

Pearson

School Report 2025

Learning for life



**“ I think learning is life.
We all grow and develop, we
have our own interests and we
work towards our futures.”**

– Secondary Student

Opening the conversation

“Learning sets you up for life.”

These are the words of a secondary school student we spoke to as part of this year’s *Pearson School Report*. They emphasise that from our very first breath, we are learning. Whether it’s happening in schools, colleges, homes, workplaces or beyond, learning influences every aspect of our lives.

That’s why it’s been a privilege to hear from more than 14,000 teachers, students and changemakers on the power of learning – reflecting on what, where and how it happens. And, in many ways, most importantly: why.

Learning never stops

What we learn today is what we build upon tomorrow. With that in mind, this edition of the *Pearson School Report* expands on the insights and trends we’ve seen since 2022 and looks ahead to what’s next.

To do this, we’ve focused on how learning in schools equips students for the future that awaits them. So, for the very first time, our report questions have gone beyond the school gates.

Alongside teachers and students, home educators and college tutors have shared thoughts in their thousands – bringing perspectives together in a way that, I hope, will make what we learn and discuss as an education community richer as a result.

Learning for the future

We live in a fast-changing world. And the question of ‘what’s next for learning?’ is everywhere in education – from the shape and form of curriculum and assessment, to what’s possible with AI. So it’s only right that these insights add to the conversation. By sharing our findings, ideas and potential answers from across the sector in this report, we can build upon them together.

Let’s start now...

Freya Thomas Monk

Managing Director, Pearson Qualifications



What we're exploring...

14,000+ voices in education...

	New
■ Almost 10,000 primary and secondary teachers and leaders	■ 1,000 college tutors
■ 1,000 primary school students	■ 1,000 college students
■ 1,000 secondary school students	■ 75 home-educating parents

Plus, **views from across the sector...**

On learning now and how it can evolve in the future...

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We ask why learning matters, where students and those teaching them want it to lead, and how it's something that never stops.

Part Two – The learning landscape 13

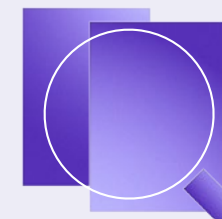
Our biggest picture of trends across education to date – including what's impacting learning, whether students are ready for their next steps, and how we as a sector are rising to the challenges.

Part Three – Where we go next 43

We put the spotlight on what members of the education community believe can help build learning for the future – from curriculum and assessment evolution, to the power of skills, creativity and technology.

Continuing the conversation 83

About the research



Pearson commissioned a nationally representative external survey of primary and secondary classroom teachers, middle leaders, school leaders and headteachers working in schools in England between 29 March 2025 and 25 April 2025. Between 2,355 and 9,821 responded to the questions. Responses were collected by the polling organisation Teacher Tapp and weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics.

Research was also conducted by Censuswide in April 2025 with 1,000 primary school students (aged 7–11 years), 1,000 secondary school students (aged 11–16 years), 1,000 college students, 1,000 college tutors and 75 parents who are home/flexi-schooling their children.

When we refer to 'teachers', this represents the views of those working in primary and secondary schools. 'Tutors' reflects the views of those working in colleges. We use 'colleges' as an overarching term for all colleges, including sixth-form colleges.

Part One

Why we learn

To answer how education can meet the needs of students and teachers now and in the future, we're starting at the beginning: why do we learn?



Learning for life

What drives us to learn and what we value from learning changes over a lifetime. But the importance of lifelong learning unites students, teachers and the wider education community alike.

“Learning is a very important part of our life. It helps us to understand and communicate through life.”

– Secondary Student

“Learning is empowering. It gives you life skills you will need to succeed and gives you more choices.”

– Secondary Student

“Learning prepares me for the future. Learning teaches me useful skills. Learning teaches me about society.”

– Secondary Student

“Learning is self-growth, it’s discovering who you are, what you can do and how you can contribute. It’s about curiosity, development and the power to change yourself and the world around you.”

– Primary Headteacher

“[Learning should be] continuous! The world is ever evolving, our profession needs to follow suit.”

– Primary Teacher

Your voices

More from across the sector...



“[It’s important to] learn new things and open my mind.”

– Primary Student

“Every day I learn something.”

– Secondary Student

“[Learning] helps me build my future.”

– Primary Student

“All [training] is useful if it enables us to reflect on our practice and consider new methods or ideas.”

– Secondary Middle Leader

“We are what we know [...] we keep learning by the day.”

– Primary Student



Why learning matters

When we asked teachers and students why learning matters and where they want learning to lead, answers came back in their thousands.

“Overwhelmingly, students join their local college with the determination to develop skills, achieve qualifications and to prepare for work and higher education.”

– Gerry McDonald CBE, CEO & Group Principal, New City College

Teachers' views

Amid many possible outcomes for learning, teachers shared how most of all, they hope their students will grow as individuals and build their skills and knowledge.

Teachers' top outcomes they'd prioritise for students

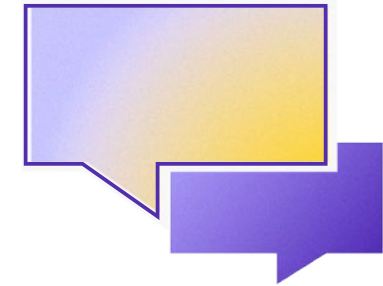
	1 Self-confidence and self-awareness	54%
	2 Love of learning	50%
	3 Life skills	40%
	= Understanding of the wider world	40%
	5 Emotional literacy	39%
	6 Academic progress	24%

When we asked **home educators** the same question, **self-confidence** and **self-awareness** also came top (**47%**) with **life skills** similarly appearing in their top three (**36%**) after **digital skills** (**37%**).

Students' views

When students shared why learning is important, the role of schools and colleges in paving the way for future lives is clear.

Across all ages, there's **a strong link between learning, skills and careers**. Among secondary and college students specifically, progression to key milestones such as achieving qualifications and readiness for next steps emerge as significant reasons for learning, alongside being supported to thrive in life.



What do you think are the most important reasons for learning, if you think there are any at all?*

Primary		Secondary		College	
To learn new things/to build my knowledge	58%	To get a job in the future	54%	To develop skills I can use in everyday life	38%
To get a job in the future	47%	To develop skills I can use in everyday life	42%	To get a job in the future	37%
To develop skills I can use in everyday life	47%	To learn new things/to build my knowledge	38%	To help me get ready for my next steps (Higher Nationals/ university/apprenticeship/career)	29%
To help me understand the world around me	33%	To help me get ready for college/ university/higher education	36%	To achieve my qualifications	28%
To become more confident in myself	29%	To pass tests/exams	34%	To help me understand the world around me	24%

*Question wording tailored for appropriateness to student phase

Why we keep learning

As well as exploring views on the 'destinations' that education can lead to, we asked **primary and secondary students** what keeps them learning.

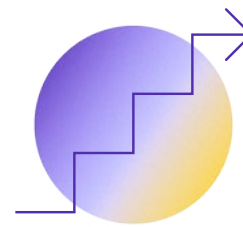
What, if anything, helps you stay **motivated** at school?



The love of **learning**

For **50%** of students it's:

- learning **new things**
- learning about things I am **interested** in.



Potential and **progress**

For **4 in 10** students, it's a sense of self-development and expression:

- feeling like I'm **making progress**
- **understanding** what I'm learning
- being able to **be creative**.

These answers mirror **home educators'** feedback too, with **64%** and **60%** respectively describing that their children like learning new things and find learning interesting.

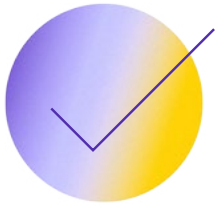
“I like to keep learning.”

– Primary Student

“Learning challenges me and keeps me interested.”

– Secondary Student

What's motivating teachers?



The power of **teaching**

Students also highlighted the vital role teachers play in motivating them:

- getting **good feedback** from teachers (**48%**)
- earning **rewards or recognition** (**45%**)
- and specifically, **their teachers** (**43%**).



Making a **difference**

Insights from teachers show that the feeling is mutual: it's helping students learn that motivates teachers. In fact, the *Pearson School Report 2024* showed it was the opportunity to “**make a difference to pupils' lives**” that led **two thirds** of teachers into their teaching careers.

“A teacher's belief and trust can transform a student's perception of themselves.”

– College Tutor

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

– Primary Middle Leader

Part Two

The learning landscape

Views from students and teachers have been helping us trace the trends, challenges and changes in learning since 2022. This year's insights paint a bigger picture than ever before.



What does learning look like?

Who's **learning**, where?

- **9 million** students in schools in England.¹
- **111,700** students in elective home education in England.²
- **1.6 million** students in colleges in England.³

Learning is happening in **different ways**

9,235 teachers told us what happened in their **last lesson**:

- **86%** did whole-class learning.
- **36%** did hands-on learning.
- **24%** did physical activity.
- **23%** did digital learning.
- **3%** did community engagement/trips.
- **2%** did remote learning.

Meeting **needs** in many ways

Every student is unique, and statistics from schools highlight the many ways learning is being tailored.

When considering the last class they taught, teachers told us at least one student within it in had:

- in-school wellbeing/pastoral support (**74%**)
- a modified or individualised curriculum (**28%**)
- regular learning interventions (**62%**)
- an adapted or flexible timetable (**25%**)
- adapted materials and/or assessments (**55%**)
- use of assistive technology (**24%**)
- one-to-one support (**49%**)
- access to alternative provision (**16%**).

♥ And is being **enjoyed** by students across all ages

- **6 in 10** students say they enjoy going to school.
- **59%** of home educators say their child enjoys learning.
- At college, **47%** say students enjoy learning.

🌱 But there is room for **improvement**...

When we asked teachers about the education system today, their responses highlighted aspects where change may be welcome:

- **1 in 5** say it prepares students for further study or training.
- **8%** say it prepares students for future careers.
- **7%** say it supports students' social and emotional development.
- **3 in 4** say it isn't inclusive for all students.



1. Department for Education. 2024. "School Pupils and Their Characteristics: 2024–25." <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics/2024-25>

2. Department for Education. 2024. "Elective Home Education: 2024–25 Autumn Term." <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/elective-home-education/2024-25-autumn-term>

3. Association of Colleges. 2024. *College Key Facts 2024–25*. <https://d4hfzltwt4wv7.cloudfront.net/uploads/files/AoC-College-Key-Facts-2024-25.pdf>







The challenges schools face: 2025/2026

Since our first *Pearson School Report* in 2022, teachers have told us what they think will be the **biggest challenges** facing their school in the next 12 months.

“Against a backdrop of financial constraint and teacher disenchantment, it’s important that [the sector takes] the time to carefully consider how best to support teachers to deliver for their pupils.”

Gareth Conyard, Chief Executive, Teacher Development Trust

The top challenges teachers expect their schools to manage in the next 12 months

	1 Budget pressures	64%
	2 Supporting pupils with SEND	51%
	3 Teacher and school leader workload	42%
	4 Teacher recruitment and retention	38%
	5 Pupil mental health and wellbeing	33%
	6 Staff mental health and wellbeing	31%

- The top six challenges teachers expect their school to face have remained the same since 2023.
- Budget pressures once again top the list of challenges that teachers expect their school to face in the year ahead, and along with supporting pupils with SEND, continue to see year-on-year increases.

“Limited funds [mean we] do not have any resources to do the basic day-to-day tasks.”

– Secondary Classroom Teacher

A closer look: year-on-year trends

Changes year on year suggest the prominence of challenges may be shifting.

What do you expect to be the top challenges for your school to manage over the next 12 months?

Challenge	Rank and % answered			
	2025	2024	2023	2022*
Budget pressures	1 64%	1 59%	1 59%	1 54%
Supporting pupils with SEND	2 51%	3 44%	4 37%	6 32%
Teacher and school leader workload	3 42%	4 43%	2 52%	2 47%
Teacher recruitment and retention	4 38%	2 57%	3 48%	4 40%
Pupil mental health and wellbeing	5 33%	5 31%	5 34%	5 33%
Staff mental health and wellbeing	6 31%	6 30%	5 34%	7 28%
School inspection	7 16%	7 23%	7 29%	3 41%

- This year, there has been a **5-percentage-point** increase in the proportion of teachers raising **budget pressures** as a top challenge (**71%** of primaries vs. **57%** of secondaries).
- **Supporting pupils with SEND** has also risen from third place in the challenges list to second – with a **7-percentage-point** increase.
- Despite seeing a **24-percentage-point** decrease year on year at secondary level, **recruitment and retention** is a worry for **more than half** of science, maths, humanities and language teachers.
- **School inspection** has seen a decline from **29%** in 2023 to **16%** in 2025, while performance measures have seen a **5-percentage-point** increase since 2023 to **14%**.

* Note: 2022 results gathered from school leaders only

The challenges: a closer look by phase

Exploring answers from teachers alongside college tutors for the first time, we can begin to trace challenges across all phases.

Each stage of education is unique, but we can see that schools and colleges face similar challenges.

Similarities



Student mental health, budget pressures, teacher/tutor workload, and recruitment and retention all featured in this year's top rankings by phase – albeit to different extents.



Budget, staff and student mental health, and workload rank consistently across the primary and secondary phases.

Differences



Concern over **supporting pupils with SEND** ranked second for primaries (**65%**) compared to fourth for secondaries (**37%**).





















Teacher recruitment and retention ranked sixth for primaries (**24%**) but second for secondaries (**51%**).



Digital safety, wellbeing and **the increasing use of AI** are perceived to be some of the greatest challenges colleges will face in the year ahead.

This is compared to **6%** of primaries and **8%** of secondaries who say the same about digital safety and wellbeing.

What do you expect to be the top challenges for your school/college to manage over the next 12 months?

Primary			Secondary			College*		
	Budget pressures	71%		Budget pressures	57%		Student mental health and wellbeing	23%
	Supporting pupils with SEND	65%		Teacher recruitment and retention	51%		Digital safety and wellbeing	23%
	Teacher and school leader workload	40%		Teacher and school leader workload	44%		Budget pressures	23%
	Staff mental health and wellbeing	32%		Supporting pupils with SEND	37%		Teacher/tutor and college leader workload	23%
	Pupil mental health and wellbeing	30%		Pupil mental health and wellbeing	36%		The increasing use of AI in teaching, learning and assessment	22%
	Teacher recruitment and retention	24%		Staff mental health and wellbeing	31%		Teacher/tutor recruitment and retention	22%

*The optional responses for colleges and schools included key differences relevant to their phase.

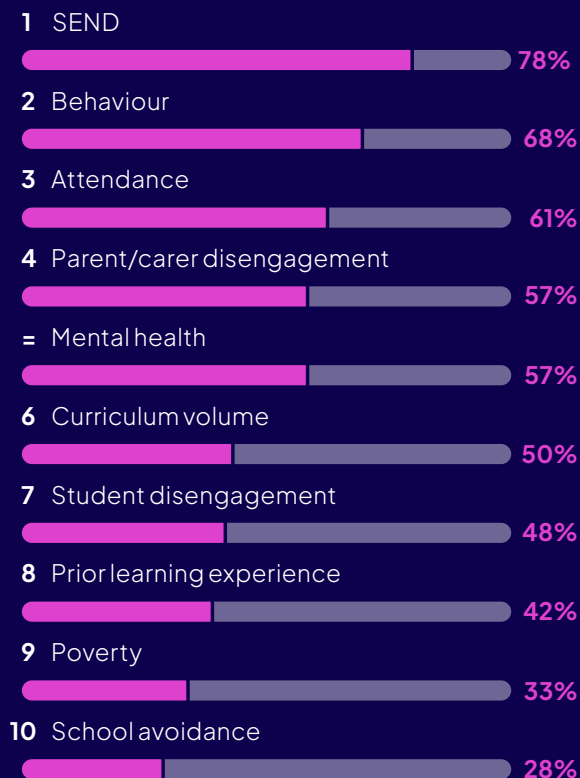
Barriers to future learning

In addition to exploring challenges for institutions, we asked teachers, college tutors and home educators what they think barriers to students' learning will be in the next six months.

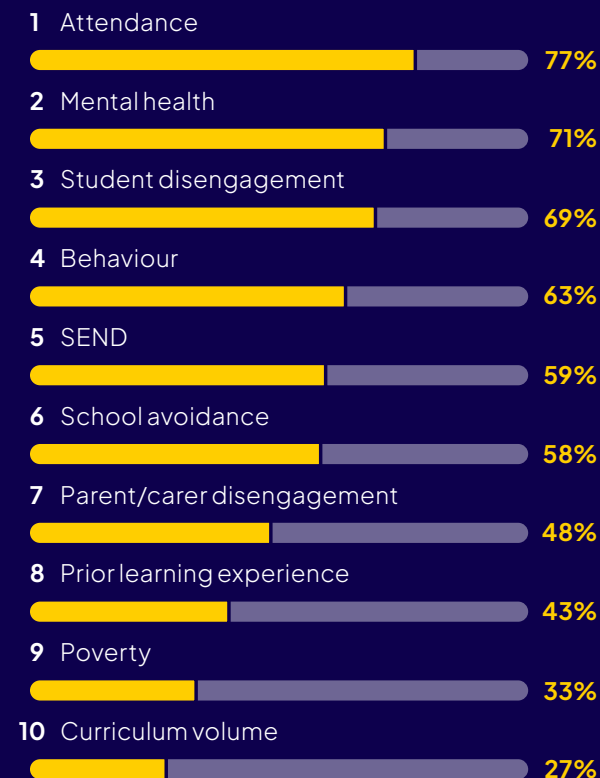
This year, we built on insights from previous reports and expanded the potential barriers listed in questions for primary and secondary schools – including further categories on engagement across school communities. At the same time, a similar set of relevant options was provided to college tutors and home educators.

The expected barriers to future learning across phases in the next six months

Primary



Secondary

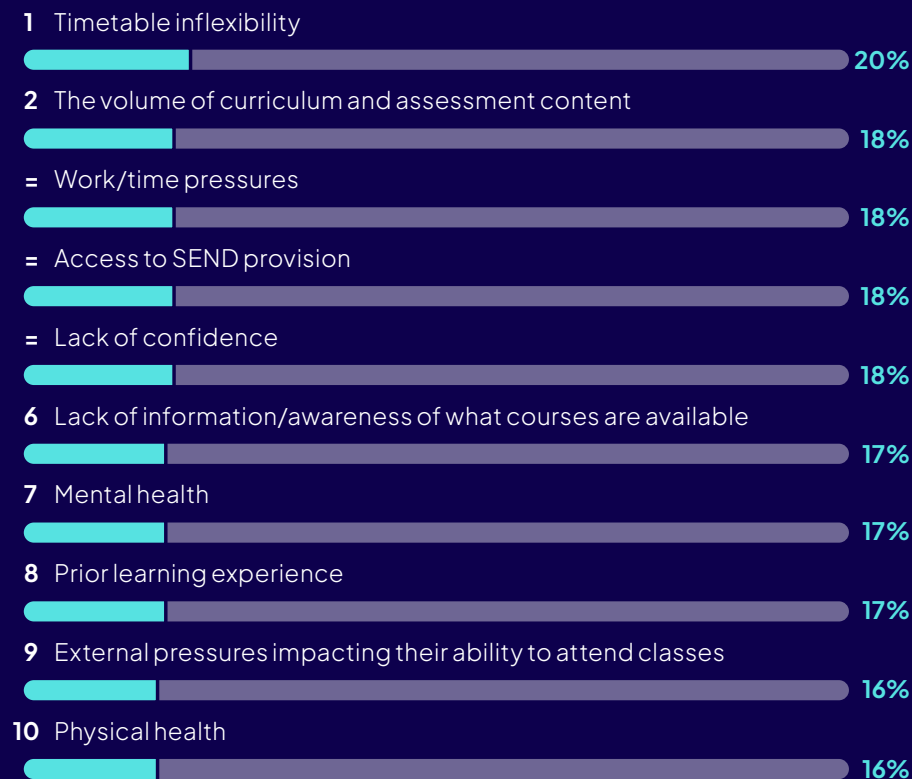


■ **Attendance, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and behaviour** were flagged by teachers as this year's top three expected barriers to students' learning.

Home educators



College



■ **Timetable inflexibility, curriculum and assessment volume, and competing time constraints and pressures** featured highly for both colleges and home educators.

“Children don’t have the chance to engage for a sustained period of time because they have too much to do.”

– Primary Classroom Teacher

Spotlight on schools: year-on-year trends

Delving deeper into the statistics, we traced how the barriers to future learning in schools are staying the same or changing over time.

Top barriers

- Attendance
- Special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- Behaviour
- Mental health
- Student disengagement

When comparing responses over the years from teachers, the **top six barriers** to future student learning in schools haven't changed since 2023, but the order in which they appear has.

In fact, since this question was last asked in 2024, all response percentages have fallen.



Attendance has moved from third place in last year's report up to **first** this year (despite decreasing to 2022 equivalent levels at **69%**).



SEND remains the second-greatest barrier year on year (despite **decreasing 7 percentage points** to **68%**).



Behaviour, a new entry for this year, is expected to be a barrier to students' future learning by **66%** of teachers.



This means that for the first time in the *Pearson School Report* series, **mental health** is **not** expected to be the biggest barrier to school students' learning in the next six months.

Instead, it is now perceived as the fourth-biggest barrier with an **18-percentage-point decrease** since 2024 (**64%** vs. **82%**).

Barriers beyond the classroom

With attendance now seen to be the greatest barrier to learning:

- **More than half** of primary and secondary school teachers (**52%**) said that **at least one** pupil in the last class they taught had **chronic absenteeism** (i.e. less than **90%** attendance).
- **1 in 16** school students (almost two in every class) told us they often miss school because of **external factors**.
- The same number (**6%**) say they often miss school because they **don't like attending**.
- **65%** of school and college students said some students miss a lot of school/college and **find it hard to catch up**.

We can also trace some **encouraging signs of change**:

- In 2024, **46%** of teachers said **poverty** was a barrier to learning at school.
 - This year, **33%** say the same – a decrease of **13 percentage points**.
- In 2024, **34%** of teachers said **hunger** was a barrier to learning at school.
 - This year, **13%** say the same – a decrease of **21 percentage points**.

While these factors have not necessarily decreased at a national level, these figures and our conversations with schools suggest that teachers' dedication and school-wide approaches are reducing the barriers' impacts on day-to-day learning.

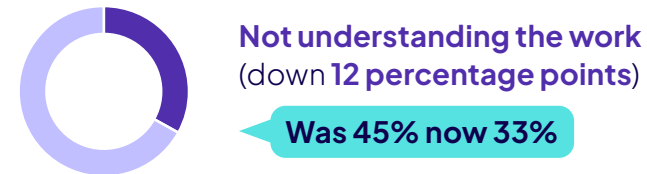


Student spotlight: what's impacting my learning?

We also spoke to students about what they believe is impacting their current and future learning within the classroom and beyond.

A closer look: what's changing?

Comparing the answers given in both 2024 and 2025 by school students, a consistent or slightly improving picture in all areas emerges. **Notable year-on-year decreases** in 'impacts' on learning described by students include:



Alongside this, **1 in 5** school students (**22%**) say that “**nothing**” impacts their learning – an increase of **17%** year on year. **1 in 16** college students (**6%**) also told us that “**nothing**” impacts their learning. **17%** of home educators say the same thing about their children.



Beyond the numbers: student stories

As statistics only give us part of a picture, we asked students to tell us more in their own words. Answering generously and openly, students reflected on many factors, including **struggles with change**, **social concerns** and **fears about the future**.

“I get upset sometimes in class.”

– Primary Student

“I regularly am unable to attend school but I want to.”

– Secondary Student

“I struggle with my emotions. I am in Year 5 now, but I am more like a child in Reception.”

– Primary Student

“I struggle and find it difficult to be in pressured situations.”

– Secondary Student

A closer look: across the learning journey

By asking students what impacts their learning across different education phases, we can take a holistic view across all ages and stages of learning.

"I need more support at school."

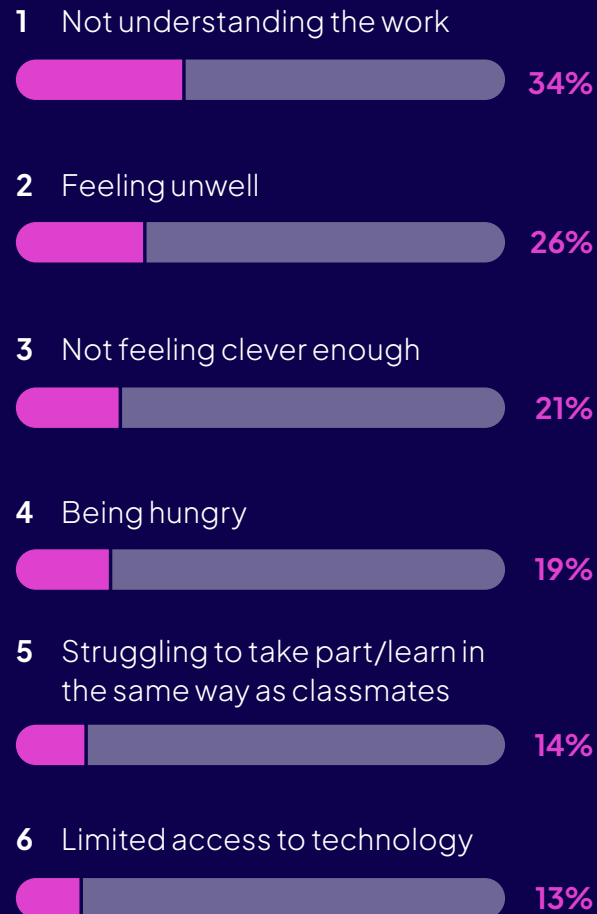
– Primary Student

**"I feel like I'm not confident
enough to face the real world."**

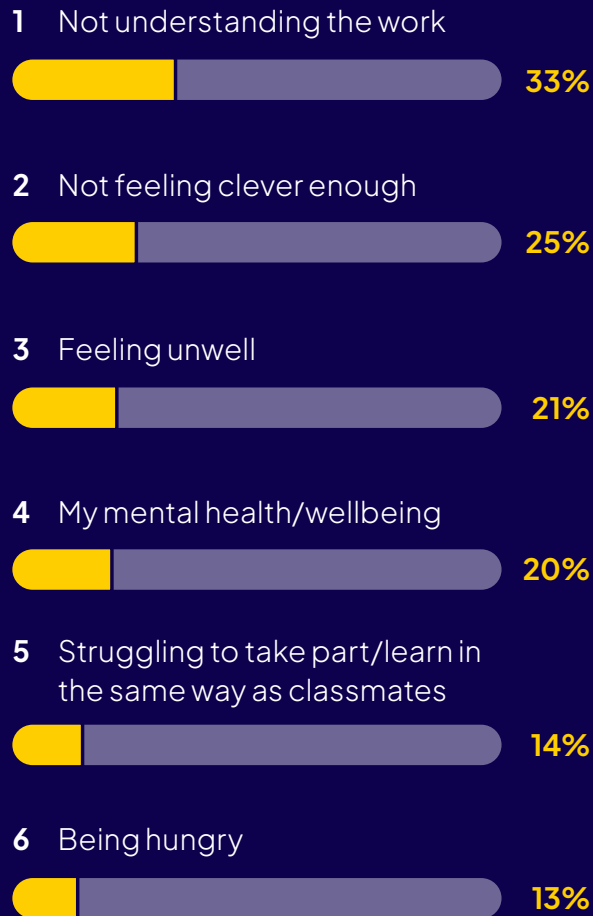
– College Student

What, if anything, impacts your learning?

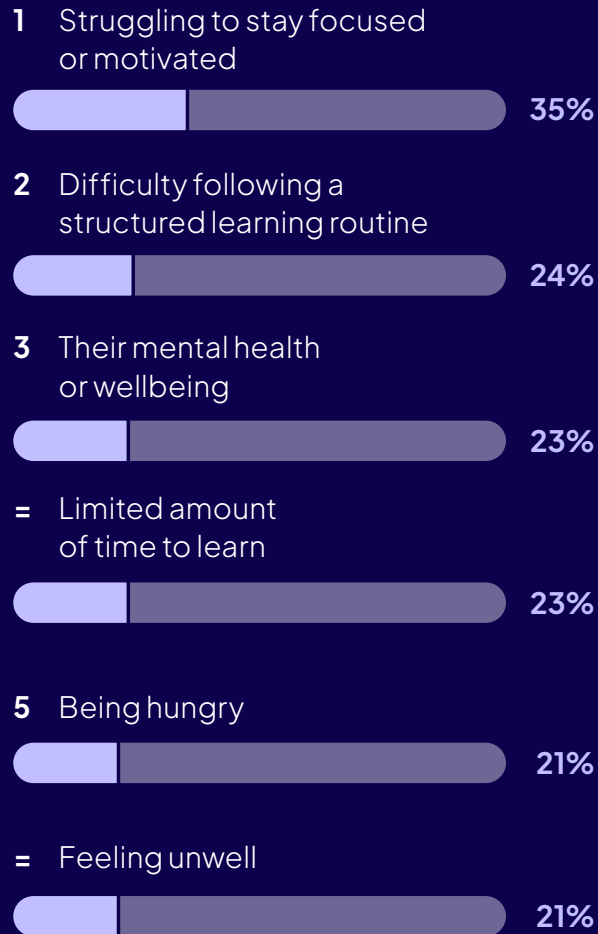
Primary



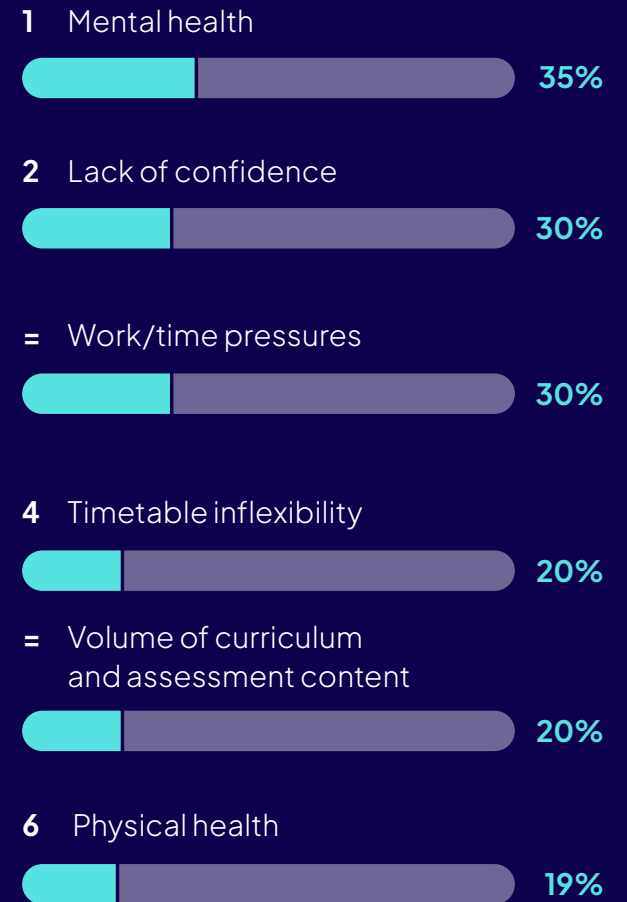
Secondary



Home educated (as reported by their parents)



College




A closer look: unpacking the pressures

With students of all ages noting that **mental health, confidence and more** impact their learning, we took a closer look at the pressures they're facing today.

While **1 in 5** school students (**22%**) say they don't currently have any worries...

Some students' worries are similar throughout stages of learning...


 More than **1 in 4** students say **school/college expectations** worry them (**26%** of school students and **28%** of college students).


 **Academic performance/succeeding in studies** is a worry for **21%** of primary students, **26%** of secondary students and **28%** of college students.

“The most striking finding for me is the gulf in the perception of reasons for learning. So many teachers believe in the holistic importance of education and fostering a love of learning. It is interesting that this is not coming across to students.”

– Dr Helen Care, Chartered Clinical Psychologist

And others change over time...

 **Being worried about uncertainty over their future** is an issue for **12%** of primary students, **doubling** to **24%** at secondary and **increasing** to **31%** in college.

 **15%** of primary students are **worried about getting a job in future**, **doubling** to **31%** at secondary. At college, **37%** of students are **worried about getting a job or progressing in their role**.

 College students are **almost three times** more likely to be worried about **money** than school students (**38%** vs. **13%** respectively).

“The range and shifts in students’ concerns as they mature are signs of how engaged young people are with the world. We can’t shield them from those worries, but it does help if we demonstrate that we’re listening.”

– Dr Helen Care, Chartered Clinical Psychologist

Discussion point

It’s noteworthy that despite the majority of teachers perceiving **social media** as the biggest pressure on students (**57%**) and a quarter of home educators saying the same (**24%**), just **16%** of school and college students share this concern.

Student engagement

To better paint a picture of how these impacts show themselves in learning, we asked educators about one of the biggest barriers: student engagement.

“Students would be more engaged if the material was more applicable and pertinent to real-world situations.”

– College Tutor

Across the learning journey...



13% of school students say they **struggle to learn in a classroom.**

18% note that they struggle with doing **schoolwork outside of school.**



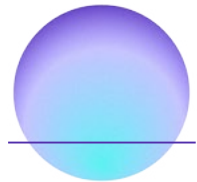
18% of college students say they **struggle to engage** in their learning.



20% of home educators told us their child **struggles to focus** on their learning.

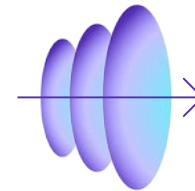
School spotlight: one year on

Comparing answers on student engagement in 2024 and 2025...



What's **staying the same**?

- **6 in 10** teachers say **student disengagement** will be a barrier to learning over the next six months (the same proportion as in 2024).
 - **Almost a quarter** of home educators (**23%**) say the same.
- Just as in 2024, challenges to engagement are **more widespread at secondary** level (**69%** compared to **48%** at primary) and in schools with those with higher levels of learners eligible for free school meals.
- As many as **97%** of teachers **witnessed students struggling to engage** with learning in the week before the research, identical to *Pearson School Report 2024* findings.



What's **changing**?

- Teachers' views on how much their students are (dis)engaged show that **the proportion of students struggling to engage has reduced** – indicating that fewer children per class are struggling.
 - **All ages and stages have seen a decrease** in student disengagement over the last year.
 - 2025 data shows that **more teachers (64%)** now report that “less than **25%** of students struggle to engage” (was **57%**).
- **66%** of school students say they “struggle” to engage with learning – a **7-percentage-point** decrease from 2024.
 - Those that “struggle a lot” has decreased from **19%** in 2024 to **14%** in 2025.

These seemingly small percentage changes represent a **significant impact** on **millions of children and young people**, both now and in the future.

Future focus: feeling ready?

Every learning journey is different but students navigate many of the same learning milestones across primary, secondary and college education.

By exploring key points in education that traditionally signal achievement, mastery of skills, and development of knowledge, we get a snapshot of students' readiness for their future learning and lives.



Perspectives on readiness

A question that we, as an education community, continue to ask:
is learning today giving young people what they need to thrive now and in their future lives?

“There are going to be jobs we haven’t even thought of in the future that children need knowledge of now. Tricky!”

– Primary Middle Leader

Students’ views

When we asked students how prepared they feel to progress in education, the majority described themselves as feeling ready to move on to their next stage of learning.

How ready (or not ready) do you feel to move on to your next stage of education?

72% of primary students feel **ready**.

1 in 8 (13%) feel unready and the same percentage are unsure.

68% of secondary students feel **ready**.

15% of them feel unready and the same number feel unsure.

65% of college students feel **ready**.

1 in 6 feel unready and almost **1 in 5 (17%)** are not sure.

- **17%** of school students are concerned about whether they are ready for the next stage of their learning – that’s **around 1.5 million** in England alone.
- **26%** of college students worry about their next stage in learning – that’s **around 416,000** in England alone.

Educators' views

We also asked teachers and tutors what proportion of their students would be both academically and emotionally ready to move on at **three key moments** in education: moving up each year (primary), leaving Year 11 (secondary) and completing their course (college).

While **the majority of students are thought to be ready for their next steps**, some children and young people face a gap in preparedness that needs to be bridged.

At least 1.9 million students are not thought to be both academically and emotionally ready.

- **Teachers believe at least 1.65 million primary and secondary students are not ready for their next steps.** That equates to **32%** of primary and **31%** of secondary students.
- **College tutors say at least 43% of their 16–18-year-old students aren't ready** to move on to their next stage.

Note: These figures were calculated by apportioning the highest possible number of students thought to be 'ready' within each of the ranges provided and then subtracting the combined 'ready' total from the total number of students in each phase.

What proportion of students will be both at the expected academic level and emotionally ready to move on by the end of summer term?*

Percentage of students that are ready	Primary	Secondary	College
0%	1%	2%	0%
Up to 25%	8%	12%	12%
Between 26% and 50%	27%	20%	45%
Between 51% and 75%	45%	36%	29%
Between 76% and 99%	19%	26%	9%
100%	0%	3%	1%

*Question asked to mainstream schools (primary and secondary) and colleges. At secondary, this question about Year 11s was only asked to teachers who teach this year group. At college level, this question was asked to tutors who teach 16–18-year-olds.

A closer look: readiness factors

Conversations about equipping young people for their futures will spread far beyond these pages. To support them, here's a more detailed look at the 'readiness factors' teachers and tutors listed.



Of those students who aren't ready, what top factors are holding them back?

Primary

SEND	79%
Struggles with writing	75%
Independence	73%
Low academic attainment	71%
Social maturity	66%
Struggles with reading	65%
Issues at home	63%
SEND support	62%
Self-motivation	59%
Emotional literacy	56%

Secondary

Self-motivation	77%
Independence	65%
Social maturity	62%
Low academic attainment	61%
Mental health	57%
Attendance	57%
Issues at home	49%
Self-esteem	47%
Assessment underperformance	46%
Critical thinking	45%

College

Digital wellbeing	30%
Critical thinking	30%
Struggles with writing	28%
Digital skills	28%
Accessibility needs	27%
Adaptability	26%
Struggles with reading	26%
Self-motivation	26%
Assessment underperformance	25%
Problem solving	25%

What's impacting readiness the most?

Looking closer at what's preventing students from being fully prepared for the next stage of learning, we see that educators' responses span a range of academic, capability and external factors.

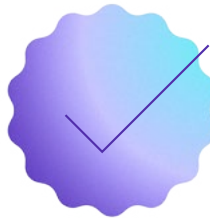
Primary

Academic factors



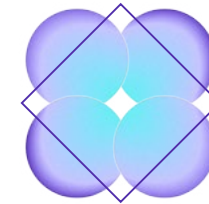
- SEND (**79%**)
- Struggles with writing (**75%**)
- Low academic attainment (**71%**)

Capability factors



- Independence (**73%**)
- Social maturity (**66%**)
- Self-motivation (**59%**)

External factors



- Issues at home (**63%**)
- SEND support (**62%**)
- Attendance (**54%**)

“I’m still too young.”

– Primary Student

“I’m scared about big school and the big children.”

– Primary Student

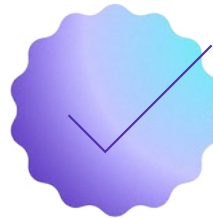
Secondary (Year 11)

Academic factors



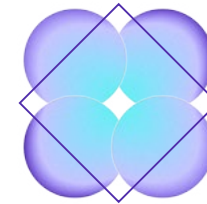
- Low academic attainment (**61%**)
- Assessment underperformance (**46%**)
- Critical thinking (**45%**)

Capability factors



- Self-motivation (**77%**)
- Independence (**65%**)
- Social maturity (**62%**)

External factors



- Attendance (**57%**)
- Mental health (**57%**)
- Issues at home (**49%**)

“I am not as confident as I would like to be.”

– Secondary Student

“Feel like I’ve slipped backwards. I was top [set but] moved down and I’m struggling to concentrate.”

– Secondary Student

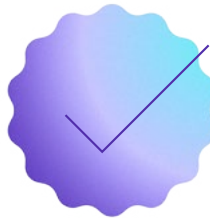
College (16–18-year-olds)

Academic factors



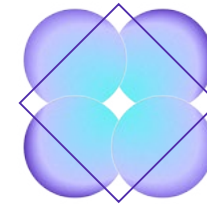
- Critical thinking (30%)
- Struggles with writing (28%)
- Digital skills (28%)

Capability factors



- Adaptability (26%)
- Self-motivation (26%)
- Problem solving (25%)

External factors



- Digital wellbeing (30%)
- Availability of suitable pathways (24%)
- Availability of jobs (24%)

“I know what I want to do,
but I don't know if I can.”

– College Student

“There's so much pressure and tough competition.”

– College Student

“A child starting school this year will enter the workplace in the late 2030s and reach the age of 30 in the year 2050 when life and work will be very different [...] It is more important than ever that today’s children become lifelong learners, not switched off from learning.”

– Jason Elsom, Chief Executive, Parentkind

Continuing to rise to the challenges

As we trace what's impacting learning and the challenges that lie ahead, it's important to recognise the huge progress being made in learning environments across the country.

And it bodes well for the future that so many schools and teachers tell us they already feel confident tackling these areas.

School strengths

When we asked teachers to share their school's **strengths**:



58% name **managing pastoral issues**.



41% say **supporting students with SEND**.



31% included **addressing behaviour**.

Confidence

And when we asked teachers about the areas where they personally feel **confident**:



Two thirds (66%) are confident managing **behaviour**.



57% say they're confident addressing **pastoral issues**.



45% of teachers rate themselves as confident **supporting students with SEND**.

Educators on what's making the biggest impact on learning

“Mind the gap. Keep up, not catch-up.”

– Primary Classroom Teacher

“Making it as real and interesting as possible, mixed with life skills...”

– Home Educator

“Behaviour. We have an excellent whole-school approach and system which works really well.”

– Secondary Classroom Teacher

“Flexibility to tailor learning to our child's interests and pace”

– Home Educator

“Making different provisions for different needs. For example, opening a building for students with emotional school-based avoidance and creating flexible timetabling and environments.”

– Secondary Middle Leader

“Curriculum ‘cafes’ where [Heads of Faculty] are encouraged to meet and discuss cutting down curriculum loading by sharing cross-curricular links”

– Secondary Middle Leader

“We have a big focus on using up-to-date technology to enhance the curriculum.”

– Primary Middle Leader

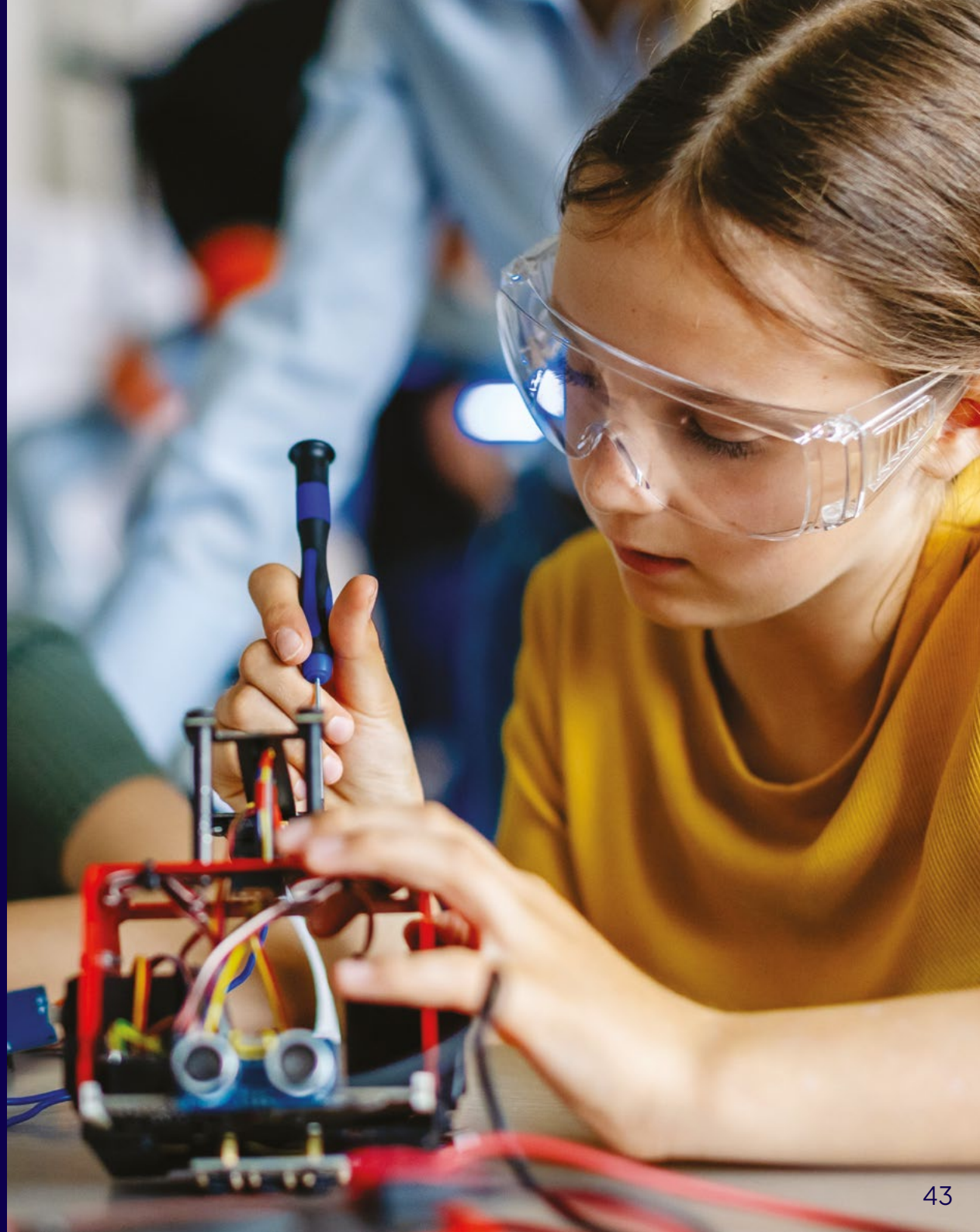
“It’s everything we do rather than something. Attendance, pastoral care, wellbeing, a strong curriculum, behaviour, and appropriate intervention are all imperative.”

– Secondary SLT

Part Three

Where we go next

The education community
have shared their ideas...



Building learning for the future

Learning from insights about education now can help us shape its future.

So, we asked teachers, tutors, students and experts what they'd do to improve learning. Their answers point to solutions that consider **how** learning happens and is being supported, as well as **what** is being learned and assessed.

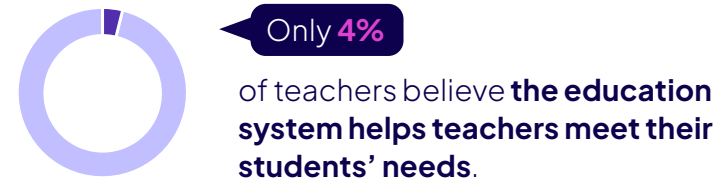


Supporting learning for everyone

When asked for potential ways to improve students' learning, teachers and tutors responded in their thousands. Among the many options they could choose from, a common theme emerged.

What teachers and tutors want most: to be able to tailor learning for all their students at every age and stage of learning.

This sentiment can be seen across a range of questions we put to teachers and tutors. As the education community keeps rising to the challenges encountered in schools, homes and colleges, there's still a desire to go further to meet students' needs.



So, we wanted to explore this further...

The top areas teachers and tutors would focus on to improve student learning

Primary		Secondary		College	
Additional staffing	74%	Additional staffing	63%	Flexibility in curriculum development or delivery	30%
Expanding in-school SEND support	67%	Parent/carer engagement schemes	49%	Improving accessibility in learning materials	29%
Parent/carer engagement schemes	53%	Expanding in-school SEND support	48%	Greater focus on life skills	29%
Adapting the curriculum	49%	Behaviour schemes	48%	Digital learning	27%
SEND training	45%	Adapting the curriculum	38%	Improving digital infrastructure, e.g. broadband, Wi-Fi, devices	27%
Greater focus on life skills	41%	Flexible timetables for staff	38%	Employer engagement	25%

“Learning is the centrepiece of why education exists, and 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.”

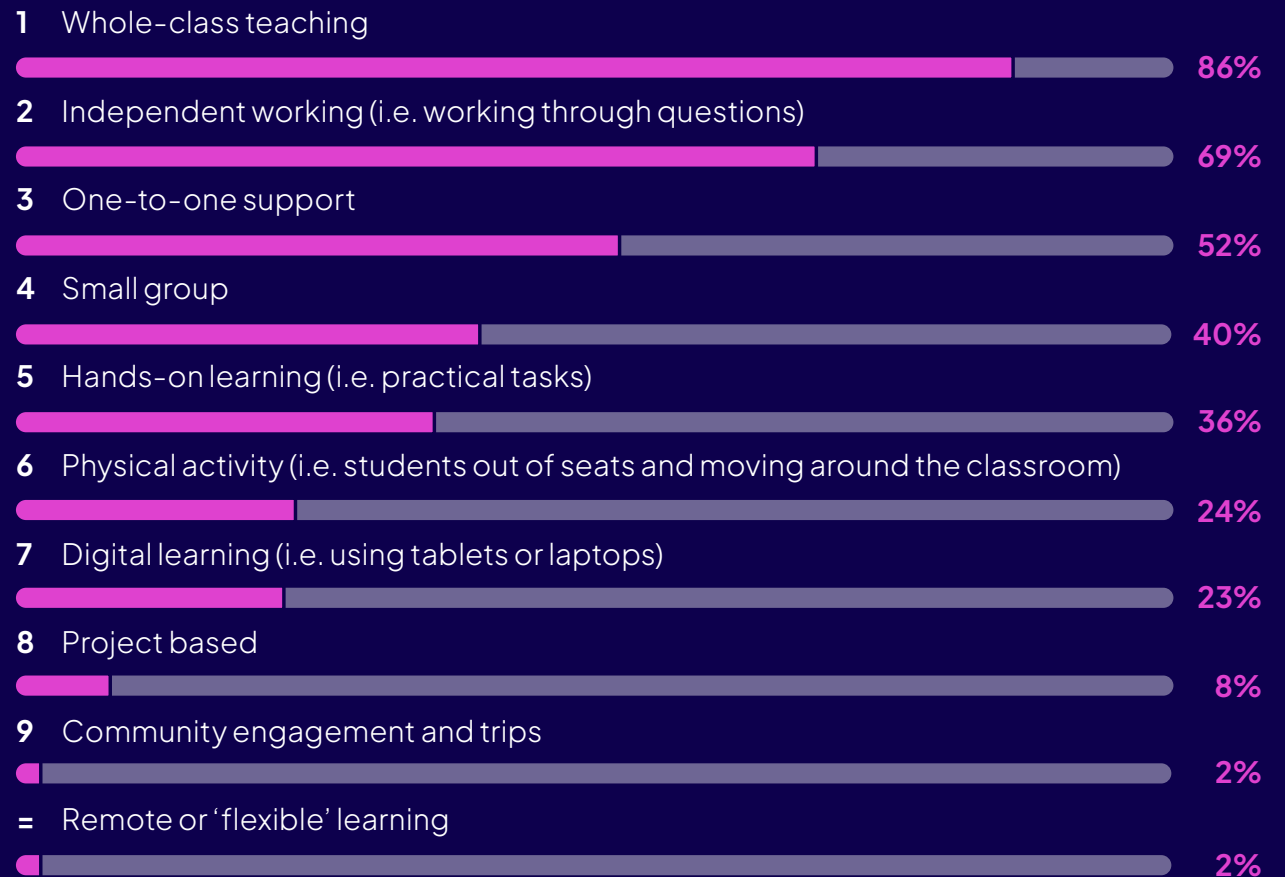
– Dr Carl Ward, Chair of the Foundation for Education Development (FED)

Evolving where and how learning happens

When it comes to bringing learning to life, teachers and students are best placed to know what works for them. Together, they call for a blend of teaching styles and approaches – a strong foundation for learning now and in the future.

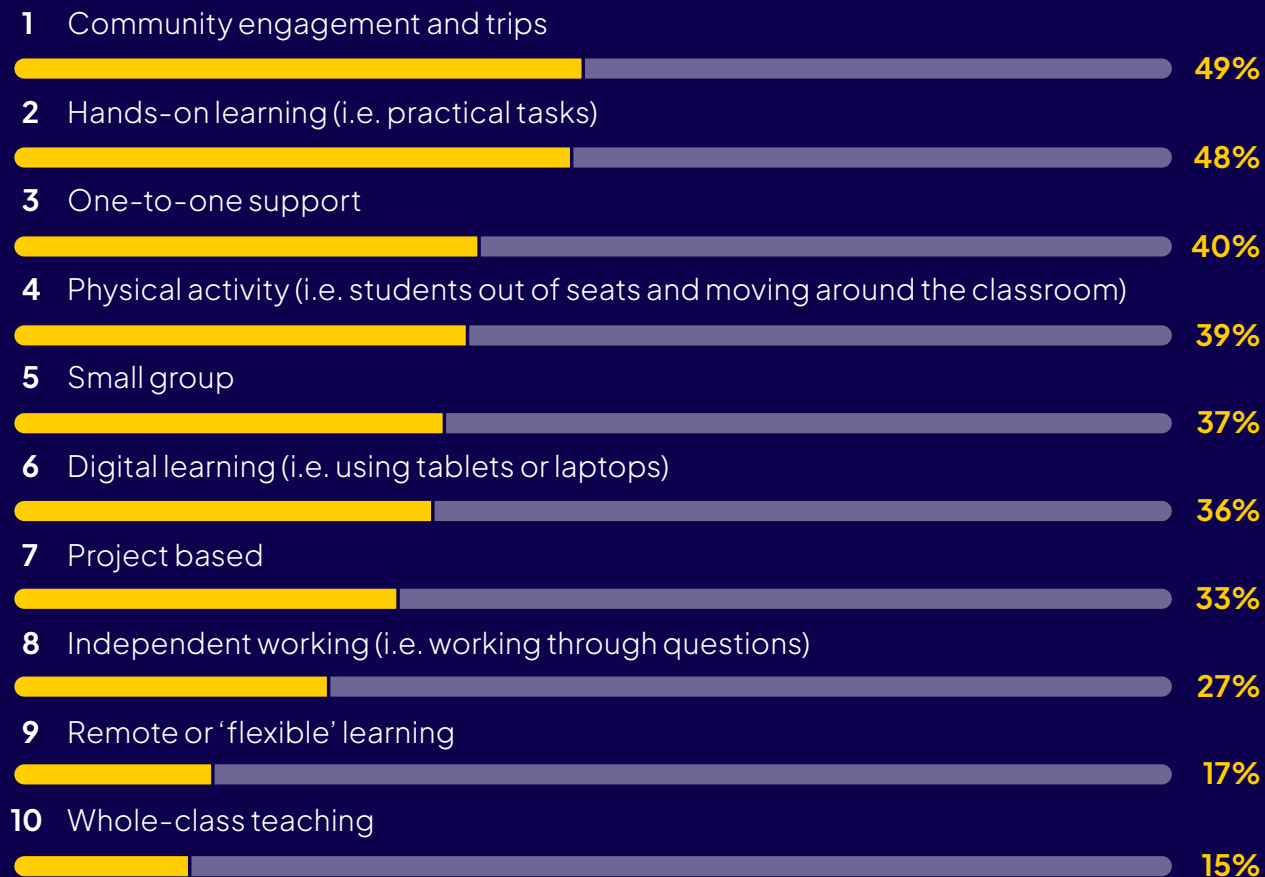
Teachers' views

Learning approaches teachers used in their last lesson:



When we asked teachers about the learning approaches they currently use and the ones they'd like to use more of, clear differences emerge between what can be delivered now and ideals for the future.

Learning approaches teachers would like to do more of:



“I’m delighted to see the appetite among teachers for broader pedagogical approaches, engagement with the community, trips, and hands-on practical learning. We have seen similar ambitions within our Rethinking Curriculum project.”

– Dame Alison Peacock, CEO,
Chartered College of Teaching

Students' views

When we asked school students for details of how they most like to learn and work, technology led the way...

The top ways students like to learn and work



Home-educated students show similar preferences – with their top five including technology, active and hands-on learning, alongside structured routines and flexible, interest-led approaches.

However, there's **no 'one size fits all' approach**. Our findings show that even options that didn't make the top five were still popular – with **35%** of students liking whole-class learning, for example.

“Young people do not want to spend all their time on-screen. Neither do they want to spend all their time doing worksheets or listening to a teacher.

This intelligent generation is reaching out to us to provide thoughtful, blended, accessible and personal pathways through learning. Pathways which equip young people with the cognitive, academic, digital and social skills to be active citizens of the world around them – both now, and for the future...”

– Dr Fiona Aubrey-Smith, Director,
One Life Learning, Founder, The National
PedTech Partnership



Spotlight: tech-enhanced education

As technology advances, so too do the ways it can be used to support learning. And **the appetite to build on what's already happening** is clear...

"I'd like to use **more digital approaches** in lessons."

36% of teachers

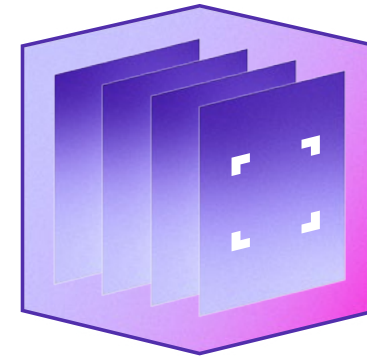
"I'd focus on **digital learning to improve student learning.**"

20% of teachers and **27%** of college tutors

So, how do we make this a reality?

Developing digitally

While supporting learning in schools, colleges and homes, we've seen first-hand how technology already is being used in so many ways to enrich learning. And it shows in our *Pearson School Report* findings too...



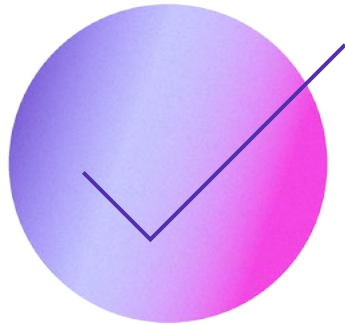
Digital at work

When we asked teachers about **digital tools** they've used to support learning in the last fortnight:

- **Almost half (49%)** mentioned **digital devices** in classrooms.
- **2 in 5 (41%)** had used **digital learning** platforms.
- **39%** had used **AI tools**.

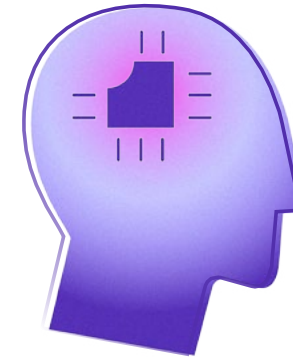
And digital technologies look to be a mainstay of **home education** too:

- **88%** say they or their child used **digital tools or technology for learning** in the last two weeks.
- **28%** used **AI** in the last month to support their child's learning.
- Overall, only **1%** say they or their child **never** use technology for learning.



Enabling **enjoyment**

- **80%** of school students and **63%** of college students agree that learning online or using technology is **enjoyable**.
- **49%** of home educators said their child **enjoys** digital learning.



Current **confidence**

- **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**.



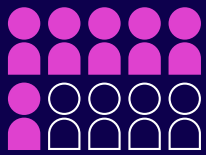
Discussion point

Bridging the gap

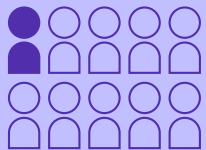
While a small majority of teachers are confident in their digital skills, a significant number are not – suggesting the importance of support and guidance to close the digital confidence gap.

The power of variety

From speaking with primary and secondary students about **technology in education** today, it's clear that it's **one of many** ways they like to learn.



Almost 6 in 10 students (**57%**) like a mix of digital and traditional learning (e.g. using technology and screens like laptops or tablets, as well as things on paper like worksheets or books).



1 in 10 students (**9%**) say they prefer not to learn digitally.



1 in 3 students say using tech is a **motivator for learning** – **39%** at primary and **34%** at secondary.

“As AI continues to collide with education and with 57% of students saying they prefer a combination of digital and traditional learning, it is vital that we evolve our pedagogies to reflect this.”

– Emma Darcy, Director of Technology for Learning, Denbigh High School

Educators and students alike highlight the **benefits of technology for learning** now and in the future...

“Using digital technology makes my child really want to learn.”

– Home Educator

“Students are closing gaps and gaining confidence thanks to smart technology.”

– College Tutor

“[In the future, we] should have technology available that matches what we expect most children to be using in the workplace.”

– Primary SLT

“Learning should be accessible in person and remotely, without losing quality.”

– Secondary Student

But this is balanced by a desire from teachers and students that **it remains one of many ways to learn**.

“[In future, we] should use more technology and prepare students for the workplace far more than they do now. Having said that, there also needs to be a focus on human interaction and the ability to communicate in person.”

– Secondary Classroom Teacher

“I think it’s really important that technology doesn’t take over everything.”

– Secondary Student

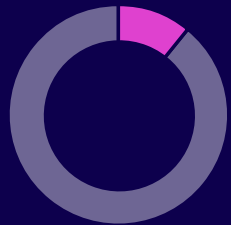
“[In the future, learning should be] enriched with technology but still traditional in terms of rich displays, quality talk, [and] consistent, emotionally friendly spaces.”

– Primary Headteacher

But first, bridging the divide...

In order for teachers, tutors, home educators and students to fully realise the benefits of tech-enabled learning in future, technology needs to be accessible and available to all now.

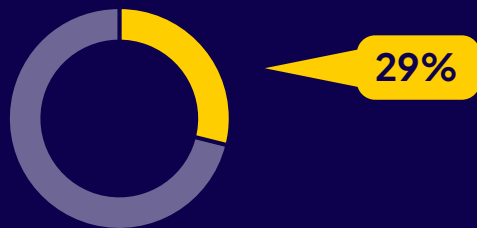
To play our part in a sector-wide effort to enable every school, college and home to access and use technology to support learning, we're building on our digital inclusion insights from previous reports.



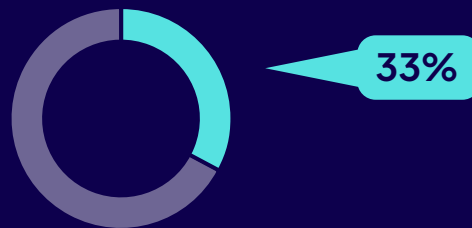
At least 1 in 9

- 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.

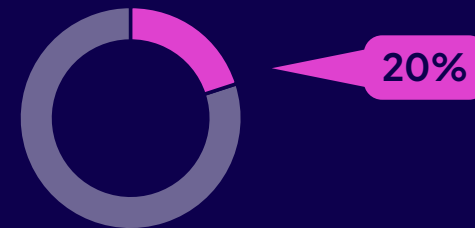
Views on tech provision today



29% of students say **their school/college has everything they need** to complete their work digitally.



1 in 3 home educators (**33%**) tell us **they have the digital tools they need** for their child to learn effectively.



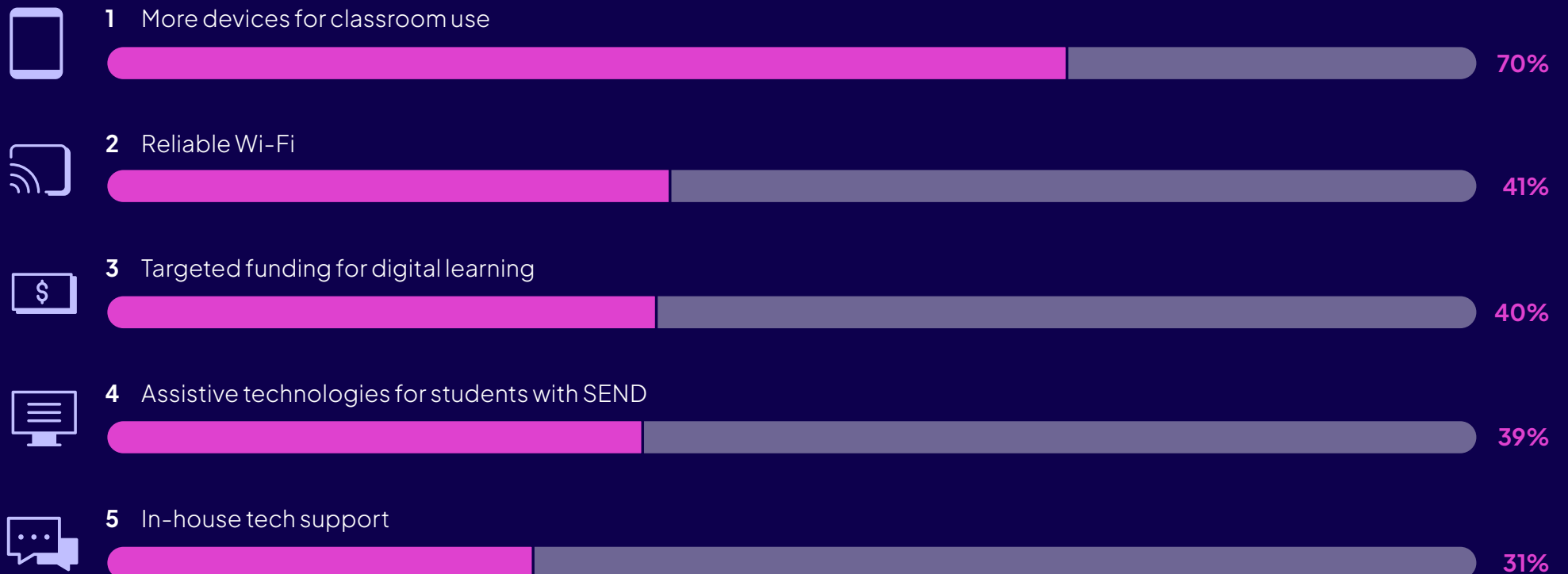
20% of teachers say their school **provided tools for students to use at home** (e.g. dongle/devices) to support learning in the last fortnight.

To improve students' learning...

- 27% of teachers and college tutors would focus on **improving digital infrastructure**.
- 30% of teachers said they'd focus on **digital upskilling for staff and students**.

To **enhance learners' digital skills**, however, teachers say their schools need a range of **practical changes**. Many of these would not only lead to **equity in digital access** in classrooms, but also across the student community.

The top practical changes needed to improve learners' digital skills



“As the report highlights, too many schools lack an adequate number of appropriate devices, as do too many students at home. School staff also need more support in impactful use of technology, and AI specifically [...] If we don’t invest in the skills and infrastructure the education system needs now, we’ll leave more and more young people behind – along with the innovation and labour they could have brought to our economy.”

– Janeen Hayat, Director of Collective Action, The Fair Education Alliance



Spotlight: what's learned and assessed

As well as sharing aspirations for how learning approaches could evolve, students and educators offered suggestions on what should be learned and how to assess it – both now and in the future.

Enhancing curriculum and assessment

Curriculum and assessment are at the heart of our education system.

As such, it's vital that these key pillars of learning **evolve** to best equip students for their futures.

A foundation for the future

Our starting point was to identify how teachers currently feel about curriculum and assessment. Across the 9,600 responses shared with us, the strength of **individual and institutional confidence** in these areas is clear.

83%

say

today's **curriculum** is an area in which they feel personally **confident**...

And it is the

biggest strength at their school (selected by **59%**).

70%

told us

they feel personally confident in **assessment**...

And it is among

the **top five school strengths** (chosen by **23%**).

The potential for growth

Teachers also highlighted the **possibilities** they see for curriculum pathways and assessment milestones to evolve and work for more students in the short, medium and long term.

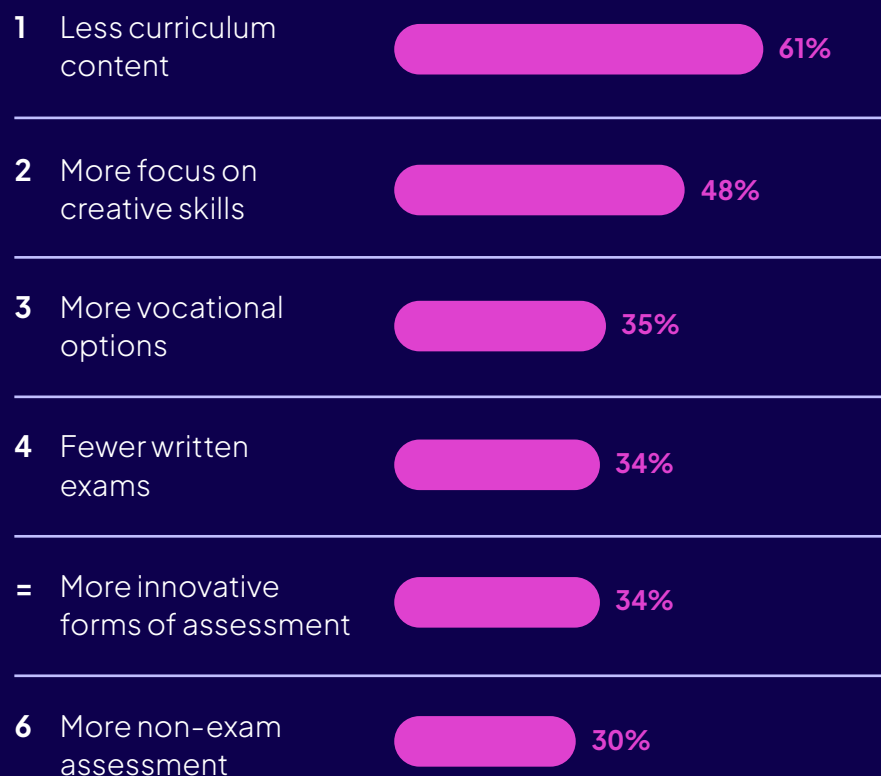


43% of teachers believe the education system focuses on the wrong things.

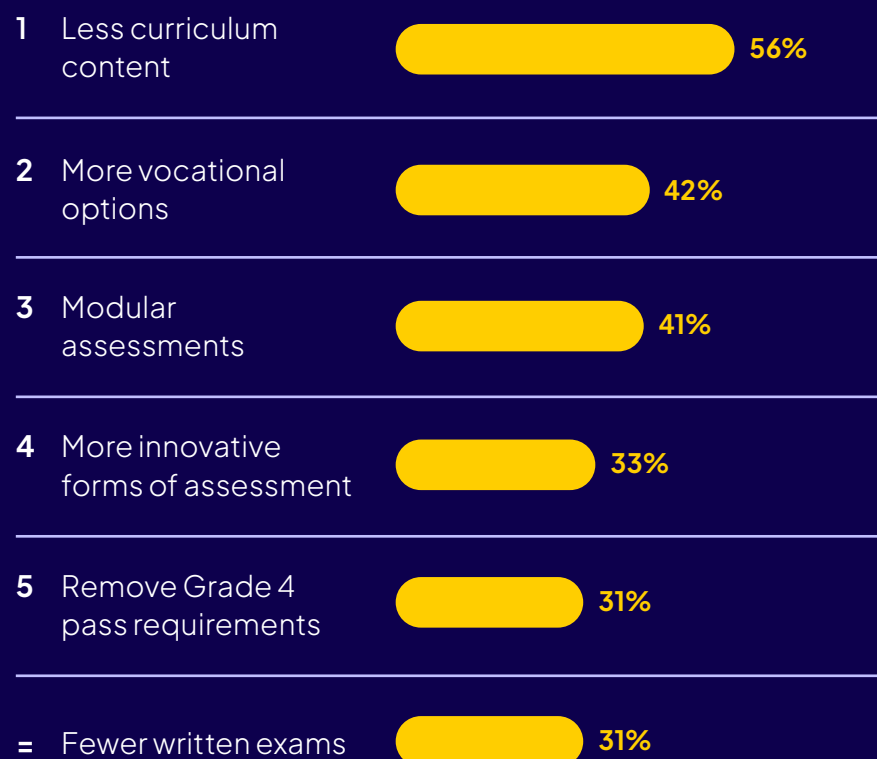
So, in the spirit of continuous improvement, we asked teachers and secondary students about **changes** they'd make to curriculum and assessment to improve student learning.

The top changes teachers would like to see to curriculum or assessment

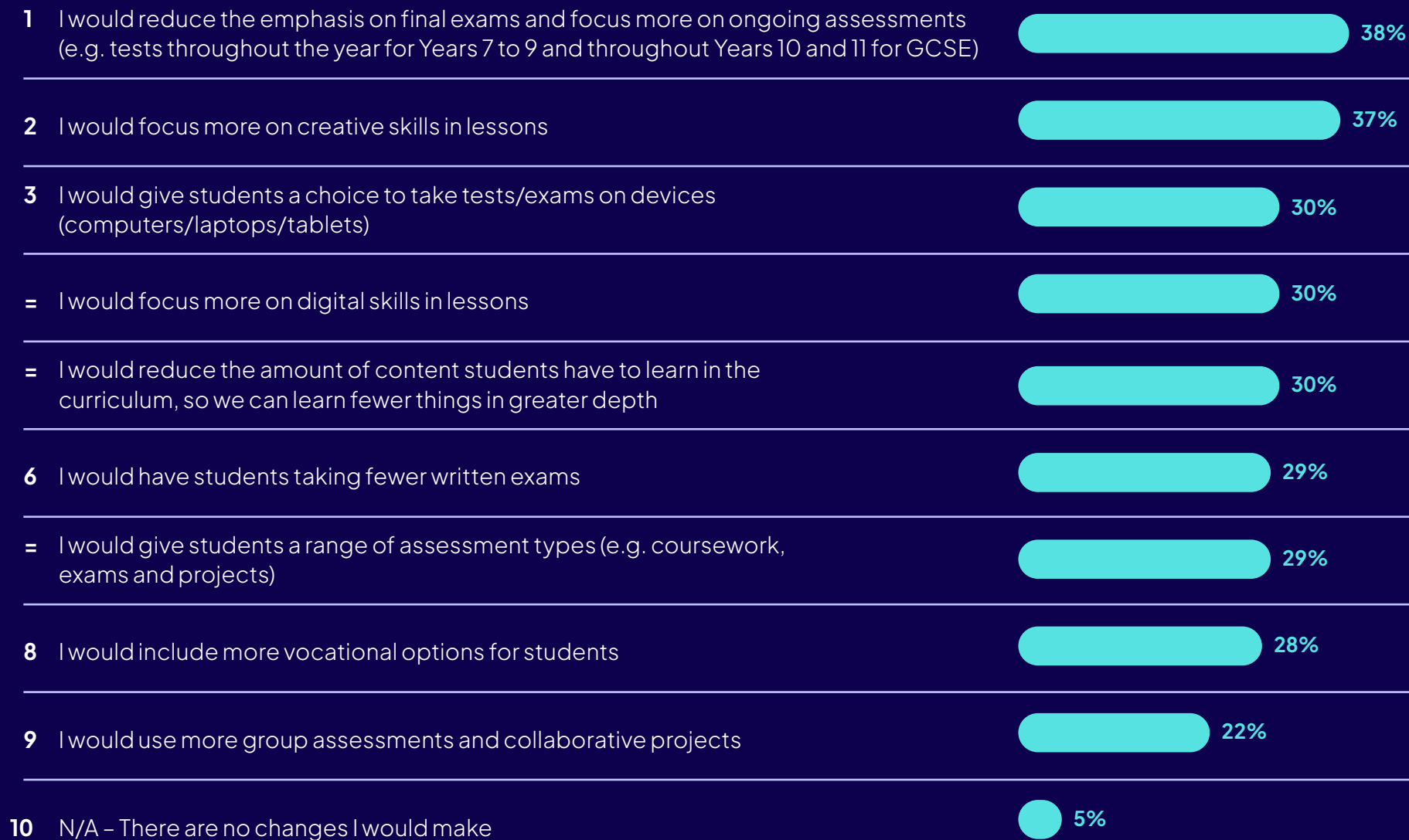
Primary



Secondary



The top changes secondary students would make to learning and assessment



Beyond the statistics: what would make a difference?

“Less focus on data as the only measure of success”

– Secondary Middle Leader

“Assessment: we adapt our teaching so why do we give the same assessments?”

– Primary Middle Leader

“Slim down the primary content and allow more time to explore concepts in depth”

– Primary Middle Leader

“More vocational/practical offer to engage students”

– Secondary SLT

“[A] creative curriculum where we prioritise practical experiences that have clear links to children’s wider lives”

– Primary Middle Leader

More from us...

On our recommendations for meaningful change in curriculum and assessment.

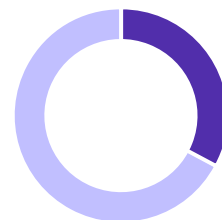


A closer look: curriculum

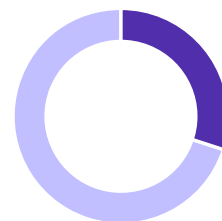
Our 2024 report found that a third of schools were already adapting the curriculum in line with today's issues. But what do students, teachers and college tutors think now?

81% of teachers say the education system is **overburdened with content**.

To improve learning...



43% of teachers would focus on **adapting the curriculum**.



30% of college tutors would focus on **flexibility in curriculum development or delivery**.

Is less more?

- **38%** of teachers (including **50%** of primary teachers) say **curriculum volume** is a **barrier** to student learning.

This is a trend that continues right through to college level, with **20%** of college students saying the volume of curriculum and assessment content **impacts their learning**. **18%** of college tutors agree.

- **More than half** of teachers (**58%**) would like **less content** in the curriculum, making it the top change they would like to see to curriculum and assessment.
- **Reducing the amount of content** is also a popular suggestion among secondary school students, with **30%** wanting to **learn fewer things in greater depth**.

“I couldn’t agree more with the need for greater curriculum flexibility which would serve to meet the changing skills needs to support the UK’s economy.”

– Gerry McDonald CBE, CEO & Group Principal, New City College

More from us...

On our recommendations for meaningful change in curriculum and assessment.



A closer look: assessment

Alongside exploring how the curriculum could evolve, we also asked teachers and secondary students for their thoughts on assessment.

While there are nuances in the popularity of certain options, there's a shared appetite for changing:






- **When** and **how often** assessments are taken.
- **How** assessments take place.
- **How many** assessments are sat.
- **What types** of assessment are available.

Plus, embracing the opportunity to innovate...

Students' views






The changes secondary students would make to improve assessment

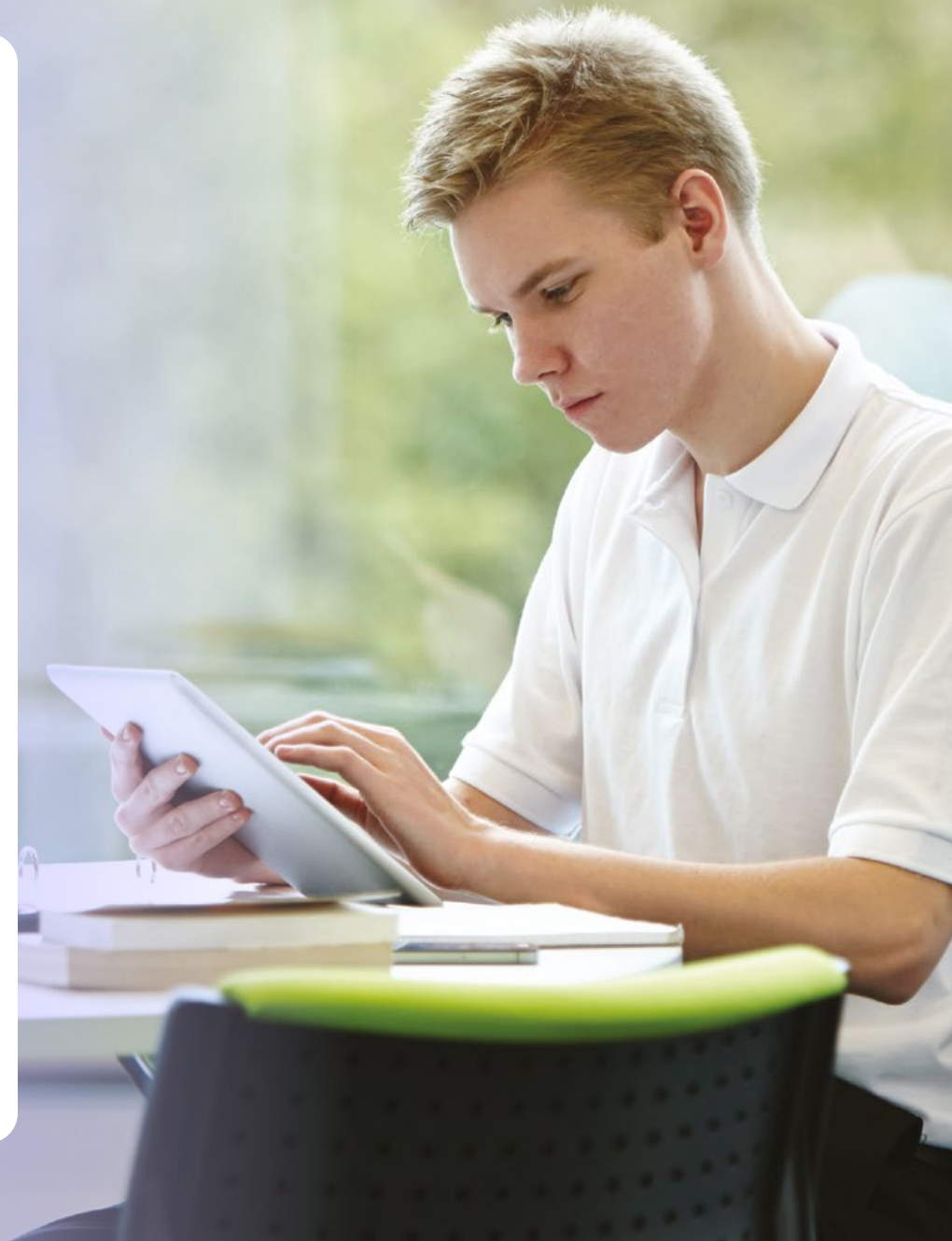
"I would..."

	1 Reduce the emphasis on final exams and focus more on ongoing assessments (e.g. tests throughout the year for Years 7 to 9 and throughout Years 10 and 11 for GCSE)	38%
	2 Give students a choice to take tests/exams on devices (computers/laptops/tablets)	30%
	3 Have students taking fewer written exams	29%
	4 Give students a range of assessment types (e.g. coursework, exams and projects)	29%
	5 Use more group assessments and collaborative projects	22%

Teachers' views

The changes teachers would like to see in assessment

	1 Modular assessments	34%
	2 More innovative forms of assessment	33%
	3 Fewer written exams	32%
	4 More non-exam assessment	29%
	5 More digital exams/tech-enabled assessment	20%
	= Remove Grade 4 pass requirements	20%



“Our member roundtables echo the calls from respondents to the *Pearson School Report* survey for less curriculum content and for better and more innovative forms of assessment, and also highlighted the need to put inclusion, particularly of children with SEND, at the heart of those reforms.”

– Dame Alison Peacock, CEO, Chartered College of Teaching

More from us...

On our recommendations for meaningful change in assessment.





Spotlight: skills

Once we gain a skill, we draw on and develop it throughout our lives – an ever-evolving process in which we continue to learn each day.

So how can we best equip our young people with the skills they need now and can build on throughout their lives?

A closer look: life skills

In our 2024 report, 9 in 10 learners said they want to be taught more skills that they'll need in life.

This year, 'skills for the future' became a central theme of students' and teachers' reflections on learning.

“[Learning environments should be] getting more students ready for [the] world after school.”

– Secondary Middle Leader

Looking back

Reflecting on where we started in this report, we can see how students, teachers and tutors see **skills-building and future-readiness** as fundamental reasons for learning.

Developing everyday life skills is the...

#1 reason for learning for college students and home-educated students

#2 reason for learning for school students

#3 outcome teachers would prioritise for students

Looking forward

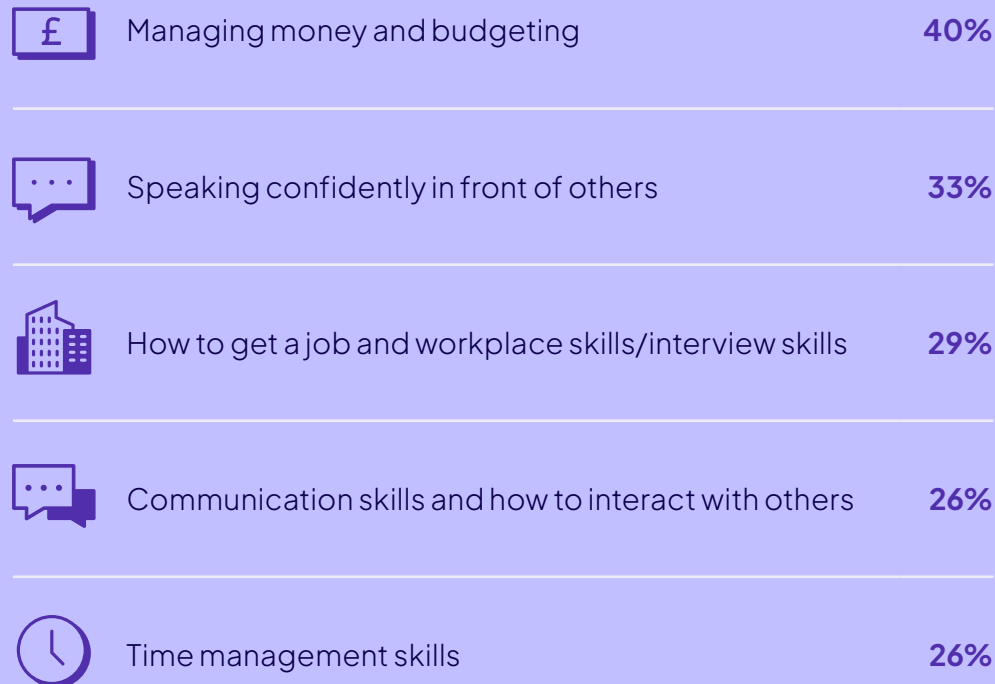
In line with this outlook, **developing key skills** features strongly in what teachers, tutors and students would like to see in learning from the future.

37% of teachers and **29%** of college tutors would place a **greater emphasis on life skills** in the curriculum.

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

So, which life skills are missing from learning right now – and what could be added to a future-focused curriculum? Students shared their views...

The skills/topics students feel are missing from learning that would help them in life



Students also flagged a desire to gain skills to support their **mental wellbeing (24%)**, as well as how to think **critically** and **solve problems (22%)**, and **work in a team (20%)**.

Educators' views

Building on this, we asked educators across all phases which **skills or qualities** they think should be prioritised outside of academic attainment for students. Their answers point to adaptable skills that can be learned, practised and mastered throughout life.

Aside from academic attainment, which three skills or qualities should students develop during their school/college years?*



Primary		
	Resilience	69%
	Problem solving	39%
	Teamwork	38%
	Confidence in their own abilities	37%
	Awareness of different cultures and societies	36%
	Growth mindset	32%
	Critical thinking	28%
	Adaptability	15%
	Leadership	2%
	Data analysis	1%

Secondary

	Resilience	69%
	Critical thinking	46%
	Awareness of different cultures and societies	39%
	Problem solving	37%
	Confidence in their own abilities	32%
	Growth mindset	22%
	Teamwork	21%
	Adaptability	20%
	Leadership	5%
	Data analysis	4%

Home educators

	Problem solving	48%
	Critical thinking	37%
	Growth mindset	37%
	Teamwork	32%
	Confidence in their own abilities	31%
	Leadership	29%
	Resilience	19%
	Adaptability	17%
	Awareness of different cultures and societies	16%
	Data analysis	16%

College

	Solving problems (e.g. creativity, critical thinking)	26%
	Confidence in their own abilities	26%
	Interpersonal skills (e.g. communication, teamwork, cultural & social intelligence)	25%
	Growth mindset	25%
	Managing yourself (e.g. responsibility, resilience and career planning)	24%
	Effective learning (e.g. research skills and managing your own learning)	23%
	Sustainability	23%
	Digital skills	22%
	Leadership	20%

*The optional responses for colleges and schools included key differences relevant to their phase.

Taking the conversation further...

“The findings show that students and educators alike value opportunities to build skills for life and their futures and would like more vocational options open to them.

Moving toward a system which reflects the aspirations of teachers and learners and incorporates skills like teamwork, interpersonal skills and time management into teaching, learning and assessment will help learners at all levels achieve their full potential and to be ready for the demands of work and life.”

– Ben Blackledge, Chief Executive, WorldSkills UK

“We need to explore all aspects of learning and how it really works. Are we recognising the full range of how different minds learn? Have we fully explored the importance of neurodiversity? Are we doing enough to build and nurture self-efficacy – the belief that you can succeed? And how often do we help learners think about **how** they learn, not just **what** they learn?”

– Anne-Marie Duguid, Co-Founder and CEO of Enabling Leaders and Co-Creator of the World Education Summit

“Learning must go beyond just learning facts (knowledge acquisition). It should be about nurturing curiosity, resilience, collaboration and adaptability. The truth is that these are the qualities that prepare learners for meaningful participation in society and a global workforce.”

– Professor Adam Boddison OBE, Chief Executive, Association for Project Management (APM)



More from us...

See our *Lost in Transition* series on how 'learning to learn' and clear skilling pathways can accelerate progress for people, businesses and society. Plus, our *Skills Outlook* series spotlights the skills most in demand in the immediate future in the world of work.



A closer look: getting creative

From schools, homes and colleges today, through to the workplaces of tomorrow, creativity has a crucial role to play.

“ [Learning environments] need to encourage more creative thinking.”

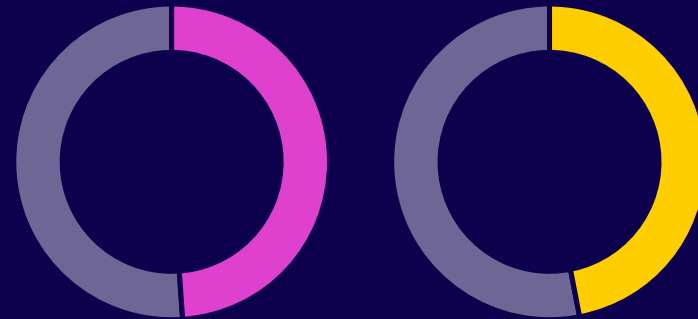
– Secondary Middle Leader

“ Learning empowers us, helps us adapt, sparks creativity... It’s key to growth and fulfilment.”

– Primary Student

According to the World Economic Forum’s *Future of Jobs Report 2023*,⁴ **creative thinking** has been highlighted as one of the **most valued skills** for the future workplace. Educators are keen to see this reflected in schools and homes.

“The education system needs more emphasis on creative skills.”



49% of teachers and 47% of home educators

This was truly a **shared belief** – having a similar response rate across all regions, school types, free school meal quartiles, and teacher demographics.

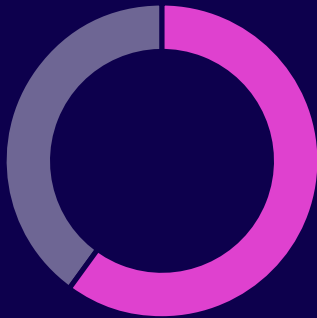
4. World Economic Forum. 2023. *Future of Jobs Report 2023: Insight Report*. https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2023.pdf

A call for change?

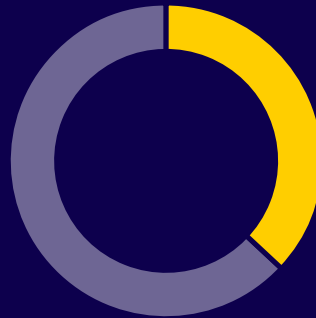
To make this a reality, students and teachers suggest **changing what's being learned and assessed**.

Focusing more on creative skills

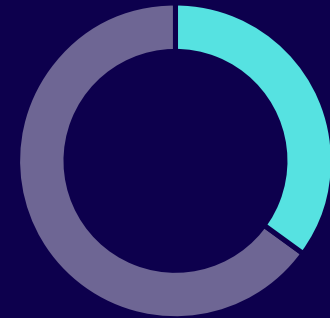
This was among the **top three** things students and educators would like to see change.



#1 change for home educators (**60%**)



#2 change for secondary students (**37%**), (second only to changing the emphasis on final exams)



#3 for teachers (**35%**)

And there's appetite for creativity to be **embedded within day-to-day learning**:

- Almost **2 in 3** home educators and **1 in 3** school students would like to **focus more on creative skills within lessons**.

More from us...

Explore our recommendations for cultivating a creative curriculum.



A closer look: digital skills

In readiness for a tech-enabled future, we need to ensure students and educators can access technology **and**, just as crucially, know how best to use it to suit their needs.

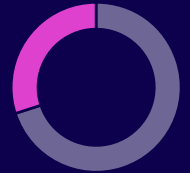
“Children are not digital natives who just know how to use it by osmosis – it requires explicit instruction and understanding to be able to use it responsibly and well.”

– Primary Middle Leader

Building on what already exists, many students and teachers told us they want to see **even more digital skills** in order to enhance learning.

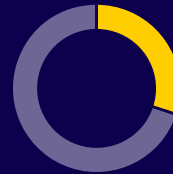
“The education system needs more focus on digital skills.”

31% of teachers



“I would focus more on digital skills in lessons.”

30% of students



“In an ideal world, I’d focus on digital upskilling of staff and students to improve student learning.”

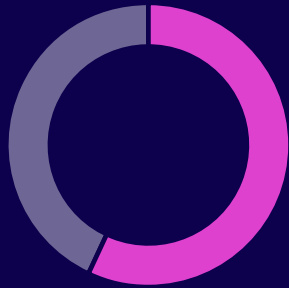
30% of teachers



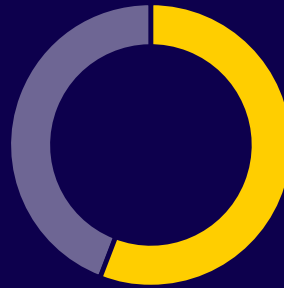
We asked teachers: **what is needed in your school to support improved digital skills for learners?**

Teachers' answers suggest that the upskilling needs to be mutual.

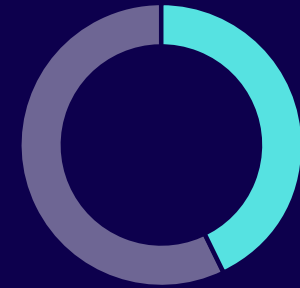
Training for teachers



Increasing staff knowledge of **digital best practice** (57%)

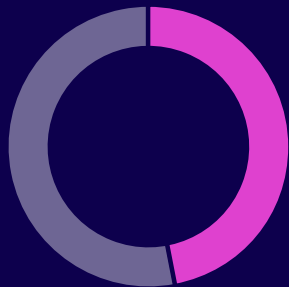


Digital skills training for staff (56%)

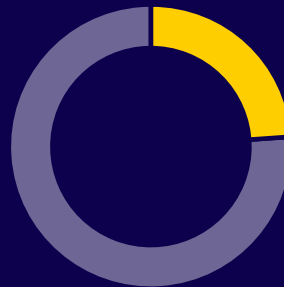


AI training for staff (43%)

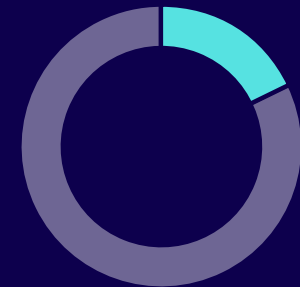
Learning and skills building in many ways



Almost half (47%) say digital skills **embedded in the curriculum** would be needed to support student upskilling.



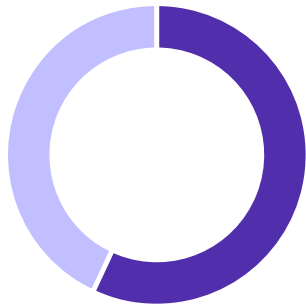
Nearly a quarter (24%) think **stand-alone digital skills lessons** for students would be needed.



Almost 1 in 5 (18%) suggest digital skills should be a **stand-alone qualification**.

A closer look: AI

With AI quickly evolving, we must consider not only where it supports learning now, but also how to give students and educators the skills to make the most of what's next.



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

In the now...

AI for teaching

When we asked teachers about their experiences of using AI in school, **only 1 in 5 (20%)** said they **don't** use AI.

So where is it making the **biggest difference** for the teachers who are using it?

"AI saves me time."

44% of teachers

4 in 10 teachers say they're **confident using AI for:**

- planning lessons
- writing reports or other admin tasks
- reducing workload.

This is followed by "setting homework", chosen by **18%** of respondents.

There are, however, **mixed feelings** about embracing the tools available.

"I am not confident using AI."

23% of teachers

43% of college tutors

"I lack confidence in using AI."

"I have concerns about using AI."

37% of teachers

Students using AI

Much like teachers and tutors, secondary school and college students have **differing levels of confidence** in using AI.

Around 1 in 2 secondary students and 6 in 10 college students feel confident in:



choosing **appropriate AI tools**



using AI to **support their learning**



using those tools **fairly and accurately** in their work.

1 in 6 secondary school students and 3 in 10 college students say they don't feel confident in these areas.

In the the future...

As it stands, **44%** of secondary teachers and **31%** of primary teachers say they **don't** think students are being well prepared for an **AI-driven world**.

Yet, only **9%** of teachers say they currently feel confident teaching students how to use AI.

But students, tutors and teachers alike have ideas on how those numbers could change:

- **42%** of teachers believe AI should be included in **teacher training**.
- **More than a quarter** of secondary and college students believe they should learn about AI **at school/college**.
- **4 in 10** teachers would like **AI training** to support improved digital skills for students.
- **26%** of teachers believe **AI training for students** would improve digital skills for students.

“What changes could benefit learning? Pupils harnessing AI tools to increase their capacity to learn and in different ways.”

– Primary Middle Leader

Taking the conversation further...

“I’m fairly confident using IT and AI but I feel many staff are not. This causes a gap in what children experience as they move through their primary years. [As] teachers we have not been equipped or taught well enough to ensure our children are digitally savvy/competent. This needs fixing urgently!”

– Primary Classroom Teacher

“Digital confidence, the ability to use, understand and critically engage with digital tools (including generative AI), is fundamental to nearly every career pathway.”

– Kamal Bodhanker, Head of System Leadership, National Institute of Teaching (NioT)

“Our education system cannot continue to play catch-up with advancements in technology and the workplace – we must put the foundations in place to equip every young person with the skills they’ll need to thrive.

There’s a great opportunity to move toward a fairer, more equitable society if we harness technology in teaching and learning and evolve our curriculum to prepare all young people for a changing world.”

– Janeen Hayat, Director of Collective Action, The Fair Education Alliance

“[To support future generations, we need training on] working smarter not harder – using AI tools where appropriate.”

– Primary Classroom Teacher

“Embedding digital skills across the curriculum (and beyond) and supporting staff with real-world and adaptable, evidence-informed examples of impactful practice, is going to be crucial, ensuring we listen to those pioneers who are already making it happen on the ground in schools, often against a backdrop of challenging circumstances.”

– Emma Darcy, Director of Technology for Learning,
Denbigh High School

More from us...

See our latest news and perspectives on digital learning, innovation and AI.



A closer look: educators are always learning

The love of learning we've seen throughout these pages is felt by teachers and students alike. Over **1,400** teachers took the time to share their thoughts on **the training and development they will need to prepare for educating future generations**.

From these suggestions alone, we can see that no area is off-limits to a workforce that believes in lifelong learning for all.

“The world is changing rapidly, and we’re equipping students for that world. The whole way we teach needs to be more technologically focused.”

– Secondary Middle Leader

“How skills can be taught through the curriculum and how this will impact future professions and jobs”

– Primary Headteacher

“Being flexible in teaching through a wide variety of circumstances”

– Secondary Middle Leader

“[Managing] with increasing SEND demands, students using AI; what education looks like now...”

– Secondary Middle Leader

“That learning isn’t one size fits all...”

– Primary Headteacher

Your voices

More from across the sector...



Continuing the conversation

Learning isn't limited to a single stage of life. it's a lifelong journey. And as we've seen and heard from the voices within this report, learning – and continuing to learn – is vital. Now more than ever.

We want the learning and insights shared here to live on beyond these pages. Together, as an education community, we can build upon them and keep pushing for positive change – so both our young people and those teaching them have what they need for the future.

So, we invite you to be part of the next chapter. Join us as we continue to bring voices together, listen, learn, and act to support every learning journey.

Thank you to everyone who has shared their perspectives with us so far. We look forward to hearing even more...

Add your voice

Driving positive change doesn't happen in isolation, so we're calling on everyone in education to have their say...

 @PearsonSchools | @PearsonBTECAppr

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Be part of what's next...

Sign up for emails about future discussions, events and opportunities to get involved.



Learning is an action that sparks a reaction...

Add **your voice**

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