NFER Teacher Voice Omnibus 2012 Survey

The use of the Pupil Premium

The Sutton Trust

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Introduction

The Sutton Trust submitted 13 questions to NFER's Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey in February 2012. This report forms the last part of the output from the Omnibus survey, concerning specifically the questions in the survey over the use of the Pupil Premium in schools.

The recent introduction of the Pupil Premium is of special interest to the Trust is the recent introduction of the Pupil Premium, which provides extra funding for disadvantaged children. It also aims to increase social mobility, enabling more pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to get to top universities, and to reduce the attainment gap nationally. The Sutton Trust has published a toolkit[1] to help schools make informed and evidence-based decisions about how to spend the Pupil Premium. The Teacher Voice questions on schools' priorities for the Pupil Premium funding will be particularly informative, when set against the evidence encapsulated in the toolkit.

A sample of over 1600 teachers completed the survey. The sample was weighted to ensure that it was representative. The sample included teachers from a wide range of school governance types and subject areas. Sample numbers were sufficient to allow for comparisons between the primary and secondary sectors. Detailed information about the sample is given in the supplementary section of this report.

The questions asked teachers (both primary and secondary) about the Pupil Premium and the top three priorities for extra spending at their school. Teachers were given a list of options to choose from, including 'other', 'don't know' and 'none'.

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[1] The Sutton Trust (2011). *Toolkit of strategies to improve learning: Summary for schools spending the Pupil Premium* [online]. Available http://www.suttontrust.com/public/documents/toolkit-summary-final-r-2-.pdf [15 March]

As Table 1 shows, the most popular responses were early intervention (16%), reducing class sizes (15%), more one-to-one tuition (10%), additional teaching assistants (8%) and offsetting budget cuts elsewhere (8%).

Table 1. With the money received through the Pupil Premium, what is the top priority for extra spending at the school in 2011/2012?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Reducing class sizes	15%	13%	18%
Additional teaching assistants	8%	12%	3%
Additional teachers	5%	6%	3%
More one-to-one tuition	10%	10%	9%
Peer-to-peer tutoring schemes for pupils	<1%	<1%	1%
Improving feedback between teachers and pupils / providing more feedback that is effective	2%	2%	1%
Early intervention schemes	16%	19%	12%
Extending the breadth of the curriculum	3%	3%	2%
Improving the classroom or school environment	5%	5%	5%
Offsetting budget cuts elsewhere	8%	5%	11%
Other	1%	1%	1%
Don't know	28%	24%	34%
None	1%	1%	1%
Local base (N)	1676	923	750

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100
Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

Two points are worth noting here to contextualise these responses. First, more than a quarter (28%) of teachers were not aware of the top priority for spending the Pupil Premium at their school. This was more common among secondary teachers than their primary counterparts (34% compared with 24%). There was a more marked difference by seniority; five per cent of senior leaders responded 'don't know', compared with over a third (34%) of classroom teachers. Second, these answers represent the teachers' impression of the priorities for spending, and not necessarily the actual priorities. However, the responses of senior leaders, who might be expected to be more aware of

the priorities for spending, were very similar. Their most common response was also early intervention (25%).

Next, teachers selected the second top priority for spending the Pupil Premium. As Table 2 shows, the most popular response was, again, early intervention (20%). This was followed by additional teaching assistants and more one-to-one tuition (both 11%). The remaining options were selected by, at most, ten per cent of teachers. The most common among these were improving the classroom or school environment (9%), additional teachers (8%) and reducing class sizes (7%).

Table 2. With the money received through the Pupil Premium, what is the second top priority for extra spending at the school in 2011/2012?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Reducing class sizes	7%	7%	8%
Additional teaching assistants	11%	15%	7%
Additional teachers	8%	7%	10%
More one-to-one tuition	11%	12%	11%
Peer-to-peer tutoring schemes for pupils	1%	1%	2%
Improving feedback between teachers and pupils / providing more feedback that is effective	3%	3%	3%
Early intervention schemes	20%	23%	17%
Extending the breadth of the curriculum	5%	5%	4%
Improving the classroom or school environment	9%	9%	8%
Offsetting budget cuts elsewhere	6%	4%	8%
Other	5%	4%	6%
Don't know	3%	3%	2%
None	11%	9%	14%
Local base (N)	1530	852	676

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100
Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

Finally, teachers indicated the third top priority for spending the Pupil Premium. Table 3 shows their responses. Once again, early intervention featured strongly, and was the most common answer along with improving the classroom or school environment (both 14%). This was followed by additional teaching assistants (11%), additional teachers (9%), more one-to-one tuition (9%) and extending the breadth of the curriculum (9%).

Table 3. With the money received through the Pupil Premium, what is the third top priority for extra spending at the school in 2011/2012?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Reducing class sizes	5%	4%	6%
Additional teaching assistants	11%	11%	10%
Additional teachers	9%	8%	10%
More one-to-one tuition	9%	9%	10%
Peer-to-peer tutoring schemes for pupils	1%	<1%	2%
Improving feedback between teachers and pupils / providing more feedback that is effective	5%	5%	4%
Early intervention schemes	14%	15%	14%
Extending the breadth of the curriculum	9%	9%	8%
Improving the classroom or school environment	14%	15%	11%
Offsetting budget cuts elsewhere	8%	9%	7%
Other	3%	3%	3%
Don't know	5%	4%	6%
None	8%	7%	10%
Local base (N)	1342	766	576

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100
Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

In summary, the responses to the survey indicated that half of the teachers (50 per cent) identified early intervention schemes as one of their top three priorities, while 30 per cent identified more one-to-one tuition, and 30 per cent named additional teaching assistants as one of the top three priorities. Slightly fewer ticked improving the classroom or school environment or reducing class sizes (27 per cent respectively) as one of their top three

priorities. Peer-to-peer tutoring schemes for pupils were the least identified by teachers (three per cent) within any of the top three priorities.

The final question submitted by the Trust asked teachers how their school decides which approaches and programmes to adopt to improve pupils' learning. Table 4 shows that teachers indicated a range of methods for making these decisions. More than half (52%) said their school uses past experience of what works. Large proportions of teachers also said their school learns from what works in other schools (46%) and from evaluating different approaches within the school (45%). Just over a third (36%) of teachers said their school looks at research evidence on the impact of different approaches and programmes. About a fifth (21%) indicated that their school considers the cost-effectiveness of different approaches. Seventeen per cent said their school consults the Local Authority in making decisions. Only five per cent of teachers said their school uses the Pupil Premium toolkit published by the Sutton Trust.

It is worth noting that more than a fifth (22%) of teachers were not aware of how their school makes these decisions. However, this was more common among secondary teachers (28%) than their primary counterparts (17%). Again, there was also a striking difference by seniority. Perhaps unsurprisingly, one per cent of senior leaders responded 'don't know', compared with 27 per cent of classroom teachers. However, while more than half of senior leaders (52%) said that their school consults research evidence, 11 per cent indicated that their school uses the Trust's toolkit.

Table 4. How does your school decide which approaches and programmes to adopt to improve pupil learning?

	All	Primary	Secondary
Using past experience of what works	52%	59%	43%
Considering research evidence on the impact of different approaches and programmes	36%	37%	35%
Evaluating different approaches and programmes then deciding which to adopt	45%	51%	37%
Considering which approaches and programmes are the most cost effective	21%	24%	17%
Reading the pupil premium toolkit, published by the Sutton Trust	5%	5%	6%
Learning from what works in other schools	46%	49%	44%
Consulting the school's governing body	6%	5%	7%
Consulting the Local Authority	17%	22%	10%

Other	5%	5%	6%
Don't know	22%	17%	28%
Local base (N)	1671	920	748

Respondents were able to select more than one response so percentages may sum to more than 100
Due to the primary, secondary and all teacher categories being weighted separately, the number of primary and secondary respondents may not sum to the number of teachers in total
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

Conclusions

In relation to the Pupil Premium, large proportions of teachers indicated that their school uses informal methods of evaluating approaches and programmes. These include trial-and-error approaches and learning from the experiences of other schools. While a large proportion of teachers believed that decisions in their school are based on research evidence, it is unclear what evidence they are using. Many of the strategies identified as high priorities for spending the Pupil Premium do not agree with the guidance published by the Sutton Trust. For example, according to the teachers in this sample, peer tutoring is not highly prioritised. This is in spite of the fact that there is good evidence that this method has high impact at a low cost. On the other hand, a large proportion of teachers, at both phases and especially senior leaders, indicated that early intervention is a top priority. While this is a high impact strategy, it is also very high cost, and not deemed suitable for secondary schools. Furthermore, teachers reported that one-to-one tuition is highly prioritised, while the toolkit's assessment considers this approach to have moderate impact for very high cost. Given these findings, it is unsurprising to learn that a small proportion of teachers indicated that their school uses the Trust's toolkit to make decisions. This suggests that the Trust may need to do more to publicise the toolkit and its usefulness in providing accessible, evidence-based guidance on how to spend the Pupil Premium.

Supporting information

How was the survey conducted?

This report is based on data from the February 2012 survey. A panel of 1686 practising teachers from 1269 schools in the maintained sector in England completed the survey. Teachers completed the survey online between the 17th and 29th February 2012. During the survey period, a team of experienced coders within the Foundation coded all 'open' questions (those without a pre-identified set of responses).

What was the composition of the panel?

The panel included teachers from the full range of roles in primary and secondary schools, from headteachers to newly qualified class teachers. Fifty five per cent (921) of the respondents were teaching in primary schools and 45 per cent (765) were teaching in secondary schools.

How representative of schools nationally were the schools corresponding to the teachers panel?

There was an under-representation of schools in the highest quintile in terms of eligibility for free school meals in the sample of primary schools. In the sample of secondary schools and for the overall sample (primary and secondary schools) there was under-representation in the highest quintile and over-representation in the lowest quintile in terms of eligibility for free school meals. To address this, weights were calculated using free school meals factors to create a more balanced sample. Due to the differences between the populations of primary schools and secondary schools, different weights were created for primary schools, secondary schools and then for the whole sample overall. The weightings have been applied to all of the analyses referred to in this commentary and contained within the tables supplied in electronic format (via Pulsar Web)[2]. .

Tables S.1, S.2 and S.3 show the representation of the weighted achieved sample against the population. Table S.4 shows the representation of the weighted teacher sample by role in school.

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[2]   The sample was not weighted for missing free school meal data

Table S.1 Representation of (weighted) primary schools compared to primary schools nationally

		National Population %	NFER Sample %
Achievement Band (Overall performance by KS2 2011 data)	Lowest band	19	15
	2nd lowest band	18	18
	Middle band	17	18
	2nd highest band	21	23
	Highest band	25	25
	Missing	0	0
% eligible FSM (5 pt scale) (2010/11)	Lowest 20%	20	20
	2nd lowest 20%	20	20
	Middle 20%	20	20
	2nd highest 20%	20	20
	Highest 20%	20	20
	Missing	0	0
Primary school type	Infants	9	10
	First School	5	4
	Infant & Junior (Primary)	77	73
	First & Middle	0	0
	Junior	7	11
	Middle deemed Primary	0	1
	Academy	2	2
Region	North	31	24
	Midlands	32	30
	South	37	47
Local Authority type	London Borough	11	13
	Metropolitan Authorities	21	21
	English Unitary Authorities	18	20
	Counties	51	47
Number of schools		16798	801

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100
Some information is not available for all schools and some schools included more than one respondent
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012

Table S.2 Representation of (weighted) secondary schools compared to secondary schools nationally

		National Population %	NFER Sample %
Achievement Band (Overall performance by GCSE 2010 data)	Lowest band	16	16
	2nd lowest band	20	19
	Middle band	19	22
	2nd highest band	18	21
	Highest band	19	19
	Missing	7	4
% eligible FSM (5 pt scale) (2010/11)	Lowest 20%	20	20
	2nd lowest 20%	20	20
	Middle 20%	20	20
	2nd highest 20%	20	20
	Highest 20%	20	20
	Missing	1	0
Secondary school type	Middle	6	3
	Secondary Modern	3	1
	Comprehensive to 16	26	22
	Comprehensive to 18	32	42
	Grammar	5	6
	Other secondary school	0	0
	Academies	28	26
Region	North	29	24
	Midlands	33	31
	South	38	44
Local Authority type	London Borough	13	14
	Metropolitan Authorities	21	21
	English Unitary Authorities	19	19
	Counties	47	46
Number of schools		3255	468

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.
Some information is not available for all schools and some schools included more than one respondent.
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

Table S.3 Representation of all schools (weighted) compared to all schools nationally

		National Population %	NFER Sample %
Achievement Band (By KS2 2011 and GCSE 2010 data)	Lowest band	18	16
	2nd lowest band	18	18
	Middle band	17	20
	2nd highest band	20	22
	Highest band	24	22
	Missing	1	1
% eligible FSM (5 pt scale) (2010/11)	Lowest 20%	20	20
	2nd lowest 20%	20	20
	Middle 20%	20	20
	2nd highest 20%	20	20
	Highest 20%	20	20
	Missing	0	0
Region	North	30	24
	Midlands	32	30
	South	37	46
Local Authority type	London Borough	11	13
	Metropolitan Authorities	21	21
	English Unitary Authorities	18	20
	Counties	51	46
Number of schools		20017	1269

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100
Some information is not available for all schools and some schools included more than one respondent
Source: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012.

Table S.4 Comparison of the achieved (weighted) sample with the national population by grade of teacher

Role	Primary schools				Secondary schools			
	National Population		NFER Sample		National Population		NFER Sample	
	N*	%	N	%	N*	%	N	%
Headteachers	16.8*	10	86	9	3.2*	2	13	2
Deputy Headteachers	11.7*	7	103	11	5.3*	3	23	3
Assistant Headteachers	6.5*	4	54	6	11.4*	6	72	10
Class teachers and others	131.8*	79	682	74	160.0*	89	643	86

*Population N is expressed in thousands
Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100
Sources: NFER Omnibus Survey February 2012, DfE: School Workforce in England (including pupil:teacher ratios and pupil:adult ratios), January 2010
http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000927/index.shtml [12 March 2012].

How accurately do the findings represent the national position?

Precision is a measure of the extent to which the results of different samples agree with each other. If we drew a different sample of teachers would we get the same results? The more data that is available the more precise the findings. For all schools and a 50 per cent response, the precision of that response is between 47.61 per cent and 52.39per cent. For secondary schools the same precision is + and – 3.54 percentage points and for primary schools it is + and – 3.23 percentage points.

With the weightings applied to the data, we are confident that the omnibus sample is broadly representative of teachers nationally and provides a robust analysis of teachers' views.