Education Tomorrow

Dr Michael Wagstaff – Head of Public Sector Consulting
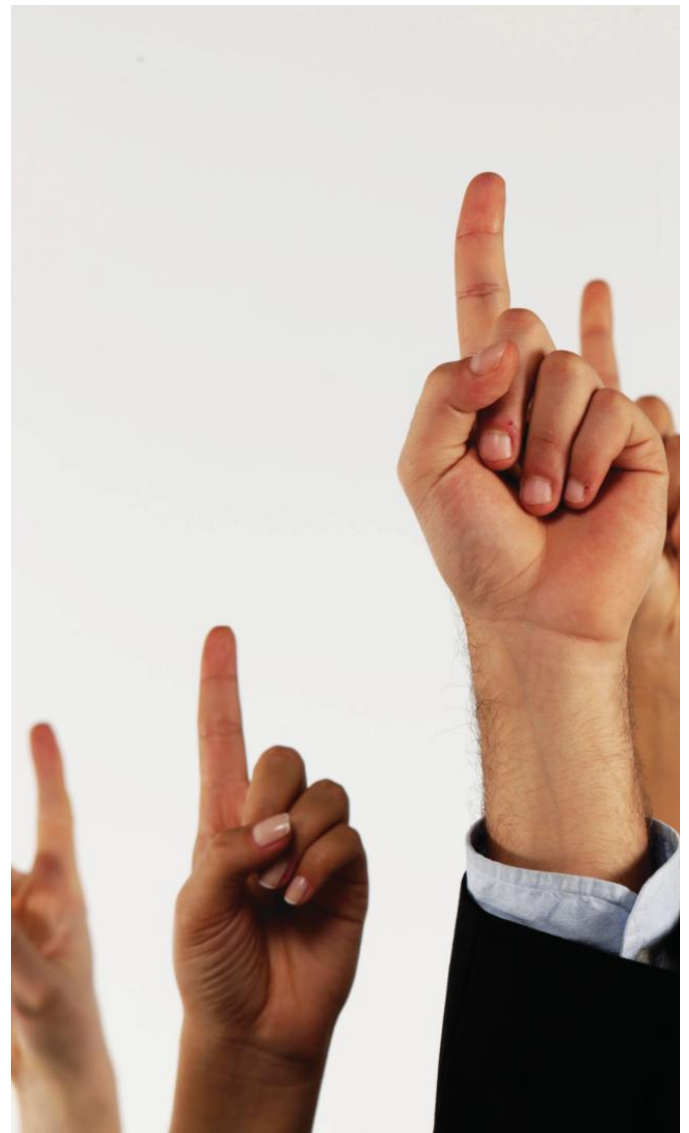
YouGov

What the world thinks

Table of Contents

Introduction

1.1.1 Background

1.1.2 This report provides an insight into the current state of education in the UK and considers what it should look like in the future. The report provides the results from a YouGov survey of secondary school teachers in the UK, and also covers the themes of a roundtable debate, hosted by YouGov and based on the same topics as the survey.

1.1.3 The report is timely. The new Liberal Democrat-Conservative government has outlined its education policies. Parents, teachers and charities are to be allowed to set up schools, SATs are to be reviewed, the government will be less involved in the curriculum and a 'pupil premium' of extra cash will be given to schools that take on more pupils from poorer backgrounds. Other policies include a return to 'old fashioned discipline', recognition for the iGCSE and a move to 'academy style freedoms'.

1.1.4 Many of the new government's policies as well as those of the previous Labour government are considered within the report with the focus on what education professionals would like to see in the future.

1.1.5 The report firstly considers what the **teacher of tomorrow** should look like: what makes a good teacher; how more suitable people can be attracted into teaching, and how teachers should be trained, qualified, and developed towards senior roles.

1.1.6 Next we discuss the **school of tomorrow**: how much autonomy state schools should have, the role of parents and local communities, and how social disadvantage can be addressed.

1.1.7 The report then explores the **curriculum of tomorrow**: to what extent should there be a set curriculum and how far should school be able to deviate from it; what should the balance be between academic and vocational learning, and how can the qualifications system fairly recognise different types of learning.

1.1.8 Finally, we consider how the education system affects the **workforce of tomorrow**: how ready are young people for the world of work, and what can schools do to improve this; how

helpful are qualifications for the real world, and the barriers businesses face in helping schools develop employability skills.

1.2 Method

1.2.1 The survey was conducted online between 15th and 20th February 2010 using YouGov's online research panel. The YouGov panel consists of around 300,000 adults in the UK.

1.2.2 A sample of secondary school teachers was selected from the overall panel and invited to take part in the survey. In total, 685 teachers responded.

1.2.3 The debate took place on 25th February 2010 in London. Senior figures from the education sector were invited, and there were nine participants representing a range of organisations including a representative from the current government. Headline findings from the survey were presented at the debate to stimulate and guide the discussion.

1.3 Scope of the report

1.3.1 Many of the topics were predominantly relevant to state schools rather than independent ones. While a small amount of independent school teachers were included in the survey, they have been excluded from questions that are only relevant to maintained schools, such as those dealing with state control or the National Curriculum.

1.3.2 The Chatham House Rule was applied at the debate, therefore this report deals with general themes, and the viewpoints expressed at the debate are not attributed.

The teacher of tomorrow

1.4   Future focus

- The suitability of people entering the profession needs to be addressed. Many people who enter teaching are not particularly well suited to it, and there is potential to market secondary teaching better to young people who are keenly interested in their chosen subject, who are currently more likely to choose academia.

- Academic qualifications are important but not at the expense of other attributes. Good teacher training, as distinct from academic qualifications, is paramount. People who have succeeded in other areas such as business can contribute a lot to teaching regardless of their academic background. This is especially beneficial in deprived areas where there is a need of role models.

- The gender imbalance among teachers needs addressing. It is desirable for teachers to broadly reflect the population they are teaching, on gender as well as ethnicity and social background. Action needs to be taken to encourage more men into the profession. Private schools have less of a gender imbalance, and there is an opportunity to learn from them.

- The teacher of tomorrow will reach senior leadership and headship at a younger age and there is a need for development and skills transfer. Mentoring programmes were seen to be extremely valuable, and the example of mentoring in private industry can be followed.

1.5 Are the right people entering teaching?

1.5.1 The survey of teachers revealed a concern among some that many people working in teaching are in fact not particularly well suited to it. While the majority (60 per cent) of teachers thought that most people who enter teaching are well suited to this career, a sizeable minority (30 per cent) thought that many people enter teaching who are not very well suited to it.

Figure 1: Thinking about the factors which may affect how well suited a person is to teaching (for example their temperament, what they like and dislike in a job, their career aspirations etc)…which of the following statements do you most agree with?
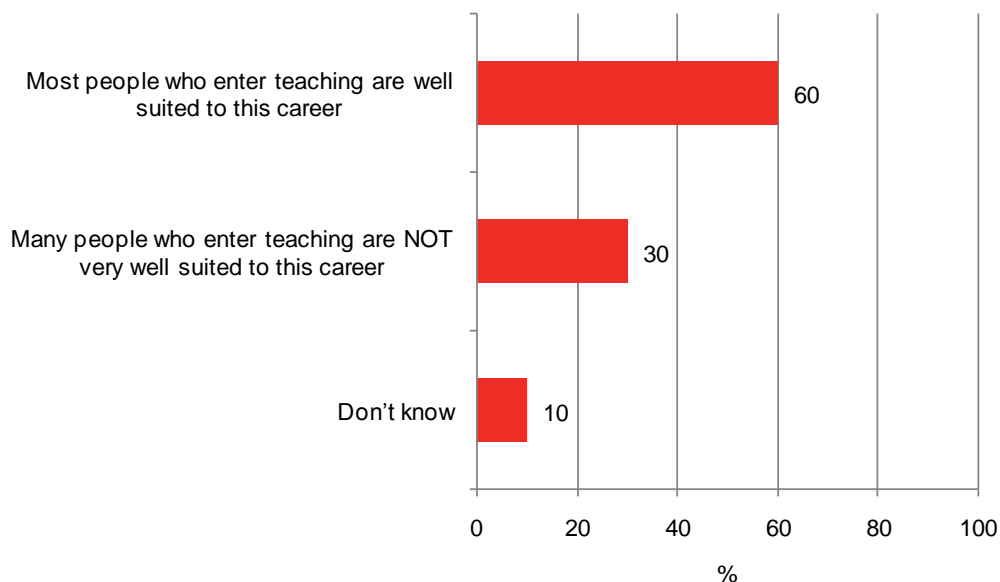

1.5.2 This raises questions about who we are attracting into teaching and how. In the debate, the view was expressed that the attractions of teaching are not sold well to undergraduates and other who may consider it as a career. It was argued that young people who have a keen interest in their degree subject are more likely to think of either going into academia or, if they do consider teaching, to think of sixth form lecturing rather than secondary school. The benefits of sharing knowledge and generating enthusiasm in young people are perhaps not so recognised, and so there may be an opportunity here for better information or marketing of teaching as a career.

What the world thinks

1.6 How should teachers be qualified?

1.6.1 Should the teacher of tomorrow be more academically elite? The teachers surveyed had close to a balanced view on this, with 36 per cent agreeing that it should be more academically elite, and 44 per cent disagreeing.

Figure 2: In principle, do you agree or disagree that teaching should be a more academically 'elite' profession?
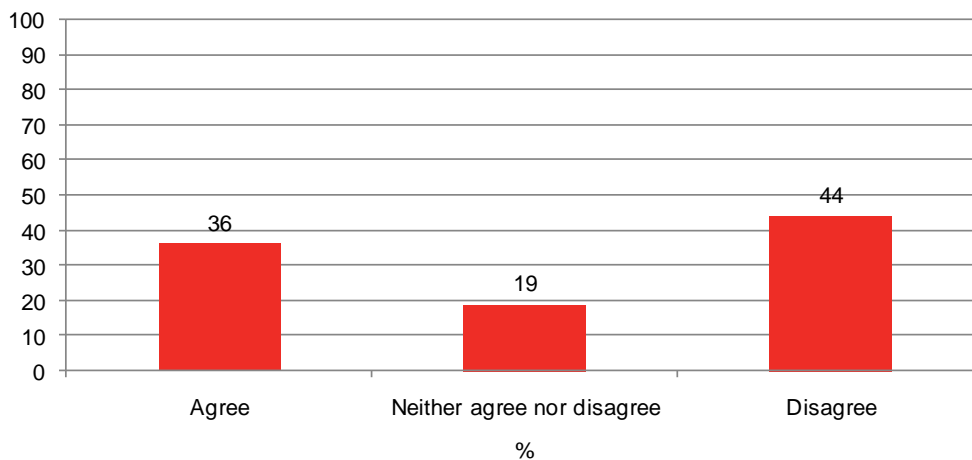
1.6.2 In the debate, the general view was that academic qualifications are important for the teacher of tomorrow but not sufficient on their own; other attributes are equally or more important. It was also felt that the ability to teach comes from teacher training, while subject knowledge is likely to come from a first degree, and that more emphasis should be placed on high quality training.

"There is an equation of academic excellence with ability to teach well, although (highly qualified graduates) can struggle with the basics. There is a need to understand what learning is... it is not academic but about teacher training".

1.6.3 All participants agreed that people who have succeeded in other areas such as business, regardless of their academic background, have the potential to contribute a lot to teaching and can provide good role models. This was seen to be particularly beneficial in deprived areas.

1.6.4 It was recognised that the importance of academic qualifications varies depending on the area of teaching. For example, a history teacher should have a good degree in history, but this is not so relevant for a less specialist role. It was also pointed out that the vast majority of entrants to the current PGCE route already hold a 2:2 degree or higher.

1.7 Gender imbalance among teachers

1.7.1 There are considerably more female than male teachers in schools generally, and this gap is even larger in primary schools. The debate considered the reasons for this disparity, how much it matters, and what can be done to address it.

1.7.2 A general view was expressed that the makeup of teachers should broadly reflect that of the population being taught. A general lack of male role models in many children's lives was also highlighted, and it was seen to be disappointing that schools are not more able to provide male role models in teachers. However it was also mentioned that many other support roles, such as family support contacts, have increasing male representation.

"Need a balance. A dominance of females must be wrong. Teaching needs to reflect balance in society. That's what they say about parliament, so should it be in schools."

1.7.3 At the root of this imbalance is a general perception that teaching, particularly at primary level, is more of a female profession. This was seen as one reason why men are less likely to enter teaching, and of course it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. However concern was also raised that it is more difficult for men to work with children generally due to fears or suspicions over abuse or inappropriate behaviour. Such suspicions tend to be directly predominantly at men, and it was thought that this could discourage men from entering teaching.

1.7.4 It was argued that private schools may not suffer from the same gender imbalance as the state sector, suggesting that men who do choose teaching as a career are more likely to

choose private school employers. One possible reason suggested for this was that private schools on the whole offer more opportunities to get involved with sports and other extra-curricular activities, which may appeal more to male teachers. However it is also likely that, with fewer male teachers available, private schools simply have more ability to select the balance of teachers they want, given that they pay higher average salaries.

1.7.5   It was also emphasised that ethnicity and social background are also important factor as well as gender, and also often do not reflect the makeup of the population.

1.8   Developing teachers for leadership

1.8.1   The debate moved on to discuss issues around developing teachers for headship and other senior roles. With the overall teaching workforce becoming younger, this could have implications for leadership, with teachers likely to move into senior roles at a younger age.

1.8.2   All participants recognised the importance of continuing professional development and investment. It was stated that skills do not remain fresh when left alone in a classroom for five years.

1.8.3   The value of mentoring programmes was emphasised, and attention was drawn to the model of corporate mentoring, which is successful and can be imitated, rather than creating a new model.

1.8.4   Certain specific leadership programmes were also praised. The Future Leaders programme run by the National College is fairly recent but participants are now starting to filter through to headship. In the US, the KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) leadership training was also thought to offer a valuable example.

# The school of tomorrow

1.9 Future focus

- Should tomorrow see an expansion of the Academy system? The answer to this is not clear cut. The benefit of new buildings and facilities in increasing pride and greater freedom over spending is helpful. However there are concerns over exclusions and admissions policies, and over curricula freedoms which may have led to easier courses being offered.

- If the Academy model is to be expanded the level of investment has to be sustainable.

- The future should see much more partnership and collaborative working, between different schools and between schools and the local community. Some Academies are successful at this and there are good lessons to be learnt.

- Teachers are not keen on the idea of charities and groups of parents being able to set up schools.

1.10 The Academy model

1.10.1 Academies were considered, along with the general issue of school autonomy from government. The teachers we surveyed were generally not in favour of Academies, with almost half (47 per cent) saying their introduction was a negative development, and only one in ten thinking it a positive development. The remainder either had a neutral opinion or did not know.

1.10.2 Teachers thought that the apparent headline GCSE success of many Academies was down to either investment in new buildings and facilities, greater freedom over exclusions, or greater curricula flexibility. Some teachers expressed a concern that a focus on easier or less academic subjects, such as BTECs, had led to better headline pass rates but not to genuine improvement.

Figure 3: Do you think the introduction of Academies has been a positive or negative development overall?
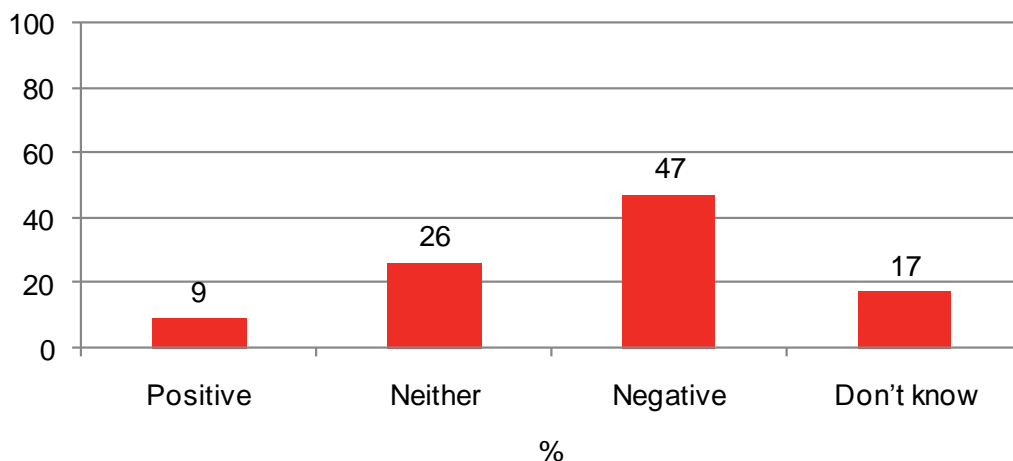
1.10.3 The view of Academies in the debate was fairly mixed. It was generally admitted that some individual Academies have been successful, but a concern was expressed that this has been achieved at a high investment cost, which could not necessarily be scaled up and may not be sustainable.

"The jury is out. If you look at the outcomes versus the distribution of funding, then they are no better than you would expect".

1.10.4 Some participants felt that new buildings and facilities were key to success because they instil pride in young people which can turn around those who are underperforming. Others thought that greater freedom from government, particularly over spending, was the most important factor.

1.10.5 It was also argued that greater freedom over exclusions and admissions has allowed Academies to bias their intake towards middle class children, or those with more involved and articulate parents. This means that the data showing Academies to be successful is skewed, and ultimately leads to greater polarisation of society.

1.10.6 The value of collaborative working between different schools, and between schools and the local community, was strongly emphasised. Eton, which works with various deprived local schools, was given as a good example of partnership working. Certain Academies were also seen to be successful at working with their local communities. It was thought possible for schools to work collaboratively even when in some respects they are in competition.

1.10.7 The view was also expressed that structure is in fact not important. There has been much debate around Academies compared with other school models, but, it was argued, this focus on structure ignores the importance of good teaching, which is not primarily a product of school structure.

"In the last ten years there has been more focus on structure, but it's not about the fact that schools have new computers etc, it is really about the quality of teachers. If you get the teaching right nothing else matters".

1.10.8 Overall, the general view in the debate was that, while Academies are not necessarily the answer in a general sense, their implementation can be useful in individual cases, especially considering that many have replaced previous failing schools. In these circumstances the fresh start and new investment is seen to be beneficial, even though this may not be scalable to the school system more generally.

"(Schools) don't have to be an Academy to be good, but if everything else has been tried it's about making a statement and trying something new."

1.11 Should parents and charities be allowed to set up schools?

1.11.1 There is little evidence that teachers support the setting up of schools by parents and charities. Six in 10 believe it to be a bad idea with 28 per cent supporting it.

Figure 4 : Do you think that allowing charities, not for profit trusts and groups of parents to set up their own school is a good or a bad idea?
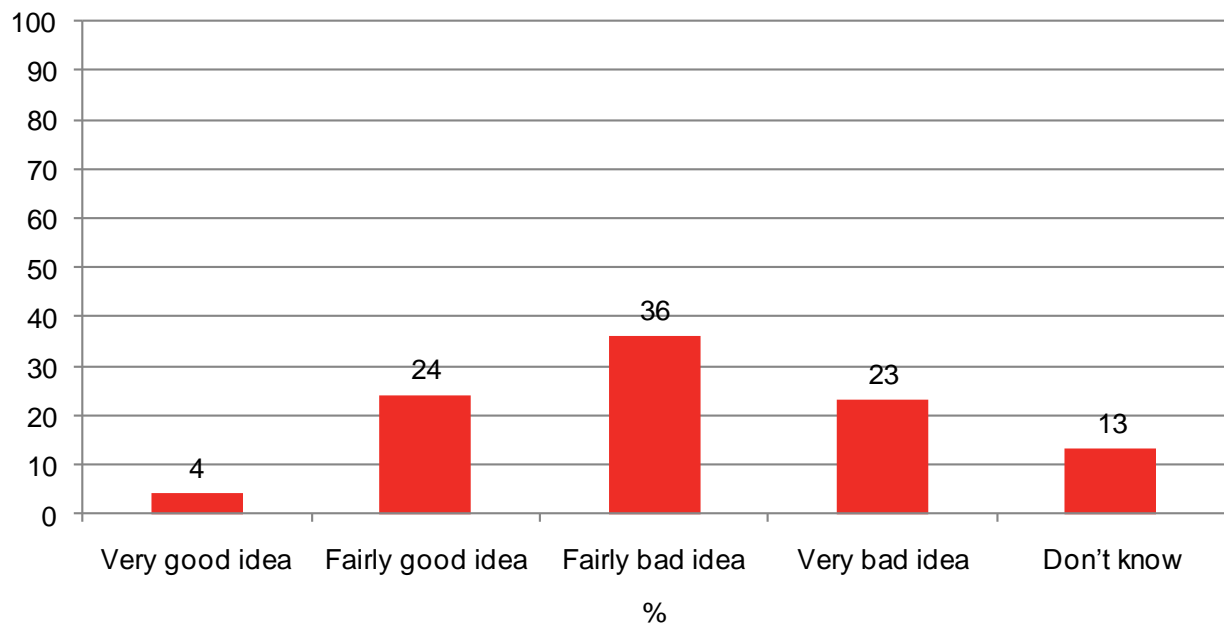
The curriculum of tomorrow

1.12 Future focus

- Schools should have more freedom from the National Curriculum, with only core subjects remaining statutory.

- The status of vocational learning should be raised and there should be an end to the distinct division between academic and vocational.

- It can be difficult for employers to judge the value of the many different qualifications available. The equivalence system is not seen to be useful. Instead, there should be a recognition that different disciplines simply are different, without devaluing vocational learning or having a two tier system. To achieve this a new vocational qualification, of higher status, should be introduced.

1.13 How much control should schools have over what they teach?

1.13.1 The survey showed that teachers are likely to think that state schools should have more freedom from the National Curriculum. Over half (55 per cent) thought that schools have too little control over what they teach, while almost a third (30 per cent) thought they had the right amount of control.

Figure 5: Do you think maintained schools have too much, too little, or the right amount of control over what they teach?
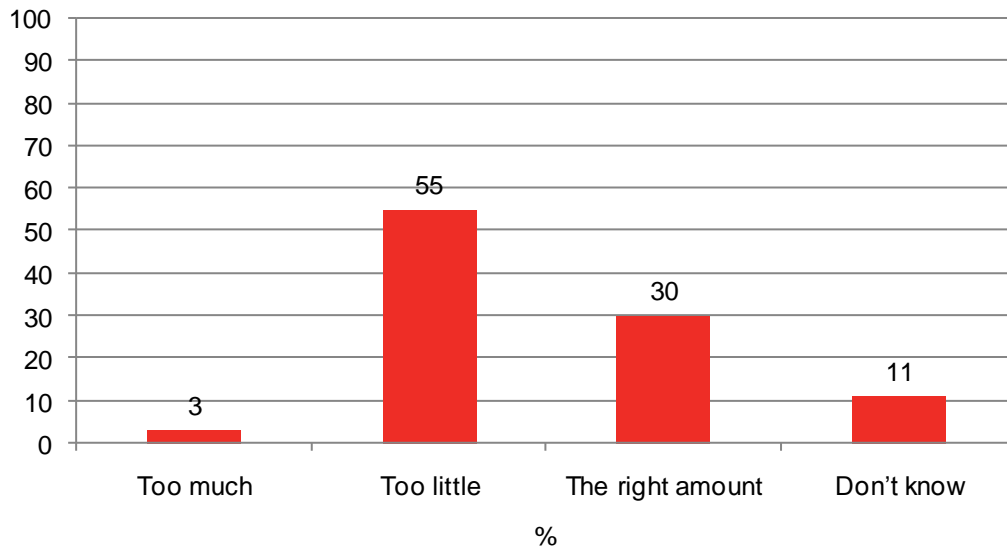
1.13.2 This view was also shared by the debate participants. The general view was that, while there should be control over core subjects such as English, maths and science, beyond this schools should have more freedom. It was pointed out that this was Margaret Thatcher's original vision of the Curriculum when it was introduced in 1988, but the final plan produced by the then Department of Education and Science was much more prescriptive. Recent moves to relax the Curriculum at Key stage 3 were seen to be positive, and it was thought that similar relaxation at Key Stage 4 would be beneficial.

1.14 Different types of learning

1.14.1 The introduction over recent years of various vocational subjects was seen as a positive development by the majority of teachers surveyed (57 per cent). This was also the view of those who took part in the debate, who stated that there needs to be more acceptance of vocational courses. The 14-19 Diploma was seen to be a good idea in principle, but it was thought that the actual structure of the Diploma was wrong since academic elements have now been introduced.

1.14.2 It was argued that the division between academic and vocational qualifications is stronger in Britain than in many other countries; this distinct division was seen as unhelpful. It was also stated that there is less connection between what skills are needed in the economy, and the courses provided, compared with other countries. The case was made for more consideration of eventual employability in the provision of qualifications. There was thought to be potential for expansion of vocational learning, with the green agenda, arts and design, and entrepreneurship highlighted as growth areas which align well with vocational learning.

1.14.3 A concern was expressed that it may be difficult for employers to judge the value of different qualifications and attainment levels, since there are many different qualifications available. The root of this problem was seen to be the equivalence system, where for example a BTEC First Certificate is equal in value to two GCSEs. It was felt that this kind of comparison is not very meaningful, and that equivalence is for the benefit of OFSTED and the creation of league tables, not for the benefit of young people.

"The issue is not qualifications in itself, but the equivalences. It's like comparing apples with pears – just accept there is a difference"

Recognition that a good carpenter and being good at Greek are different, and need to be measured differently"

1.14.4 However the danger of creating a two-tier system, which the system of equivalence is intended to avoid, was also recognised. To avoid this, participants argued that a higher status vocational qualification was needed, since existing qualifications were not seen to be highly regarded generally. Generally raising the status of vocational routes was also seen to be important.

"We need a high status vocational qualification. Something with more credibility... invest in gaining a high profile and marketing the image of vocational learning".

1.14.5 Finally, it was suggested that state schools should have more freedom to offer different (academic) qualifications, beyond GCSEs and A Levels. Many private schools offer the more challenging International GCSE, and the International Baccalaureate is also becoming popular. It was stated that pupils in state schools should be offered the same options.

The workforce of tomorrow

1.15 Future focus

- Young people are poorly prepared for working life. Schools should place greater emphasis on employability and life skills and preparing young people for life in general.

- Employers should be encouraged to work more with schools by stripping away some of the bureaucracy and regulations that are perceived to inhibit closer ties.

- Schools need to do more to engage with businesses and create strong local partnerships. A commitment to working with business must come from the headteacher and senior leadership downwards. There are successful examples of this which other schools can learn from.

1.16 Readiness for the workplace

1.16.1 The general view of young people's employability skills was fairly negative. Two thirds (67 per cent) of teachers surveyed thought that school/ college leavers are typically poorly prepared for work, with only a third (32 per cent) thinking them well prepared.

Figure 6: In general, how well prepared do you think school/ college leavers are for the word of work?
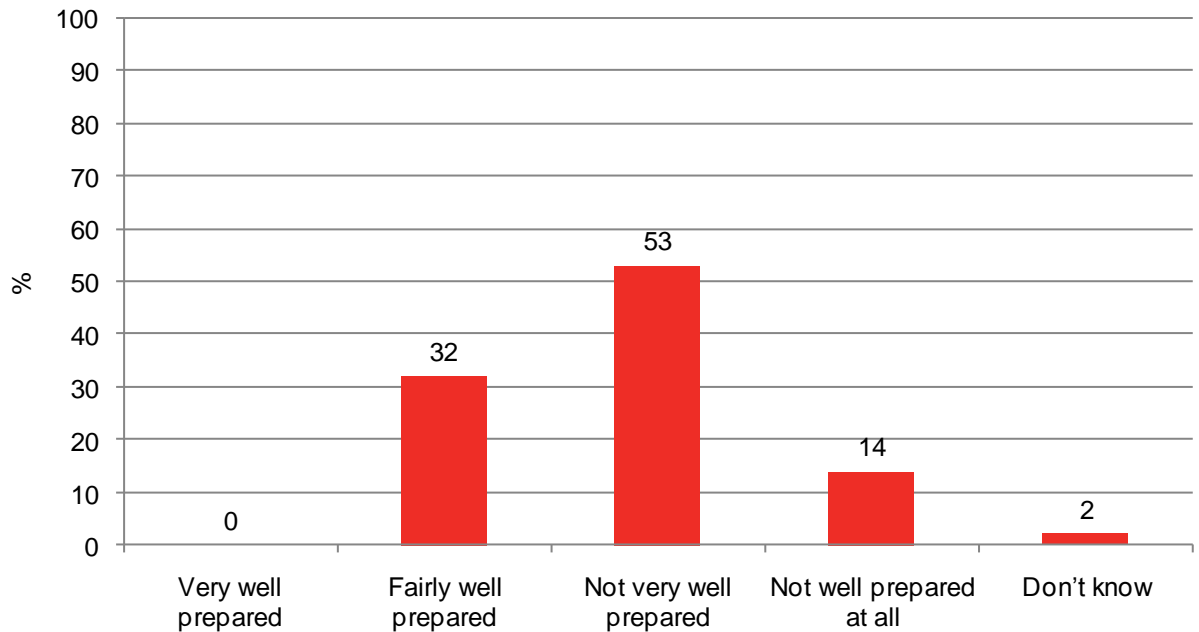
1.16.2 This opinion was shared by participants in the debate. The current system was criticised for too great a concentration on knowledge, with little attention given to life skills such as teamwork, networking and influencing other people. The example was given of a company who took on large numbers of people with PhDs, but found that these individuals could not address day-to-day workplace problems or get on with other workers. It was argued that education should help to develop a rounded, responsible citizen, as well as imparting subject knowledge.

"(Young people) become institutionalised; students are injected with qualifications. 17% of NEETS are aged 16-18. The system doesn't help them make sense of a complex world."

1.16.3 It was emphasised that schools need to have more awareness of workplace readiness, and realise that GCSEs are not necessarily of great value to employers on their own. However it

was also recognised that schools' approaches are driven primarily by accountability and funding, which do not encourage them to place a high value on workplace readiness.

1.16.4 All participants agreed on the importance of engagement with employers, and it was generally felt that the standard two weeks of work experience is insufficient, although useful. There were concerns that the raising of the participation age would have a negative impact on work experience opportunities.

1.16.5 It was recognised that there are various barriers to businesses getting involved with school, and excessive bureaucracy was blamed for some of the difficulty. However it was also pointed out that the perception of the bureaucracy involved can be greater than the reality (for example CRB clearance is not required to visit a school for a lesson or talk, but many people believe this to be the case. Therefore perhaps there is potential for employers to be better informed about the process.

1.16.6 Generally it was felt that schools need to do more to engage with local businesses and create strong partnerships. The schools that are most successful in this area are those with a strong commitment to business from the headteacher and the senior leadership downwards, and it was felt that other schools could learn from these examples.

"Its success is down to the headteacher, their leadership and commitment to business. Every child is participating, and there is an ongoing commitment to business".

Appendix 1: The survey sample

Table 1: Characteristics of sample

	N	%
Role		
Teacher	375	55
Senior level teacher	267	39
Headteacher, assistant or deputy	43	6
School type		
State	601	90
Private/ independent	68	10
Faith status		
Faith school	120	18
Non faith school	553	83
Gender		
Male	308	45
Female	377	55
Age		
18-34	254	37
35-44	153	22
45-54	143	21
55+	135	20

Appendix 2 : About YouGov

Client	Description
	For the educational foundational that promotes vocational and practical learning, an impact evaluation of engagement activities with employers, schools and young people in two pilot regions (Yorkshire & Humberside and Hertfordshire). This involved 300 pre and post engagement telephone surveys of local businesses, online focus groups with teachers, in-depth interviews with employer engagement champions and the set up, maintenance and moderation of an online employer forum to further facilitate local information sharing. The research aims to evaluate the impact and lessons learned from the pilot to inform the go ahead or otherwise of a nationwide rollout.
	For the educational foundation that promotes vocational learning, YouGov has a three year contract to conduct surveys and other research with all stakeholder groups including children / young people; teachers; parents and employers. As part of this contract we have established a longitudinal panel of 2,000 young people whose attitudes and choices will be tracked over time. All surveys are conducted online and the standard sample size for each stakeholder group is 1,000.
	Whose Job is it Anyway? A survey of parents, young people (14-19) and teachers gathering their views on where responsibility should lie for the teaching of non-academic social, personal and citizenship issues. With over 1,000 interviews per group, the research reveals contrasting ideas about the role of government, schools and parents in providing young people with advice and guidance.
	Survey of over 500 middle managers on their attitudes to qualifications; the way they view school leavers; their behaviour when reviewing CVs and the sort of tasks school leavers would be given to do.
	Survey of 16 to 19 years olds about work experience placements at school and their career aspirations, the EMA; and the advice received on their options for post-16 learning. Sample size – 600.
	Survey of 500 8 to 11 year olds on the relationship between gender and primary school teaching, exploring the attitudes of primary school children towards male teachers.

tda	Survey of 1,500 parents about their expectations of teachers and in particular their attitudes and experiences with those who joined teaching later in life as a career change.
teachers.tv	Survey of 800 teachers split evenly between primary and secondary on the subjects of a) stress, its causes and the professional support received and b) assessment and testing.
I can — helps children communicate	Survey of 350 primary and secondary teachers who have a proportion of children with SEN. An online survey of 550 primary school teachers and 50 primary school headteachers about the balance between reading, writing, speaking and listening.
lsn	Employability skills research - a national online survey of 1,100 private sector employers across industry sectors who have recent experience of recruiting school and college leavers. An online questionnaire was distributed by e-mail to approximately 3000 contacts. The target group was people working in the private sector in middle management or above with responsibility for any part of the recruitment process. Respondents accessed the survey via a link and with the use of a personal password. This restricted responses to the intended audience only and ensure that it was not possible for the questionnaire to be distributed further. Overall, there was a high response rate, 1,137 surveys were submitted before the completion date giving a response rate of 38%. The survey tested their views of the employability and skills of young people and also asked what is required by business, including the prioritisation of skills, division of responsibility for funding and delivering vocational skills. The research report 'Employability Skills Explored' was launched by LSN at its Employability Skills evening reception on Wednesday 2nd April 2008. Press release: http://www.lsneducation.org.uk/news/?ID=5290&back=/News
cipd	**Staff attitudes and human resources issues – quarterly tracking of the UK workforce** For the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) we undertake a quarterly tracking survey examining the views of a representative sample of employees on issues relating to key aspects of working life. These include the impact of the recession, the extent to which they are consulted on key decisions, their level of engagement with the strategic objectives of their employer and satisfaction with current job. The research tracks over 3,000 employees every quarter. Data are benchmarked by sector (private, public, voluntary), business type (SIC) region and size of organisation worked for.