

[Home](#) ▾ [Education, training and skills](#) ▾ [Teaching and leadership](#)  
▾ [School and college voice: omnibus surveys for 2023 to 2024](#)



[Department  
for Education](#)

Research and analysis

# School and college voice: January 2024

Updated 10 October 2024

## Applies to England

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Mentor capacity for Initial Teacher Trainees and Early Career Teachers](#)

[Progression to school leadership](#)

[Requests related to social transitioning in school](#)

[PE timetabling](#)

[Implementation of DfE attendance guidance](#)

[Awareness of levelling up premium](#)

[Pupil premium spending](#)

[Systematic Synthetic Phonics \(SSP\)](#)

[Secondary school reading support](#)

[Length of the school week](#)

[GCSE and A-Level class sizes](#)

[Glossary of terms](#)

## Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned Verian (formerly known as Kantar Public) to recruit and maintain a panel of school and college leaders and teachers in England, known as the School and College Voice (SCV). The SCV is designed to collect robust evidence to help the Department for Education understand the perspectives of teachers and leaders. This allows us to make more effective policy.

The SCV works as a series of short surveys across the academic year, covering a range of new and longstanding policy issues. This report is about the findings from the January 2024 survey wave of the School and College Voice.

## Methodology

The SCV survey is answered by teachers and leaders who have agreed to participate in short, regular research surveys on topical education issues.

We select teachers and leaders randomly using records from the School Workforce Census (SWFC) and invite them to take part in an online survey. For the first survey of the academic year we send invitation letters and emails to teachers and leaders. For other surveys in that same academic year, the invitation is sent by email and text message to the teachers and leaders who agreed to join the panel in the first survey.

We conducted the survey between 2 February and 12 February 2024. The respondents were:

- 940 primary school teachers
- 743 secondary school teachers
- 373 special school teachers
- 387 primary school leaders
- 300 secondary school leaders
- 147 special school leaders

When we refer to the 'average' we are reporting the arithmetic mean. Complete findings can be found in the published data tables, which include more detail on how different groups answered each question.

The report makes some comparisons to previous surveys conducted in previous academic years, for example the [school and college panel omnibus surveys for 2022 to 2023](#). These comparisons are helpful to understand how trends may be

changing. However, the survey methodology changes over time and so comparisons to previous years are not as reliable as survey findings within each academic year.

Further information on the survey methodology is available in the accompanying [school and college voice technical report: 2023 to 2024 academic year](#)

## **Banding for percentages**

We use a consistent banding system for describing percentages, as follows:

- Very few - 0% to 10%
- A small minority - 11% to 32%
- A minority - 33% to 47%
- About half - 48% to 52%
- A majority - 53% to 66%
- A large majority - 67% to 89%
- Almost all - 90% to 100%

We do not describe 0% and 100% as 'none' and 'all' because figure rounding may mean this is not accurate. For instance, 100% may be 99.6% of respondents, rounded to the nearest whole number.

## **Topics covered in this survey**

The survey included questions about:

- mentor capacity for Initial Teacher Trainees and Early Career Teachers
- teacher progression to school leadership
- requests related to pupils social transitioning in school
- compulsory PE timetabling
- implementation of DfE attendance guidance
- awareness of levelling up premium payments in chemistry, computing, mathematics and physics
- pupil premium spending
- use of systematic synthetic phonics programmes

- teacher confidence supporting struggling readers in secondary school
- implementation of guidance on the length of the school week
- GCSE and A-Level class sizes

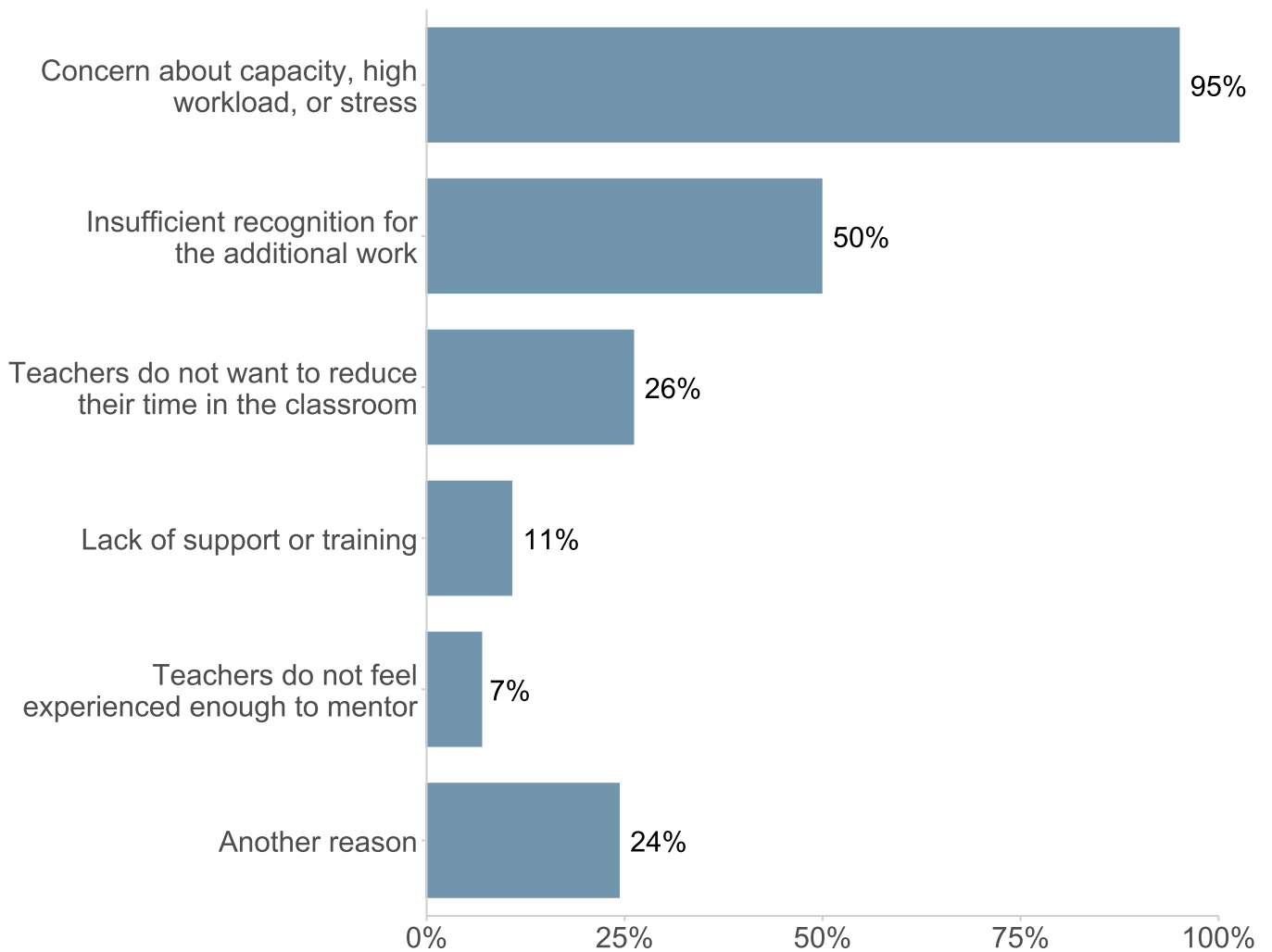
## **Mentor capacity for Initial Teacher Trainees and Early Career Teachers**

Almost all leaders (90%) said that they had Initial Teacher Trainees (ITTs) or Early Career Teachers (ECTs) working at their school, and, among these leaders, almost all (100%) said that their school was able to provide mentors for their ITTs and/or ECTs.

The majority of leaders said that it had been very easy or fairly easy (62%) to provide these mentors since September 2022, while a small minority said it had been very difficult or fairly difficult (22%).

We asked school leaders who said they had found it difficult to provide mentors since September 2022 why this was (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Why leaders have found it difficult to provide ITT and ECT mentors**



Base: Leaders who have found it very difficult or fairly difficult to provide mentors to ITTs or ECTs since September 2022 (n = 173). Respondents could select all that applied.

The most common reasons were concerns about capacity, high workload, or stress (95%) and insufficient recognition for the additional work (50%).

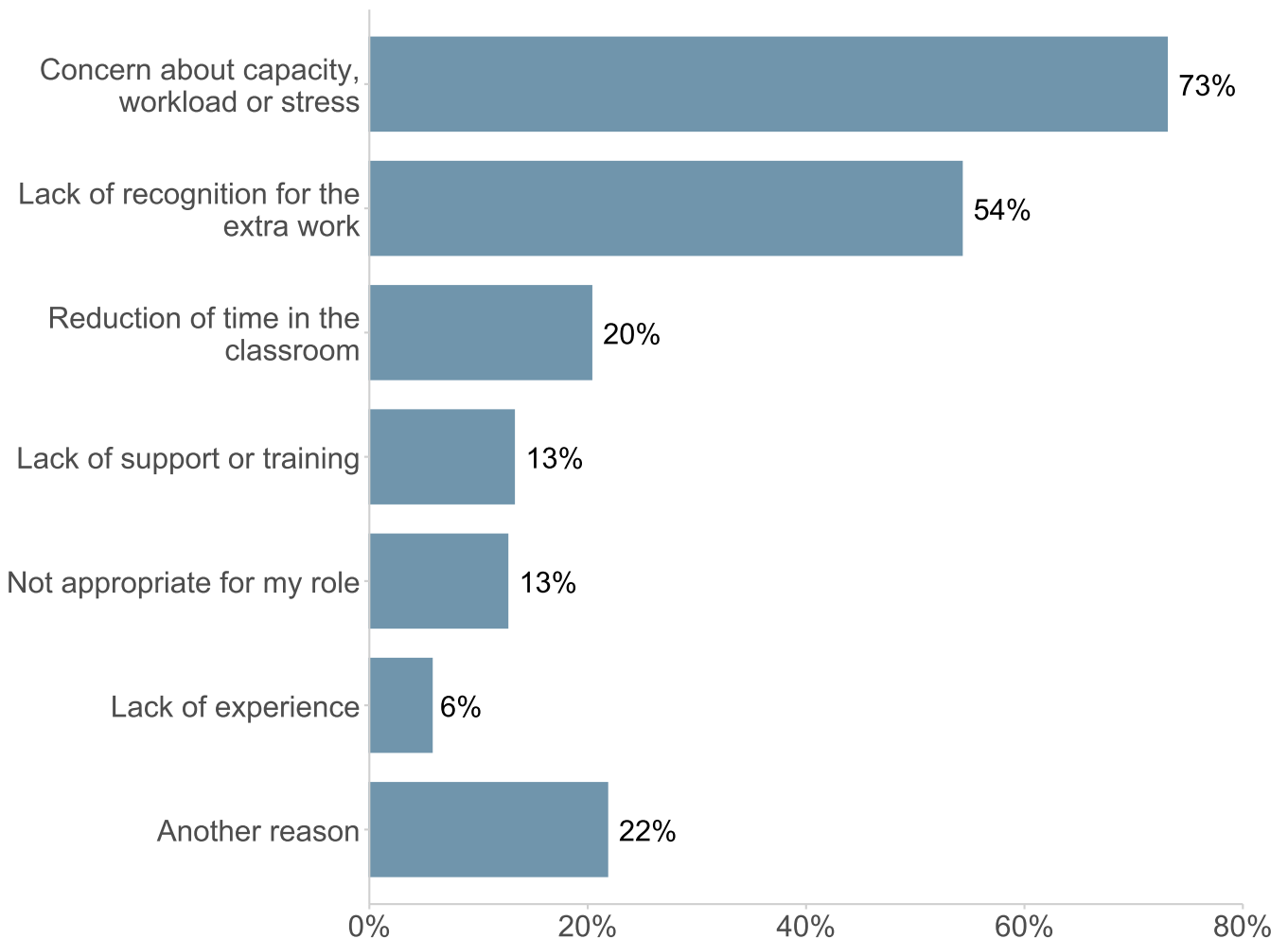
A majority of teachers (56%) said they were currently an ECT or ITT mentor, with 26% saying they were currently a mentor. A minority of teachers (44%) said they had never been an ECT or ITT mentor.

Among all teachers, irrespective of whether they were currently a mentor, a large majority (74%) said they would consider being a mentor (again) in the future, while a small minority (15%) said they would not.

We asked teachers who said they would not consider being a mentor in the future

why this was (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Why teachers would not consider being an ITT or ECT mentor in the future**



Base: Teachers who would not consider being a mentor in the future (n = 315). Respondents could select all that applied. We asked teachers who currently are a mentor or have been a mentor before whether they would be a mentor again.

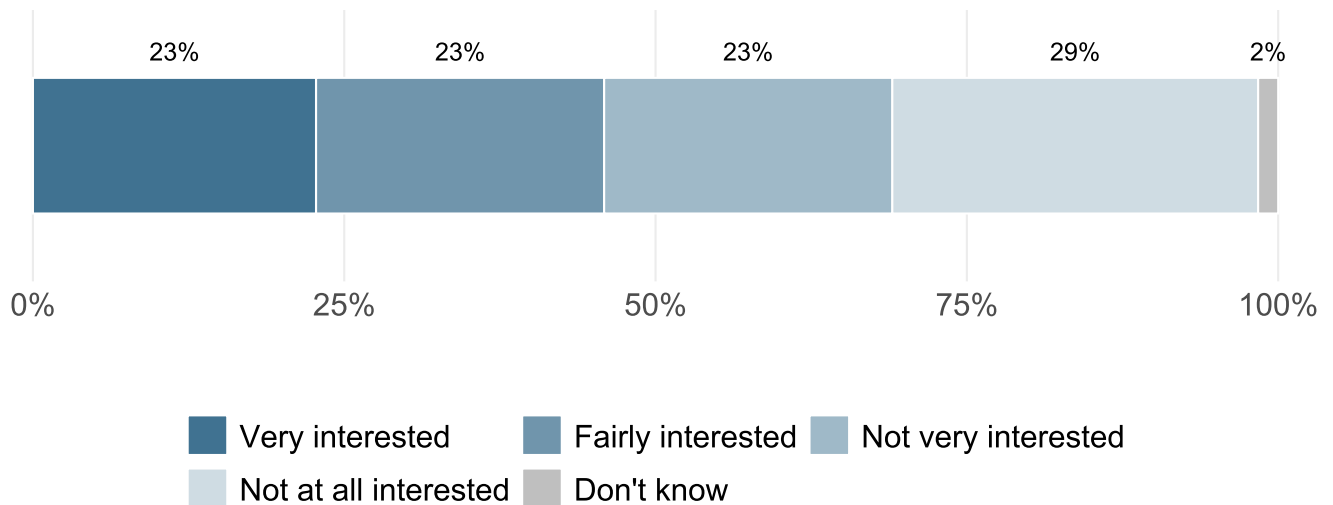
The most common reasons were concerns about capacity, high workload, or stress (73%) and insufficient recognition for the additional work (54%). These were the same as the most common reasons leaders gave for struggling to provide mentors.

## Progression to school leadership

We asked teachers how interested they would be in progressing to a school

leadership position in the next 3 years (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Whether teachers are interested in a school leadership position in the next 3 years**

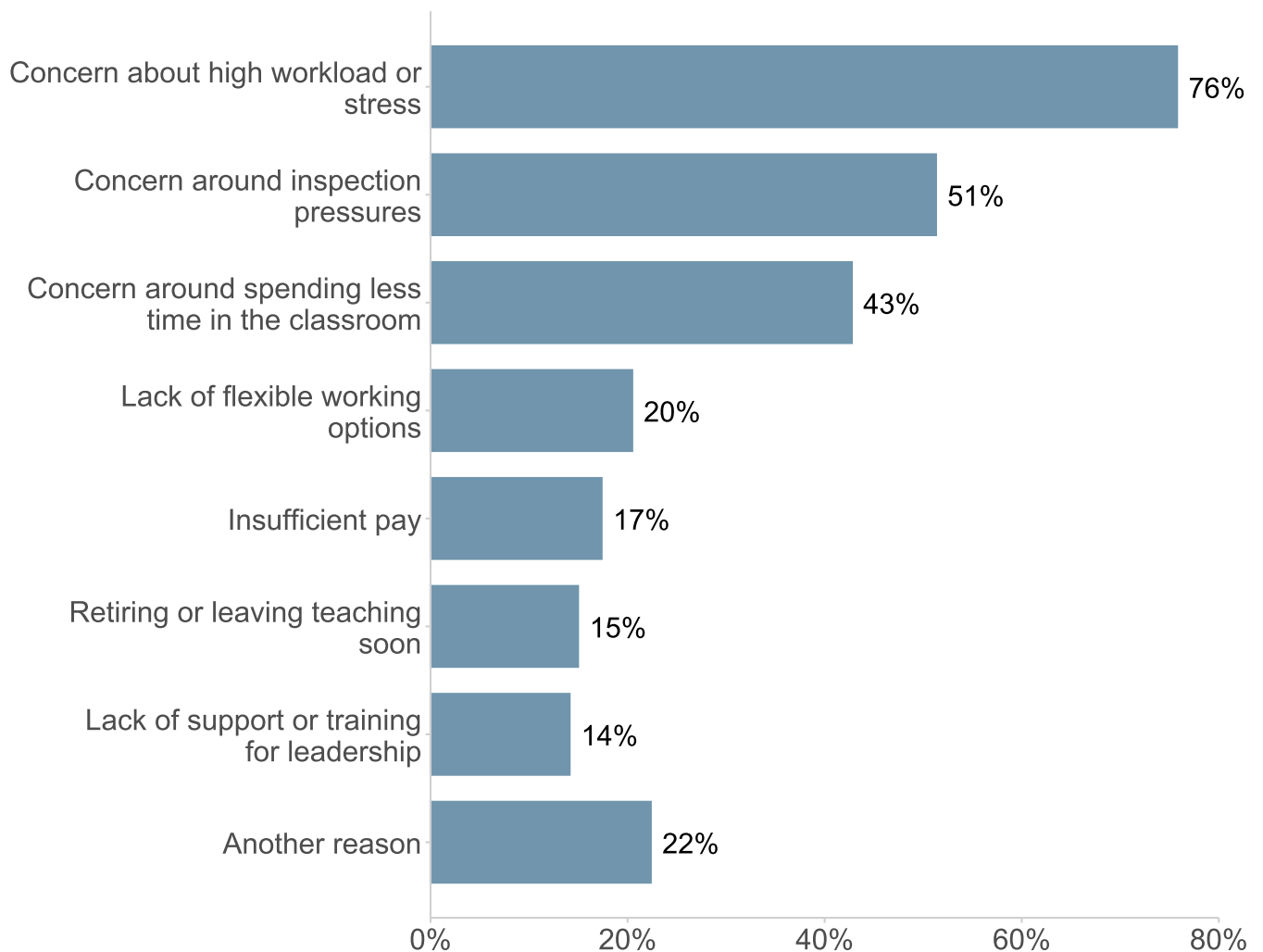


Base: All teachers (n = 2056).

A minority of teachers (46%) were very interested or fairly interested in progressing to a school leadership position in the next 3 years, while a majority were not very interested or not at all interested (53%).

We asked teachers who were not very interested or not at all interested in progressing to a school leadership position in the next 3 years why this was (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Why teachers are not interested in a school leadership position in the next 3 years**



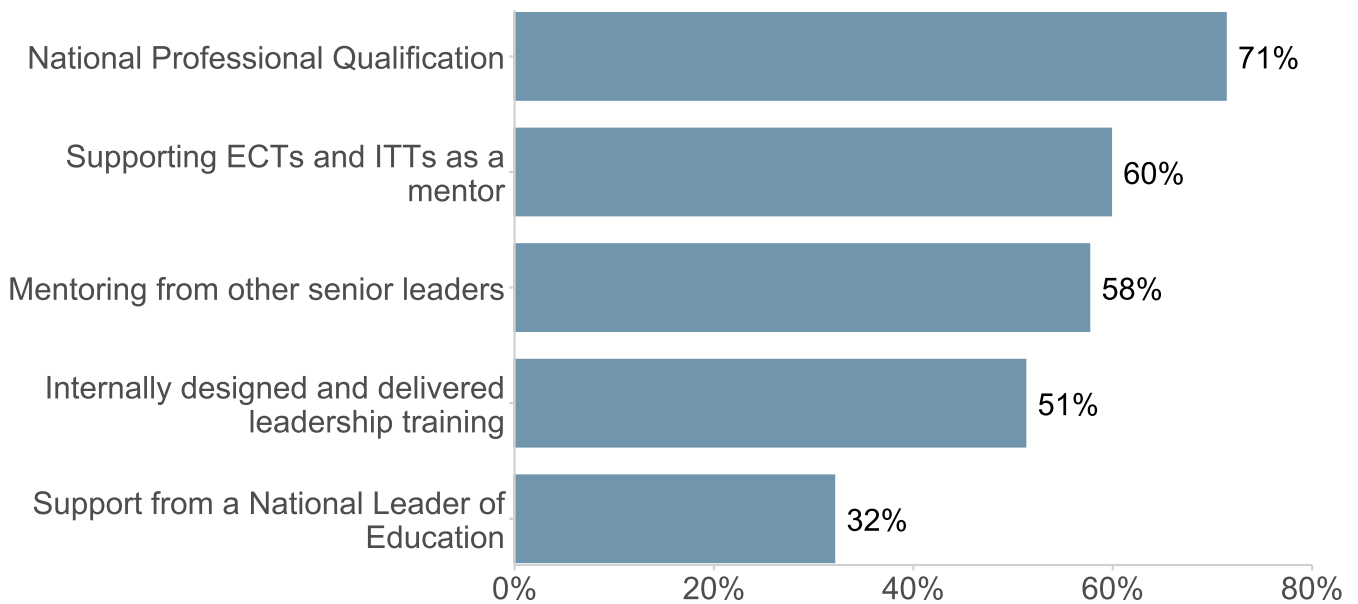
Base: Teachers who are not interested in progressing to leadership in the next 3 years (n = 1095). Respondents could select all that applied.

The most common reasons were high workload or stress (76%), inspection pressures (51%), and spending less time in the classroom (43%).

We asked teachers who were interested in progressing into a school leadership position within the next 3 years which CPD options they would consider to support their progression (Figure 5).



**Figure 5: Continuous professional development options teachers would consider to support their progression to leadership**



Base: Teachers who are interested in progressing to leadership in the next 3 years (n = 927). Respondents could select all that applied.

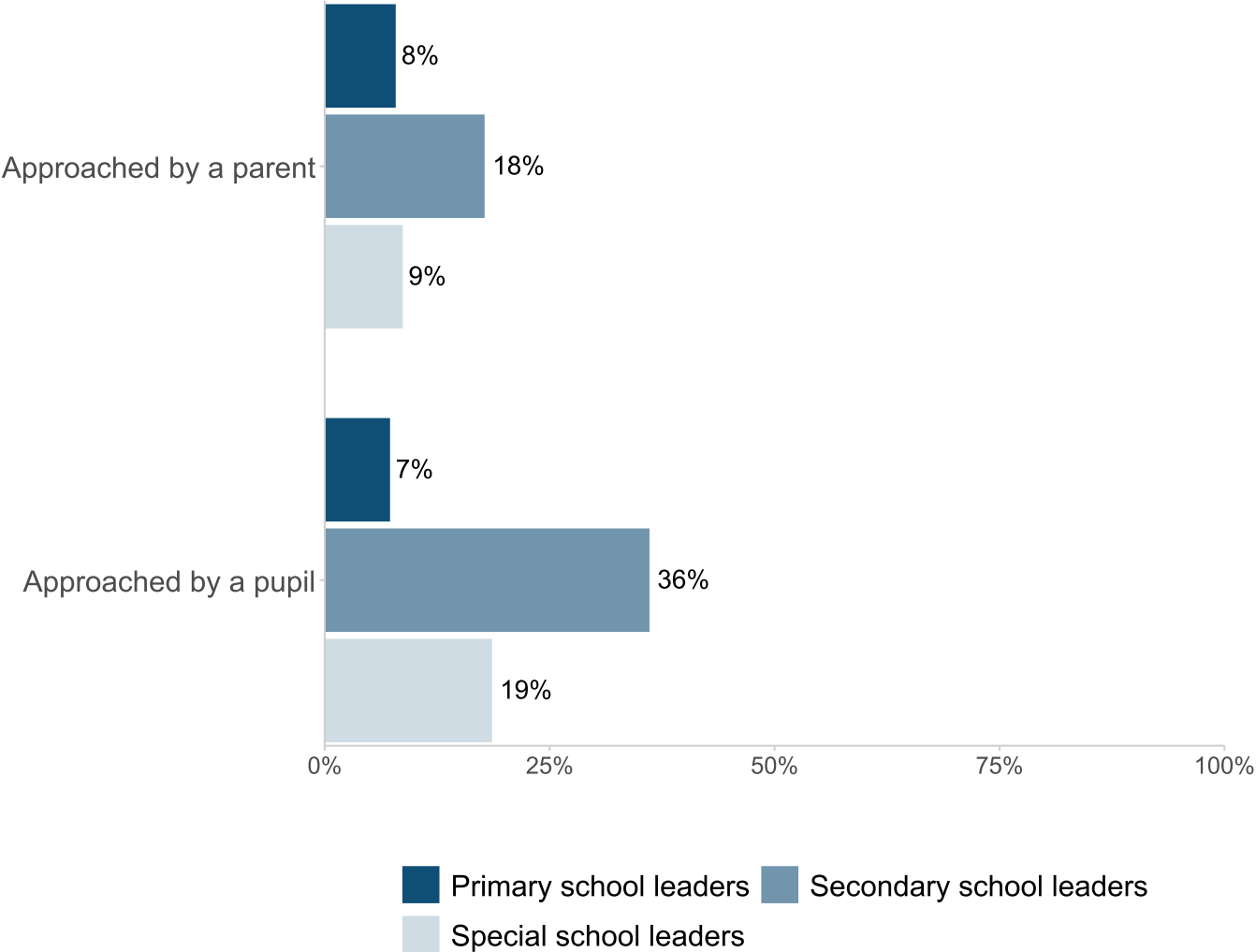
The most common options chosen were a [National Professional Qualification](#) (71%), supporting ECTs and ITTs as a mentor (60%), and coaching or mentoring from other senior leaders (58%).

## Requests related to social transitioning in school

We asked teachers and leaders whether they had been approached at least once in the past 12 months by a pupil, or a pupil's parent, with a request related to that pupil socially transitioning at school (Figures 6 and 7).

We defined socially transitioning as a process by which people change their name, pronouns, clothing, or use different facilities from those provided for their biological sex.

**Figure 6: Percentage of leaders who have been approached with a request related to a pupil socially transitioning in school in the last 12 months**



Base: All leaders (n = 834).

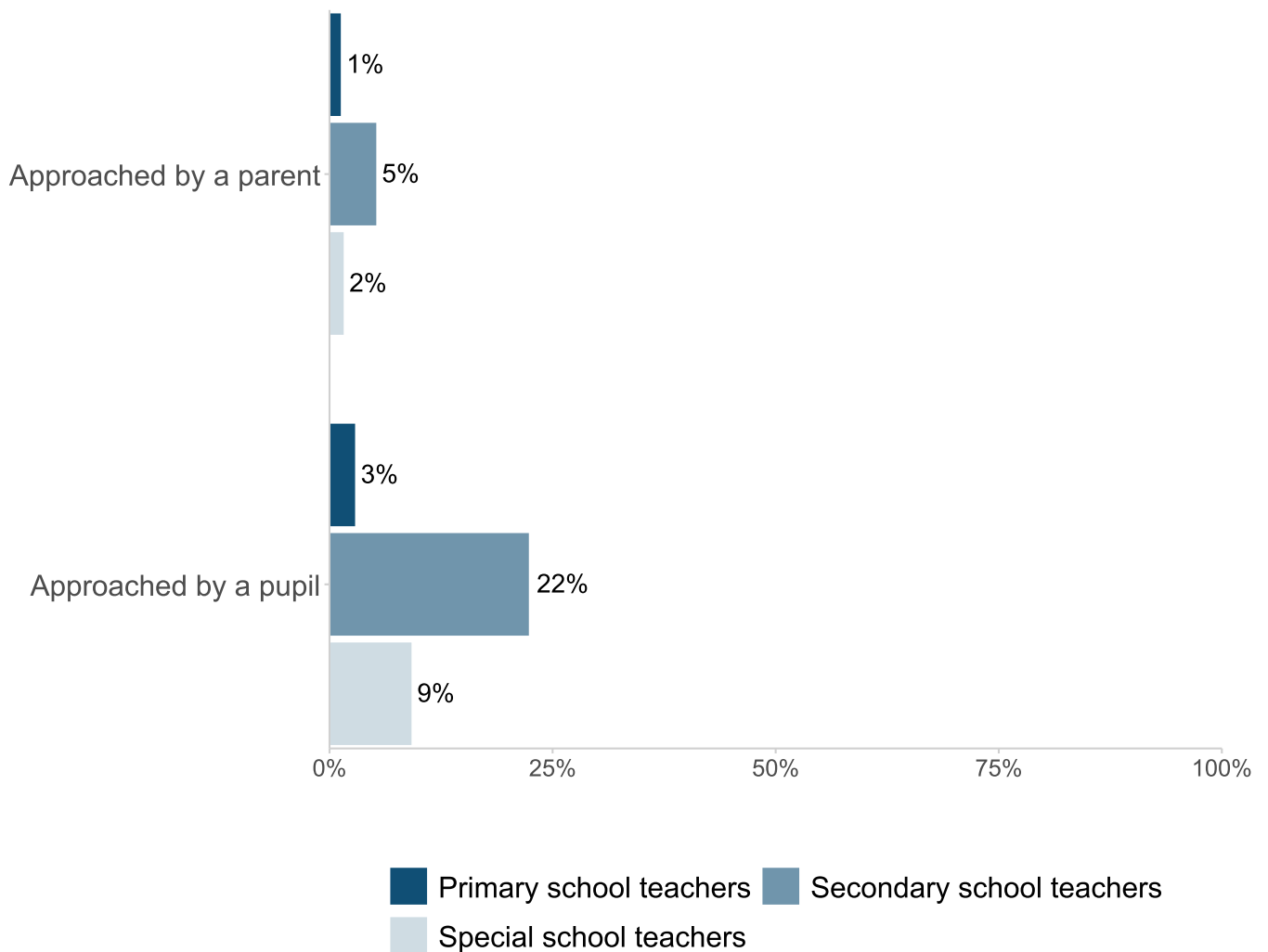
Very few primary school leaders or teachers had been approached by a parent or pupil with a request relating to a pupil socially transitioning in school in the last 12 months.

Similarly, very few special school leaders (9%) had been approached by a parent, while a small minority (19%) had been approached by a pupil. Very few special school teachers had been approached by either a parent (2%) or a pupil (9%) with a request.

Secondary school leaders were the most likely to have been approached with a request. A small minority of secondary school leaders (18%) had been approached by a parent, while a minority (36%) had been approached by a pupil. Very few

secondary school teachers (5%) had been approached by a parent, while a small minority (22%) had been approached by a pupil.

**Figure 7: Percentage of teachers who have been approached with a request related to a pupil socially transitioning in school in the last 12 months**

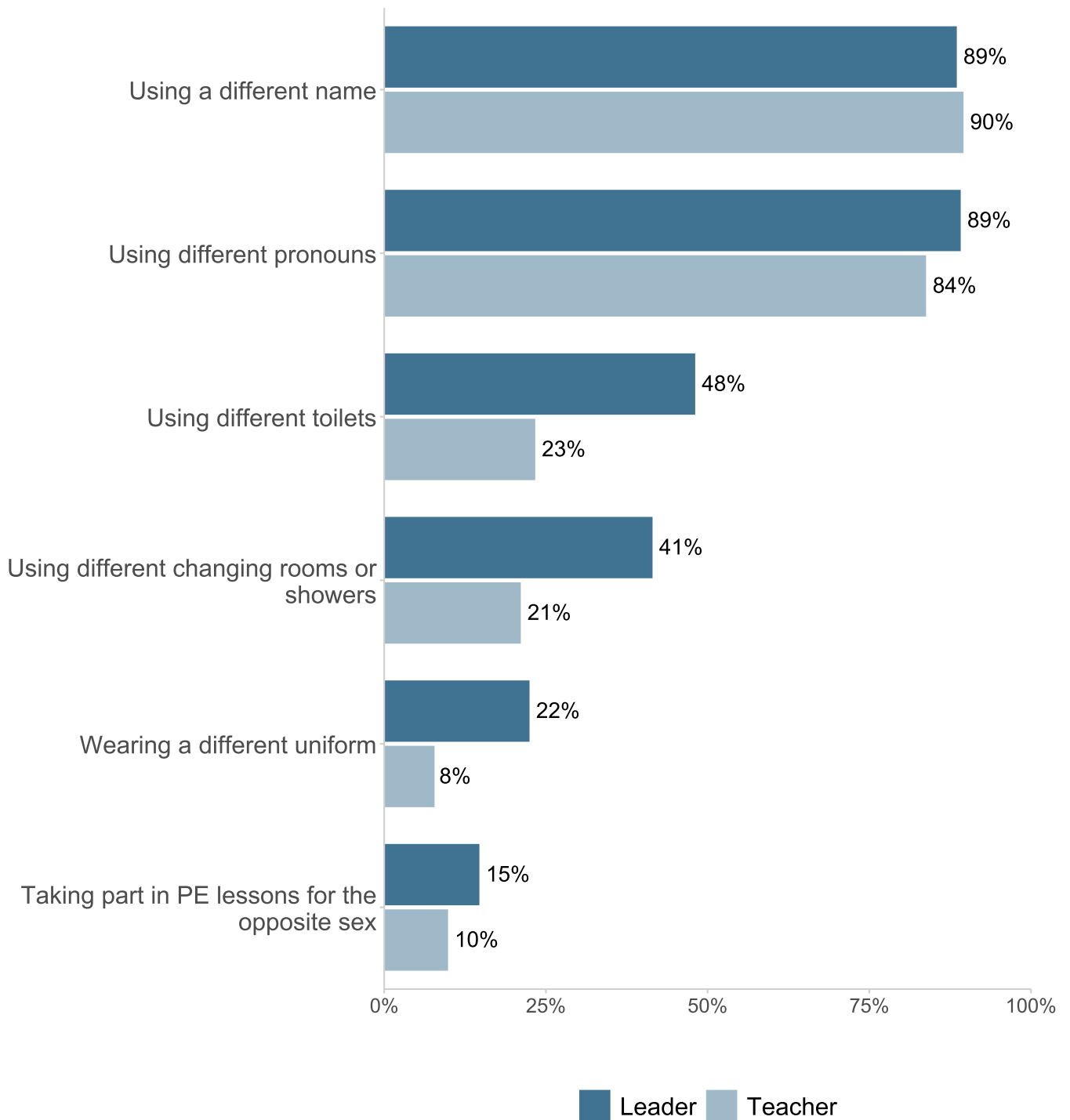


Base: All teachers (n = 2056).

Across all phases, leaders were more likely than teachers to say they had been approached with a request relating to a child socially transitioning in school. Leaders were also more likely to say they had been approached by a pupil than by a parent.

We asked the teachers and leaders who had been approached by a pupil with a request relating to them socially transitioning in school what area or areas they were asked to respond to (Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Nature of pupil requests related to the pupil socially transitioning in school**

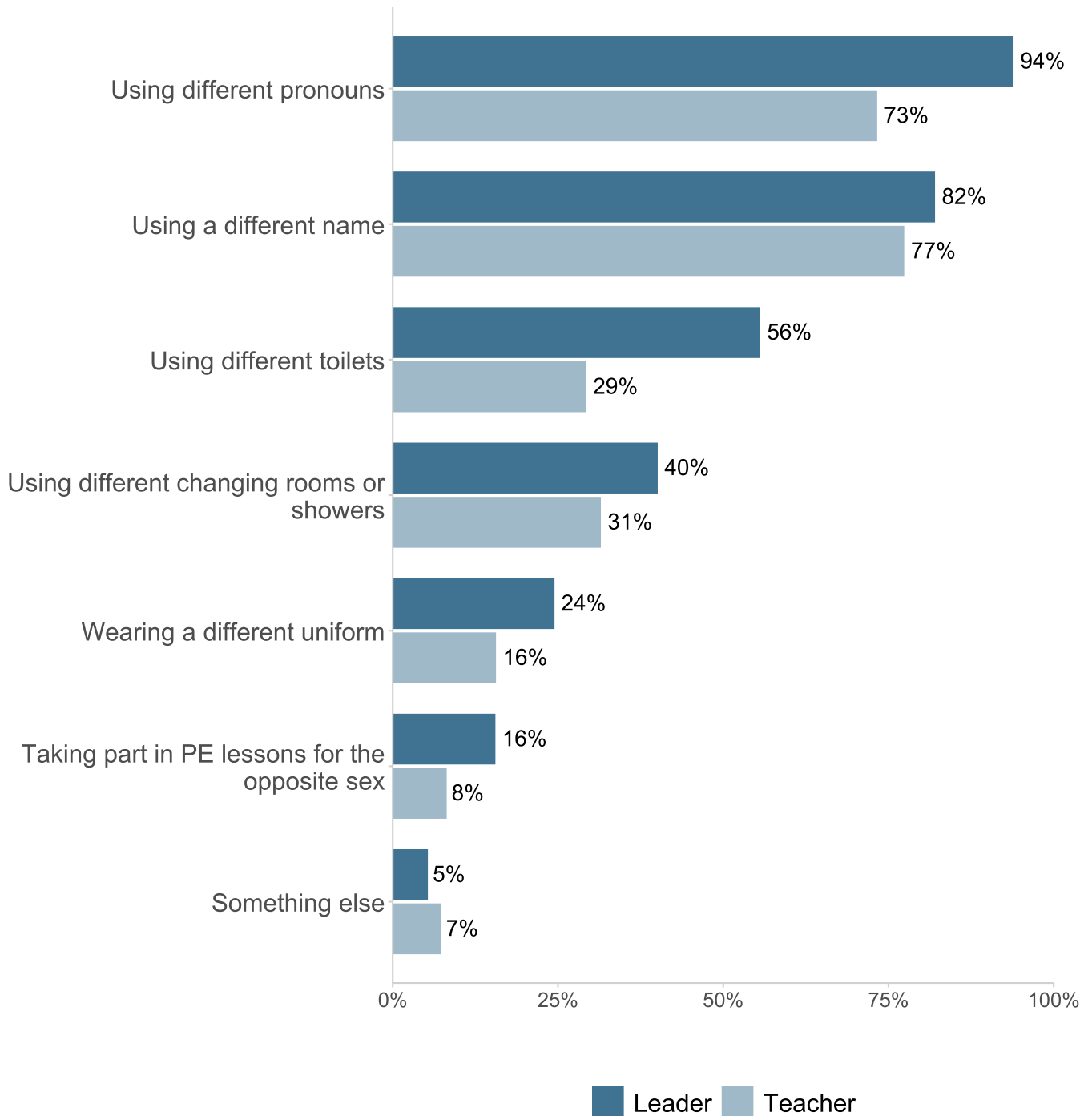


Base: Leaders (n = 175) and teachers (n = 230) who have been approached by a pupil with a request related to them socially transitioning in school. Respondents could select all that applied. Areas with less than 5% of respondents selecting them not charted.

A large majority of both teachers and leaders said the request or requests related to using a different name or using different pronouns. Leaders were more likely than teachers to report receiving requests relating to all other areas we asked about.

We also asked the teachers and leaders who had been approached by a parent with a request relating to their child socially transitioning in school what area or areas they were asked to respond to (Figure 9).

**Figure 9: Nature of parent requests related to their child socially transitioning in school**



Base: Leaders (n = 105) and teachers (n = 58) who have been approached by a parent with a request related to their child socially transitioning in school. Respondents could select all that applied. Areas with less than 5% of respondents selecting them not charted. Due to low base sizes, these results should be used with caution.

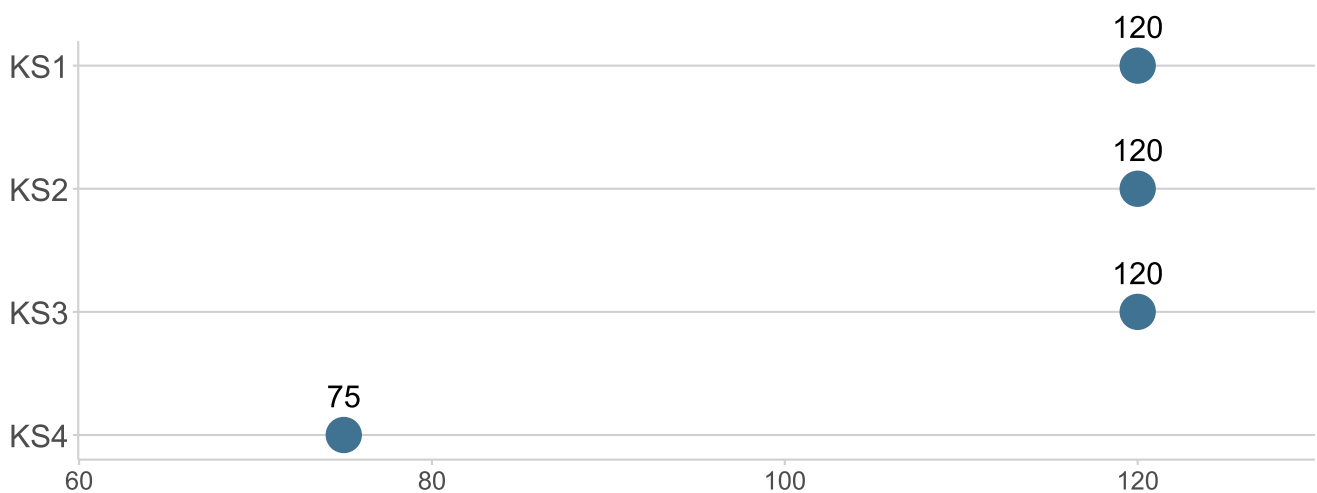
The most common areas were the same as to those requested by pupils: using different pronouns or using a different name. Leaders were more likely than teachers to report that requests related to the other areas we asked about.

## PE timetabling

The majority of leaders (86%) said that the number of minutes timetabled per week for PE does not vary across terms.

We asked primary and secondary school leaders how many minutes of compulsory PE teaching were timetabled for pupils in the spring term (Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Median number of minutes of compulsory PE teaching in the spring term, by key stage**



Base: Primary and secondary school leaders (n = 522). Due to a technical error in the survey, 165 secondary school leaders did not receive this question.

The median number of timetabled minutes of compulsory PE teaching in the spring term was:

- 120 for KS1
- 120 for KS2
- 120 for KS3
- 75 for KS4

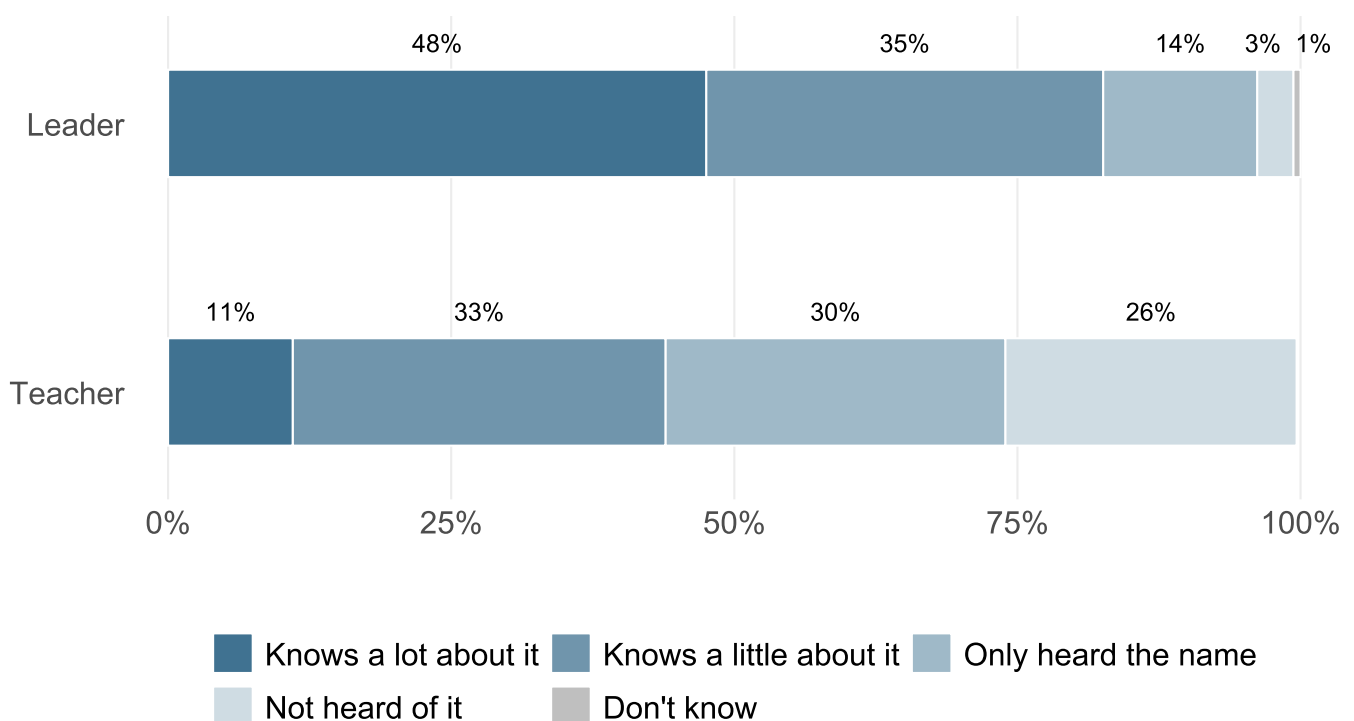
We present the median here due to a large number of outliers in responses.

Compared to the autumn term, the median number of timetabled minutes of compulsory PE teaching was the same for key stages 1, 2 and 3. For key stage 4, the median number of timetabled minutes of compulsory PE teaching was higher in the spring term (75 minutes) than in the autumn term (60 minutes).

## Implementation of DfE attendance guidance

We asked teachers and leaders whether they had heard of DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance (Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Awareness of DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance**



Base: All leaders (n = 834) and all teachers (n = 2056).

Almost all leaders (96%) and a large majority of teachers (74%) had heard of the guidance. A large majority of leaders (83%) knew a lot or a little about it, while a minority of teachers (44%) said the same.

We also asked leaders about how their school monitors attendance data and engagement with the local authority on attendance.

A large majority of leaders (68%) said their school monitors attendance data at least every fortnight, while a small minority said their school does this at least every half term (27%). Very few (3%) said their school does this less often or never does this.

Almost all leaders (91%) said their school benchmarks their school's absence data against local schools and/or national levels.

A majority of leaders (60%) said their school holds Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions. A small minority (21%) said their school does not hold these meetings or did not know whether they did (19%).

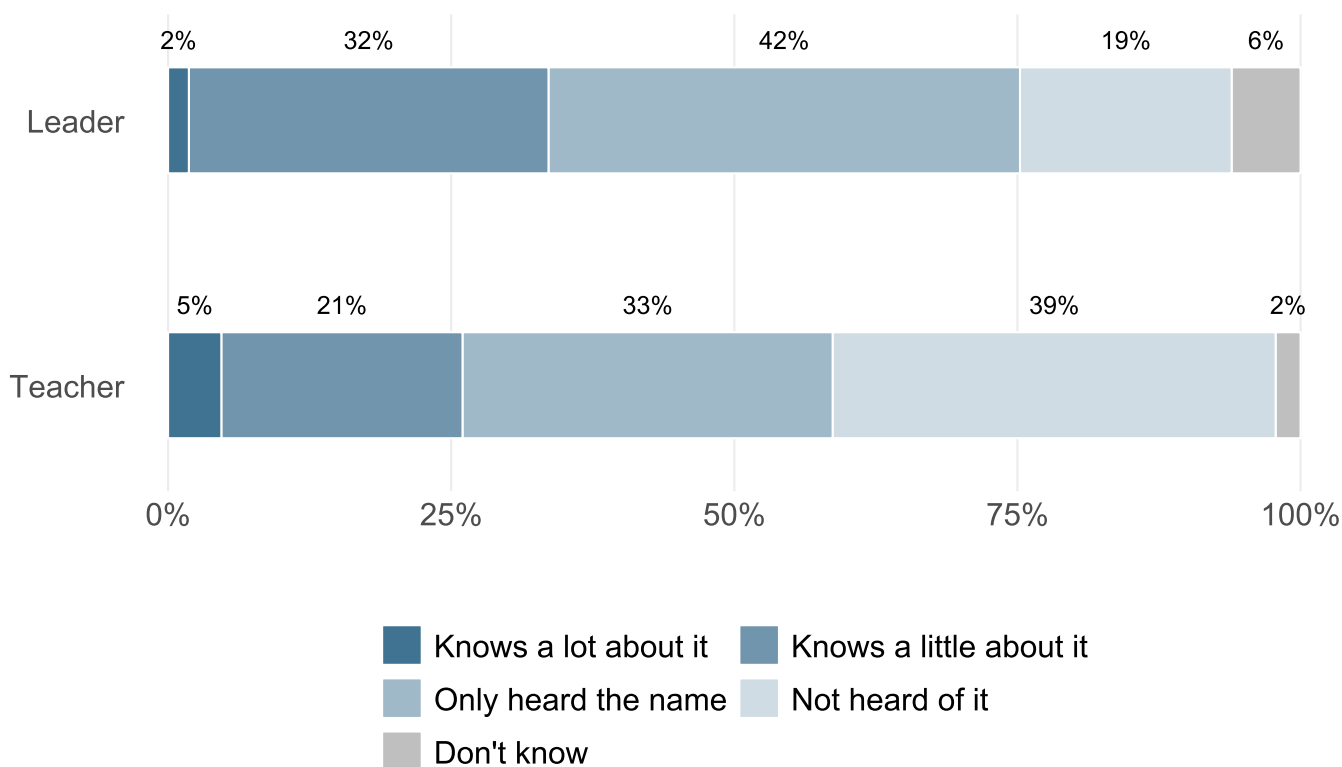
A majority of leaders (65%) said their school has access to a single point of contact in their local authority for attendance related issues, while a small minority said they do not (11%) or did not know whether they did (24%).

## **Awareness of levelling up premium**

We asked secondary school teachers and leaders whether they were aware of the [levelling up premium payments](#). These payments are offered to chemistry, computing, maths and physics teachers in the first 5 years of their careers who teach in disadvantaged schools (Figure 12).



**Figure 12: Awareness of the levelling up premium**



Base: Secondary school leaders (n = 300) and secondary school teachers (n = 743).

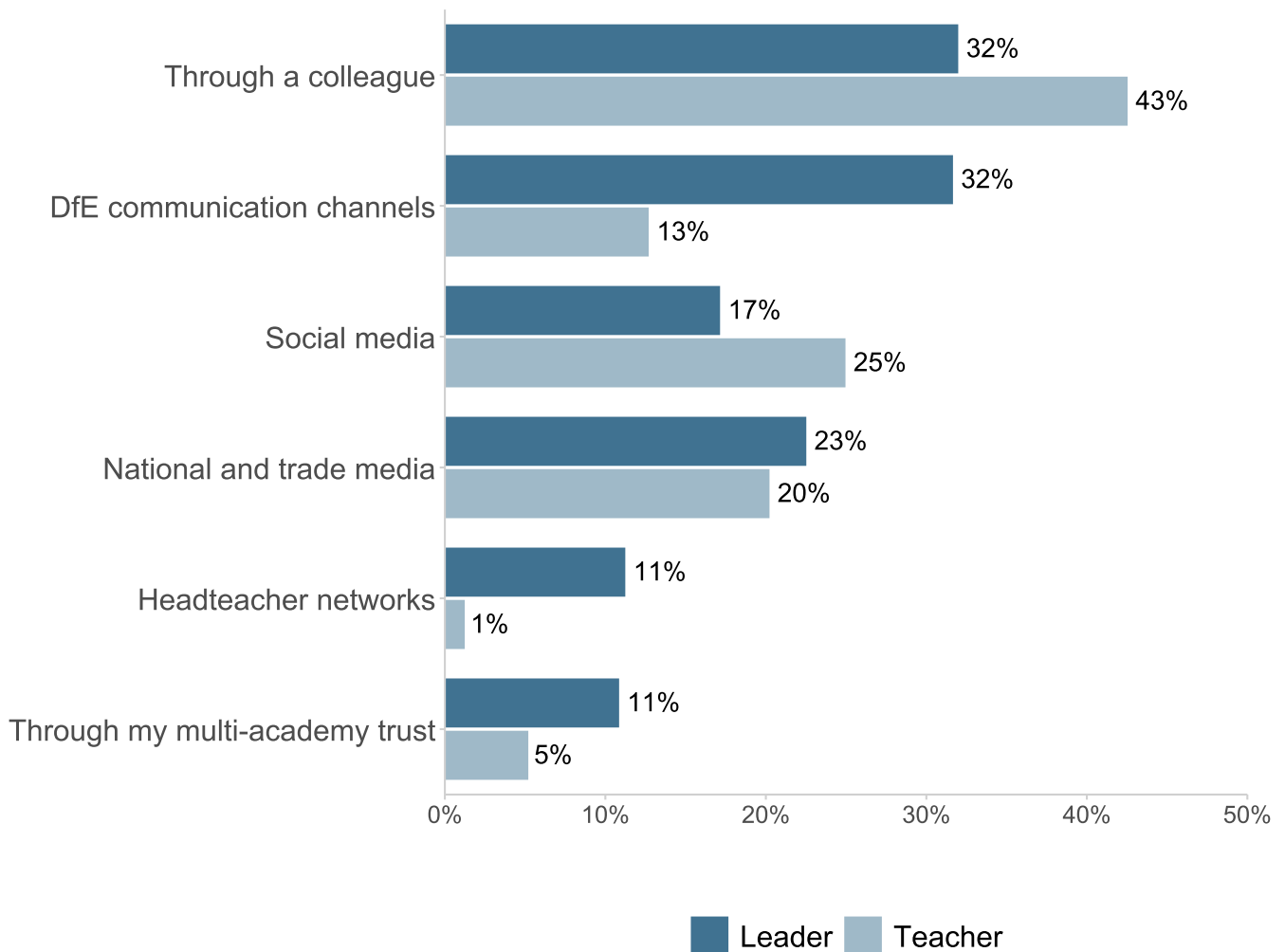
A large majority of secondary school leaders (75%) had heard of the levelling up premium. A minority of leaders (34%) said they knew a little or a lot about it.

The majority of secondary school teachers (59%) had heard of the levelling up premium. Awareness was higher for teachers who teach a subject eligible for levelling up premium payments (66%) compared to those who teach a subject which is not eligible for levelling up premium payments (56%). Teachers who teach a subject eligible for levelling up premium payments were also more likely to know a little or a lot about the levelling up premium (36%) than those who teach a subject which is not eligible for levelling up premium payments (23%).

Awareness of the levelling up premium was higher for both teachers and leaders compared to when we last asked this question (March 2023), when a large majority of secondary school leaders (69%) and about half of secondary school teachers (48%) had heard of the levelling up premium.

We asked those who had heard of the levelling up premium how they had found out about it (Figure 13).

**Figure 13: Where teachers and leaders found out about the levelling up premium**



Base: Leaders (n = 229) and teachers (n = 437) who were aware of the levelling up premium. 'Not sure' and sources selected by less than 10% of both audiences not charted. Respondents could select all that applied.

Leaders had most commonly found out about the levelling up premium through a colleague (32%) and through DfE communication channels (32%). When we last asked this question (March 2023), leaders had most commonly found out about the levelling up premium through DfE communication channels (32%) and through national and trade media (21%), while a small minority (13%) had found out about the levelling up premium through a colleague.

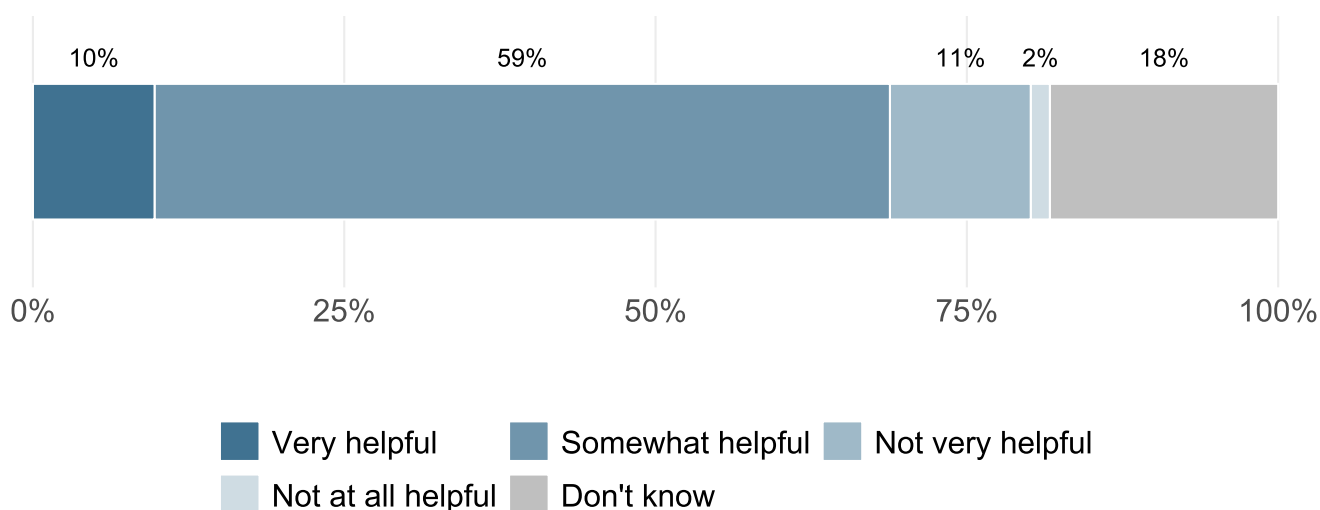
Teachers had most commonly found out about the levelling up premium through a colleague (43%) and through social media (25%). When we last asked this question (March 2023), teachers most commonly selected same sources, with 38% of teachers saying they found out about the levelling up premium through a colleague and 21% saying they found out about it through social media.

# Pupil premium spending

A large majority of leaders (74%) said they were aware of DfE's 'menu of approaches' for [pupil premium](#) spending, and the majority of leaders (53%) said they had read it.

We asked leaders who had heard of the 'menu of approaches' how helpful it had been in supporting them to consider approaches to pupil premium spending (Figure 14).

**Figure 14: Helpfulness of DfE's pupil premium 'menu of approaches'**



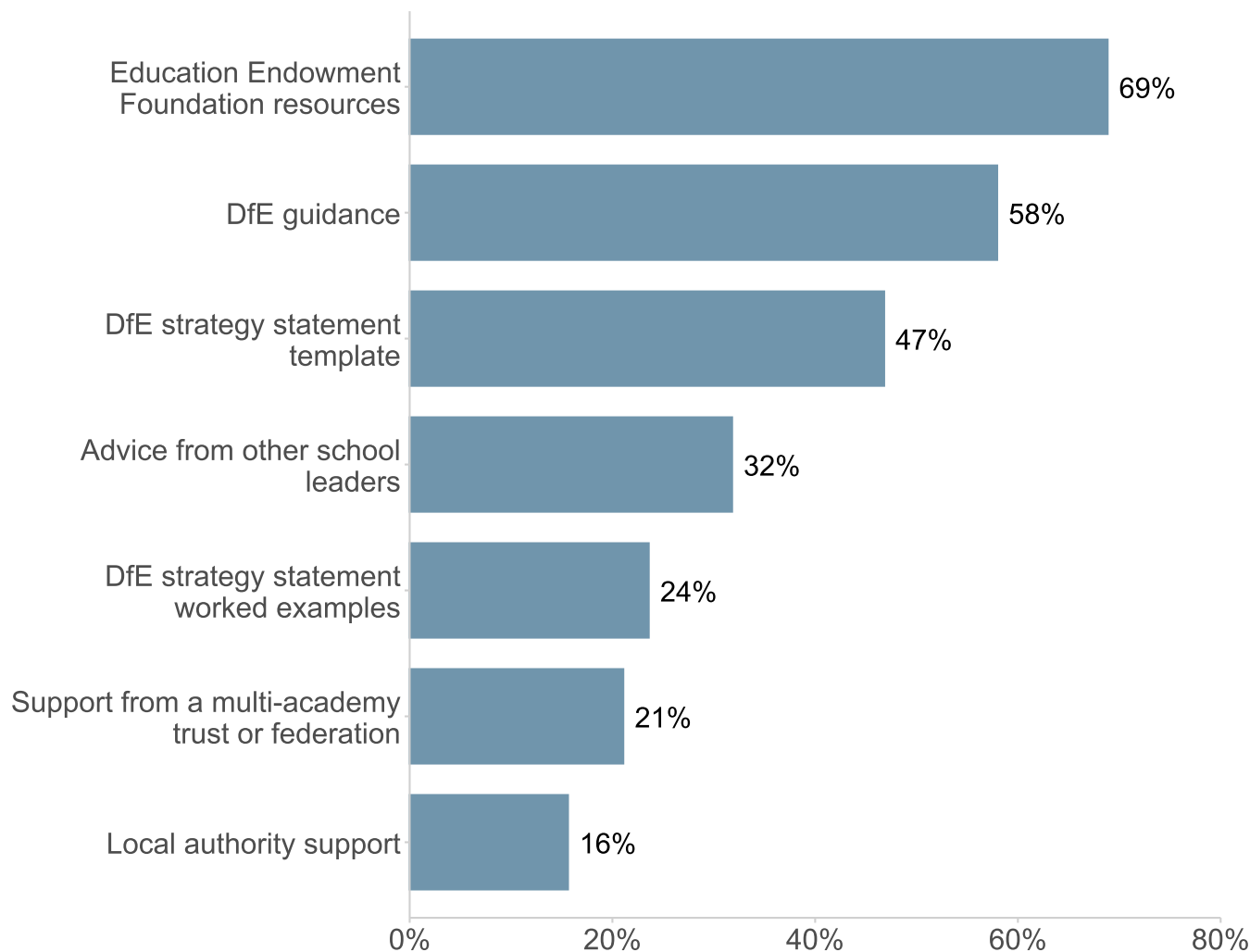
Base: Leaders who had heard of DfE's pupil premium 'menu of approaches' (n = 615).

A large majority (69%) said the menu was very helpful or somewhat helpful, while a small minority (13%) said it was not very helpful or not helpful at all.

The most common reasons given by those who said the menu was not helpful were that they already knew what they wanted to spend pupil premium funding on (60%) and that the menu is too broad or vague (33%).

We asked all leaders what resources their school uses to help develop their pupil premium spending strategy (Figure 15).

**Figure 15: Resources leaders use to develop their pupil premium strategy**



Base: All leaders (n = 834). Respondents could select all that applied. 'Don't know' and resources with less than 15% of respondents selecting them not charted.

Leaders most commonly used Education Endowment Foundation resources (69%), DfE pupil premium guidance (58%), and the DfE pupil premium strategy statement template (47%).

## **Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP)**

We asked primary and special school leaders and teachers whether they use a systematic synthetic phonics (SSP) approach for teaching reading in their school. Almost all leaders (98%) said they do, while a large majority of teachers (85%) said

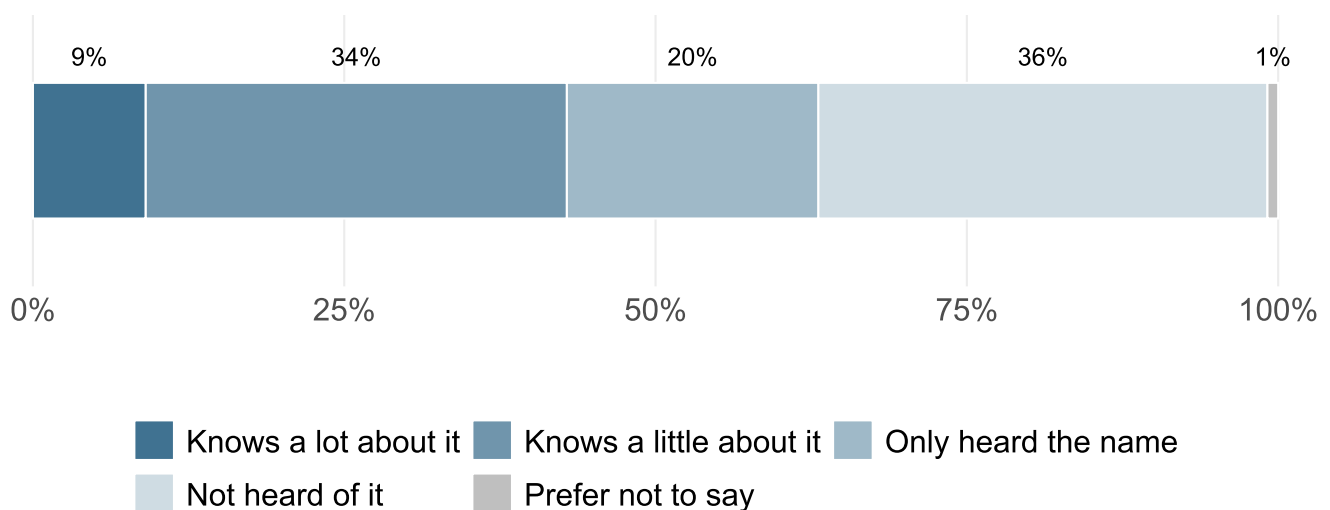
the same. These results were similar to when we last asked this question (January 2023), when almost all leaders (97%) said their school uses an SSP.

Almost all teachers (95%) and leaders (99%) whose school uses an SSP said they use this approach with pupils with SEND.

## Secondary school reading support

We asked secondary school teachers who teach pupils in years 7 to 9 whether they were aware of the DfE's expanded reading framework (Figure 16).

**Figure 16: Secondary school teacher awareness of the DfE expanded Reading Framework**



Base: Secondary school teachers who teach years 7 to 9 (n = 609).

The majority of secondary school teachers (63%) had heard of the reading framework, while a minority (36%) had not.

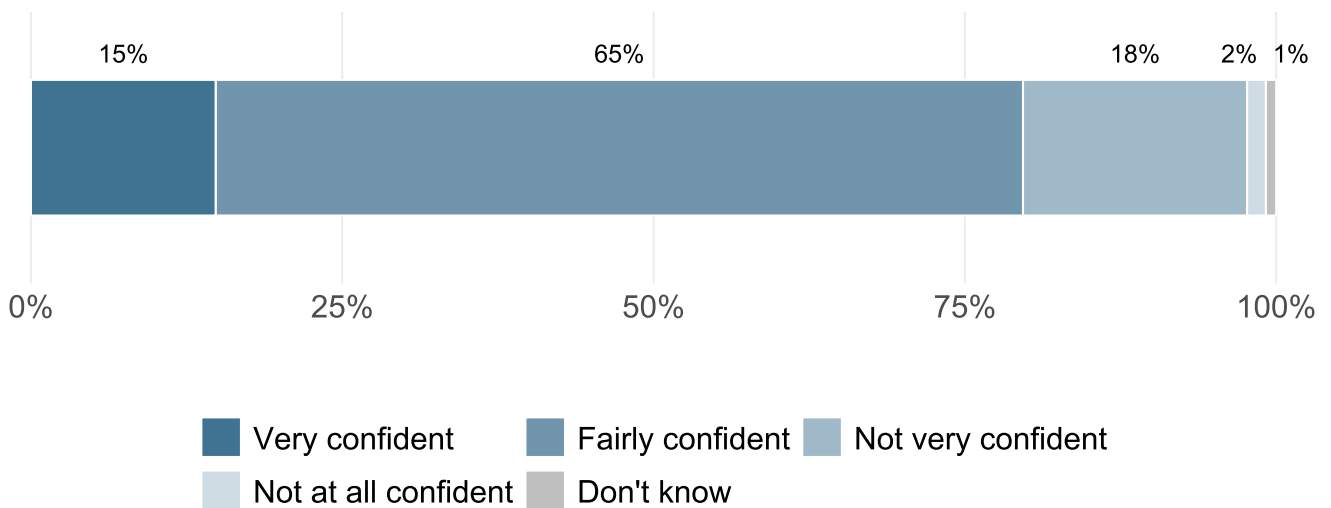
A majority of secondary school teachers (62%) said that all or most of the pupils they teach have the reading ability required to access their subject content, while a minority (34%) said that only some of them do. Very few teachers (4%) said that no pupils or hardly any pupils have the required reading ability.

When we asked secondary school teachers which areas struggling readers have found most difficult this academic year:

- 87% said understanding what they have read (comprehending)
- 35% said word reading (decoding)
- 31% said reading fluently

We asked secondary school teachers how confident they feel supporting struggling readers to access their subject content (Figure 17).

**Figure 17: Secondary school teacher confidence in supporting struggling readers to access subject content**



Base: Secondary school teachers (n = 743).

A large majority (80%) said they feel very confident or fairly confident supporting struggling readers, while a small minority (19%) said they feel not very confident or not at all confident.

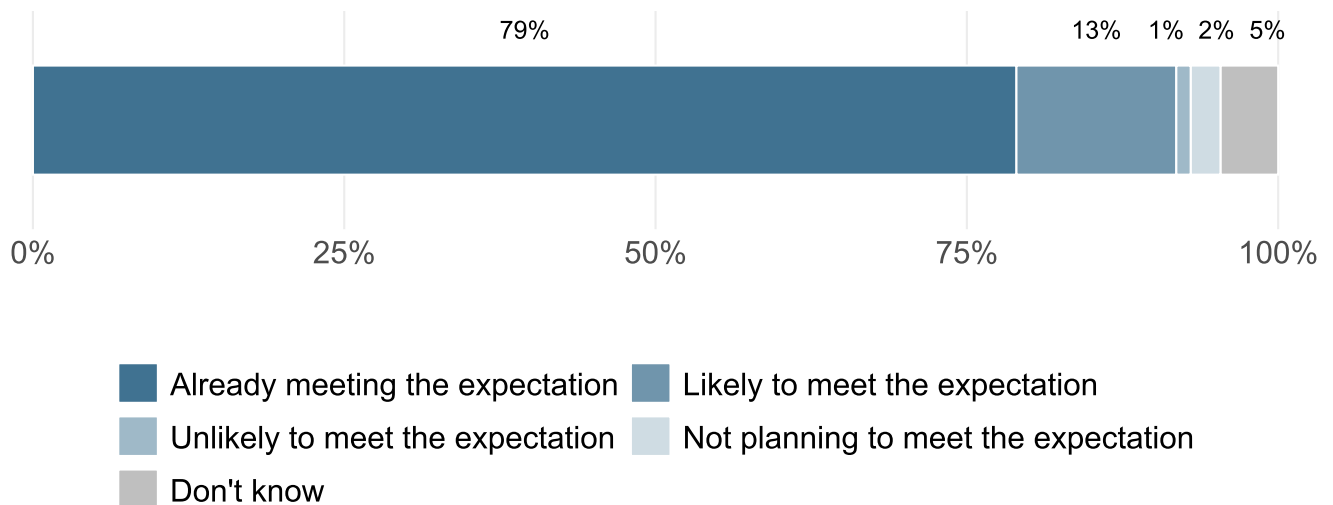
We asked secondary teachers what support is offered at their school to help them to support struggling readers. The most common support types of support reported were support from a reading leader or literacy leader (59%), CPD training in phonics and reading (30%), and support from a specialist reading teacher (16%).

## Length of the school week

Almost all leaders (92%) said they were aware of the expectation for their school to provide a minimum 32.5 hour school week by September 2024.

We asked those who were aware of the expectation how likely they are to meet it by September 2024 (Figure 18).

**Figure 18: School likelihood of meeting the expectation to provide a minimum 32.5 hour school week by September 2024**



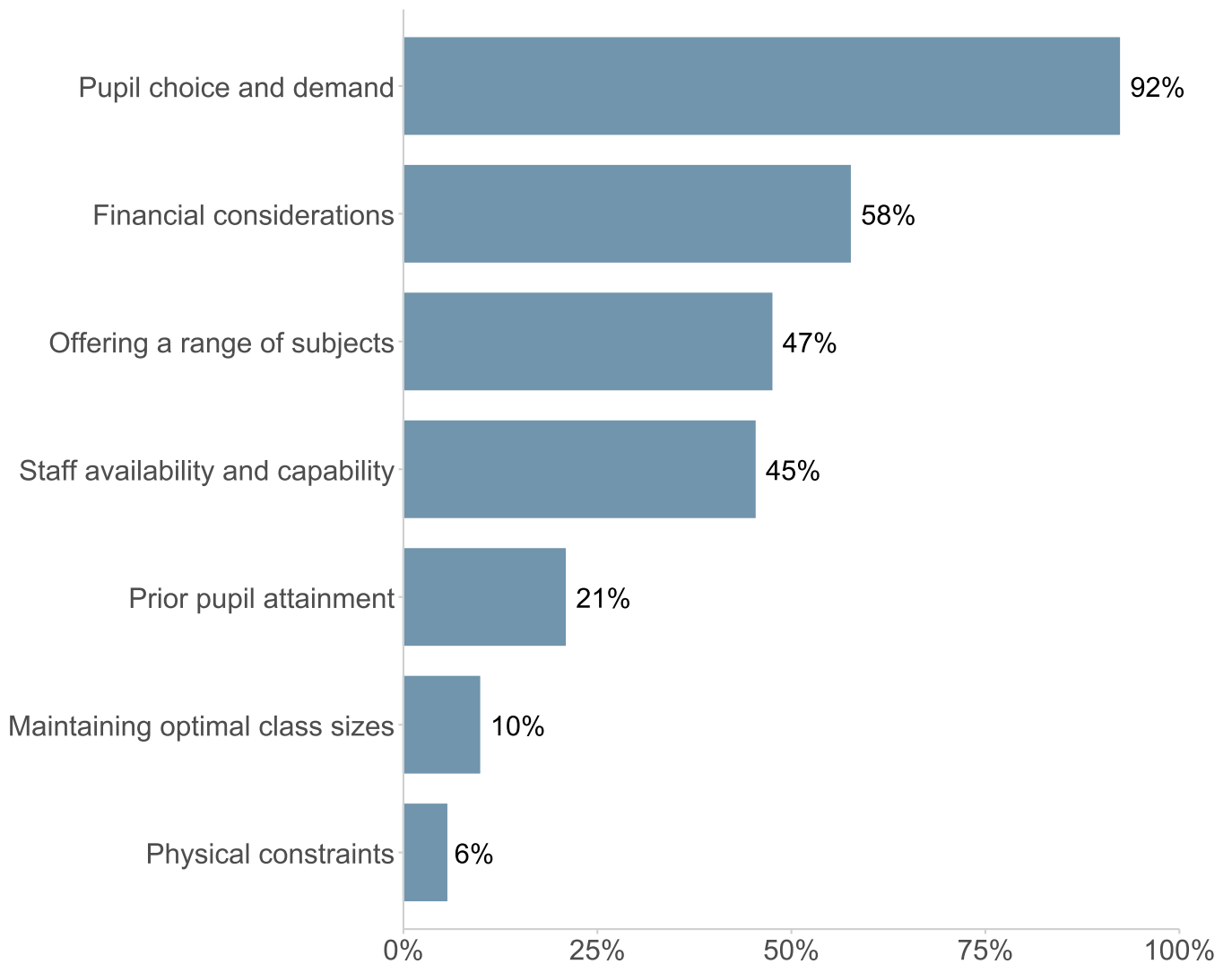
Base: Primary and secondary school leaders (n = 683).

Almost all (92%) said their school was already meeting the minimum expectation or were likely to meet it by September 2024. Very few leaders (4%) said they are unlikely to or not planning to meet the expectation.

## GCSE and A-Level class sizes

We asked secondary leaders whose school offers A-Levels what factors most influence A-Level class sizes (Figure 19).

**Figure 19: Main factors which influence A-Level class sizes**



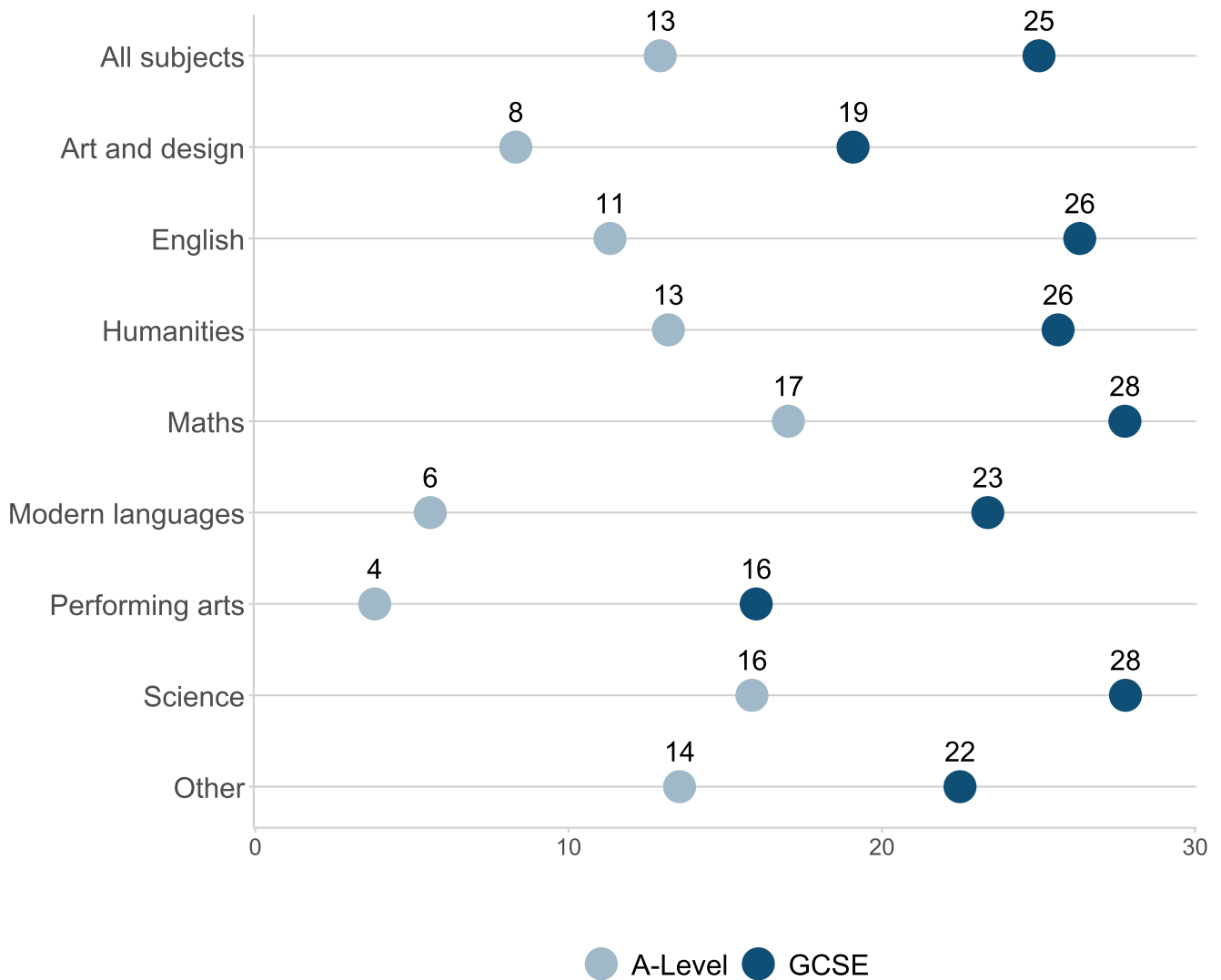
Base: Secondary school leaders whose school offers A-Levels (n = 189). Respondents could select up to 3 options.

Almost all leaders (92%) said that pupil choice and demand influence A-Level class sizes. A majority (58%) also said financial considerations influence A-Level class sizes, while a minority said that maintaining a diversity of subjects (47%) and staff availability, capacity and capability (45%) influence A-Level class sizes.

We asked secondary teachers who teach GCSE and/or A-Level classes how many pupils, on average, are in a single class this academic year (Figure 20).



**Figure 20: Average number of pupils in GCSE and A-Level classes, by subject**



Base: Secondary school teachers who teach GCSE (n = 651) and/or A-Level (n = 326).

The average number of pupils in GCSE classes was 25, while the average number of pupils in A-Level classes was 13.

Maths teachers reported the highest average number of pupils in both GCSE (27 pupils) and A-Level classes (17 pupils).

Teachers in performing arts subjects, including dance, drama and music, reported the lowest number of pupils in both GCSE (15 pupils) and A-Level classes (3 pupils).

For all subjects, there were a higher average number of pupils in GCSE classes than in A-Level classes.

# Glossary of terms

**Early career teacher (ECT):** a teacher who has received qualified teacher status (QTS) in the last 2 years.

**Initial teacher trainee:** someone training to receive qualified teacher status (QTS). Initial teacher trainees follow a course of study which includes teaching placements within schools.

**Special educational needs and disability (SEND):** a child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions

Many children and young people who have SEND may also have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision, they will also be covered by the SEND definition.

**Special schools:** schools which provide an education for children with SEND. Almost all pupils in special schools have an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

**Systematic synthetic phonics (SSP):** an approach to teaching reading which teaches children to recognise letters and their associated sounds.

[↑ Back to top](#)

---

## Help us improve GOV.UK

To help us improve GOV.UK, we'd like to know more about your visit today. [Please fill in this survey \(opens in a new tab\)](#).

## Services and information

---

[Benefits](#)

[Births, death, marriages and care](#)

[Business and self-employed](#)

[Childcare and parenting](#)

[Citizenship and living in the UK](#)

[Crime, justice and the law](#)

[Disabled people](#)

[Driving and transport](#)

[Education and learning](#)

[Employing people](#)

[Environment and countryside](#)

[Housing and local services](#)

[Money and tax](#)

[Passports, travel and living abroad](#)

[Visas and immigration](#)

[Working, jobs and pensions](#)

---

## Government activity

---

[Departments](#)

[News](#)

[Guidance and regulation](#)

[Research and statistics](#)

[Policy papers and consultations](#)

[Transparency](#)

[How government works](#)

[Get involved](#)

[Help](#) [Privacy](#) [Cookies](#) [Accessibility statement](#) [Contact](#)

[Terms and conditions](#) [Rhestr o Wasanaethau Cymraeg](#)

**OGI**

All content is available under the Open Government Licence v3.0, except where otherwise stated



© Crown copyright