Department
for Education

Research and analysis

# School and college voice: February 2025

Updated 17 July 2025

**Applies to England**

## Contents

# 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 DfE 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 February 2025 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, we send the invitation by email and text message to the teachers and leaders who agreed to join the panel in the first survey.

We ran a survey between 10 February and 17 February. The respondents were:

| Audience | Responses |
| --- | --- |
| Primary school leaders | 464 |
| Secondary school leaders | 551 |
| Primary school teachers | 345 |
| Secondary school teachers | 382 |

Questions with fewer than 30 responses (before weighting) are not included in this report, and base sizes of below 100 should be treated with caution. 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

[2023 to 2024](#). 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. We introduced special school teachers and leaders to the SCV in the 2023/24 academic year, so any comparisons from previous academic years do not include these audiences.

In this report we round figures to the nearest whole number. 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. Unless otherwise stated, when we refer to the 'average' we are reporting the arithmetic mean.

Further information on the survey methodology is available in the accompanying [technical report](#).

# Topics covered in this survey

- work experience

- changes in pupil numbers

- special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) support workforce

- in-school behaviour units

- off-site direction and alternative provision (AP) commissioning

- alternative provisions outreach

- pupil behaviour

# Work experience

We asked secondary school teachers whether, during this academic year, their school offered employment-related activities to year 10 and 11 pupils. Employment-related activities can include work experience placements, employer talks and mini enterprise activities for example.

**Figure 1: Whether schools offer employment-related activities to year 10 and**

**11 students**

| Response | Percentage |
| --- | --- |
| Yes - work experience placements | 69% |
| Yes - other types of employment- related activities | 65% |
| No | 6% |
| Don't know | 4% |

**Base:** All secondary school teachers. (n = 382). Data table reference = "workexperience_curriculum".

We then asked secondary school teachers what benefits, if any, they thought there were for year 10 and 11 pupils taking part in work experience.

**Figure 2: What teachers think are the benefits of year 10 and 11 pupils taking part in work experience**

| Response | Percentage |
| --- | --- |
| Improving their understanding of the workplace | 89% |
| Career decisions/helping to decide on their career | 82% |
| Gaining skills and confidence to help them find a job | 82% |
| Planning their post-16 options | 78% |
| None of the above | 2% |
| Don't know | 3% |

**Base:** All secondary school teachers. (n = 382). Data table reference = "workexperience_benefits".

Finally, we asked secondary school teachers how often, in this academic year, they discussed or incorporated content on career paths and opportunities within the regular lessons they taught.

**Figure 3: How often teachers incorporate content on career paths and opportunities within their lessons**

| Level | Most lessons | Some lessons | A few lessons | Never | Don't know | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher | 5% | 28% | 54% | 12% | 1% | 100% |

> **Base:** All secondary school teachers. (n = 382). Data table reference = "workexperience_discuss".

# Changes in pupil numbers

We asked primary school leaders whether, over the past 12 months, the overall number of pupils at their school had increased, decreased or stayed about the same.

**Figure 4: Change in the overall number of pupils at primary school over the past 12 months**

| Level | Increased | Decreased | Stayed the same | Don't know | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Leader | 27% | 30% | 43% | 0% | 100% |

> **Base:** All primary school leaders. (n = 464). Data table reference = "pupilfall_numbers".

We asked primary school leaders who said that the overall numbers of pupils at their school had decreased what actions, if any, their school had taken in response.

**Figure 5: Actions taken at primary schools that had experienced a fall in**

**pupil numbers in the past 12 months**

| Response | Percentage |
| --- | --- |
| Made reductions to non-teaching staff | 59% |
| Decreased the use of supply teachers | 55% |
| Not replaced teaching staff when they left the school | 43% |
| Cut back on non-essential school programs | 35% |
| Combined classes within the same year group | 18% |
| Combined classes across different year groups | 15% |
| Set a greater focus on recruiting early career teachers | 9% |
| Made teaching staff redundant | 2% |
| None of the above | 12% |

> **Base:** All primary leaders who have had a decrease in pupil numbers. (n = 144). Data table reference = "pupilfall_cutbacks".

We then asked which, if any, additional responsibilities teachers at the school had taken on in the past 12 months as a result of the actions taken in response to decreased pupil numbers.

**Figure 6: Additional responsibilities teachers have taken on as a result of actions in response to a fall in pupil numbers**

| Response | Percentage |
| --- | --- |
| Taken on additional supervision activities | 52% |
| Taken on additional administrative work | 41% |
| Taught a combined class of pupils from different year groups | 16% |
| Taught a combined class of pupils from the same year group | 14% |

| Response | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Other | 10% |
| None of the above | 25% |

Finally, we asked which additional responsibilities, if any, their teaching assistants had taken on in the past 12 months as a result of actions taken in response to decreased pupil numbers.

**Figure 7: Additional responsibilities teaching assistants have taken on as a result of actions in response to a fall in pupil numbers**

| Response | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Provided support for a greater number of pupils with SEND | 89% |
| Worked across multiple classes instead of one dedicated class | 79% |
| Taken on additional supervision activities | 60% |
| Delivered whole class teaching in certain lessons | 56% |
| Taken on additional administrative work | 35% |
| Other | 5% |
| None of the above | 5% |

# SEND support workforce

We asked primary and secondary school leaders about the types of internal staff who support pupils with SEND in their school.

**Figure 8: Internal staff used to support pupils with SEND in primary and secondary schools**

| Response | Percentage |
| --- | --- |
| At least one fully qualified special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) | 95% |
| Teaching assistants without specific special educational needs (SEN) specialism | 89% |
| Teaching assistants with specific SEND specialism | 50% |
| A team working with the SENCO fulfilling some SENCO-related duties | 38% |
| An assistant or deputy SENCO | 37% |
| Role separate to the SENCO responsible for leading or advising on inclusive practices within the school | 21% |
| Teachers with a SEND specialism | 20% |
| Role separate to the SENCO responsible for leading or advising on inclusive practices within the multi-academy trust or local authority | 13% |
| Other | 4% |
| None of the above | 0% |

**Base:** All primary and secondary school leaders. (n = 1015). Data table reference = "workforcesendsupport_use".

# In-school behaviour units

We asked primary and secondary school leaders if their school has a unit that is a separate dedicated space away from the mainstream classroom used to support pupil behaviour. We defined a unit as a room or classroom used to support pupils with their behaviour and which may provide support for groups of pupils or one-to-one support, including both pupil support units and internal alternative provision.

**Figure 9: Whether schools have an in-school behaviour unit**

| Response | Primary | Secondary |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 22% | 68% |
| No - but intend to establish one | 11% | 7% |
| No - and there are no plans to establish one | 66% | 25% |
| Don't know | 1% | 0% |

**Base:** All primary and secondary school leaders. (n = 1015). Data table reference = "inschoolbehaviourunit_have".

We then asked primary and secondary leaders who said they have an in-school behaviour unit approximately how many pupils receive support from the unit in a typical school week.

**Figure 10: Numbers of pupils receiving support from an in-school behaviour unit in a typical school week**

| Response | Primary | Secondary |
|---|---|---|
| No pupils | 1% | 0% |
| 1 to 5 pupils | 42% | 9% |
| 6 to 10 pupils | 29% | 18% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 11 to 15 pupils | 10% | 18% |
| 16 to 20 pupils | 8% | 12% |
| 21+ pupils | 6% | 27% |
| It varies too much to say | 4% | 12% |
| Don't know | 2% | 5% |

We asked primary and secondary leaders who said they have an in-school behaviour unit how long, on average, pupils are placed in the behaviour unit before returning to normal classroom lessons.

**Figure 11: How long, on average, pupils are placed in in-school behaviour units before returning to classroom lessons**

| Response | Primary | Secondary |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 1 day | 36% | 28% |
| Between 1 day and 1 week | 2% | 29% |
| Between 1 week and 1 month | 5% | 2% |
| Between 1 month and 3 months | 3% | 8% |
| Between 3 months and 1 year | 6% | 2% |
| 1 year or more | 6% | 1% |
| Varies too much to say | 37% | 27% |
| Don't know | 4% | 2% |

We also asked what type of support the behaviour unit provides.

**Figure 12: Types of support in-school behaviour units provide**

| Response | Primary | Secondary |
|---|---|---|
| Behavioural support | 78% | 96% |
| SEND support | 88% | 42% |
| Wellbeing or mental health support | 77% | 76% |
| Support for pupils reintegrating to mainstream classes | 42% | 68% |
| Academic support | 59% | 66% |
| Support for emotionally based school avoidance | 37% | 50% |
| Other | 4% | 5% |
| Don't know | 1% | 1% |

Finally, we asked primary and secondary leaders who said they have an in-school behaviour unit where the pupils supported by the behaviour unit come from.

**Figure 13: Where pupils supported by in-school behaviour units come from**

| Response | Primary | Secondary |
|---|---|---|
| Own school | 97% | 99% |
| Other mainstream schools | 5% | 15% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Other schools in the same academy trust | 0% | 11% |
| Other | 1% | 1% |
| Don't know | 1% | 0% |

# Off-site direction and alternative provision commissioning

We asked primary and secondary school leaders if, before starting the survey, they were aware that their school has the power to use off-site direction as a preventative measure prior to suspension or permanent exclusion. Around half of primary school leaders (49%) and the majority of secondary school leaders (89%) said they were aware.

We then asked leaders who said they were aware of off-site direction if their school had used the power for off-site direction to help improve a pupil's behaviour since the start of the academic year. A minority of primary (17%) and a majority of secondary (76%) school leaders said they had.

Finally, we asked primary and secondary leaders whose school has used off-site direction how many pupils have been placed in an alternative setting instead of issuing a suspension or permanent exclusion this academic year.

**Figure 14: Numbers of pupils who have been placed in an alternative setting instead of issuing a suspension or permanent exclusion this academic year**

| Phase | 1 to 5 | 6 to 10 | 11 to 15 | 16 to 20 | 21+ | Don't know | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| Secondary | 48% | 24% | 8% | 3% | 4% | 12% | 100% |

# Alternative provisions outreach

We asked primary and secondary school leaders if any pupils in their school currently receive outreach support from alternative provision (AP) settings.

**Figure 15: Whether pupils currently receive outreach support from AP settings**

| Response | Primary | Secondary |
|---|---|---|
| Yes - all pupil(s) who need it currently receive outreach support from AP settings | 4% | 8% |
| Yes - some pupil(s) who need it currently receive outreach support from AP settings | 27% | 56% |
| No - pupil(s) need outreach support from AP settings but it is not received | 27% | 15% |
| No - outreach support from AP settings is not required by any pupil(s) in the school | 37% | 4% |
| Not applicable - the school gets this type of support from elsewhere | 1% | 3% |
| Don't know | 3% | 13% |

We asked leaders, who said that pupils receive AP outreach support, who delivers that support.

**Figure 16: Who delivers AP outreach support services to schools**

| Response | Primary | Secondary |
|---|---|---|
| A state funded alternative school, for example, a pupil referral unit | 68% | 75% |
| A special school | 24% | 12% |
| An unregistered alternative provider | 9% | 23% |
| An independent school providing alternative provision | 6% | 11% |
| Other | 10% | 13% |
| Don't know | 1% | 7% |

**Base:** All primary and secondary school leaders whose school has pupils that receive AP outreach support. (n = 511). Data table reference = "ap_deliver".

We asked leaders, whose school has pupils that receive AP outreach support, which types of outreach support are currently being delivered in their school from AP settings.

**Figure 17: Types of outreach support that are currently being delivered to schools from AP settings**

| Response | Primary | Secondary |
|---|---|---|
| One-to-one behavioural support for pupils | 58% | 54% |
| Staff training on specialised behavioural support | 36% | 19% |
| Transition support for pupils who have returned from alternative provision | 10% | 22% |
| On call advice for school staff | 20% | 12% |
| Self-regulation classes for small groups of pupils | 10% | 20% |
| Support for your whole-school behaviour culture | 8% | 13% |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Behaviour coaching for school leaders and staff | 7% | 13% |
| Support on curriculum pathways | 5% | 12% |
| Other | 13% | 10% |
| Don't know | 6% | 25% |

**Base:** All primary and secondary school leaders whose school has pupils that receive AP outreach support. (n = 511). Data table reference = "ap_type".

We also asked those leaders how their school's use of AP outreach support services is funded.

**Figure 18: How use of AP outreach support services is funded**

| Response | Primary | Secondary |
|---|---|---|
| Traded service: my school pays the provider for the support | 46% | 58% |
| Universal service: free to use service funded by the local authority or alternative provision | 24% | 9% |
| School uses a universal service, but we also purchase additional support from the provider separately | 9% | 10% |
| Other | 1% | 2% |
| Don't know | 20% | 21% |

**Base:** All primary and secondary school leaders who receive AP outreach support. (n = 511). Data table reference = "ap_funding".

Finally, we asked primary and secondary leaders who said pupils require AP support, but do not receive that support, why they do not currently receive it.

**Figure 19: Reasons why pupils who require AP outreach support services**

do not currently receive it

| Response | Primary | Secondary |
|---|---|---|
| The local alternative provision offer does not provide enough outreach support | 54% | 64% |
| It is too expensive | 33% | 54% |
| The local alternative provision outreach offer does not meet the needs of our pupils | 22% | 27% |
| Other reason | 15% | 6% |
| I wasn't aware that outreach support services were available | 7% | 4% |
| Don't know | 7% | 9% |

**Base:** All primary and secondary school leaders who do not receive required AP outreach support. (n = 643). Data table reference = "ap_reasons".

# Pupil behaviour

We asked primary and secondary school teachers how confident they felt in managing pupil misbehaviour.

**Figure 20: Teacher confidence in managing pupil misbehaviour**

| Phase | Very confident | Fairly confident | Not very confident | Not confident at all | Not sure | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary | 29% | 65% | 5% | 1% | 0% | 100% |
| Secondary | 32% | 59% | 7% | 1% | 1% | 100% |

A majority of primary (94%) and secondary school teachers (92%) said they felt fairly confident or very confident in managing pupil misbehaviour at their school. This is a similar proportion to when we last asked this question in May 2024, when 93% of primary and 89% of secondary school teachers said the same. It is also a similar proportion to when we asked this at a similar time the previous year in March 2024, when 94% of primary and 89% of secondary school teachers said the same.

We then asked primary and secondary school teachers how often rules on behaviour are applied fairly to all pupils.

**Figure 21: How often rules on behaviour are applied fairly to all pupils**

| Phase | All of the time | Most of the time | Some of the time | Never | Don't know | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary | 30% | 53% | 15% | 1% | 1% | 100% |
| Secondary | 16% | 63% | 19% | 1% | 1% | 100% |

We also asked primary and secondary school teachers the extent they agreed or disagreed that parents and carers are generally supportive of the school's behaviour rules.

**Figure 22: Extent teachers agree or disagree that parents and carers are generally supportive of the school's behaviour rules**

| Phase | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary | 8% | 57% | 18% | 15% | 2% | 0% | 100% |

| Phase | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Secondary | 7% | 54% | 20% | 16% | 3% | 1% | 100% |

We asked primary and secondary school teachers how confident, if at all, they felt communicating with parents and carers about their child's behaviour.

**Figure 23: Teacher confidence in communicating with parents and carers about their child's behaviour**

| Phase | Very confident | Fairly confident | Not very confident | Not confident at all | Prefer not to say | Not applicable |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary | 32% | 53% | 13% | 2% | 0% | 0% |
| Secondary | 30% | 53% | 13% | 4% | 1% | 1% |

We also asked primary and secondary school teachers how easy they think it is for pupils at their school to follow their school's behaviour rules.

**Figure 24: How easy teachers think it is for pupils at their school to follow their school's behaviour rules**

| Phase | Very easy | Fairly easy | Not very easy | Not easy at all | Don't know | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary | 43% | 49% | 7% | 1% | 1% | 100% |
| Secondary | 43% | 48% | 6% | 1% | 1% | 100% |

We gave primary and secondary school teachers a series of statements relating to managing pupil behaviour, and asked the extent they agreed or disagreed with those statements.

**Figure 25: Extent teachers agree or disagree with statements relating to managing pupil behaviour**

| Statement | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know | To |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| At my school there is a shared understanding among staff of what is meant by good behaviour | 25% | 54% | 8% | 11% | 2% | 1% | 10 |
| The support I receive from senior leaders helps me to effectively manage pupils with persistently disruptive behaviour | 18% | 41% | 17% | 17% | 6% | 1% | 10 |
| Pupils understand what will | 24% | 52% | 10% | 11% | 2% | 1% | 10 |

happen if they
don't meet
the expected
standards of
pupil
behaviour

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Finally, we asked primary and secondary school teachers if they can personally access training and development support for behaviour management that is relevant to their experience and needs. Around half of primary (51%) and 56% of secondary school teachers said they could, and 30% of primary and 26% of secondary school teachers said they could not. The remaining 19% of primary and 17% of secondary school teachers said that they did not know.

# Glossary of terms

**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
- disability that 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.

Some 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 that provide an education for children with a special educational need or disability. Almost all pupils in special schools have an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

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