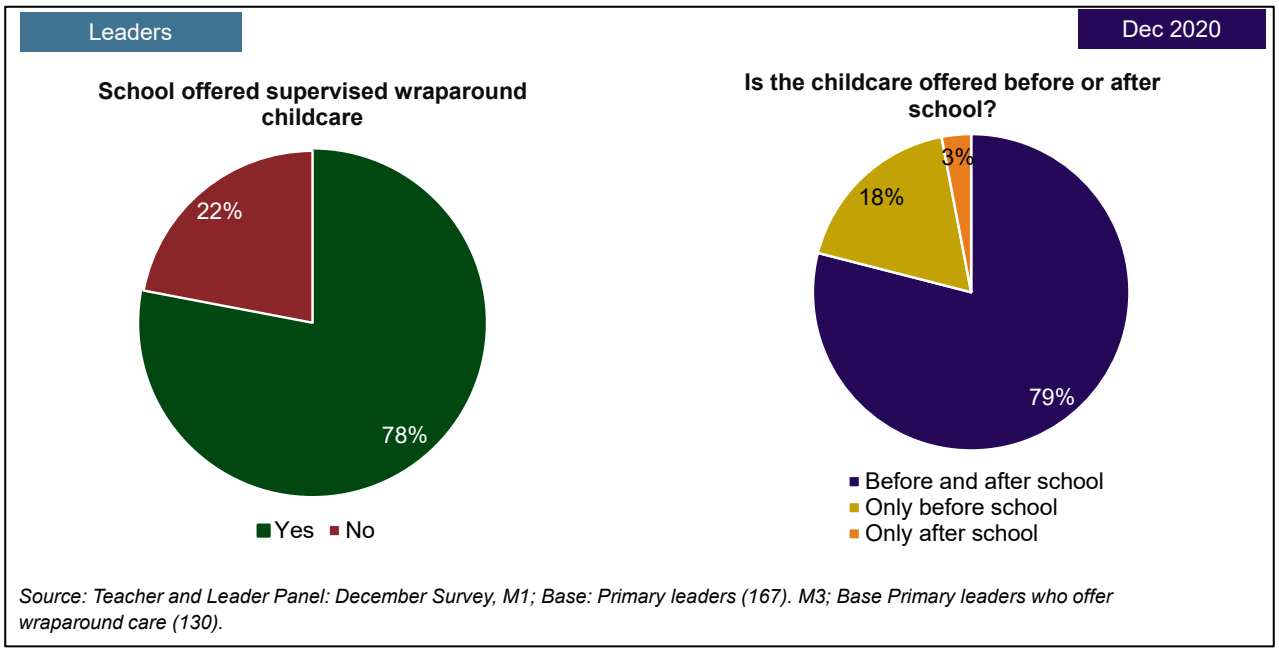
From the beginning of the autumn term 2020, schools were encouraged to resume all before and after-school childcare provision, such as breakfast clubs, and DfE provided them with guidance on full school opening to support them to do so. The guidance also made clear that schools could hire out their premises to external private childcare providers and out-of-school settings.

DfE also published guidance for parents and carers to reflect that all children and young people could attend wraparound childcare when schools returned in the autumn term. However, parents were encouraged to send their child to the same wrapround childcare or out-of-school setting consistently to reduce the numbers of different children mixing outside of school.

When tighter restrictions were introduced in November, guidance for schools made clear that they could and should continue to offer their usual before and after-school provision to support parents to work and promote the wellbeing of vulnerable children.

In the December 2020 survey, 78% of primary school leaders reported that their school offered daily supervised wraparound childcare during the school term. The proportion of schools that offered daily supervised wraparound childcare varied in terms of whether this was just provided before school, just after school, or both. Most commonly, schools offered this provision both before and after school (79% of those with any childcare provision); just under one fifth offered only before school (18%) and 3% only after school.

Figure 42. Whether primary schools offered childcare and when this childcare was available



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel: December Survey, M1; Base: Primary leaders (167). M3; Base Primary leaders who offer wraparound care (130).

Primary leaders with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils were more likely to offer wraparound childcare (84%) than schools with the highest proportion (60%).

There were variations in how schools' childcare provision was primarily offered, with a higher proportion being provided on school premises by the school than by a private organisation. Almost eight-in-ten (78%) schools reported that their childcare was provided by staff on the school premises and was part of the school's governance, while a fifth (21%) reported that it was provided by a private organisation on the school site with their own governance arrangements. Nearly all schools that offered before school childcare reported that it was provided on the school premises (98%).

The findings from the late October wave of the Parent and Pupil Panel suggest that some parents would like greater access to childcare than was available through schools during the autumn term.[21] In late October, a fifth (20%) of parents of years 1-11 pupils reported they wanted before or after school childcare for their children, but a smaller proportion (16%) had used any childcare since the start of the school term. In a similar vein, 28% that had used childcare for their child said they would like them to attend more if it was available.

Changes to childcare provision

Schools were asked whether their wraparound childcare provision had changed compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic. Just over two-thirds reported a change in childcare provision (65%); with over half reporting that it had decreased (56%), a third reporting it had stayed the same (33%), and a relatively small proportion that it had increased (9%).

In December 2020, schools were also asked about changes to their childcare provision after Christmas. Most commonly schools reported that they expected it to stay the same (84%), and only a small proportion reported that they would increase (5%) or reduce (4%) capacity.

[21] Please see the DfE COVID-19 Interim Report for the Parent and Pupil Panel.

Health and Wellbeing

Leaders and teachers were asked about their school's delivery of curriculum physical education, and any changes compared to last autumn term. They were also asked about pupil mental health and wellbeing, including concerns about pupil mental health and access to relevant services. In addition, teachers were asked about their knowledge and level of confidence in supporting pupils' mental health and any relevant training that they had undertaken. Finally, leaders and teachers were asked about their own personal wellbeing using a series of ONS-validated questions, including: their life satisfaction, the extent to which they feel the things they do in life are worthwhile, how happy they felt yesterday and their anxiety levels.

Pupils' Physical Education

All young people should have the opportunity to live healthy and active lives. A positive experience of Physical Education (PE), sport and physical activity at a young age can build a lifetime habit of participation and is central to meeting the government's ambitions for a world-class education system. Physical activity has numerous benefits for children and young people's physical health, as well as their mental wellbeing (increasing self-esteem and emotional wellbeing and lowering anxiety and depression).

PE is a compulsory subject at all four key stages in the national curriculum. Schools have the flexibility to design and deliver a PE curriculum that suits the needs of all pupils. While academies and free schools are not required to follow the national curriculum, they are similarly required to provide a broad and balanced curriculum.

During the current restrictions due to the coronavirus (Covid-19), schools have the flexibility to decide how physical education, sport and physical activity will be provided to pupils attending school while following the measures in their system of controls. Pupils are recommended to be kept in consistent groups, and sports equipment thoroughly cleaned between each use by different individual groups. Schools can hold PE lessons indoors, including those that involve activities related to team sports, for example practising specific techniques, within their own system of controls. However, outdoor activities and sports should be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not, maximising natural ventilation flows (through opening windows and doors or using air conditioning systems wherever possible), distancing between pupils and paying scrupulous attention to cleaning and hygiene. This is particularly important in a sport setting because of the way in which people breathe during exercise.

In December 2020, almost three-quarters of schools (73%) reported that their delivery of physical education (PE) curriculum had changed compared to last autumn term (i.e. in

2019). The remaining quarter (27%) of schools did not think their curriculum PE had changed.

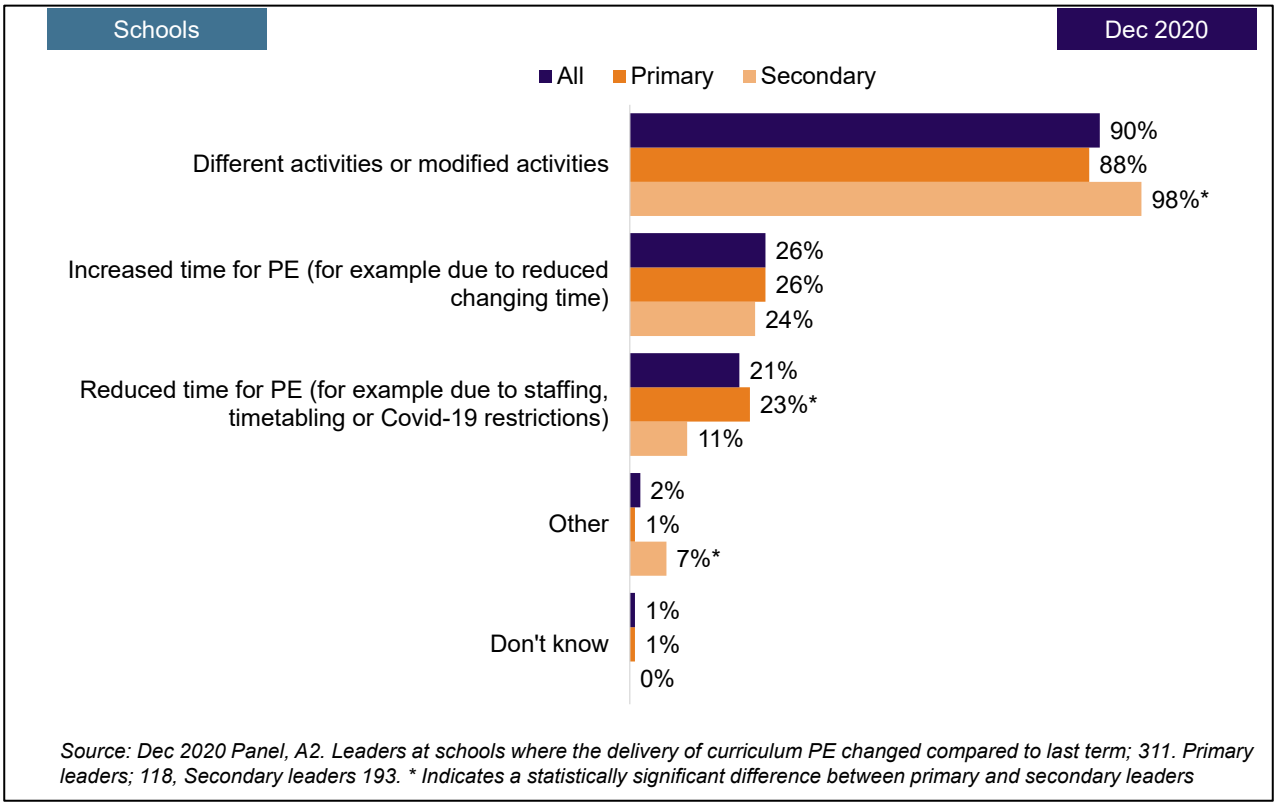
Secondary schools were significantly more likely than primary schools to say that their delivery of curriculum PE had changed (86% vs. 71%). Compared to the average across all regions (73%), schools in the South East (61%) and West Midlands (60%) were less likely to say their delivery of PE had changed, while schools in Yorkshire and Humber (92%) were more likely to say that their delivery had changed.

Ways the delivery of PE has changed

Among schools who had changed the delivery of their PE curriculum, they were most likely to had done so by delivering different or modified activities, with 90% of schools reporting this change.

A quarter (26%) of schools who had changed the delivery of PE had increased time allocated for PE (for example, due to reduced changing time), while one-in-five (21%) of these schools had reduced time for PE (for example, due to staffing, timetabling or COVID-19 restrictions). This means that overall, 19% of schools had increased their delivery of PE, while 15% of schools had reduced it.

Figure 43. Ways in which the delivery of curriculum PE has changed this term



*Source: Dec 2020 Panel, A2. Leaders at schools where the delivery of curriculum PE changed compared to last term; 311. Primary leaders; 118, Secondary leaders 193. * Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary leaders*

Secondary schools were significantly more likely than primary schools to report that they had different or modified activities compared to last autumn term (98% vs. 88%). This was less likely to be reported by schools in London compared to the average across regions (76% vs. 90%).

Primary schools were significantly more likely than secondary schools to report that they had reduced time for PE (23% vs. 11%). Schools were also more likely to have reduced time for PE if they had an Ofsted rating of “outstanding” rather than “requires improvement” (36% vs. 10%), and if they were located in Yorkshire and Humber (42% vs. 21% on average across regions).

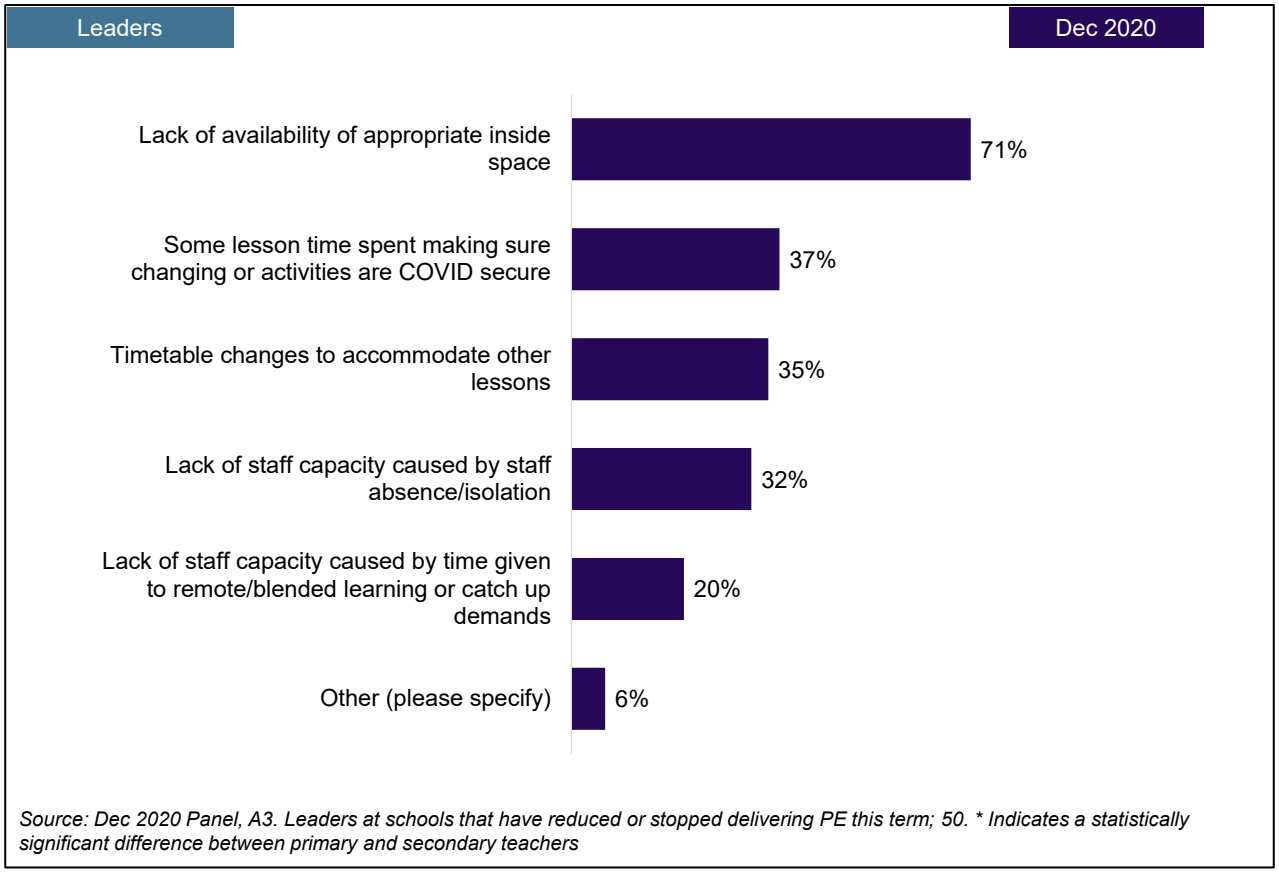
Schools in the West Midlands were more likely to have increased time for PE, compared to the average across regions (55% vs. 26%).

Reasons for reduced delivery of PE

Schools that reduced or stopped delivering PE in December 2020 were asked what factors contributed to this decision. The most common reason, mentioned by 71% of leaders, was a lack of availability of appropriate inside space.

Around a third of schools reported that they were delivering reduced PE time because: lesson time was now spent making sure changing and/or activities were COVID-19 secure (37%); timetable changes to accommodate other lessons had impacted on PE time (35%) and a lack of staff capacity caused by staff absence or isolation (32%). One-in-five (20%) schools also reported that lack of staff capacity due to time given to remote/blended learning or catch-up demands was a reason for reduced PE time.

Figure 44. Reasons that have contributed to schools delivering reduced PE time



*Source: Dec 2020 Panel, A3. Leaders at schools that have reduced or stopped delivering PE this term; 50. * Indicates a statistically significant difference between primary and secondary teachers*

There were no significant differences between primary and secondary leaders in the reasons that had contributed to schools delivering reduced PE time.

Pupil mental health and wellbeing

The pandemic and associated measures are affecting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing in a variety of ways and the return to school will also have affected different pupils in different ways. For most children and young people, being in school will be beneficial for their mental health and wellbeing, as it allows contact with friends, access to supportive adults and structure and routine. However, it may also have been challenging for some pupils, who may have needed additional support to readjust.

Schools are in a unique position, as they are able to ensure children and young people can receive a range of information and support for their mental health and wellbeing. This includes activities to prevent mental health problems by promoting resilience and creating a safe and calm environment; ensuring staff are able to recognise emerging issues as early and accurately as possible; helping pupils to access evidence-based early support and interventions; and working effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, DfE have put in place a range of measures to support schools, including guidance and signposting to resources. The department has also introduced a new £8m initiative called Wellbeing for Education Return, which is helping local areas to provide training and support to schools and colleges, to help them promote wellbeing and good mental health, identify emerging issues and access additional support where required.

In the longer term, DfE remains committed to our joint green paper delivery programme with DHSC and NHSE, including introducing new mental health support teams for all schools and colleges, providing training for senior mental health leads in schools and colleges, and testing approaches to faster access to NHS specialist support.

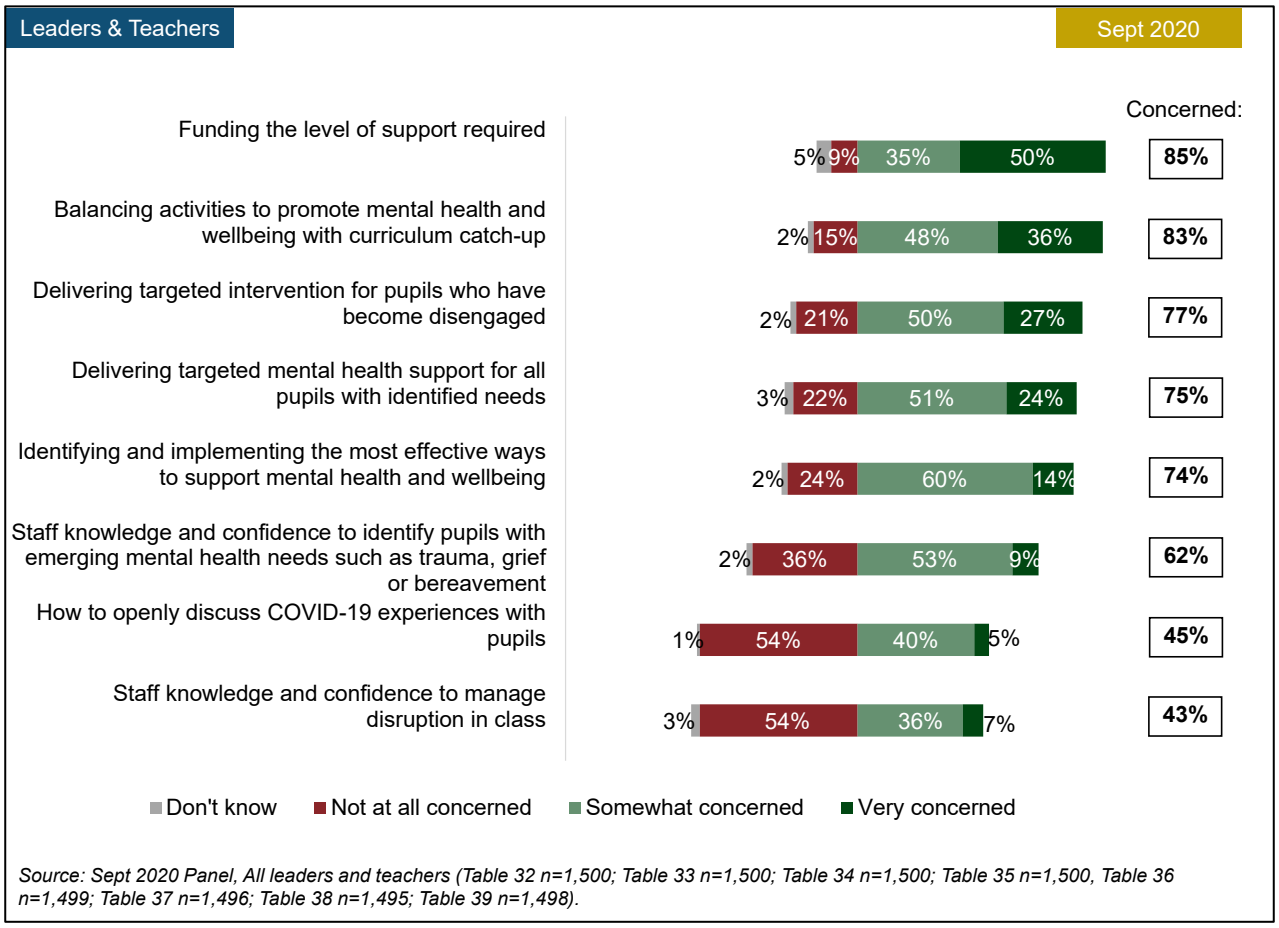
In the Parent and Pupil Panel, secondary pupils were asked a series of ONS-validated questions about their own levels of happiness, life satisfaction, the extent to which they feel the things they do in life are worthwhile, as well as their anxiety levels. Pupils were asked to give their answers on a scale of 0 to 10. Among secondary pupils there was a small but significant shift towards more negative scores across each of the four wellbeing measures between August 2020 and late October 2020.

- Self-reported scores for happiness (a mean score of 7.4 to 7.2), life satisfaction (7.1 to 6.7) and worthwhileness (7.2 to 6.8) significantly declined between August and late October.
- Following a similar trend, mean self-reported levels of feeling anxiety increased over this time period (from 2.6 to 2.9).

Areas of concern related to pupil's mental health

In September 2020, leaders and teachers were asked to what extent they were concerned about various aspects of mental health support for pupils. Funding the level of support required was the biggest concern, with 50% of leaders and teachers saying that they were 'very concerned' about this. Over a third (36%) of leaders and teachers were also very concerned about balancing activities to promote mental health and wellbeing with curriculum catch-up. Around a quarter of leaders and teachers were very concerned about delivering targeted intervention for pupils who had become disengaged (27%), and about delivering targeted mental health support for all pupils with identified needs (24%).

Figure 45. Areas of concern related to pupils' mental health



Source: Sept 2020 Panel, All leaders and teachers (Table 32 n=1,500; Table 33 n=1,500; Table 34 n=1,500; Table 35 n=1,500, Table 36 n=1,499; Table 37 n=1,496; Table 38 n=1,495; Table 39 n=1,498).

Leaders were significantly more likely than teachers to report being very concerned about funding the level of support required (70% vs. 47%) and delivering targeted mental health support for all pupils with identified needs (32% vs. 23%). Teachers on the other hand were significantly more likely than leaders to be very concerned about staff knowledge and confidence to identify pupils with emerging mental health needs such as trauma, grief or bereavement (10% vs. 6%).

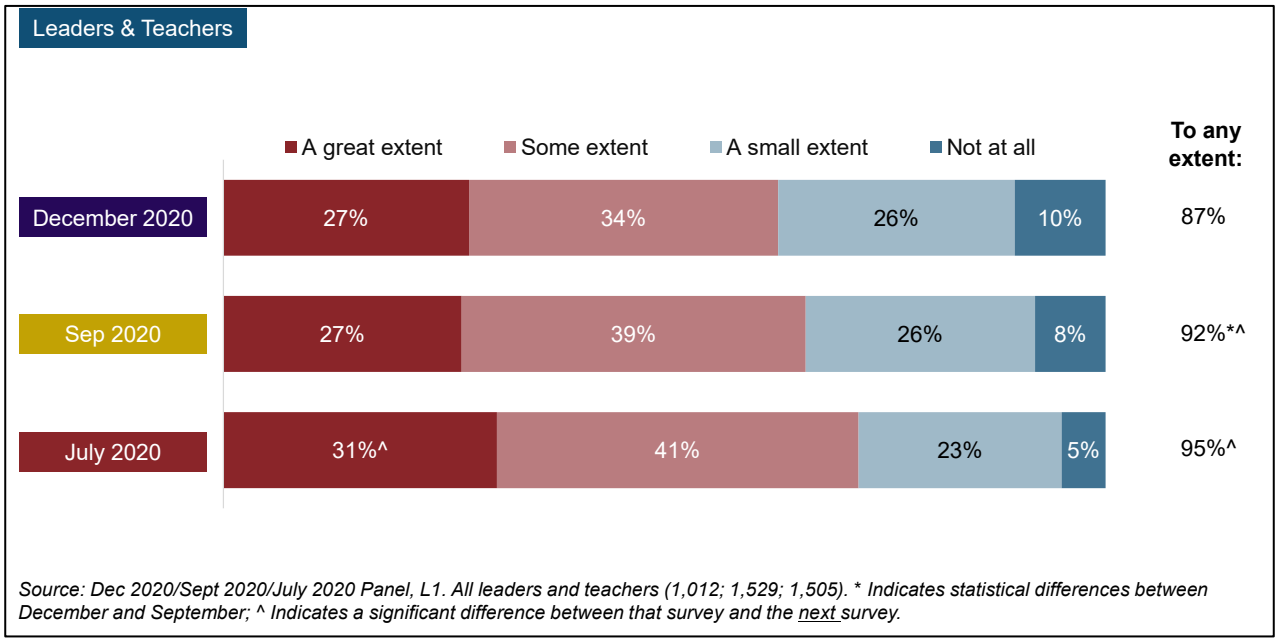
Primary leaders and teachers were significantly more likely than secondary leaders and teachers to be very concerned about balancing activities to promote mental health and wellbeing with curriculum catch-up (41% vs. 31%).

Leaders and teachers in rural schools and schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils were significantly more likely to be very concerned about delivering targeted intervention for pupils who have become disengaged (32% vs. 26% in urban schools; 34% vs. 25% in schools with lowest proportion of FSM pupils).

Concerns about offering appropriate mental health support

The proportion of leaders and teachers who were concerned (to any extent) about offering appropriate mental health support for pupils, including those who had experienced trauma or bereavement as a result of COVID-19, decreased from July to December (95% in July; 92% in September; 87% in December), though remained high.

Figure 46. Concern about offering appropriate mental health support for pupils

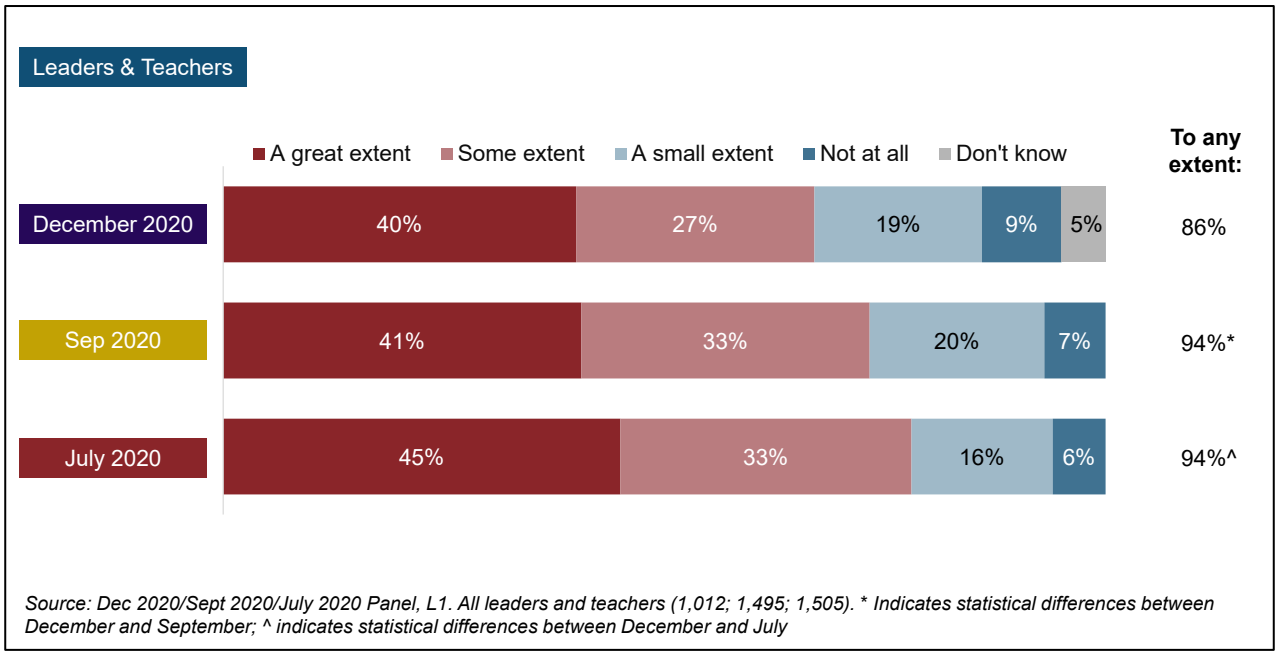


*Source: Dec 2020/Sept 2020/July 2020 Panel, L1. All leaders and teachers (1,012; 1,529; 1,505). * Indicates statistical differences between December and September; ^ Indicates a significant difference between that survey and the next survey.*

Concern about access to specialist services

Following the same trend as concerns about offering appropriate mental health support, the proportion of leaders and teachers who were concerned (to any extent) about access to specialist services, such as CAMHS, Children's Social Care Services, or educational psychology services has decreased from July to December. In July, 94% reported they were concerned to any extent about this, falling to 86% in December. The proportion reporting that they were concerned to a great extent fell from 45% to 40%.

Figure 47. Concern about access to specialist services (generally)



*Source: Dec 2020/Sept 2020/July 2020 Panel, L1. All leaders and teachers (1,012; 1,495; 1,505). * Indicates statistical differences between December and September; ^ indicates statistical differences between December and July*

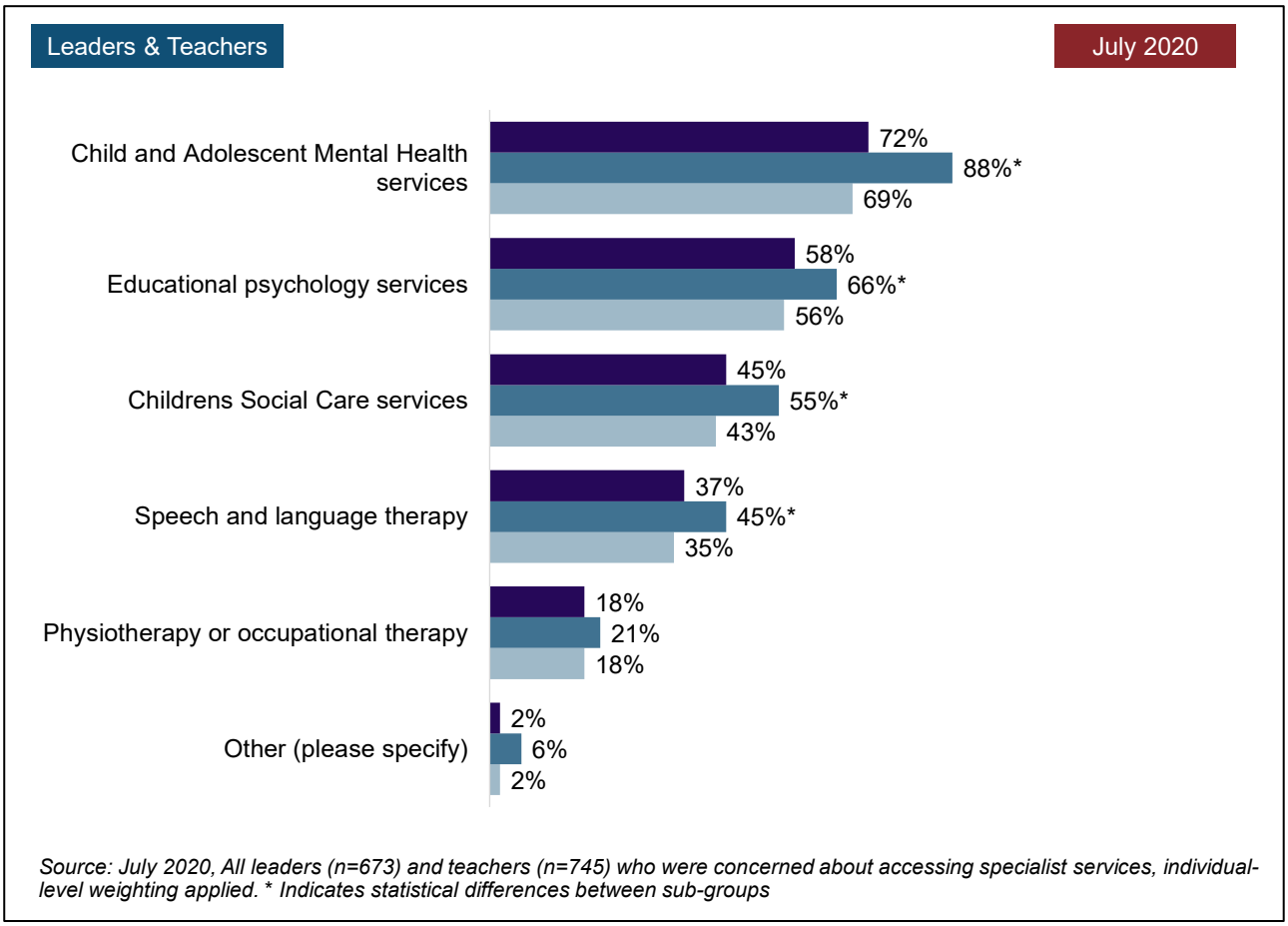
In December 2020, leaders and teachers in schools with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils were significantly more likely than leaders and teachers in schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils to be concerned to a great extent about accessing specialist services (44% vs. 30%).

The same was true of leaders and teachers from primary schools, in comparison to those from secondary schools (44%, and 35%, respectively).

Concern about access to specific specialist services

In July 2020, leaders and teachers were asked which specific services they were concerned about accessing in the Autumn term. Figure 48 illustrates that leaders and teachers were most likely to be concerned about accessing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, with nearly three-quarters (72%) expressing concern. Fifty-eight per cent of leaders and teachers were also concerned about accessing educational psychology services, and 45% were concerned about accessing Children's Social Care services.

Figure 48. Specific services leaders and teachers are concerned about accessing from September 2020



*Source: July 2020, All leaders (n=673) and teachers (n=745) who were concerned about accessing specialist services, individual-level weighting applied. * Indicates statistical differences between sub-groups*

Leaders were significantly more likely than teachers to express concern about accessing:

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (88% vs. 69%)
- Educational psychology services (66% vs. 56%)
- Children's Social Care services (55% vs. 43%)
- Speech and language therapy (45% vs. 35%).

Primary leaders and teachers were significantly more likely than secondary leaders and teachers to express concern about accessing:

- Educational psychology services (69% vs. 45%)
- Children's Social Care services (48% vs. 42%)
- Speech and language therapy (60% vs. 11%)
- Physiotherapy and occupational therapy (27% vs. 8%).

Leaders and teachers in schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils were significantly more likely than leaders and teachers in schools with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils to express concern about accessing:

- Educational psychology services (62% vs. 54%)
- Children's Social Care services (48% vs. 37%)
- Speech and language therapy (43% vs. 33%)
- Physiotherapy and occupational therapy (24% vs. 17%).

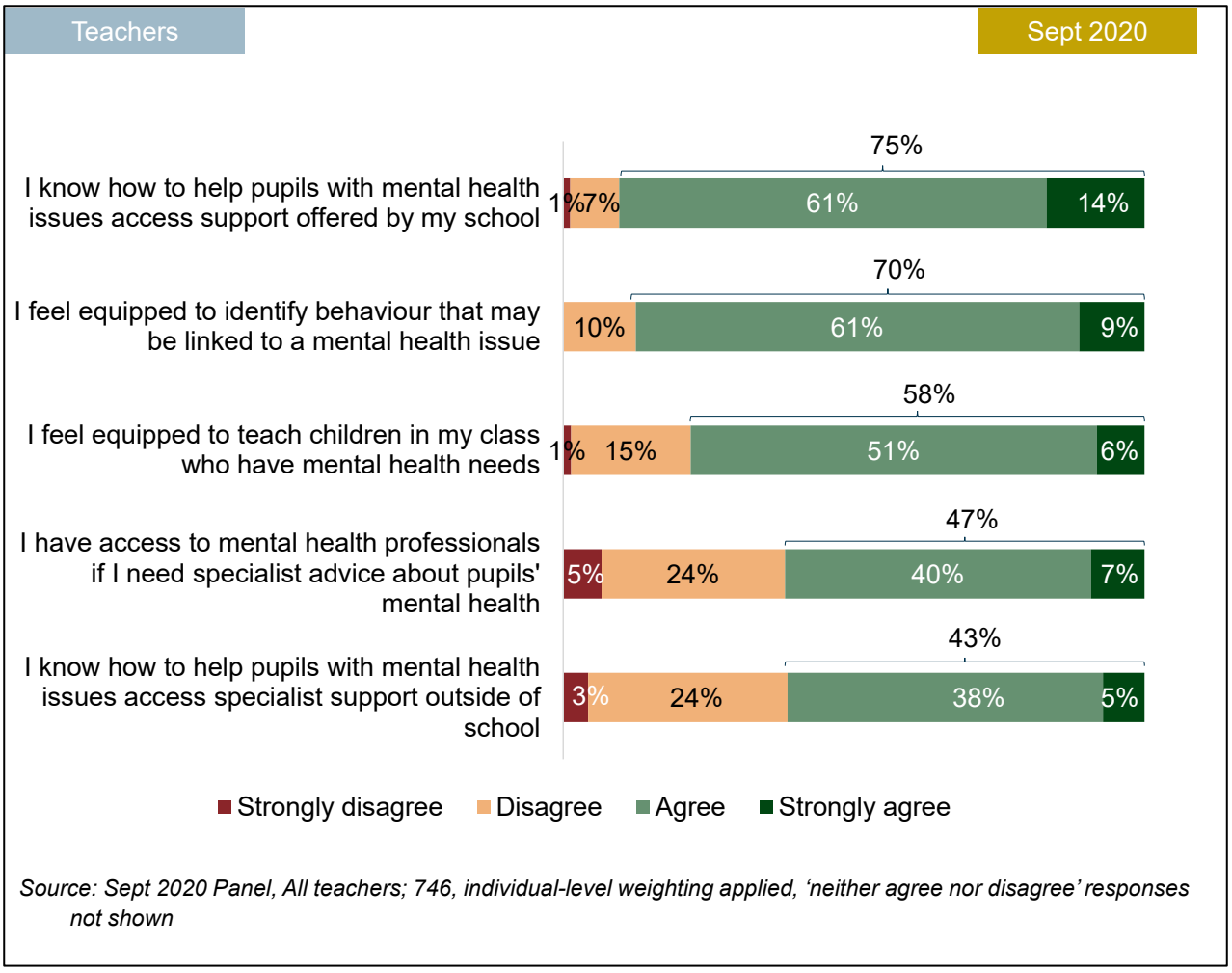
Teacher knowledge and confidence in supporting pupils' mental health

In September 2020, teachers were asked to what extent they agreed with a set of statements relating to their knowledge and confidence in supporting pupils' mental health.

Figure 49 shows that teachers were most likely to either agree or strongly agree that they know how to help pupils with mental health issues access support offered by their school (75%), and feel equipped to identify behaviour that may be linked to a mental health issue (70%).

Most teachers also agreed that they feel equipped to teach children in their class who had mental health needs (58%). Less than half of teachers agreed that they had access to mental health professionals if they needed specialist advice about pupils' mental health (47%), or that they knew how to help pupils with mental health issues access specialist support outside of school (43%).

Figure 49. Teachers' knowledge and confidence in supporting pupils' mental health



Source: Sept 2020 Panel, All teachers; 746, individual-level weighting applied, 'neither agree nor disagree' responses not shown

There were few sub-group differences for most of the statements. However, teachers were significantly more likely to agree or strongly agree that they had access to mental health professionals if they needed specialist advice about pupils' mental health if they were from:

- Secondary schools (50%, compared with 44% from primary schools)
- Schools with the highest proportion of FSM pupils (57%, compared with 46% from schools with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils)
- Schools where groups of pupils (e.g. classes, year groups) have needed to self-isolate (54%, compared with 44% from schools where groups of pupils have not needed to self-isolate).

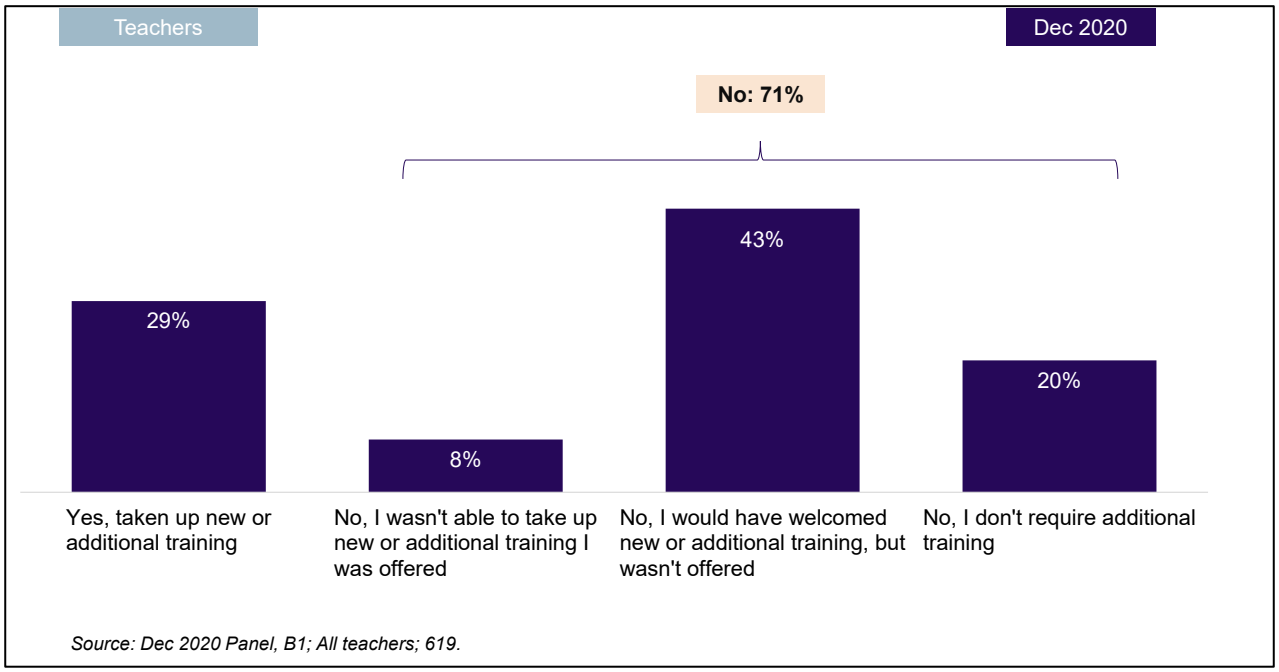
Training to assist pupil health and wellbeing

As part of the Parent and Pupil Panel, secondary school pupils were asked directly about their own levels of happiness, life satisfaction, the extent to which they feel the things they do in life are worthwhile, and their anxiety levels. Among secondary school pupils there has been a small but significant shift towards more negative scores across each of the four wellbeing measures between August 2020 and late October 2020.

- Self-reported scores for happiness (7.4 to 7.2), life satisfaction (7.1 to 6.7) and worthwhileness (7.2 to 6.8) have significantly declined between August and late October.
- Following a similar trend, self-reported levels of anxiety have increased over this time period (from 2.6 to 2.9).

In December 2020, teachers were asked if they had taken up any new or additional training beyond what they would usually receive on pupil mental health since September. Most teachers (71%) had not taken up any new or additional training, with 43% reporting that they would have welcomed new or additional training, but they were not offered this and 20% reporting that they did not need additional training. Less than a third of teachers (29%) had taken up new or additional training on pupil mental health since September 2020.

Figure 50. Teachers' uptake of new or additional training on pupil mental health since September 2020



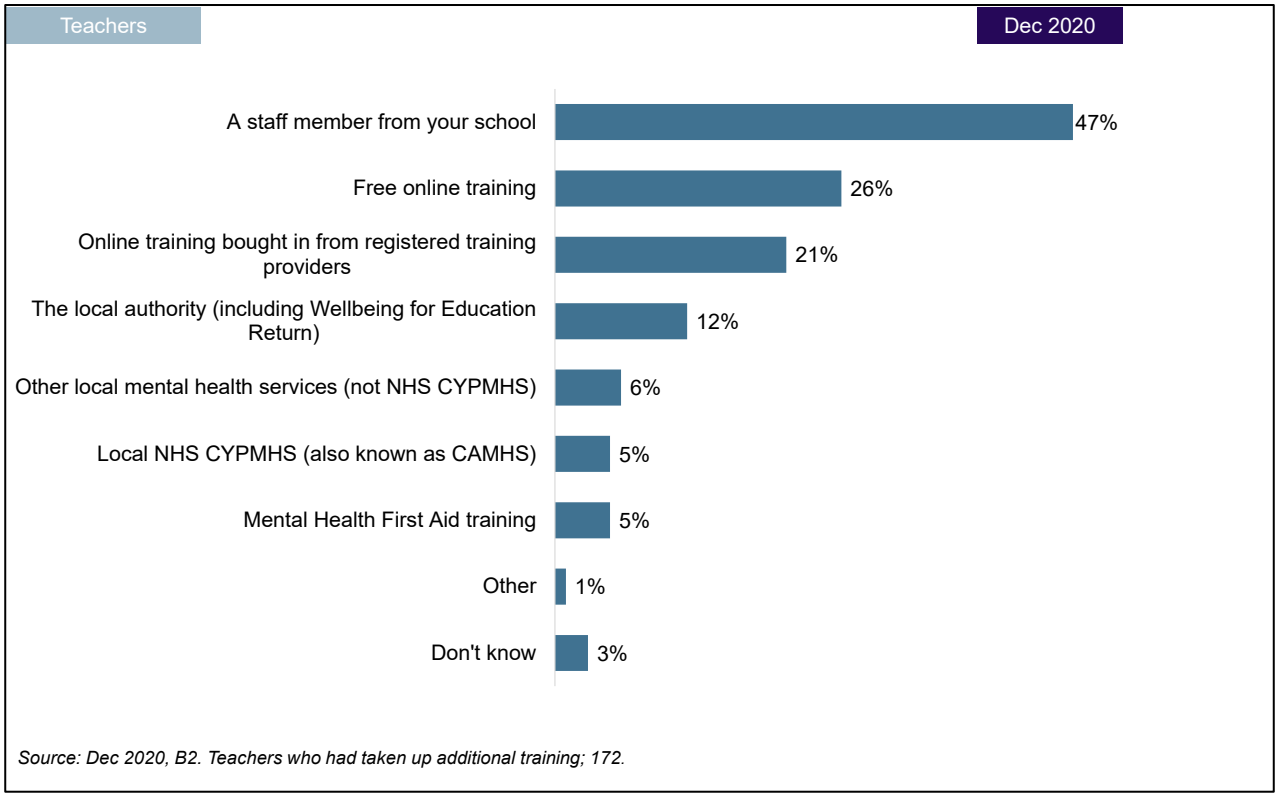
Primary teachers were significantly more likely than secondary teachers to report that they had taken up new or additional training since September (34% vs. 23%). This was also significantly more likely to be the case for BAME teachers than White teachers (46% vs. 27%); and for teachers that rated their life meaning (how worthwhile) as 'very high' compared with teachers that rated their life meaning as 'low' (35% vs. 23%).

Providers of pupil mental health training

Teachers that had taken up additional training were asked who the training was provided by. Most commonly, the training was provided by a staff member in the teachers' school (47%). Just over a quarter of teachers had taken up free online training (26%), and just over a fifth had taken up online training bought in from registered training providers (21%).

Around one in ten or less had taken up additional training from other providers, as shown in Figure 51.

Figure 51. Providers of training on pupil mental health



Source: Dec 2020, B2. Teachers who had taken up additional training; 172.

Workforce

This section covers concerns around workload and how this could be made more manageable, how many schools are experiencing long and short-term staff shortages and how they are finding cover. It also covers how the number of trainee placements has changed since last academic year and the extent of concerns over funding.

Workload and well-being

Workload reduction is a longstanding priority for the Department for Education. For example, in 2019 the Department launched a series of online resources to support school leaders and teachers to help reduce and review workload in their schools. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on many aspects of leaders' and teachers' workloads; such as the pressure of identifying ways to support pupils at home, developing online learning tools and materials, and additional responsibilities (e.g. providing welfare support for vulnerable pupils not in school). In addition, the pandemic has impacted on leaders' and teachers' well-being, with significant pressures from working at home, such as parenting and home-schooling their own children.

The impact of COVID-19 on workload was initially explored in May 2020 in the COVID-19 School Snapshot Survey. This was during the first national lockdown, when schools were closed to all but children of key workers and those deemed vulnerable. At this time remote education was still relatively new and many teachers were delivering learning offline. The May 2020 School Snapshot Survey found that 43% of teachers reported their workload was more manageable than usual compared with 18% that reported their workload was less manageable.[22] However, the findings showed that COVID-19 had brought a new set of pressures to school leaders who were more likely to say their workload, in comparison to before the pandemic was less manageable (45%) than more manageable (15%).

The opening of schools more fully during the summer term of the 2019/2020 academic year and into the autumn term of the 2020/21 academic year brought additional pressures on teachers and leaders, who were expected to provide high-quality learning in school, and remotely, whilst also providing on-going welfare support for vulnerable pupils who were not attending schools and implement government guidelines to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

With these additional pressures in mind, in the December 2020 panel, leaders and teachers were asked an open-ended question about what support would help to make their personal workload more manageable for the remainder of the academic year. The issues raised in response covered a broad range of themes, incorporating their thoughts

[22] Please see the COVID-19 School Snapshot Survey for more details.

not only on workload but also on well-being, as highlighted below. These themes reflect the situation at that time, when schools were still open, but lockdown was in force due to the rapid growth in COVID-19 cases across the country.

Leaders views on how to make their workload more manageable

A common theme reported by leaders was the desire for increased support and more timely communication from Ofsted, the DfE and wider government. This ranged from more recognition of the work that teachers do, to allowing schools more freedom to make the best decision for themselves. However, the key issue was the need for greater lead in time for changes that are imposed on schools as a result of the pandemic, which in turn impact on workload.

"The current practise of last-minute press releases with no warning, no funding and no consultation is counter-productive and destroying relationships between the school and its community."

Leader, secondary school

"It would be very helpful to have earlier indications of decisions that need to be acted upon. Late announcements about face masks, general expectations, exam arrangements, last day of term training days, etc. add massively to workload because there is limited time to respond in a measured and well-planned way."

Leader, secondary school

"Advice/information to be shared well in advance by the DfE so school leaders have enough time to react and respond e.g. changes to GCSEs, endings to term dates."

Leader, secondary school

At this point in time, the arrangements for exams in the summer of 2021 were clearly a major source of anxiety for school leaders who repeatedly called for greater clarity and more timely government announcements that would allow schools the opportunity to prepare for the associated changes. Concern focused on the potential impact on workload of not being given sufficient time to address the lost weeks of contact time with year 11 students and manage the additional interventions required. It is important to bear in mind that the survey was conducted in December 2020, prior to the approach to exams being confirmed by Ofqual in February 2021.

"Greater clarity re formal assessments and funding for additional COVID costs. Greater recognition of the commitment of my teachers and the extraordinary efforts they are going to."

Leader, secondary school

The open-ended question in the December 2020 survey revealed how leaders felt under pressure due to difficulties in staffing their schools. They highlighted the additional pressure on their workload of spending time covering roles such as pastoral care, alongside providing one-to-one support for pupils who had fallen behind during the first lockdown, which would be alleviated if they could hire additional staff.

School leaders highlighted the need for increased funding to address workload issues brought about by staff absence, typically to cover staff who are self-isolating or to increase Teaching Assistance support:

"Staffing isolation puts a lot of pressure on staff as the supply pool is small and interventions are too difficult to catch-up on with absences. Budget also adds the extra strain as to can you afford to buy in supply cover as isolation absence is not covered under the insurance."

Leader, primary school

Indeed, the pressure to implement government guidelines to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 was raised repeatedly as having a major impact on the workloads of school leaders. The support most readily identified to help make their personal workload more manageable was funding to cover COVID-19 related costs such as increased cleaning and social distancing measures and additional staffing, with non-teaching staff employed to monitor test and trace within schools.

"The majority of my time is now taken up with managing the control measures in the risk assessment, managing cover for staff absence, managing COVID-19 cases, contact tracing, comms with parents etc. Anything to reduce the above"

Leader, primary school

"More funding from central and local government resulting in the ability to appoint additional staff allowing SLT [the Senior Leadership Team] to become more strategic and less operational. Currently, the senior leadership team are spending circa three hours a day on duty (due to bubbles) which includes wiping down tables with disinfectant."

Leader, secondary school

Other themes less commonly reported by leaders included delaying the resumption of Ofsted inspections, reduction in administrative duties, paperwork and performance management and contact tracing during the weekends, alongside the need for well-being resources such increased mental health support for staff and students and 'proper' breaks and holidays. Teachers' views on how to make their workload more manageable

While teachers reported their workload was more manageable than usual, in the May 2020 Snapshot survey, working arrangements have changed significantly since then with the requirement to provide in school learning; working to implement new practices and procedures to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (e.g. staggered start and end times, overseeing extra hygiene requirements etc), supporting pupils who continue to require remote learning and supporting absent colleagues who are ill or forced to isolate.

As with school leaders, teachers mentioned the importance of increased funding to address the impact of these factors on the perceived manageability of their workload, however this was more focussed on additional staff and teaching resources, including more technical and IT support, rather than COVID-19 specific costs more commonly reported by leaders.

“Money to buy workbooks rather than spending hours printing and sticking in sheets.”

Teacher, primary school

“More money to buy intervention resources and to help with increase in photocopying costs.”

Teacher, secondary school

As with school leaders, teachers also suggested that more support and communication from DfE and Ofsted would help with their workload pressures. A key concern in December 2020, before the government announced it plans for exams in 2021, was the likely impact on teacher workloads if sufficient notice was not given in the event of teacher assessment being the proposed approach. Teachers also discussed the possibility of continuing the suspension of routine Ofsted inspections into the Spring term to allow teachers to focus on the additional requirements necessitated by keeping schools open during the pandemic..

“Clearer guidance about what exams will look like in Summer 2021 so that we can make appropriate plans.”

Teacher, secondary school

“Lift the pressure of Ofsted - schools should be focussing on the needs of individuals not an inspection framework.”

Teacher, primary school

Teachers also mentioned the increased pressure on their workload with lesson planning, which, in December 2020, included simultaneous online and ‘real time’ teaching.

Teachers expressed the need for more support in helping them to plan both approaches, as well as more time in the day to be designated to lesson planning, in order to help them balance their workload.

"I would like there to be some ease on marking and the giving of homework expectations. I teach 506 students across 24 classes. I have to plan both in class lessons and online lessons. It is an impossible task. I have seen no work reduction taking this into account. I am seeking other employment outside of education."

Teacher, secondary school

"Our workload has increased hugely due to now having to provide remote learning for those isolating as well as teaching the children in class. Parents are becoming more demanding and are not so accepting of available resources such as Oak or BBC Bitesize for remote learning. It is actually easier to provide remote learning for an entire bubble rather than remote for some and face to face for others"

Teacher, primary school

"Currently, I am having to plan my lesson for the students in class, put it online for those accessing it from home and then teaching a class as well as teaching online at the same"

Teacher, secondary school

"They said setting remote learning is possible during working hours, but it is not. I have had to set work every weekend. Add the number of staff who have been sent home because they have to shield which therefore means more supply teachers who do not know the pupils at your school which means that you have got to sort classes out in their absence . . . I think we should hire NQTs who have no jobs yet or retired teachers who have the time to be solely in charge of Google classroom or remote learning."

Teacher, secondary school

Teachers also expressed the need for a reduction in commitments outside lessons (e.g. training, CPD) and in the amount of marking and removal of performance management and data drop.

"Less time on paperwork assessments and more time providing enriching resources and lessons to engage children and provide enjoyment within the classroom."

Teacher, primary school

The challenge of keeping the school 'safe' in light of the growing number of Covid-19 cases in December 2020 was also mentioned as an additional pressure on workloads, albeit less frequently than other themes, highlighting the need to return to a more 'normal'

school environment (e.g. no ‘bubbles’ or distancing). In line with school leaders, a minority highlighted the need for well-being resources to be put in place for increased mental health support for staff and students, and a commitment to ensure ‘proper’ breaks and holidays.

Leaders' and teachers' health and wellbeing

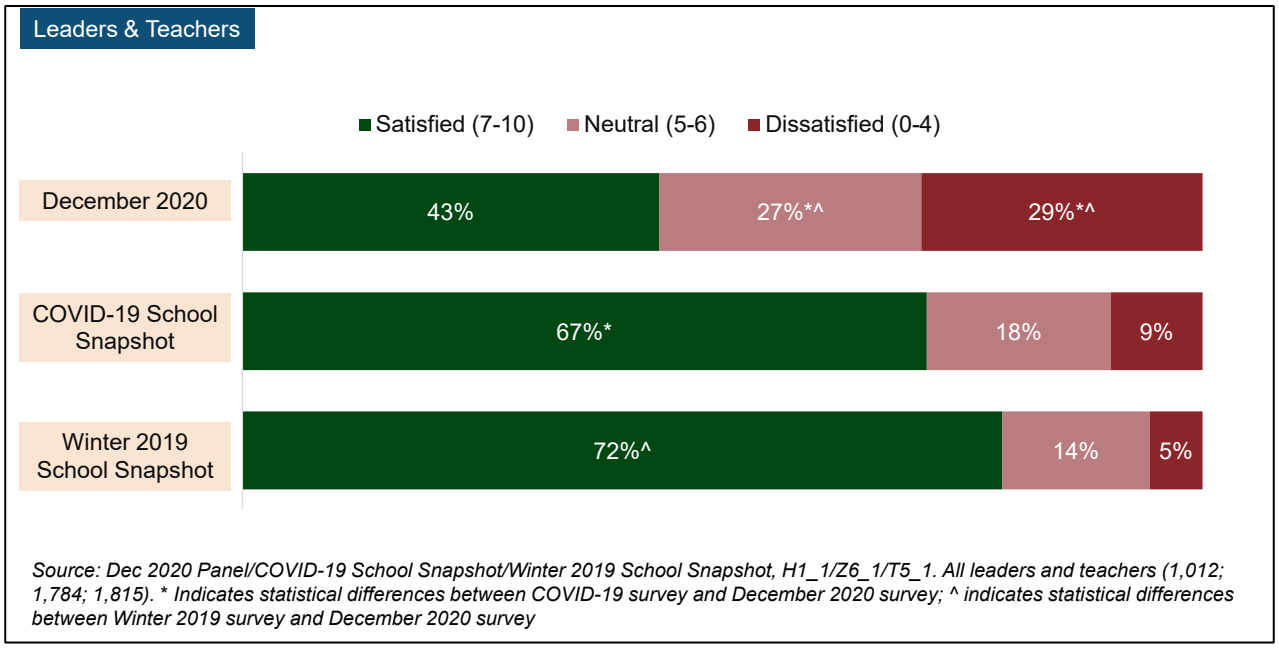
This section looks at leaders' and teachers' life satisfaction, worthwhileness, happiness and anxiety. It also investigates staff wellbeing and job satisfaction.

Life satisfaction

Leaders and teachers were asked to rate 'overall, how satisfied are you with your life?' using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all and 10 is 'completely'.

In December 2020, less than half of leaders and teachers were satisfied with life, with 43% giving a positive score (between 7-10).[23]

Figure 52. Life satisfaction



*Source: Dec 2020 Panel/COVID-19 School Snapshot/Winter 2019 School Snapshot, H1_1/Z6_1/T5_1. All leaders and teachers (1,012; 1,784; 1,815). * Indicates statistical differences between COVID-19 survey and December 2020 survey; ^ indicates statistical differences between Winter 2019 survey and December 2020 survey*

The decline in life satisfaction during the course of 2020 were common to both teachers and leaders. In December 2020, 40% of leaders reported a positive life satisfaction score which was significantly lower than the 74% of leaders who reported the same in the COVID-19 Snapshot survey in May and the 84% of leaders who gave a positive score in the Winter 2019 Snapshot survey run in November to December 2019. Similarly, the 40% of teachers reporting a positive life satisfaction score in December 2020; significantly lower than the 67% in the COVID-19 Snapshot survey and the 70% in the Winter 2019 Snapshot survey.

[23] Given the change in people's circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the timing of the December survey (December 2020) and the Annual Population Survey (March – June 2020), comparisons between the December survey results and the general population are not explored.

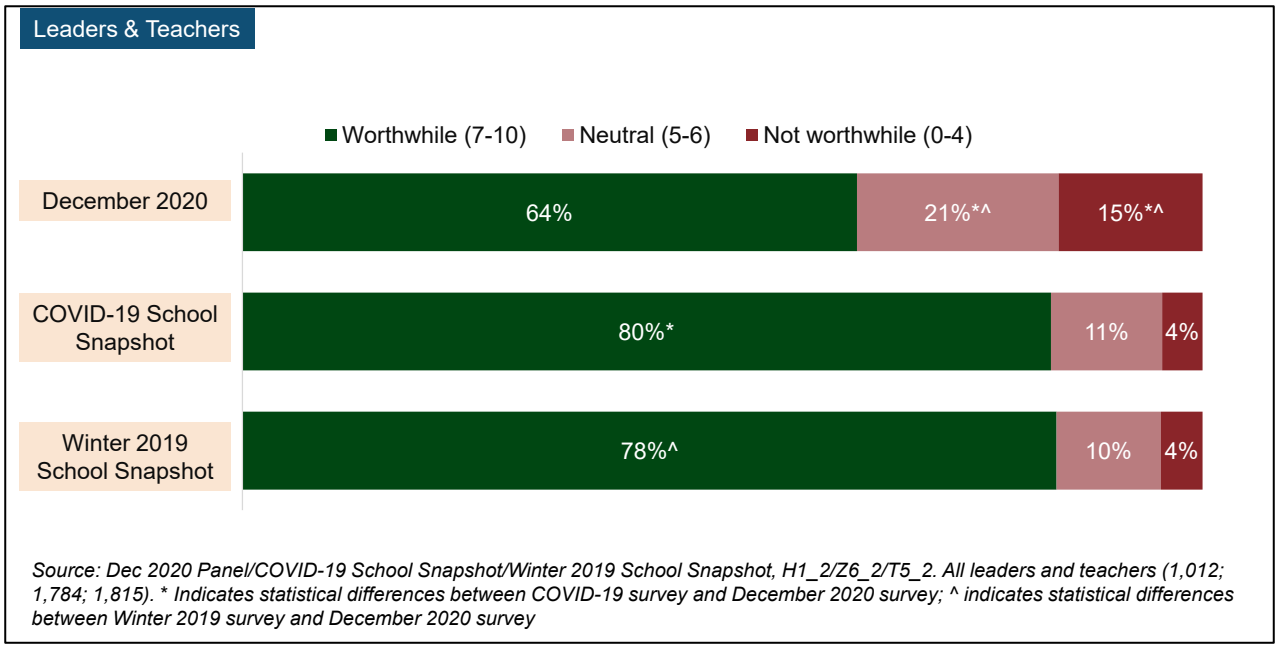
Unlike the May 2020 COVID-19 survey and Winter 2019 School Snapshot surveys, the low levels of life satisfaction were common to both teachers and leaders in December 2020.

Worthwhileness of daily tasks

Using the same 0 to 10 scale as life satisfaction, leaders and teachers were asked 'overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?'.

In December 2020, close to two-thirds (64%) of leaders and teachers felt that the things they did in their life were worthwhile (giving a positive score between 7-10). Leaders (69%) were significantly more likely to have higher scores than teachers (63%).

Figure 53. Worthwhileness of daily tasks



*Source: Dec 2020 Panel/COVID-19 School Snapshot/Winter 2019 School Snapshot, H1_2/Z6_2/T5_2. All leaders and teachers (1,012; 1,784; 1,815). * Indicates statistical differences between COVID-19 survey and December 2020 survey; ^ indicates statistical differences between Winter 2019 survey and December 2020 survey*

Again, the proportion of leaders reporting a positive score in the December survey (69%) was significantly lower than in the May 2020 COVID-19 survey (87%) and in the Winter 2019 survey (92%). The same trend applied to teachers; the proportion of teachers reporting a positive score in the December 2020 survey (63%) was significantly lower than in the COVID-19 survey (79%) and in the Winter 2019 survey (76%).

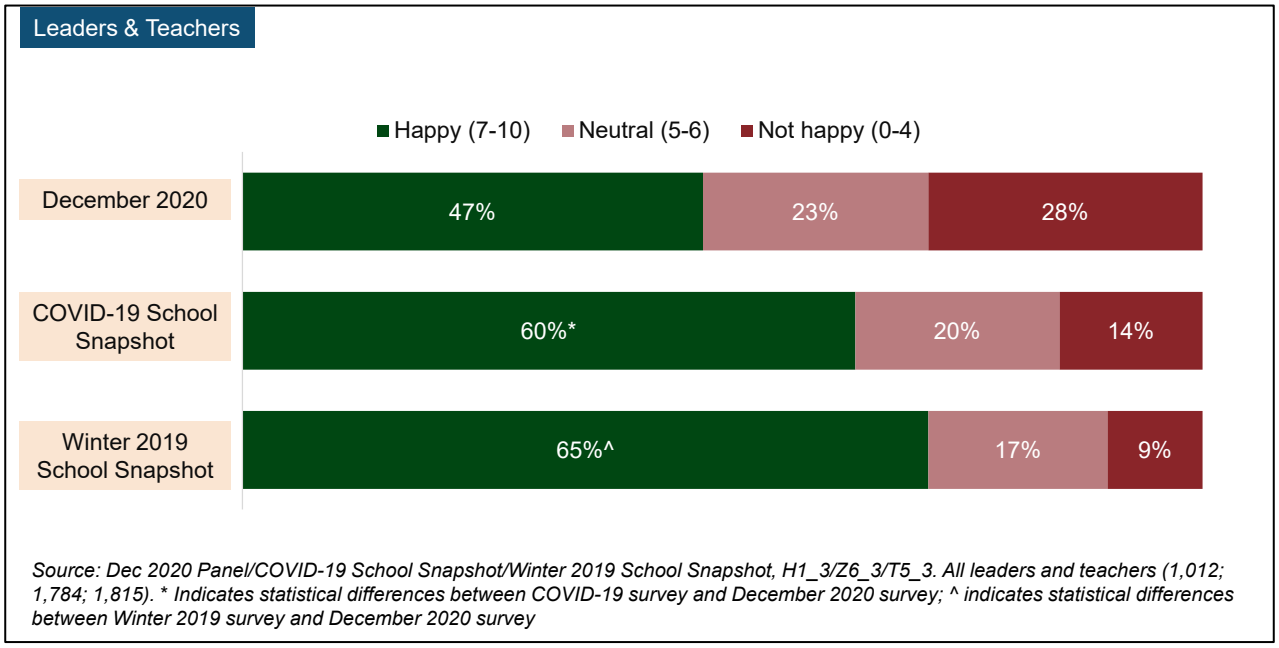
Happiness

Using the same scale, leaders and teachers were asked 'overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?'.

Almost half (47%) reported that they were happy yesterday, with 42% of leaders and 48% of teachers reporting this (the difference between leaders and teachers is not statistically significant).

The proportion of leaders and teachers that reported a positive score in this survey was significantly lower than the 60% in the May 2020 COVID-19 survey (61% leaders; 60% teachers) and 65% in the Winter 2019 survey (75% leaders; 64% teachers).

Figure 54. Levels of happiness



*Source: Dec 2020 Panel/COVID-19 School Snapshot/Winter 2019 School Snapshot, H1_3/Z6_3/T5_3. All leaders and teachers (1,012; 1,784; 1,815). * Indicates statistical differences between COVID-19 survey and December 2020 survey; ^ indicates statistical differences between Winter 2019 survey and December 2020 survey*

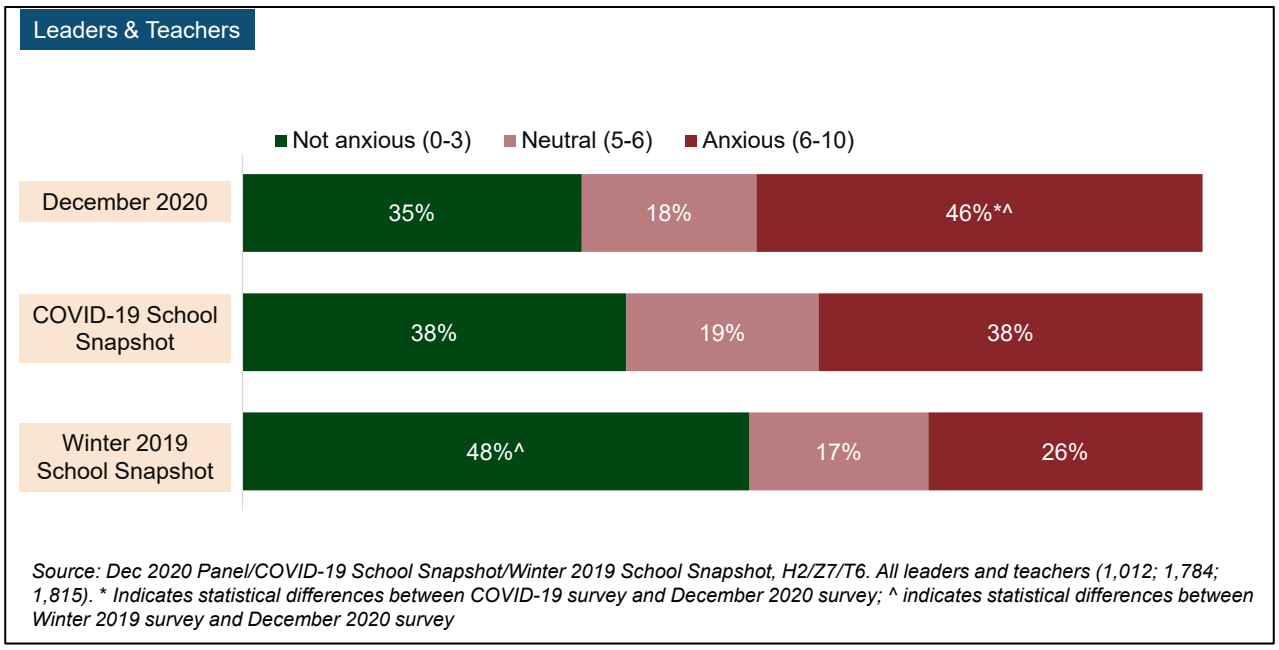
Anxiety

Using the same scale, leaders and teachers were asked 'overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?'. It is important to note that for anxiety a low score (between 0-3) is a positive score as it represents not being anxious.

About one-third (35%) of leaders and teachers reported that they were **not** anxious (giving a score of 0-3 on the scale); this differed little between leaders (33%) and teachers (36%).

A third of leaders (33%) and teachers (36%) expressed little or no feelings of anxiety, representing a significant drop compared to the COVID-19 survey (39% leaders; 38% teachers) and the Winter 2019 survey (52% leaders; 48% teachers).

Figure 55. Anxiety levels

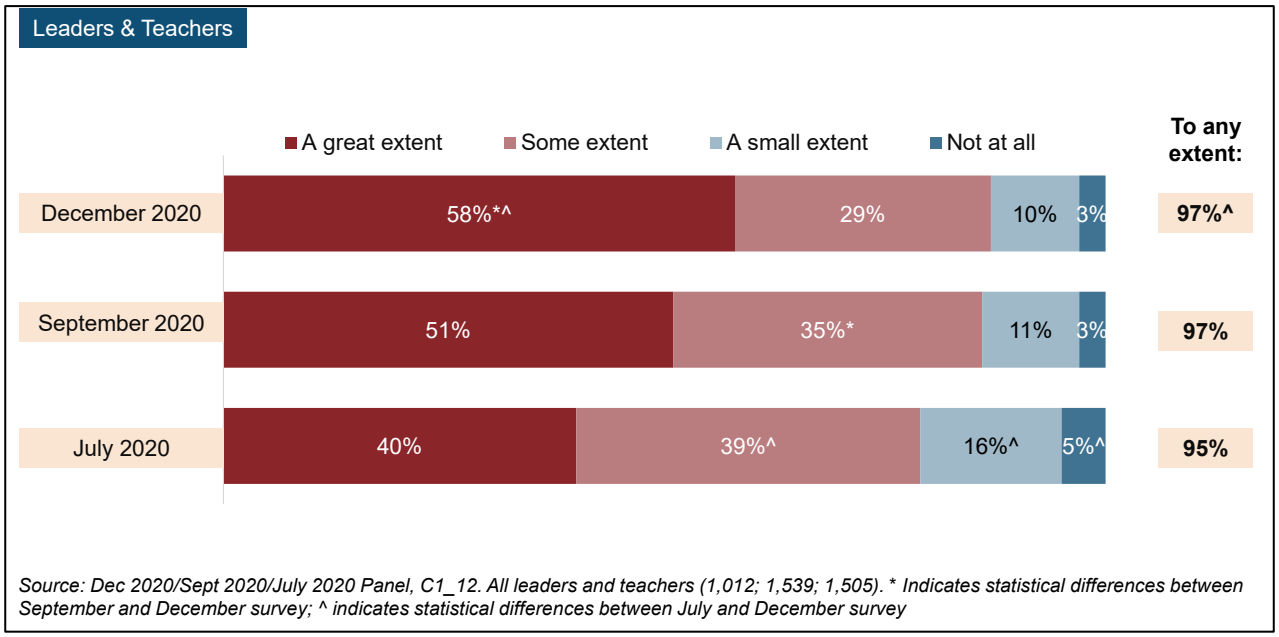


*Source: Dec 2020 Panel/COVID-19 School Snapshot/Winter 2019 School Snapshot, H2/Z7/T6. All leaders and teachers (1,012; 1,784; 1,815). * Indicates statistical differences between COVID-19 survey and December 2020 survey; ^ indicates statistical differences between Winter 2019 survey and December 2020 survey*

Staff wellbeing

In July, September, and December 2020, leaders and teachers were asked to what extent they were concerned about staff wellbeing in their school. Since July leaders and teachers have become significantly more concerned, as indicated by the proportion who were concerned to *a great extent* (58% in December, compared with 51% in September and 40% in July 40%).

Figure 56. Extent of concern about staff wellbeing



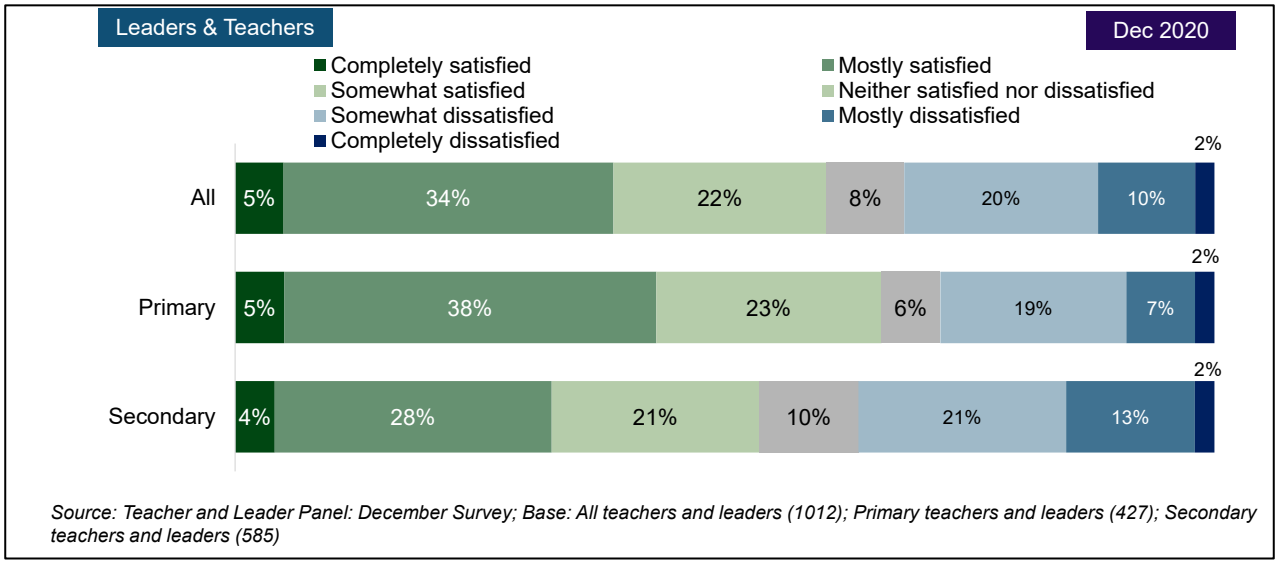
*Source: Dec 2020/Sept 2020/July 2020 Panel, C1_12. All leaders and teachers (1,012; 1,539; 1,505). * Indicates statistical differences between September and December survey; ^ indicates statistical differences between July and December survey*

Job satisfaction

In December 2020, all teachers and leaders were asked how satisfied they were with their present job. Overall, 60% of leaders and teachers were satisfied with their job (5% completely satisfied, 34% 'mostly' satisfied and 22% 'somewhat satisfied). A third (32%) were dissatisfied (2% completely dissatisfied, 10% 'mostly' dissatisfied' and 20% 'somewhat dissatisfied').

As shown in Figure 57, primary leaders and teachers were more likely than secondary to be satisfied with their current job (66% vs. 54%).

Figure 57 Satisfaction with present job



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel: December Survey; Base: All teachers and leaders (1012); Primary teachers and leaders (427); Secondary teachers and leaders (585)

Job satisfaction was previously explored in the Winter 2019 School Snapshot survey, at which point 73% of teachers and leaders reported they were satisfied, compared with 60% in December 2020, indicating a drop in job satisfaction for over the last year. In Winter 2019, it was found that leaders were significantly more likely to say they were satisfied with their job than teachers (81% vs. 71%) whereas there was no difference between teacher and leader satisfaction in December 2020 (both 60%).

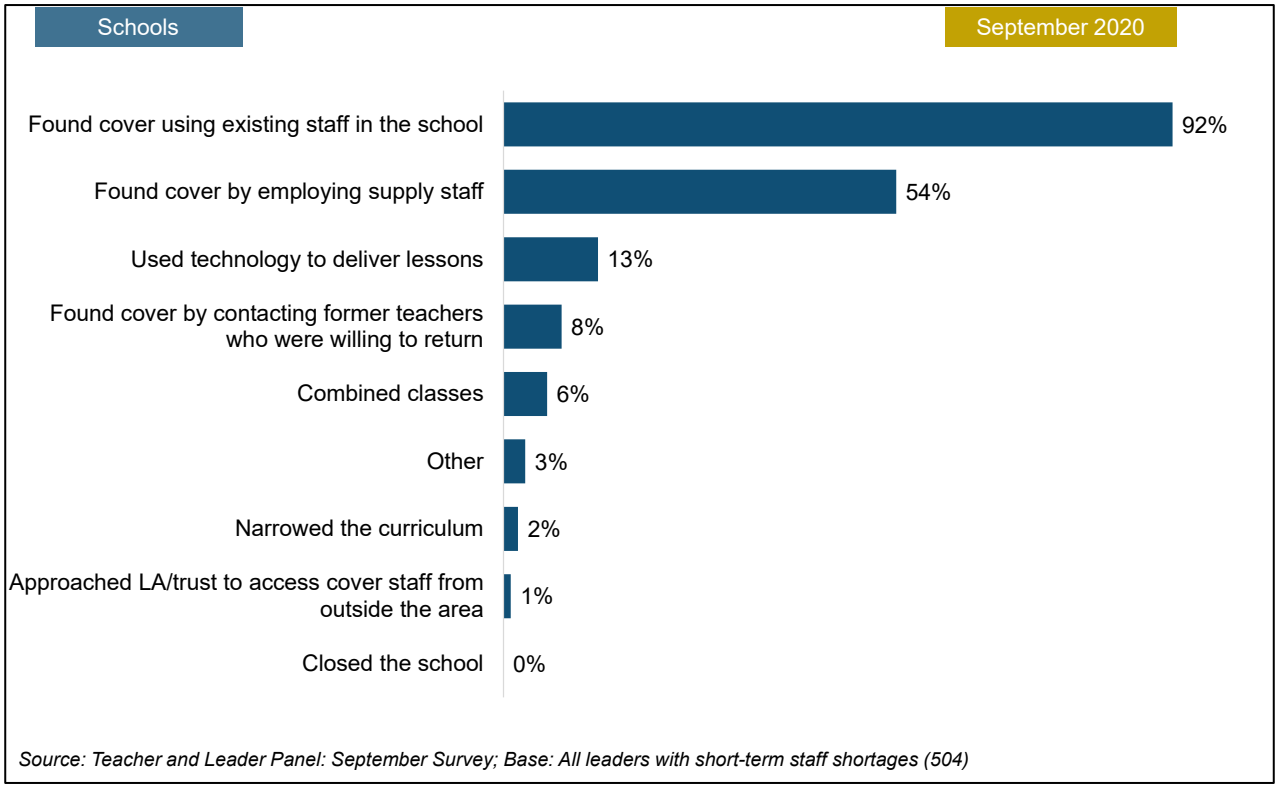
Staff shortages

In September 2020, 21% of schools reported they had not experienced any staff shortages since the start of term. Over two-thirds (69%) of schools had experienced short-term staff shortages (for 2 weeks or less) and a further 10% of schools had experienced long-term staff shortages (greater than 2 weeks).

Schools where groups of pupils have needed to self-isolate were more likely to have faced short-term staff shortages (77% vs. 67% of schools who have not needed to self-isolate bubbles), as were those with the highest proportion of FSM pupils (57% vs. 28% of schools with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils).

As shown in Figure 58, the most common action in response to short-term staff shortages was to find cover using existing staff in the school (92%). Over half (54%) of schools with short-term staff shortages employed supply staff to cover.

Figure 58. Actions taken in response to short-term shortages



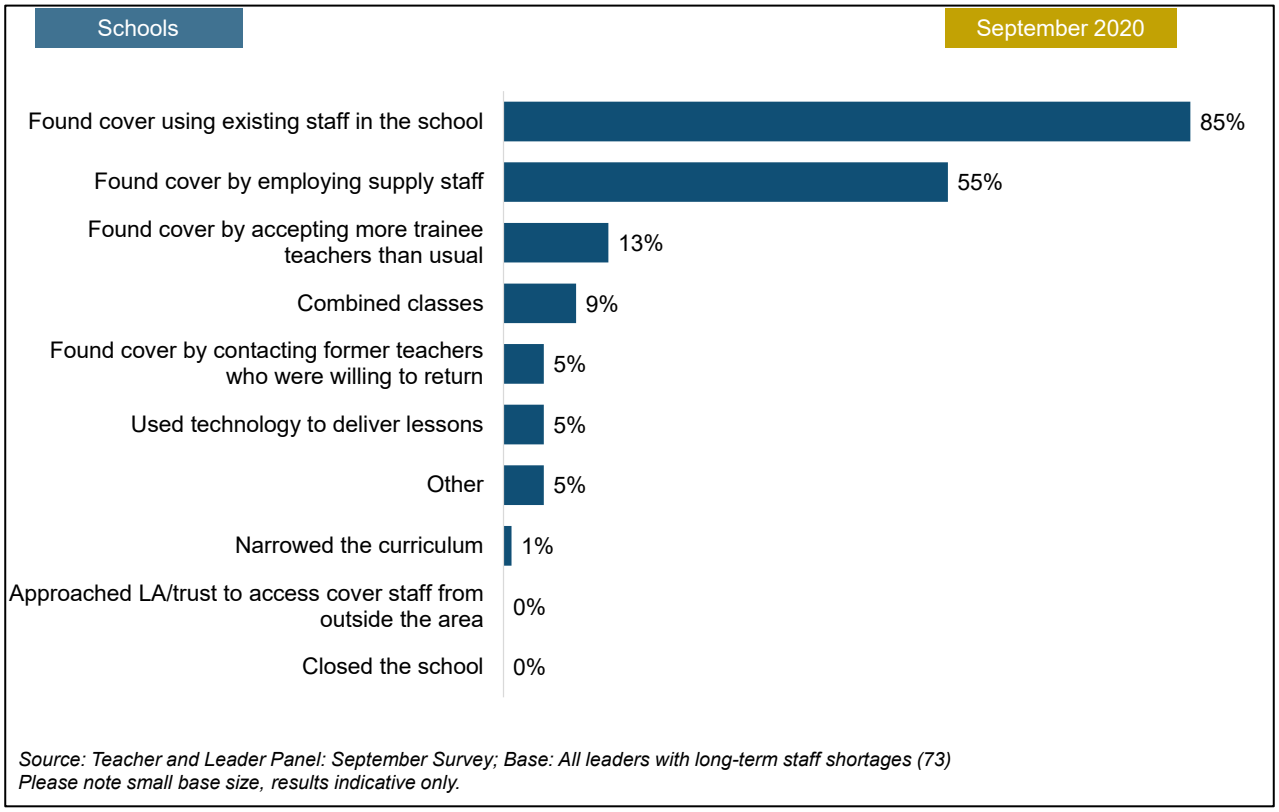
Source: Teacher and Leader Panel: September Survey; Base: All leaders with short-term staff shortages (504)

In order to cover short-term staff shortages, secondary schools were more likely than primary to report employing supply staff (70% vs. 52%), using technology to deliver lessons (40% vs. 9%) and combining classes (13% vs. 5%).

Schools with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils were more likely to use technology to deliver lessons (16% vs. 8% of schools with the highest proportion of pupils eligible for FSM).

Schools who had experienced long term staff shortages were also asked which actions they had taken in response. As shown in Figure 59 below, results are broadly consistent with response to short-term shortages. Most schools with long term shortages reported using existing staff (85%) or supply staff (55%) to cover. One response unique to longer-term staff shortages was the employment of more trainee teachers than usual, reported by 13% of schools with long-term shortages.

Figure 59. Actions taken in response to long-term shortages



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel: September Survey; Base: All leaders with long-term staff shortages (73)
Please note small base size, results indicative only.

Secondary schools were more likely than primary to report contacting former teachers who were willing to return (17% vs. 3%).

Staffing costs for supply teachers

In September 2020, all leaders were asked if they were paying more for employing supply staff, compared with the last autumn term. For 41% of schools this was not applicable as they had not employed any supply staff, a further 14% did not know. Primary schools were more likely to say they had not employed any supply staff compared with secondary schools (43% vs. 30%). Overall, 14% of schools said they

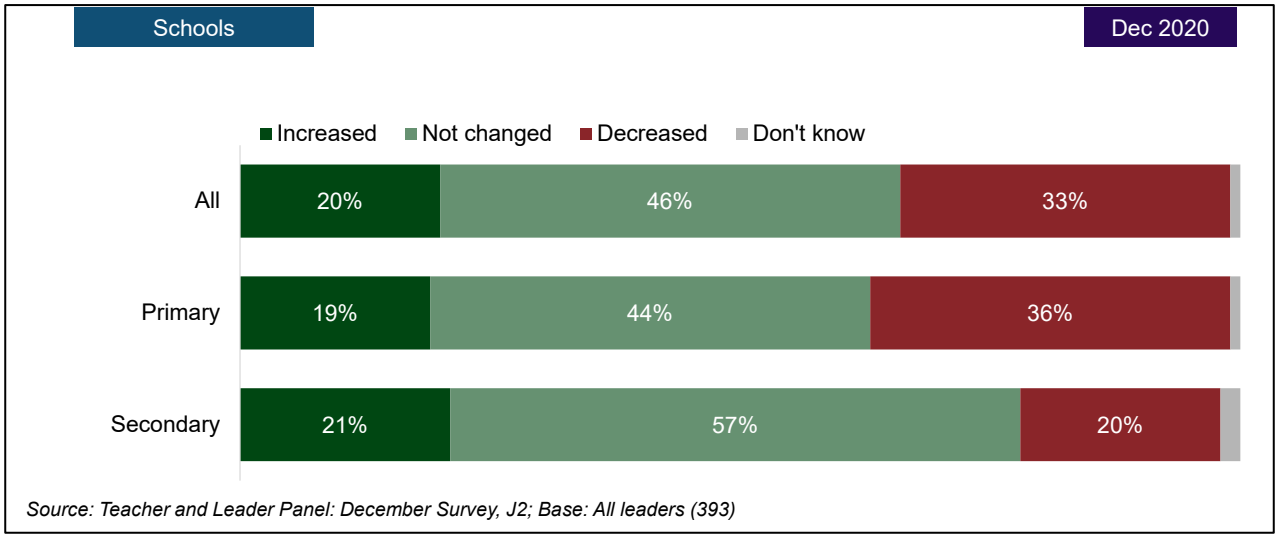
were paying more for employing supply staff and around a third (32%) said they were not.

Trainee Placements

Newly qualified trainees make up a large proportion of those entering the workforce annually with just under 40,000 people undertaking Initial Teacher Training (ITT) this year (2020/21). The ITT criteria requires training programmes to be designed to provide trainees with sufficient time training in schools to demonstrate they have achieved the specified standards to be recommended for qualified teacher status (QTS). There are thousands of placement schools spread across England that work in partnership with ITT providers to host those trainees. However, due to the impact of Covid-19 on schools and reduced face-to-face teaching time for most pupils, hosting trainees was expected to be more challenging than usual for placement schools, and a challenge for ITT providers to overcome.

In December 2020, leaders were asked if the number of trainee placements they were hosting this academic year (2020/21) was different to the number their school hosted in the previous academic year. Around half of schools (53%) had changed the number of trainee placements they hosted, and this was more likely amongst primary compared with secondary schools (55% vs. 41%). Among those making a change, it was more common to have reduced the number of placements than increased them.

Figure 60 Whether number of trainee placements the school is hosting is different to last academic year



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel: December Survey, J2; Base: All leaders (393)

As shown in Figure 60 primary schools were more likely than secondary to report a reduction in the number of trainee placements (36% vs. 20%). Schools with the lowest proportion of FSM pupils were more likely than that highest proportion to have reduced the number of trainee placements (38% vs. 19%).

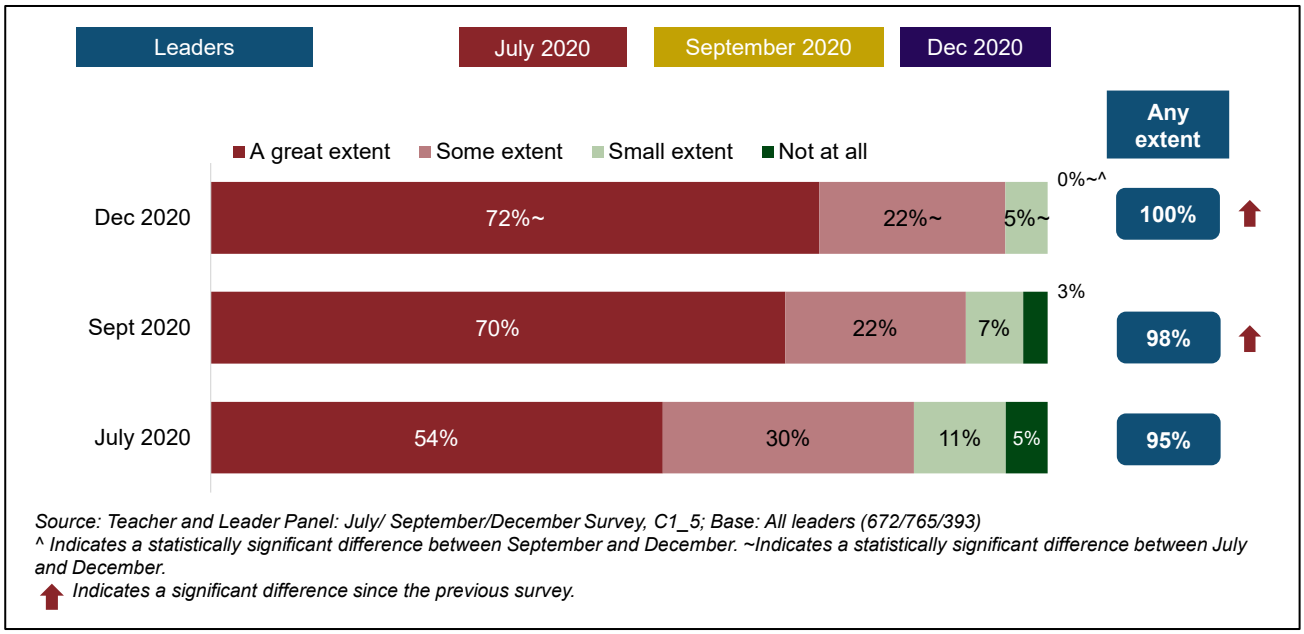
The majority (90%) of schools hosting trainee placements in the 2020/21 academic year said they felt fairly or very confident about hosting them for the entire duration of their

placement, with half (49%) indicating they were ‘very confident’. One in 10 (10%) schools were not very or not at all confident they could host the trainee placement for the entire duration of their placement, with 2% indicating they were ‘not at all confident’.

Concern about School Funding

Across all three waves of research in the autumn term, leaders were asked about the extent of concerns around funding. As shown in in Figure 61, there was an increase from 95% of leaders with any concerns about funding in July 2020 to 100% of leaders expressing concerns in December 2020.[24] The proportion stating they were concerned 'to a great extent' rose from 54% in July 2020 to 72% in December 2020.

Figure 61. Extent of concern around funding



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel: July/ September/December Survey, C1_5; Base: All leaders (672/765/393)
^ Indicates a statistically significant difference between September and December. ~Indicates a statistically significant difference between July and December.
Indicates a significant difference since the previous survey.

In December 2020, there was no significant difference between school phase in the extent of concern expressed by leaders; the findings were universal across schools. Primary leaders, for example, were as likely as secondary leaders to be 'greatly concerned' about funding (73% vs. 71%).

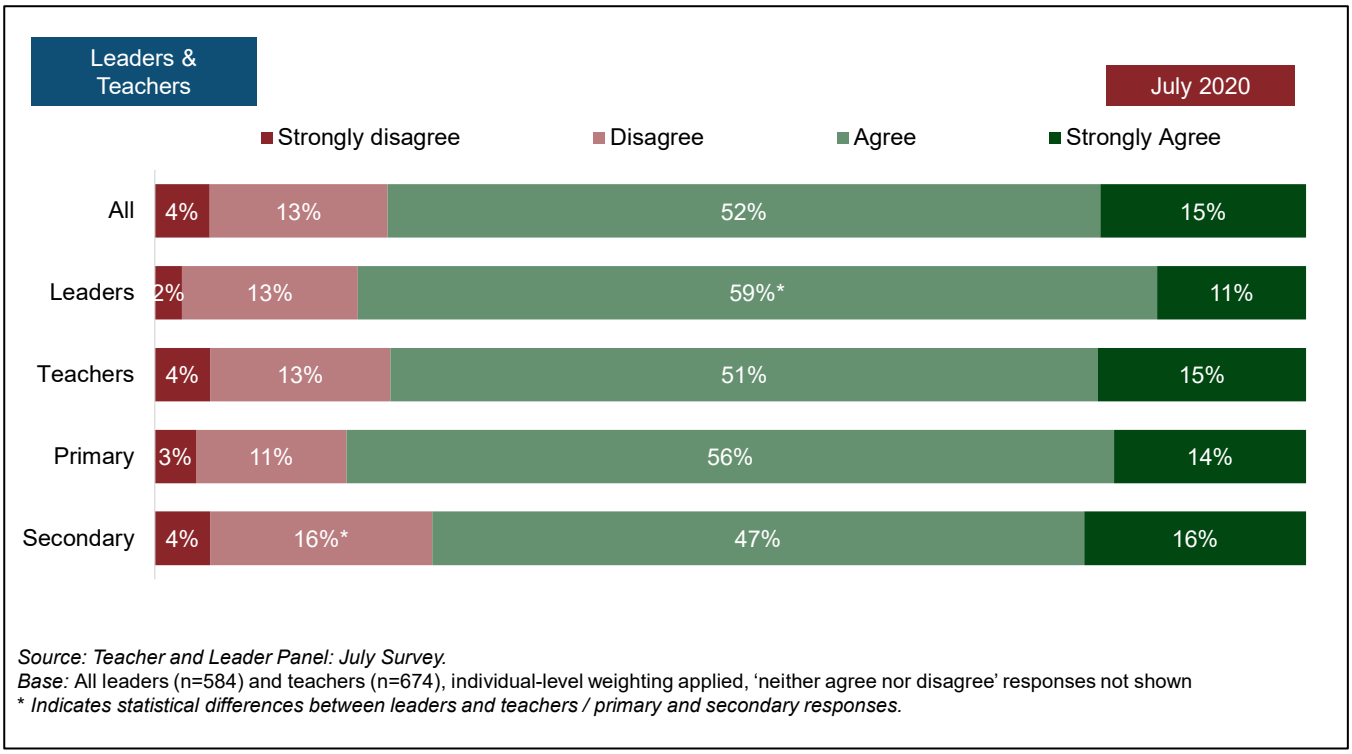
[24] In July 2020, leaders were asked how concerned they were about funding in relation to their school fully reopening to all pupils from September 2020.

Information and guidance for reopening schools

Appropriateness of information and guidance

Most (66%) leaders and teachers in the July 2020 survey agreed that they had access to appropriate information and guidance about schools reopening. They were significantly more likely to agree with this if they were from primary schools (70%, compared with 62% from secondary schools).

Figure 62. Extent to which leaders and teachers agree that they had appropriate information and guidance about reopening schools



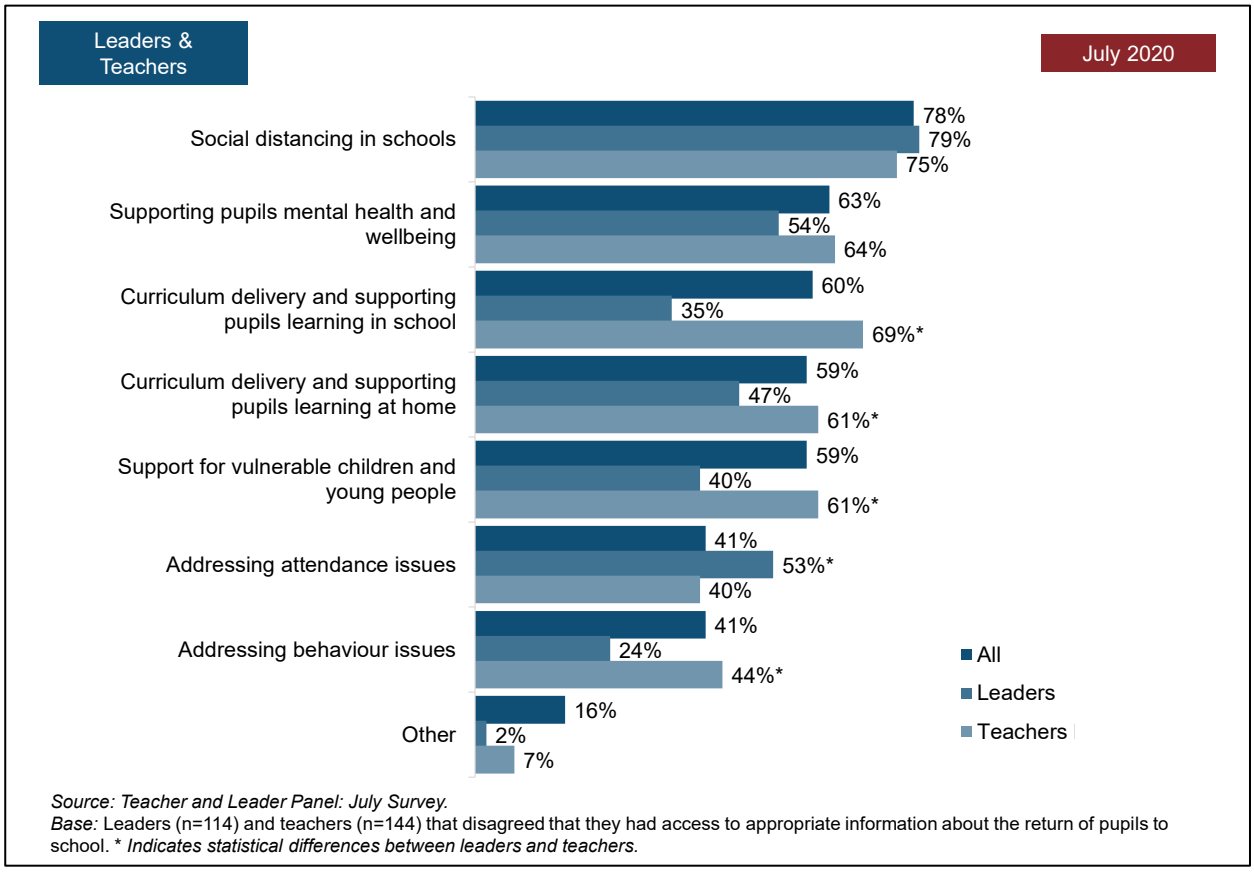
Source: Teacher and Leader Panel: July Survey.
Base: All leaders (n=584) and teachers (n=674), individual-level weighting applied, 'neither agree nor disagree' responses not shown
** Indicates statistical differences between leaders and teachers / primary and secondary responses.*

Leaders and teachers based at academy schools were more likely to agree that they had received the appropriate information and guidance about schools reopening (70%, compared with 63% of non-academy-based leaders and teachers).

Areas where more guidance needed

Leaders and teachers reported a range of areas in which they felt more guidance would have been useful in relation to schools fully reopening in autumn 2020. They most commonly reported a need for more guidance on social distancing in schools (78% overall), and four of the remaining six options presented in the survey were reported as areas where more information was needed by roughly three-in-five leaders and teachers (in Figure 63).

Figure 63. Areas leaders and teachers felt more information or guidance would be useful in relation to schools fully reopening in September



Source: Teacher and Leader Panel: July Survey.
Base: Leaders (n=114) and teachers (n=144) that disagreed that they had access to appropriate information about the return of pupils to school. * *Indicates statistical differences between leaders and teachers.*

There were differences by school phase that reflected differences in leaders' and teachers' job roles. Leaders were more likely to report they would have found more information and guidance addressing attendance issues useful (53% vs. 40% of teachers). In contrast, teachers were more likely to have found information relating to curriculum delivery either at home (61% vs. 47% of leaders) or in school (69% vs. 35%) useful, alongside guidance on supporting vulnerable children (61% vs. 40% of leaders).

There were fewer differences by phase but reflecting findings in the Pupil Behaviour section of this report, secondary leaders and teachers were more likely than primary teachers and leaders to report they would find more guidance on addressing behaviour issues useful (49% vs. 31%).

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