



Teacher Voice

**NFER Teacher Voice Omnibus
April 2012 Survey**

Volunteering in schools

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Introduction

NFER ran a question in the April 2012 Teacher Voice omnibus survey to provide robust data about volunteering in schools. We wanted to know:

- who is volunteering to help in schools
- in which types of school are they volunteering
- in what capacities are volunteers utilised by schools.

The survey was completed online by a representative sample of 1597 teachers from 1211 schools in the maintained sector in England. The respondents included teachers from primary and secondary phases and from a range of school types. Detailed information about the sample is given in the supplementary section of this report.

This report analyses the responses and also the findings from further analysis of volunteering in schools with different levels of socio-economic deprivation in their pupil intake.

Analysis of findings

Who are the volunteers and in which schools are they volunteering?

Teachers were asked to differentiate between volunteering by parents of pupils at their school (parental volunteers) and volunteering by other members of the community (who are not parents of pupils in the school), for example, by employees from local companies or retired people, (community volunteers). As shown in Table 1, 84 per cent of respondents said that parents were volunteering in some capacity at their school compared to 68 per cent who reported some form of involvement by community volunteers. Separate analysis of the data for primary teachers and secondary teachers indicates that parental volunteering is widespread in primary schools (98 per cent of primary teachers) but declines once pupils enter secondary education (64 per cent of secondary teachers). Community volunteering is also more prevalent in primary schools (76%) than secondary schools (57%) although the difference between phases is less marked than for parental volunteering.

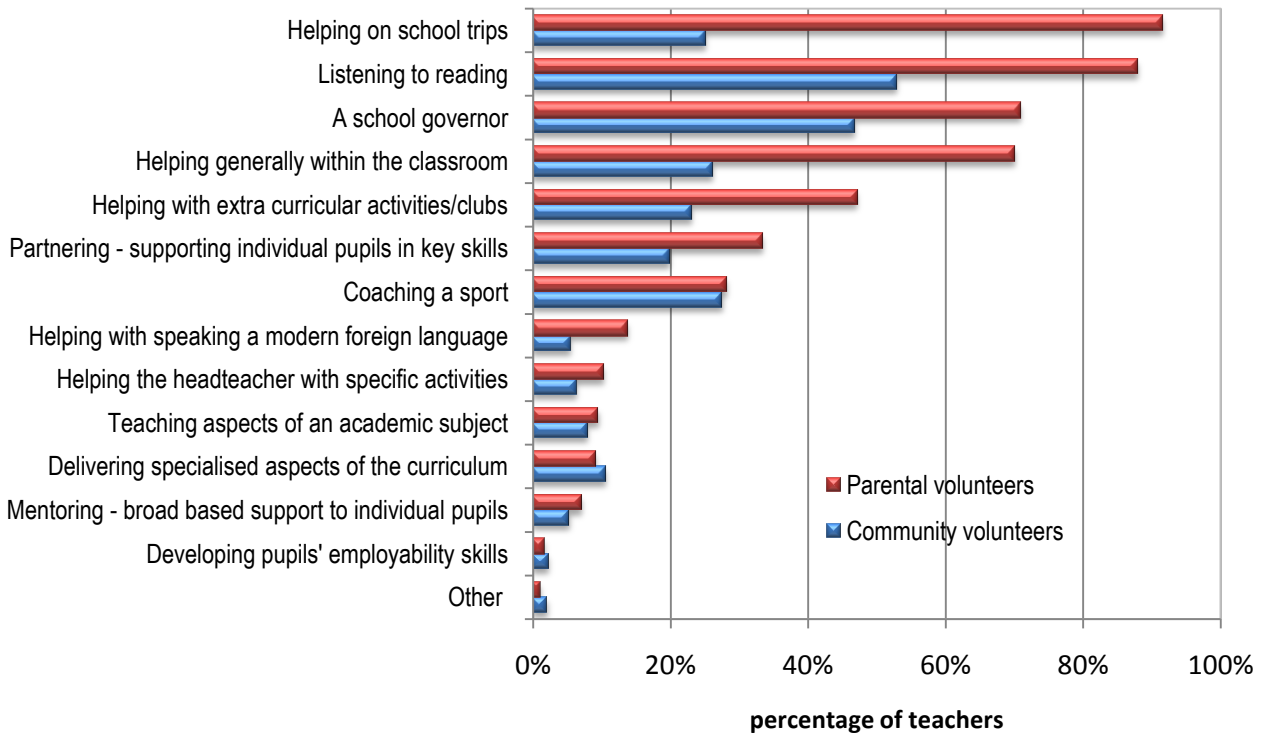
These disparities in volunteering between primary and secondary schools and according to the type of volunteer are highlighted in the charts on page 2, which also show the range of activities undertaken by volunteers.

**Table 1. Who is volunteering and in which types of school?
Teachers reporting volunteering activity at their school**

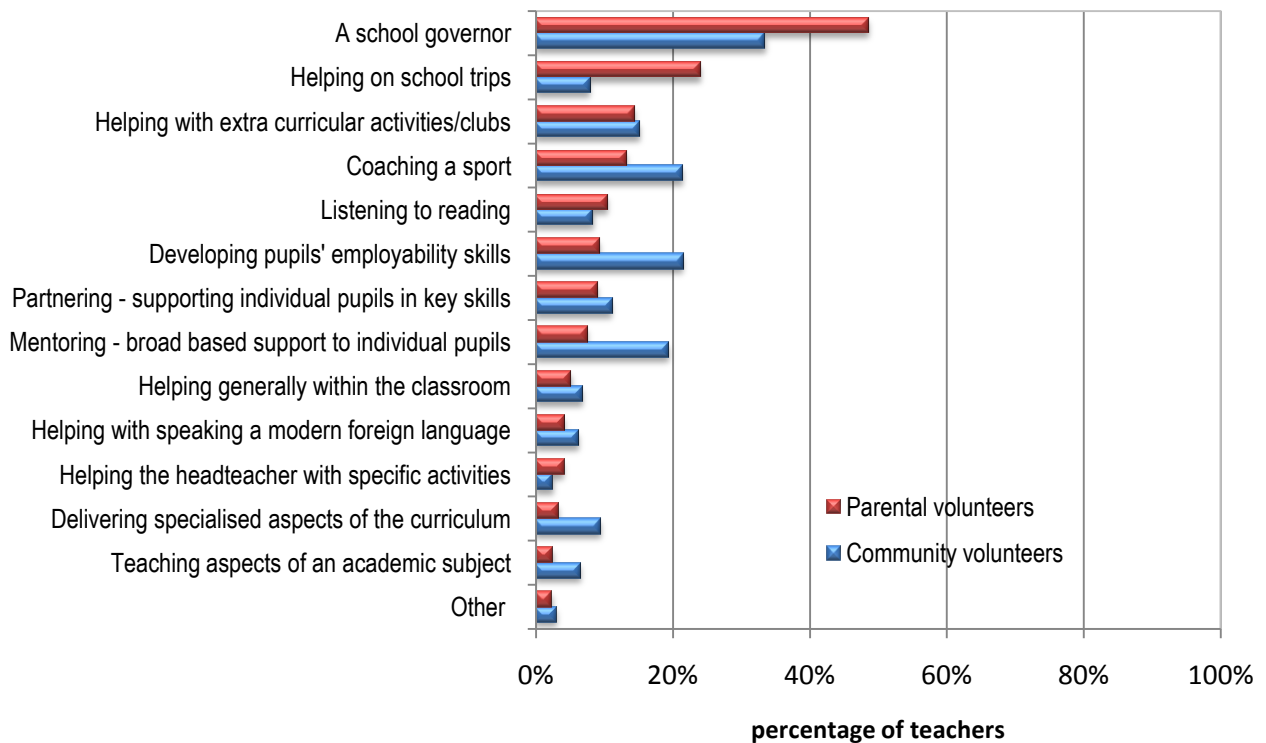
	All	Primary	Secondary
Parental volunteers	84%	98%	64%
Community volunteers	68%	76%	57%
N	1555	869	693

*Multiple response question 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 April 2012.*

Volunteering in primary schools



Volunteering in secondary schools



In what capacities are schools utilising volunteers?

Teachers were asked to identify all the activities currently undertaken by volunteers at their school. The predefined response options covered support for both curricular and extra-curricular activities as well as supporting the management of the school and respondents could supply details of any other roles undertaken. The responses are shown separately for primary and secondary teachers in the charts on page 2 and highlight differing patterns of volunteering in each of these phases.

In primary schools, the top roles undertaken by parental volunteers were: ‘helping on school trips’, (92 per cent of primary teachers), ‘listening to reading’ (88%) and ‘school governor’ (71%). For community volunteers, ‘listening to reading’ (53%) and ‘school governor’ (43%) were most frequently cited.

In secondary schools, ‘school governor’ was also the main role for both parental (49 per cent of secondary teachers) and community volunteers (34%). For parental volunteers, the second most frequently cited activity was ‘helping on school trips’ (24%). For community volunteers, other roles such as developing employability skills (22%) and coaching a sport (21%) featured, although the levels were comparatively low. Typically, these are roles where volunteers may bring specialist knowledge, skills or experience.

Across both phases, the charts show the concentration of the volunteering resource on the main activities described above. In comparison, other activities such as sports coaching and roles involving utilising specialist knowledge, skills or experience appear under-developed.

Who is volunteering in more disadvantaged areas?

To investigate patterns of volunteering in schools with varying socio-economic backgrounds, further analysis was undertaken using data on eligibility for Free School Meals (FSM) of the respondents’ schools. FSM is used as an indicator of socio-economic status, a higher eligibility indicating higher levels of deprivation among pupils. The analysis focused on primary schools where more survey data was available and indicated that parental volunteering decreased as FSM eligibility increased. Put another way, the data suggests that schools in more challenging circumstances have less access to help/support from their parents. This is illustrated in Table 2 for volunteers involved in ‘listening to reading’. Table 2 also shows that ‘listening to reading’ by community volunteers was at a fairly constant level across the spectrum of schools. These findings raise a number of questions for both schools and the volunteers working with them.

Table 2. Primary respondents reporting ‘Listening to reading’ by volunteers

	FSM quintile of respondent’s school				
	Lowest 20%	2 nd lowest 20%	Middle 20%	2 nd highest 20%	Highest 20%
Parental volunteers	94%	93%	90%	82%	80%
Community volunteers	52%	54%	51%	52%	56%
N	167	194	169	180	157

Source: NFER Omnibus Survey April 2012

Conclusions

The survey has highlighted disparities in volunteering on several levels: between primary and secondary schools, between parental and community volunteers and in the roles volunteers are undertaking. Whilst particular characteristics of primary schools, such as their smaller size and younger pupils relative to secondary schools, may have prompted greater use of volunteers, the findings suggest there is scope for secondary schools to develop their use of this resource. Across both phases schools would benefit from reviewing the utilisation and impact of their volunteers. Key questions include:

- Could volunteers be used more effectively by developing the range of activities in which they are engaged?
- Should schools be attracting new volunteers and particularly those with specialist knowledge or experience to help in areas such as sports coaching and developing employability skills?

In schools with higher eligibility for FSM, the survey indicated that lower levels of parental involvement are not offset by targeted volunteering from within the community. These schools may need to be more proactive than others in approaching and engaging volunteers. Similarly organisations looking to develop community volunteering in their local schools need to focus their efforts appropriately to avoid compounding existing inequities in parental volunteering.

Supporting information

How was the survey conducted?

This report is based on data from the April 2012 Teacher Voice Omnibus survey. A panel of 1567 practising teachers from 1211 schools in the maintained sector in England completed the survey. Teachers completed the survey online between the 20th April and 2nd May 2012.

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 (859) of the respondents were teaching in primary schools and 45 per cent (708) 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)¹.

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.

¹ 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	19
	2nd highest band	21	23
	Highest band	25	26
	Missing	<1	0
% eligible FSM (5 pt scale) (2010/11)	Lowest 20%	20	20
	2nd lowest 20%	20	21
	Middle 20%	20	20
	2nd highest 20%	20	20
	Highest 20%	20	20
	Missing	<1	0
Primary school type	Infants	9	9
	First School	5	4
	Infant & Junior (Primary)	76	73
	First & Middle	0	0
	Junior	7	12
	Middle deemed Primary	<1	1
	Academy	2	3
Region	North	31	23
	Midlands	32	31
	South	37	47
Local Authority type	London Borough	11	13
	Metropolitan Authorities	21	21
	English Unitary Authorities	18	19
	Counties	51	47
Number of schools		16799	760

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 April 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	18	20
	2nd lowest band	20	16
	Middle band	20	22
	2nd highest band	19	22
	Highest band	20	19
	Missing	3	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	1	1
Secondary school type	Middle	6	3
	Secondary Modern	3	1
	Comprehensive to 16	24	21
	Comprehensive to 18	29	39
	Grammar	5	5
	Other secondary school	<1	0
	Academies	33	30
Region	North	29	24
	Midlands	33	32
	South	38	43
Local Authority type	London Borough	13	14
	Metropolitan Authorities	21	20
	English Unitary Authorities	19	18
	Counties	47	48
Number of schools		3255	460

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 April 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	19	17
	2nd lowest band	18	17
	Middle band	17	20
	2nd highest band	21	22
	Highest band	24	23
	Missing	1	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	<1	<1
Region	North	30	23
	Midlands	32	31
	South	37	45
Local Authority type	London Borough	11	14
	Metropolitan Authorities	21	20
	English Unitary Authorities	18	19
	Counties	51	47
Number of schools		20018	1211

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 April 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	15.4*	8	77	9	2.1*	2	12	2
Deputy Headteachers	10.8*	6	91	10	3.3*	2	25	4
Assistant Headteachers	6.4*	3	60	7	7.6*	6	63	9
Class teachers and others	155.6*	83	641	74	119.2*	90	594	86

*Population N is expressed in thousands

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100

Sources: NFER Omnibus Survey April 2012, DfE: School Workforce in England (including pupil:teacher ratios and pupil:adult ratios), November 2011

<http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s001062/sfr06-2012v2.pdf> [21 May 2012].

How accurately do the findings represent the national position?

Assuming that our data is representative of the population at large (and we have no evidence to suggest otherwise) we can calculate the precision of results from each of our samples based on the number of respondents. The smallest number of respondents is for the secondary school sample where we have 708 respondents. In this case we can calculate that all results based on the full sample will be precise to within at worst plus or minus 5 percentage points. This means that we are 95 per cent sure that if we were to collect results from all secondary schools in the country the results we would get would be within 5 percentage points of the results presented in this report. We have marginally more respondents within the primary school sample and hence can be even more confident about our results. For this reason, **within any of our samples, the precision of results based on all respondents will be precise to within at worst plus or minus 5 percentage points.**

Certain questions within the survey were filtered and in these cases the number of respondents to questions may be much smaller. In these cases we may need to be more cautious about the precision of the percentages presented within the report. The table below gives a rough guide to the level of precision that can be attributed to each table based upon the total number of respondents. For example, if a table is based upon just 40 respondents we can only be sure that the percentages within that table are correct to within plus or minus 16 percentage points.

Number of respondents	Precision of estimates in percentage point terms
30	18
40	16
50	14
75	12
100	10
150	9
200	7
300	6
400	5
650	4