

EXAMPLE REPORT

Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey – November 2007

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Introduction

Two questions were submitted (by a client) to NFER's Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey, November 2007. The topics covered were:

- the use of ICT in learning and teaching
- teachers' priorities for future research in education

This report provides an analysis of the findings and supporting information about the survey and the composition of the respondent panel. The results are analysed by school phase (primary and secondary).

Analysis of findings - ICT in teaching and learning

Context

Substantial investment has taken place in schools since 1998 to improve ICT infrastructure, connectivity, software and staff skills. According to the Department for Schools, Children and Families (DCSF), investment in technology across education has risen over six fold between 1998 and 2005 (DCSF, 2005a).

In 2005 the Government announced a five year e-strategy for schools. This aims to harness technology to the needs of learners, teachers, and other stakeholders, transforming learning and ensuring that ICT is used effectively across education and children's services (DCSF, 2005b).

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed with a series of statements about the use of ICT in teaching and learning. Answers were recorded using a five point scale ranging from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree' and including 'Don't know'. The statements probed four key issues in relation to investment in ICT and the Government's e- strategy:

- the engagement of teachers with ICT and the impact of using ICT on pupil attainment
- ICT infrastructure and provision of digital resources in schools
- training and support for practitioners
- leadership of ICT in schools.

The findings will be discussed in relation to these issues. A summary of the frequency data is provided in table 1, showing the proportion of respondents

agreeing (i.e. who responded 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree') with each statement.
(Further tables are provided in the topline data report supplied separately.)

Table 1 To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the use of ICT in teaching and learning?

| | Respondents answering strongly agree or agree |
|--|--|
| | Overall % |
| Learning platforms (including personalised online learning spaces, VLEs and MLEs) are effective tools for learning | 53 |
| The leadership of ICT pedagogy in my school is inspirational | 27 |
| I have the ICT skills to exploit the technology that is available to me | 67 |
| Pupils expect me to use ICT in lessons | 65 |
| In my school there is good support for teachers using ICT in lessons | 62 |
| In my experience, use of ICT helps to raise pupil attainment | 62 |
| I feel under pressure to use ICT in my lessons | 38 |
| I know what the research evidence says about the impact of ICT on pupil attainment | 40 |
| Poor reliability discourages me from using ICT in lessons | 35 |
| A lack of resources limits my use of ICT in lessons | 33 |
| Recent investment in ICT would have been better spent in other areas of teaching and learning | 15 |
| The school buildings place constraints on how I use ICT in teaching and learning | 49 |
| Using ICT in lessons makes a difference to the way I teach | 80 |
| My school is innovative in its use of ICT | 44 |
| N= 1000 | |

A series of single response items

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2007

Overall findings

The engagement of the teachers with ICT and the impact of using ICT on pupil attainment

Generally, the findings suggest that new technologies are becoming embedded in teaching, and helping to raise attainment, with the majority of teachers agreeing that:

- Using ICT in lessons makes a difference to the way I teach (80 per cent of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement).
- I have the ICT skills to exploit the technology that is available to me (67 per cent).
- Pupils expect me to use ICT in lessons (65 per cent).
- In my experience, use of ICT helps to raise pupil attainment (62 per cent).
- Learning platforms (including personalised online learning spaces, VLEs and MLEs) are effective tools for learning (53 per cent).

However, for a sizeable minority of teachers, more information and support may need to be provided to ensure that ICT becomes fully embedded across the curriculum:

- I feel under pressure to use ICT in my lessons (38 per cent).
- I know what the research evidence says about the impact of ICT on pupil attainment (40 per cent).

ICT infrastructure and provision of digital resources in schools

About a third of respondents highlighted lack of resources and poor reliability as barriers to the development of ICT in schools:

- Poor reliability discourages me from using ICT in lessons (35 per cent).
- A lack of resources limits my use of ICT in lessons (33 per cent).

At local level, expert guidance and support needs to be targeted in schools where these factors remain an issue for teachers.

Training and support for practitioners

About two thirds of teachers felt that they have the skills and support to enable them to use the technology that is available:

- I have the ICT skills to exploit the technology that is available to me (67 per cent).
- In my school there is good support for teachers using ICT in lessons (62 per cent).

Compared to research conducted in 2004, these findings suggest that teacher competence in using ICT has improved (Lewis *et al.*, 2005). However, the findings identify a continuing demand for basic skills training, with about a third of teachers responding that they do not have the requisite skills to exploit the technology available to them. Progressively however, providers of initial teacher training and continuing professional development will need to focus less on basic skills provision and more on refining and disseminating best practice in teaching with ICT.

Leadership of ICT in schools

Responses to statements probing the quality of ICT leadership in schools suggest that leadership of ICT pedagogy in school could be improved. Only a minority of respondents felt that:

- The leadership of ICT pedagogy in my school is inspirational (27 per cent).
- My school is innovative in its use of ICT (44 per cent).

These findings underline the importance of continuing and developing the Strategic Leadership of ICT (SLICT) programme run by the National College for School Leadership.

Findings from respondents in primary and secondary schools

Further analysis of the responses identified the following differences between respondents in primary and secondary schools. Respondent in secondary schools were more likely than respondents in primary schools to agree with the following statements:

- **Learning platform (including personalised online learning spaces, VLEs and MLEs) are effective tools for learning.**
Less than half of primary teachers, compared to approximately two thirds of secondary teachers, consider learning platforms are effective in supporting their pupils' learning. This may be due to the lower level of uptake of learning platforms in the primary sector.

- **The school buildings place constraints on how I use ICT in teaching and learning**

The Government's programme, Building Schools for the Future (BSF), to rebuild all secondary schools is designed to address problems of poor building design in relation to the use of ICT. The survey findings support the targeting of secondary schools within this programme (56 per cent of secondary teachers compared to 44 per cent of primary teachers were in agreed that school buildings place constraints on their use of ICT in teaching and learning).

- **A lack of resources limits my use of ICT in lessons**

ICT resources are also an integral part of the BSF programme. The survey identified that 41 per cent of secondary teachers compared to 27 per cent of primary teachers highlight lack of resources as a factor limiting their use of ICT. These findings are in agreement with Becta's annual survey of ICT in schools (Becta, 2007) in which primary schools were generally more satisfied with the level of resources compared to secondary schools.

Respondents in primary schools were more likely than respondents in secondary schools to agree with the following statements:

- **In my school there is good support for teachers using ICT in lessons**

Sixty-six per cent of primary teachers agreed with this statement compared with 56 per cent of secondary teachers. Further research might consider the contribution of teaching assistants in supporting teachers in their use of ICT and differences between the phases in deployment and training of assistants.

- **Leadership of ICT pedagogy in my school is inspirational**

Thirty-one per cent of primary teachers agreed with this statement compared with 21 per cent of secondary teachers. Reasons for this difference may be due to more direct engagement by primary headteachers with the development of ICT in their schools, particularly in small primary schools.

Analysis of findings - Priorities for future research

Teachers were asked to identify one large piece of investigative research they would commission if they were Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families and explain why they chose that particular topic. About 80 per cent of teachers suggested a topic.

Overall findings

Two broad themes were evident across many of the responses which indicated that teachers' were interested in research that investigated:

- The impact of external factors, such as parenting, culture and contemporary childhood that are largely outside their control on the education of their pupils. Although Sue Palmer's book 'Toxic Childhood' was mentioned by only a few teachers, similar ideas were apparent in many of the responses.
- The wider impact of policies/initiatives, looking at effects beyond the original objectives or intended target groups. An example of this area was the impact of national curriculum testing on the psychological well-being of pupils and teachers.

The ten most frequent responses to the question are shown in Table 2. Further details on some of these suggestions and the reasons given for suggesting these areas of research are described.

Table 2 Teachers' priorities for further research

| | Overall Number of respondents |
|--|--|
| Effects of childhood today on the achievement/well-being of pupils | 129 |
| Impact of testing on curriculum provision/pupil learning | 77 |
| Behaviour | 44 |
| Research into formal learning for young children/under 5s | 41 |
| Impact of class size on progression/behaviour | 40 |
| Impact of parents/background on motivation/aspirations | 38 |
| Impact of inclusion | 28 |

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Psychological effects of testing on pupils | 23 |
| Research into boys | 21 |
| Literacy issues | 18 |
| N = | 1000 |

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2007

Effects of childhood today and the home environment on the achievement, aspirations and well-being of pupils

Within this general area topics for further research included the impact of *Toxic childhood syndrome*, drugs and teenage pregnancy on achievement and emotional well-being. The effects of computer and media use in the home were singled out as a particular topic for further research, with concerns being raised about the impact on social skills and behaviour.

Responses also equated poor achievement and behaviour with lack of effective parenting skills. The impact of poor parenting skills was described in many of the responses as *massive* or *huge* and several respondents suggested that problems related to pupils' home environment were increasing. One teacher explained why she had chosen this topic; *'I'm fed up of being a social worker and dealing with abused, ignored and uncared for children. I work in one of the richest counties in this country.'* Another commented that *'Parents frequently undo all the good work in schools by undermining the work of staff and contradicting the values we are trying to foster and promote.'*

Impact of testing on curriculum provision/pupil learning and psychological effects of testing on pupils

Typical suggestions within this category included research into the effectiveness of national testing and whether the existing provision:

- is an effective marker of ability
- impacts adversely on the quality of education
- encourages disaffection
- adversely effects the emotional well-being of pupils.

Behaviour and impact of inclusion on other pupils

Poor behaviour was highlighted as an increasing problem that was a major hindrance to the learning of other pupils. The related issue of inclusion was also identified as an area for research. Teachers suggested inclusion as an area for research because the education of other pupils was being disrupted by the inclusion of pupils whose own needs would be better served in a specialist unit.

Research into formal learning for young children/under 5s

The majority of responses in this category called for further research into the age at which formal education should begin and contrasted the approach in England with that of other European countries. Teachers generally felt that children begin formal education *too early* in England. They also felt that the national curriculum was inhibiting the development of key social and other skills that were essential to successful, long term engagement with education.

Research into boys

Teachers felt that some progress had been made in narrowing the attainment gap between boys and girls, but considered this was a problem to which they did not have all the answers.

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Supporting information

How was the survey conducted?

The survey was completed online in November 2007 by a panel of 1,000 practising teachers from the maintained sector in England. We value the teachers that take part in our surveys, and so in recognition of their efforts they are given feedback from the survey results and a £5 book token for themselves, or they can choose for us to donate that money to charity on their behalf. At the end of the survey period all 'Open' questions were coded by a team of experienced coders within the Foundation.

What was the composition of the panel?

The panel includes teachers from the range of roles in primary and secondary schools, from headteachers to class teachers. Sixty per cent (602) of respondents were teaching in primary schools and forty per cent (398) in secondary schools, see Table 3.

Table 3 Comparison of the achieved sample with the national population by grade of teacher

| Role | Primary schools | | Secondary schools | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | population | sample | population | sample |
| | % | % | % | % |
| Headteachers | 11 | 9 | 2 | 1 |
| Deputy Headteachers | 8 | 10 | 3 | 4 |
| Assistant Headteachers | 3 | 7 | 6 | 9 |
| Class teachers and others | 79 | 75 | 89 | 85 |
| N = | 165,200 | 602* | 188,000 | 398* |

* Less than one per cent (N= 5) did not specify their role

Due to rounding, percentages do not sum to 100

Sources: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2007, DCSF 618g survey (LA maintained sector teachers) and School Census

How did the schools represented by the panel compare with schools nationally?

Table 4 compares the primary schools represented by the teacher panel with all maintained primary schools in England using a range of characteristics. Table 5 shows a similar comparison for secondary schools. The primary and secondary samples showed a good spread of schools across the range in terms of achievement, eligibility for free school meals (FSM), school type, local authority (LA) and region, which was similar to that for schools nationally.

How accurately would the findings represent the national position?

Findings from a sample of 1000 teachers are predicted to give an accurate reflection of the views of the teaching profession in England. With a 95 per cent confidence interval, if 50 per cent of the sample gave a particular response, between 47 per cent and 53 per cent of all teachers in England would, if asked, give the same response.

Table 4 Representation of primary schools compared to primary schools nationally

| | | Population | Sample |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | | % | % |
| Achievement Band (KS2 Overall performance 2006) | Lowest band | 16 | 16 |
| | 2nd lowest band | 15 | 17 |
| | Middle band | 15 | 19 |
| | 2nd highest band | 15 | 17 |
| | Highest band | 16 | 19 |
| | Missing | 23 | 12 |
| % eligible FSM 2005 (5 pt scale) | Lowest 20% | 21 | 21 |
| | 2nd lowest 20% | 20 | 20 |
| | Middle 20% | 20 | 25 |
| | 2nd highest 20% | 19 | 22 |
| | Highest 20% | 19 | 12 |
| Primary school type | Infant/First | 17 | 12 |
| | Primary/Combined | 74 | 69 |
| | Junior | 9 | 18 |
| | Middle/other type | 1 | |
| Region | North | 31 | 23 |
| | Midlands | 32 | 31 |
| | South | 37 | 47 |
| LA type | London Borough | 10 | 10 |
| | Metropolitan Authorities | 21 | 17 |
| | English Unitary Authorities | 15 | 20 |
| | Counties | 53 | 53 |
| N = | | 17376 | 380 |

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2007*

Table 5 Representation of secondary schools compared to secondary schools nationally

| | | Population | Sample |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | | % | % |
| Achievement Band (total GCSE point score 2005) | Lowest band | 20 | 12 |
| | 2nd lowest band | 19 | 22 |
| | Middle band | 19 | 26 |
| | 2nd highest band | 18 | 16 |
| | Highest band | 15 | 23 |
| | Missing | 10 | 1 |
| % eligible FSM 2005 (5 pt scale) | Lowest 20% | 14 | 12 |
| | 2nd lowest 20% | 26 | 27 |
| | Middle 20% | 26 | 23 |
| | 2nd highest 20% | 20 | 27 |
| | Highest 20% | 13 | 11 |
| Secondary school type | Middle | 7 | 1 |
| | Comprehensive to 16 | 36 | 28 |
| | Comprehensive to 18 | 45 | 63 |
| | Other Secondary schools | 6 | 3 |
| | Grammar | 5 | 6 |
| Region | North | 29 | 24 |
| | Midlands | 34 | 23 |
| | South | 37 | 53 |
| LA type | London Borough | 12 | 13 |
| | Metropolitan Authorities | 21 | 18 |
| | English Unitary Authorities | 16 | 29 |
| | Counties | 50 | 40 |
| N = | | 3361 | 105 |

*Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey November 2007*