

The English classroom today



As schools across the country prepare for changes to curriculum and assessment, we explore what’s standing out to secondary English teachers in the classroom today.

In the *Pearson School & College Report 2026*, more than 1,000 **secondary English teachers** in England shared their thoughts...

A system under strain

Secondary English teachers, like many other secondary educators, feel like the education system is struggling to adapt to the needs of today’s learners.

More than 1 in 2 English teachers say **today’s education system...**

is not inclusive enough (53%)

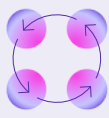
is not accessible enough (55%)

1 in 4 (**25%**) believe that the current education system **effectively supports achievement** and aspiration for **boys**. 1 in 3 (**34%**) think it does so for **girls**.

48% of English teachers say supporting students with **SEND** is one of the **top three challenges for their school to manage** over the next year.

→ **58%** have become **increasingly concerned about the prevalence of SEND** in the last 12 months.

Battle for engagement



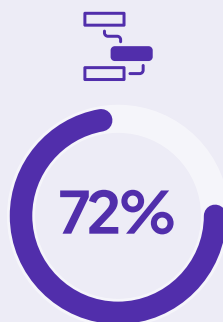
Declining attendance and focus are impacting daily classroom life for secondary English teachers.



Have become **increasingly concerned about student disengagement** in learning over the past year.



3 in 4 English teachers say that **attendance** is a barrier to student learning.



See **student disengagement** as a barrier to students’ learning **in the next six months**.
→ **3 pp** higher than the secondary teacher average (**69%**).

Embracing opportunities



English departments are leading the way in modernising content and experimenting with new technologies.

In the past two years:



1 in 4 English teachers (**24%**) state that more **diverse resources and texts** have had a **positive impact** on their school.
→ **13 pp** higher than the secondary teacher average.



28%

say the same about **AI tools**

Spotlight on skills

Secondary English educators feel confident in fostering human-centric skills in their students:

2 in 3 feel **equipped to foster,**



Emotional literacy

68%

37 pp more than science teachers.



Imagination

65%

45 pp more than maths teachers.



But **only 24%** say they feel equipped to foster **digital skills** in students– the lowest percentage across all subjects.

Want to know more?

Explore secondary English teachers’ views on the classroom tomorrow and find out more about how we’re helping schools and colleges [navigate curriculum and assessment reform with confidence](#).

Discover what 50,000+ educators, students and sector representatives think about education today and its future in the [Pearson School & College Report](#).



About the research

Surveys of primary and secondary classroom teachers, middle leaders, school leaders and headteachers working in schools in England were conducted by Teacher Tapp between 9 January 2026 and 28 January 2026. Depending on the question, there were between 1,538 and 9,611 respondents. Results were weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics.