Pearson

School Report 2025

Learning for life

Spotlight on key findings

14,000+ voices in education have shared their insights on the power of learning – including teachers, students, college tutors, home educators and changemakers across the country.

> " Learning sets you up for life."
>
> – Secondary Student

Why learning matters

Students' top reasons for learning

Primary	Secondary	College
• To learn new things/build knowledge (**58%**)	• To get a job in the future (**54%**)	• To develop skills for everyday life (**38%**)
• To get a job in the future (**47%**)	• To develop skills for everyday life (**42%**)	• To get a job in the future (**37%**)
• To develop skills for everyday life (**47%**)	• To learn new things/build knowledge (**38%**)	• To help me get ready for my next steps (**29%**)

Teachers' priority outcomes for students

- Self-confidence and self-awareness (**54%**)
- A love of learning (**50%**)
- Life skills | Understanding of the wider world (**40%**)

Understanding the challenges

Looking ahead to the next 12 months...

In **schools**, **budget pressures** are the **top challenge** (**64%**) for the fourth year in a row. This is followed by supporting pupils with SEND (**51%**), teacher and school leader workload (**42%**), and recruitment and retention (**38%**).

In colleges, the **top challenges** are budget pressures, student mental health and wellbeing, teacher/tutor/leader workload, and digital wellbeing (**23%**).

Teachers/tutors on the top barrier to students' learning in the next six months

- **Primary** – SEND (**78%**)
- **Secondary** – attendance (**77%**)
- **Home educators** – volume of teaching and learning content (**29%**)
- **College** – timetable inflexibility (**20%**)

Students on what's impacting their learning the most

1 in 3 say...

- **Not understanding the work** – at primary and secondary
- **Struggling to stay focused or motivated** – according to home educators
- **Mental health** – at college

Unpacking the pressures

- **66%** of school students report **struggling to engage with learning**.
- At least **1 in 4** students say they're worried about **school/college expectations** and/or **academic performance/ succeeding in studies**.
- **22%** of school students say they currently **don't** have any worries.

Feeling **future-ready**

The majority of primary, secondary and college students (**68%**) **feel ready** for their next stage of education. Teachers and tutors agree.

Yet, at least 1.9 million students are **not** thought to be both at the expected academic level and emotionally ready for the next stage of learning.

Teachers' top factors affecting readiness

- **Primary** – SEND (**79%**), struggles with writing (**75%**) and independence (**73%**)

- **Secondary** – self-motivation (**77%**), independence (65%) and social maturity (**62%**)

- **College** – digital wellbeing (**30%**), critical thinking (**30%**) and struggles with writing (**28%**)

Teachers on today's education system

- **1 in 5** say it prepares students for further study or training.

- **8%** believe it prepares students for future careers.

- **4%** say it helps teachers meet their students' needs.

Where we go next – **big-picture changes**

Fuelled by the desire to tailored learning for all students, teachers and tutors suggest system-wide changes including:

- Additional staffing
- Expanding in-school SEND support
- Parent/carer engagement
- Flexibility in curriculum development
- A greater emphasis on life skills and accessibility.

" **[Learning should be] based on the digital world in front of us. Skills based. Creating a lifelong love of learning.**"

– Primary Middle Leader

" **The findings show how dedicated teachers are to driving improvements forward in their students' learning, and how perceptive they are at highlighting what needs to be done to improve things.**"

– Dr Carl Ward, Chair of the Foundation for Education Development (FED)

Where we go next – evolving the curriculum

81% of teachers say the education system is overburdened with content.
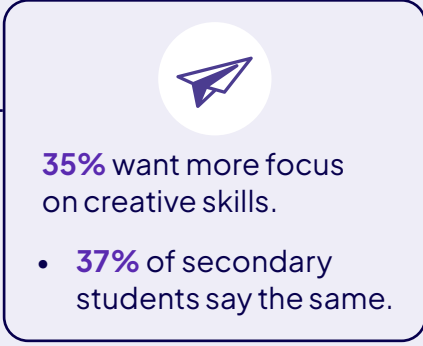
58% would like to see less curriculum content.
- **30%** of secondary students say the same.

38% would want more vocational options.
- **28%** of secondary students say the same.

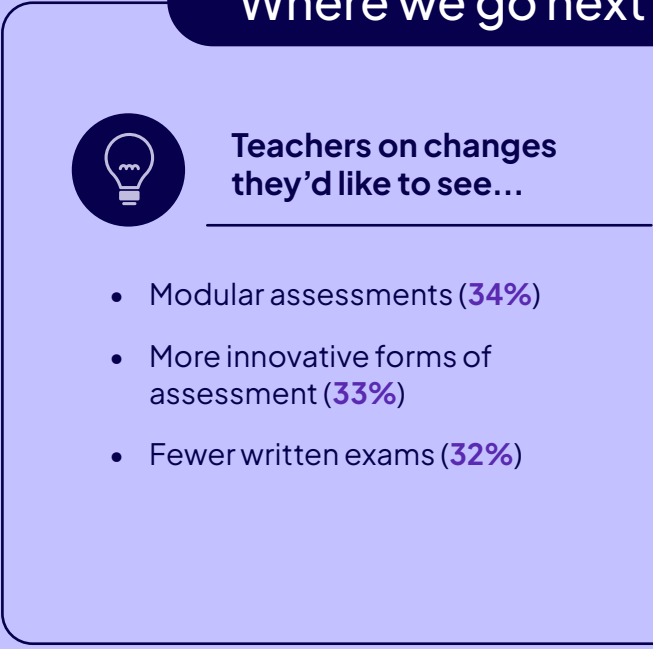**35%** want more focus on creative skills.
- **37%** of secondary students say the same.

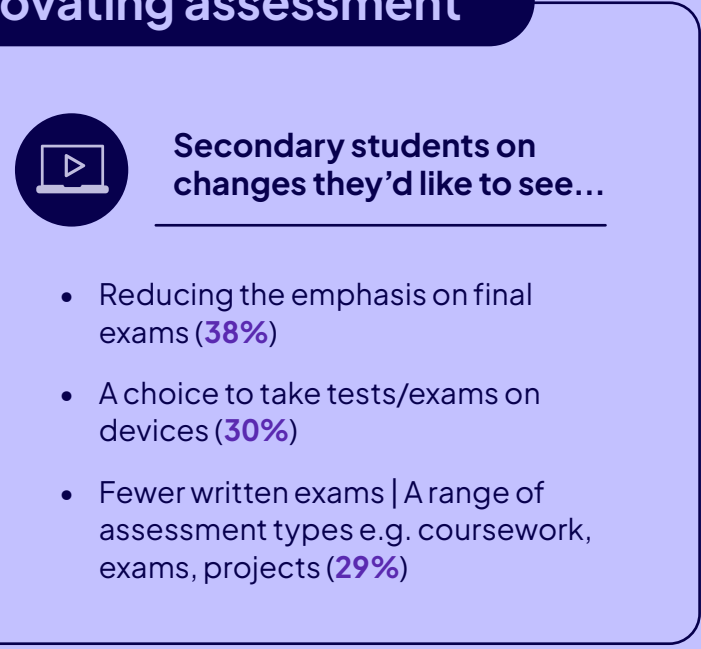# Where we go next – innovating assessment

Teachers on changes they'd like to see…

- Modular assessments (**34%**)
- More innovative forms of assessment (**33%**)
- Fewer written exams (**32%**)

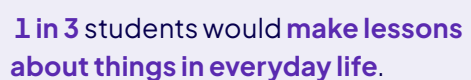**Secondary students on changes they'd like to see…**

- Reducing the emphasis on final exams (**38%**)
- A choice to take tests/exams on devices (**30%**)
- Fewer written exams | A range of assessment types e.g. coursework, exams, projects (**29%**)

Where we go next – skills for life

33% of teachers

29% of college tutors

Would place a **greater emphasis on life skills** in the curriculum.

1 in 3 students would **make lessons about things in everyday life**.

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Secondary students on the skills that are missing from learning that'd help them:

40% say
- Managing money and budgeting

33% say
- Speaking confidently in front of others

29% say
- How to get a job and workplace skills/ interview skills

Teachers/tutors on the top skills and qualities that should be prioritised outside of academic attainment

Primary	Secondary	Home educators	College
• Resilience	• Resilience	• Problem solving	• Solving problems
• Problem solving	• Critical thinking	• Critical thinking	• Confidence in their own abilities
• Teamwork	• Awareness of different cultures and societies	• Growth mindset	• Interpersonal skills

Where we go next – tech–enhanced education

Building on the now…

- **80%** of school students and **63%** of college students say learning online or using tech is **enjoyable**.
- **57%** of school students say they prefer **a mix** of digital and traditional learning.
- **1 in 10** school students say they prefer **not** to learn digitally.
- **88%** of home educators or their children used digital tools or technology for learning in the last two weeks.

The need to tackle the digital divide
At least 1 in 9…

- School and college students say a lack of technology **impacts their learning now**.
- Teachers and tutors predict that limited access to technology will be a **barrier** to learning in the next six months.

Bridging the confidence gap

While a small majority of teachers are confident in their digital skills, a significant number are not – suggesting the importance of support and guidance to close the digital confidence gap.

56%
of teachers say they feel confident using existing technology.

43%
of home educators are confident in their digital skills.

62%
of college tutors are confident in their digital skills.

Where we go next – developing digitally

The top three practical changes teachers say they need to support students' digital upskilling

More devices for classroom use (**70%**)

Reliable WiFi (**41%**)

Targeted funding for digital learning (**40%**)

56%
of teachers would like **digital skills training.**

31%
of school students say they'd like to **focus more on digital skills.**

Where we go next – AI

In the now…

Only **9% feel confident** teaching students how to use AI.

- **38%** of teachers **don't think students are being well prepared** for an AI-driven world.

- Only **1 in 5** teachers **don't use AI** in school.

- **44%** of teachers say **AI saves them time.** A similar number say they're confident using it for planning, writing reports/admin tasks and reducing workload.

- **23%** of teachers and **43%** of college tutors, **don't feel confident** using AI.

In the future…

More than a quarter of students believe they should **learn about AI at school/college**.

- **57%** of teachers believe **AI will play a bigger role** in education in the future.

- **43%** of teachers would like **AI training**.

- **42%** of teachers believe AI should be **part of teacher training**.

> " [To support future generations, we need training on] working smarter not harder – using AI tools where appropriate."
>
> **– Primary Classroom Teacher**

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