

Missing Mothers - Appendix 1 - Survey results - Leavers

Methodology

To gain an understanding of the views and experiences of women who had left teaching in the state sector between the ages of 30 - 39, The New Britain Project published a short survey with The MTPT Project. 383 people completed this survey.

A full breakdown of the survey profile can be found below.

It is important to note that while the survey provides a powerful indicator of former teachers' views, it is not representative and should not be treated as such.

The survey was live between 8 April and 3 June 2024, and was promoted by both The New Britain Project and The MTPT Project through social media channels, a [Schools Week article](#) and numerous education sector, schools and multi academy trusts newsletters for staff.

Only women who answered yes to the following questions were able to complete the survey:

- Were you formerly a teacher in a UK state school, and have you now left state school teaching?
- Did you leave UK state school teaching between the age of 30-39?

Questions 10, 11, 12,13 and 14 were only shown to respondents who answered yes to question 9 – that is, to those who said they had dependent children.

All other questions were shown to all respondents.

Q1: What phase did you teach?	EYFS	4%
	Primary	34%
	Secondary	56%
	Post-16	4%
	Other (please specify)	3%

Q2: What was your last role in teaching?	Classroom teacher	35%
	Middle management/TLR holder	39%
	Senior management	22%
	Headteacher	2%
	Other (please specify)	1%

Q3: What route did you take into teaching?	Teach First	11%
	Schools Direct	4%
	University led training	75%
	Other (please specify)	10%

Q4: What year did you leave teaching?	2024	12%
	2023	20%
	2022	19%
	2021	6%
	2020	9%
	2019	7%
	2018	4%
	2017	6%
	2016	4%
	2015	4%
	2014	2%
	2013	2%
	2012	1%
	2011	1%
	2010	0%
Before 2010	2%	

Q5: What were your principal reasons for leaving UK state school teaching? (Please tick all that apply)	Financial	14%
	Workload	75%
	Progression opportunity in another industry	5%
	Lack of progression opportunities in teaching	15%
	Lack of flexible/ part time working arrangements in teaching	51%
	Lack of job satisfaction	28%
	School culture	45%
	Lifestyle choice - i.e. wanting to work fewer hours, seeking a better work-life balance or to pursue other interests	54%
	Childcare logistics	42%
	Social pressure	1%
	Mental health/ wellbeing	57%
	Career redirection	13%
	Logistics/ commute/ change of location	8%
	Health related reasons	7%
	Family commitments - children	51%
Family commitments - elderly relatives	2%	
Family commitments - spouse/ partner	3%	

	Maternity/ paternity leave	7%
	Desire for change	17%
	Needed a break - i.e. you intend on returning to the classroom at some point	9%
	Curriculum/ policy changes	13%
	Pressure from educational monitoring bodies/ school leadership and management	30%
	Lack of professional development opportunities	9%
	Poor public perception of teaching	9%
	Other (please specify)	15%

Q6: And of those principal reasons for leaving UK state school teaching please rank your top 3.		1st	2nd	3rd
		Financial	17%	50%
	Workload	29%	32%	39%
	Progression opportunity in another industry	25%	75%	0%
	Lack of progression opportunities in teaching	38%	38%	25%
	Lack of flexible/ part time working arrangements in teaching	32%	44%	24%
	Lack of job satisfaction	29%	36%	36%
	School culture	30%	39%	31%
	Lifestyle choice - i.e. wanting to work fewer hours, seeking a better work-life balance or to pursue other interests	30%	28%	42%
	Childcare logistics	33%	27%	39%
	Social pressure	0%	0%	0%
	Mental health/ wellbeing	47%	30%	23%
	Career redirection	9%	36%	55%
	Logistics/ commute/ change of location	20%	30%	50%
	Health related reasons	57%	43%	0%
	Family commitments - children	42%	32%	26%
	Family commitments - elderly relatives	33%	33%	33%
	Family commitments - spouse/ partner	0%	75%	25%
	Maternity/ paternity leave	78%	11%	11%
	Desire for change	15%	31%	54%
	Needed a break - i.e. you	17%	17%	67%

	intend on returning to the classroom at some point			
	Curriculum/ policy changes	33%	22%	44%
	Pressure from educational monitoring bodies/ school leadership and management	19%	55%	26%
	Lack of professional development opportunities	0%	33%	67%
	Poor public perception of teaching	50%	0%	50%
	[Insert text from Other]	69%	14%	17%

Q7: Do you have any dependent children?	Yes	78%
	No	22%

Q8: How old are your children? Please tick all that apply.	0 - 4 years	54%
	5 - 10 years	63%
	11 - 17 years	21%
	18 or above	3%

Q9: Which of the following might have helped you stay in the teaching profession longer? (Select all that apply)	More generous maternity/parental leave	15%
	Access to on-site childcare	37%
	Ability to work part-time	32%
	Job-sharing opportunities	23%
	More timetable flexibility (e.g. ability to start/end earlier)	68%
	More ad hoc flexibility (e.g ability to attend child activities/appointments)	63%
	Better support transitioning back after maternity leave	27%
	None of the above	13%
	Other (please specify)	23%

Q10: How important or not were each of the following in your decision to ultimately leave teaching?		Extremely important	Quite important	Of little importance	Not at all important
	Inability to find part-time roles	20%	29%	24%	27%
	Challenges with work-life balance	80%	17%	2%	1%

	Lack of flexibility around child care/family obligations	65%	26%	3%	6%
	Unsupportive school policies/culture around parental needs	48%	36%	9%	7%

Q11: What best fits your experience?	I left teaching before becoming a parent	15%
	I left teaching after becoming a parent	85%

Q12: How satisfied were you with the maternity leave and transition support provided by your school?	Very satisfied	5%
	Satisfied	22%
	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	14%
	Dissatisfied	28%
	Very dissatisfied	16%
	n/a	17%

Q13: At any point during your teaching career, have you requested any flexible working arrangements at your school(s) (e.g. part-time timetable, job-share, early finishes, late starts etc.)?	Yes, and I had flexible working arrangements put in place	43%
	Yes, I requested flexible working arrangements but my request was not accepted	19%
	No, and I did not want or need flexible working arrangements	30%
	Not sure/Can't recall	7%

Q14: How would you rate the effectiveness of your flexible working arrangements in supporting your work-life balance?	Extremely effective	4%
	Very effective	8%
	Somewhat effective	45%
	Not so effective	33%
	Not at all effective	10%

Q15: Have you ever contemplated returning to a teaching role?	Yes	54%
	No	46%

Q16: What if anything might make you contemplate returning to teaching?	If better pay was on offer	27%
	If there was more flexibility available	59%
	If there was less accountability pressure	33%
	When my children are older	28%
	If there was a support scheme in place to refresh my skills	12%
	If behaviour in schools becomes less of an issue	34%
	If there was a reduction in workload expected of teachers	70%
	There is nothing that would make me consider returning to teaching	13%
	Other (please specify)	15%