

Executive Summary – NFER Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey Data

The Wellcome Trust commissioned seven questions to be included as part of the Teacher Voice Omnibus survey¹ carried out by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). The survey was completed online between the 4th and 9th March 2016.

The panel included teachers from a range of roles in primary schools, from Headteachers to newly qualified classroom teachers. A total of 805 primary school teachers/leaders from 740 different schools responded to the survey; note that not all questions were answered by all respondents.

The primary sample was nationally representative by free school meals eligibility, region and school type.

- Out of those surveyed, 74 per cent taught science as part of cross curricular topics (e.g. topics such as Dinosaurs, Tudors or Space). Of those teaching science via topics, 24 per cent also held a separate annual science week.
- Thirty respondents indicated that they taught science via science weeks only (one, two or three times per year).
- Respondents tended to teach between 1-2 hours of science per week (48 per cent) or 30 minutes to 1 hour (19 per cent). A small number of teachers (4 per cent) were teaching science every week for less than 30 minutes. Of those surveyed, 24 per cent did not teach science weekly.
- The majority of those surveyed enjoyed teaching science, with 81 per cent saying they either 'always' or 'mostly' enjoyed teaching science. Seventeen per cent stated they 'sometimes' enjoy teaching science and 2 per cent said they 'rarely' enjoy teaching the subject.
- When asked, 93 per cent of teachers worked at schools that had science leaders, with 7 per cent of respondents being the science leaders themselves. Five per cent of respondents worked at schools without a science leader and one per cent did not know if they had a science leader.
- Of the 60 science leaders included in the sample, only 19 (32 per cent) received release time to lead science.
- When asked what barriers, if any, they experienced when teaching or leading science the top four categories were:
 - lack of budget and resources (35 per cent)
 - lack of time and curricular importance (22 per cent)
 - lack of subject knowledge (11 per cent)
 - issues relating to setting up space or access to resources (10 per cent).
- When a lack of time and curriculum importance (mentioned 177 times) were separated into two unique categories where possible, 75 teachers/leaders mentioned lack of time, 65 mentioned lack of curricular importance and 37 mentioned both lack of time and curricular importance.

¹ <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/teacher-voice-omnibus-survey/>

- When asked what, if anything, would help when teaching or leading science the top four categories were:
 - more resources/funding (36 per cent)
 - a need for CPD or other support (22 per cent)
 - more time/curricular standing (11 per cent)
 - the need for more model activities/exemplar materials (9 per cent).

APPENDIX: Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey February 2016² Results (Wellcome Trust Questions)

Table 1. How do you/your school currently teach science?

	Senior leaders (%)	Senior leaders (n)	Classroom teachers (%)	Classroom teachers (n)	All (%)	All (n)
As part of cross curricular topics (e.g. Dinosaurs, Tudors, Space)	76	236	73	362	74	598
Specific science weeks (3 times per year)	6	19	4	18	5	37
Specific science weeks (2 times per year)	4	11	3	13	3	24
Specific science week (1 time per year)	21	65	20	101	21	166
Other (please specify)	31	97	31	155	31	252
No response	0	1	0	2	0	3
N=	311	311	494	494	805	805

More than one answer could be given so percentages may sum to more than 100.

This question has been filtered to a subset of respondents.

Source: Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey February 2016.

Table 2. How do you/your school currently teach science? Other

	Senior leaders (%)	Senior leaders (n)	Classroom teachers (%)	Classroom teachers (n)	All (%)	All (n)
Discreet unspecified lessons	16	16	11	17	13	33
Weekly science (unspecified)	59	57	54	84	56	141
More than an hour a week	2	2	3	4	2	6
2 lessons a week (unspecified)	4	4	6	9	5	13
Linked to topics	0	0	2	3	1	3
Termly or half termly programme	4	4	3	5	4	9
In science lessons according to NC	0	0	1	1	0	1
Science week	1	1	1	1	1	2
Mixture of topic and stand alone	4	4	12	18	9	22
About to use Empiribox	1	1	0	0	0	1
Embedded in topic approach	2	2	1	2	2	4
A Science day	2	2	1	1	1	3
Specific days and weekly lessons	0	0	1	1	0	1
Part of normal curriculum	1	1	0	0	0	1
Science days	0	0	1	1	0	1
Weekly in KS2 only	1	1	1	1	1	2
Science led by children's questioning	0	0	1	1	0	1
No response	2	2	4	6	3	8
N=	97	97	155	155	252	252

More than one answer could be given so counts may sum to greater than base size.

This question has been filtered to a subset of respondents.

Source: Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey February 2016.

² Survey is referred to as February 2016 Omnibus, however data was collected in March 2016.

Table 3. How much time, on average, per week do you currently spend teaching science?

	Senior leaders (%)	Senior leaders (n)	Classroom teachers (%)	Classroom teachers (n)	All (%)	All (n)
Fewer than 30 minutes	1	3	5	26	4	29
Between 30 minutes and 1 hour	16	49	21	104	19	153
Between 1-2 hours	55	169	43	213	48	382
Between 2-3 hours	6	18	4	19	5	37
More than 3 hours	0	1	1	3	1	4
I do not teach science weekly	22	683	25	1254	24	193
No response	1	2	0	2	1	4
N=	310	310	492	492	802	802

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.

This question has been filtered to a subset of respondents.

Source: Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey February 2016.

Table 4. Which best describes your view of teaching science?

	Senior leaders (%)	Senior leaders (n)	Classroom teachers (%)	Classroom teachers (n)	All (%)	All (n)
I always enjoy teaching science	39	121	26	126	31	247
I mostly enjoy teaching science	45	140	53	261	50	401
I sometimes enjoy teaching science	14	42	19	92	17	134
I rarely enjoy teaching science	1	3	2	10	2	13
I never enjoy teaching science	0	1	0	2	0	3
No response	1	4	1	3	1	7
N=	311	311	494	494	805	805

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.

This question has been filtered to a subset of respondents.

Source: Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey February 2016.

Table 5. Does your school have a science leader?

	Senior leaders (%)	Senior leaders (n)	Classroom teachers (%)	Classroom teachers (n)	All (%)	All (n)
Yes and I am the science leader	5	14	9	46	7	60
Yes, there is a science leader	90	280	84	416	86	696
No, we do not have a science leader	5	17	5	25	5	42
Don't know	0	0	1	6	1	6
No response	0	0	0	1	0	1
N=	311	311	494	494	805	805

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.

This question has been filtered to a subset of respondents.

Source: Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey February 2016.

³ Including 10 Senior leaders who teach science via specific science weeks only

⁴ Including 20 classroom teachers who teach science via specific science weeks only

Table 6. What, if any, barriers do you experience when teaching or leading science?

	Senior leaders (%)	Senior leaders (n)	Classroom teachers (%)	Classroom teachers (n)	All (%)	All (n)
Lack of budget and or resources	32	97	37	190	35	287
Lack of time or curricular importance	21	64	22	113	22	177
Issues relating to setting up space or resources	13	40	9	45	10	85
Lack of subject knowledge	13	40	10	51	11	91
Need for planning and preparation time	2	7	3	13	2	20
Need support and practical ideas	3	8	4	18	3	26
Technology and ICT	0	0	0	1	0	1
Lack of confidence with practical work	3	10	1	4	2	14
Need other staff to assist	0	1	2	8	1	9
Health and safety issues	1	3	1	3	1	6
Doesn't teach science	2	5	4	19	3	24
None	7	21	6	31	6	52
Other	1	2	2	9	1	11
Lack of pupil interest or behaviour issues	1	2	1	4	1	6
Need to strengthen continuity	0	1	0	1	0	2
N=	301	301	510	510	811	811

Table 7. What, if anything, would help you when teaching or leading science?

	Senior leaders (%)	Senior leaders (n)	Classroom teachers (%)	Classroom teachers (n)	All (%)	All (n)
More time/curricular standing	13	26	10	41	11	67
Subject knowledge weaknesses	0	0	1	3	1	3
More resources/funding	36	70	36	142	36	212
Need CPD or other support	20	40	22	89	22	129
Need model activities/exemplar materials	7	14	10	41	9	55
Need to strengthen planning	1	2	2	8	2	10
Need smaller teaching groups	1	1	1	4	1	5
Curriculum stability required	1	2	0	1	1	3
Other	4	7	4	17	4	24
Need reform to assessment and expectation descriptors etc	4	7	2	7	2	14
Need more adults in class	5	10	3	13	4	23
Better links with KS3	1	1	1	4	1	5
Nothing	4	7	4	16	4	23
More visits and demonstrations	1	2	0	1	1	3

Wellcome Trust - NFER Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey Data

Better facilities for science	2	4	2	7	2	11
Don't teach it	1	2	0	1	1	3
Need specialist teachers	1	2	1	3	1	5
No response	0	0	0	0	0	0
N=	197	197	398	398	595	595

Due to rounding, percentages may not sum to 100.

Please note that some respondents mentioned more than one reason.

This question has been filtered to a subset of respondents.

Source: Teacher Voice Omnibus Survey February 2016.