



Prince's Trust

Executive Summary

The Prince's Trust and TES Teachers' Survey

The research was carried out by YouGov online on behalf of The Prince's Trust and TES. The total sample size was 515 secondary school teachers across England. Fieldwork was undertaken between 9th and 13th March 2012.

The research highlights the devastating impact of the recession on teachers and pupils across the UK, with thousands of secondary school teachers fearing that more pupils will end up on benefits than ever before.

- **Seven out of ten** secondary school teachers (**70 per cent**) are increasingly worried that their pupils will end up on benefits due to high unemployment levels.
- **More than one in three** (**37 per cent**) feel their efforts to help pupils become employable are “in vain” due to the current economic climate.
- **More than half** (**54 per cent**) expect more pupils to end up on benefits than ever.
- **Seven in ten** (**70 per cent**) believe that schools need a new approach to help the most disadvantaged young people, given the current high levels of youth unemployment.
- **More than two thirds** (**68 per cent**) believe that education in schools should be more geared towards making young people employable in the current climate.
- **More than half** (**26 per cent**) “always” or “often” feel they can't do enough to support disadvantaged young people in school – and more than one in four of these feel this way more regularly since the recession.
- **More than two-fifths** (**45 per cent**) agree that pupils seem to be losing faith that education can help them get a job since the recession.
- **More than half** (**57 per cent**) say that pupils facing unemployment in the family are more likely to fall behind in school.

Secondary school teachers are also witnessing increasing numbers of pupils coming into school “hungry”, “dirty” and “struggling to concentrate” since the recession, according to the survey.

N.B. YouGov has defined the term “regularly” to mean “at least once every school term” for the purposes of this research.

- **Almost half (48 per cent)** regularly witness pupils coming into school suffering from malnutrition or showing signs that they haven't eaten enough. **One in four of these (23 per cent)** see this more frequently since the recession, with some teachers admitting that they buy food for struggling pupils from their own wages.
- Meanwhile, **more than eight out of ten teachers (83 per cent)** regularly witness pupils coming into school with dirty clothes, with **one in four of these (26 per cent)** seeing this more regularly since the recession.
- **Three quarters (75 per cent)** regularly see pupils who don't have enough money for school trips. **Half of those teachers surveyed (50 per cent)** say they witness this more regularly since the recession.
- **More than two-thirds (69 per cent)** regularly witness pupils coming into school with holes in their shoes.
- **More than one in four (28 per cent)** regularly see pupils who walk for miles to get to school, as they don't have the money for public transport.
- **More than half of teachers (51 per cent)** say that they often see pupils who seem to miss meals at home. **More than one in six of these (17 per cent)** say that they see this more regularly since the recession
- **Eight out of ten (82 per cent)** regularly teach pupils who are "not clean or smelly".
- **Fifty per cent** say that the number of pupils receiving free school meals has increased since the recession
- **Seven out of ten (71 per cent)** regularly see pupils who don't have a coat, with almost **one in three of these (31 per cent)** seeing this more regularly since the recession
- **Nine out of ten (94 per cent)** regularly teach pupils who don't have the equipment they need (for example – pencils, rulers and books). **One in three of these (35 per cent)** see this more regularly since the recession

According to the research, mentoring support is the most successful intervention when it comes to working with disadvantaged young people in schools.

- **More than one in three teachers (37 per cent)** believe that mentoring and one-to-support is the most successful intervention when it comes to supporting disadvantaged young people.
- **However, two-fifths (40 per cent)** feel they do not have enough support to help these young people effectively, with some working more than 40 hours of overtime each term to do so.
- **More than two-fifths of teachers (45 per cent)** who spend time supporting disadvantaged young people "always" or "often" feel stressed when it comes to supporting those young people in their schools– and **more than one in four of these (29 per cent)** of these feel this way more regularly since the recession.

- **More than half (53 per cent)** “always” or “often” feel they can’t do enough to support disadvantaged young people in school – and **more than one in four of these (26 per cent)** feel this way more regularly since the recession.
- **One in three (34 per cent)** say they “always” or “often” feel like tearing their hair out when it comes to supporting disadvantaged young people and **more than one in four of these (27 per cent)** feel this way more regularly since the recession
- **One in three** (33 per cent) feel that no-one is listening when it comes to the support they provide for disadvantaged young people. **More than one in four of these (28 per cent)** feel this way more regularly since the recession.

The research also suggests that many pupils in schools are struggling with basic literacy skills and need extra support to help them fulfil their potential.

- **Two-fifths of secondary school teachers (41 per cent)** regularly see pupils who struggle to spell their own name.
- **Seven out of ten (70 per cent)** regularly come across pupils who can “barely read and write”.
- **More than half (59 per cent)** regularly see pupils who struggle to spell their own address.
- **Almost two-thirds (63 per cent)** regularly come across pupils who “barely speak”.

As part of the research, teachers were asked to provide personal insights on the issues they see pupils facing in their schools. A range of these responses are included below:

“I had a student who fainted in a lesson because he hasn't eaten all day. I had a student who waited outside the school gates every day because his dad never got to school on time to pick him up.”

“Children left to look after themselves turning up in shirts that look as if they haven't been cleaned in days, weeks, grey instead of white.”

“I have had a student who slept below an outside staircase for two nights before he was discovered. I frequently encounter students who say they don't have any lunch, or money for lunch, and they don't want any if offered a free school meal.”

“I have students who I will forward to Pastoral care whom I suspect are being neglected and this has increased over the past 18 months - coinciding with a large proportion of the local community losing their jobs due to local industry/businesses going bust. Aspiration has significantly lowered.”

“Those children who are dirty are also shunned and bullied by their peers. A significant number of pupils with broken or holed shoes have to wait weeks or months for new ones, and we've changed the uniform policy to allow trainers in order to have more flexibility. Lack of food in the mornings is a big issue for learning.”

"We have seen a marked increase in the number of students who have depression/emotional problems in the last two years. Frequently there are domestic difficulties (parents who have suffered redundancy, long-term illness, divorce or bereavement). This obviously affects their ability to concentrate in class and complete work to a good standard. January exam results were markedly worse than in January 2011."

"As a tutor I sometimes have to look in lost property for spare cloths - e.g. sweatshirts in cold weather."

"There is one girl in my primary school that I see walking to school every day and I know that she lives at least four miles away from school."

"One student came into school wearing a soaking wet uniform. He washed it in the morning as his mother had failed to do so due to being inebriated. He didn't know how to use the drier so came in wet. Another student regularly comes in wearing a stained and smelly blazer."

"More and more families are experiencing hardship. There have always been problems of this kind in the area where I teach, but the economic crisis has tipped many people over the edge."

"Student who never has a packed lunch, never has money for lunch and who does without food at lunchtime every day."

"I have taught sisters who could only come to school on separate days as they only had one uniform between them."

"One family within the school are known to bathe only once a week and have one set of clothes for the week. The three students are always filthy by Friday."

"A survey of eating habits showed some pupils in my class had not eaten anything for tea the night before or breakfast that morning."

"School trips are being cancelled more frequently due to less uptake."

"Malnourished young female student with parents out of work. No heating in house last winter. No money for food and old worn clothes. She is of exceptional ability but subject to depression and has very low self esteem. This is not an unusual situation to come across where I work."

"When there is theft from the school canteen it is always worth considering whether the student concerned is hungry."

"One child has a loving family who have to choose between heating the home or food - he comes in hungry most days. Another child does not sleep in a bed and is unwashed and withdrawn."

"Although children don't sit in lessons without a uniform, an increasing number are having to borrow items from our stock - average about 12-20 a day. I keep a bowl of bananas in my room so children can have them if they are hungry."

"My school is in one of the most deprived areas of the country and the gap between those who have and those who have not is getting wider. It is also becoming more difficult to run school trips because parents cannot afford them. This seriously affects students life experiences."

"Often the free school meals some pupils receive is their only meal of the day."

"One student who's white school shirt did not seem to have been washed or changed all year."

"I have a current year eight pupil who only has suitable shoes because her form tutor gave them to her and several teachers give 'her hand me down' clothes from their own daughters. Several of us bought her a suitable coat etc and we provide her with toast each day."

"Year 10 boy comes into to school to get warm and food"

"It is very common that school trips cannot run as parents cannot afford to send their children. I have known staff pay out of their own salary for trips to run. Often pupils shoes are very cheap, do not last and they come to school with them home glued ,sellotaped, stapled or even elastic banded on to their feet."

"Whilst on lunch duty I often see scavenger pupils finishing off mates scraps as they haven't eaten enough."

"On a daily basis I witness one child who never changes his clothes at all so all term he has been wearing the same two hoodies and jeans."

"I saw a girl walk to school in the snow wearing just socks. At the gates she put her shoes on. She said they were last year's shoes and they hurt because they were far too small."

Youth charity The Prince's Trust runs the xl and Fairbridge programmes with teachers to help young people who are struggling at school, preventing exclusions, improving grades and giving them the skills they need to find a job in the future.

The Trust aims to help 50,000 vulnerable young people this year, giving them the skills and confidence to find a job. Last year, more than three in four of young people on Prince's Trust schemes moved into work, education or training.