



COBIS Annual Research Survey 2022
Summary Report

In case of enquiries please contact COBIS by emailing cpd@cobis.org.uk.
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We are pleased to bring you the 2022 COBIS Annual Research Survey report, delivered in partnership with GL Education. This year's report shares information about school profiles, assessment and curriculum choices, student and teacher numbers, and university destinations, as well as information about diversity, equity and inclusion in schools, and the ongoing impact of the pandemic on schools and young people.

COBIS continues to support its member schools through professional development, student events and competitions, quality assurance through Patron's Accreditation and Compliance, safeguarding services, research, networking, lobbying and representation. We are grateful to GL Education and all responding schools for supporting this research project, and we look forward to continuing to support our schools and the wider sector in the months ahead.

Sincerely,

Colin Bell, CEO and Dr Fiona Rogers, Deputy CEO

COBIS

We are delighted to be working with COBIS once again to produce the 2022 Annual Research Survey.

The report provides a unique benchmark for COBIS school leaders, representing the responses from schools like yours, who share your values and expectations.

At GL Education, we share those values and welcome the opportunity to support this valuable project.

Sincerely,

Amanda Clarke, International Director

GL Education

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COBIS Annual Research Survey 2022

This report details the findings of the COBIS Annual Research Survey, conducted in 2022, in partnership with GL Education. The Annual Research Survey collects information about assessment and curriculum choices, student and teacher numbers, and university destinations. The 2022 survey also included questions on diversity, wellbeing, and the impact the pandemic. The findings support the lobbying work of COBIS and inform the strategic development of the association.

COBIS represents more than 260 high-quality British International Schools in more than 75 countries worldwide. These schools educate more than 200,000 students and employ more than 20,000 teachers and support staff. The Annual Research Survey was carried out between 4 October 2022 and 4 November 2022.

The following report provides a summary of the findings. All data represents responding schools unless otherwise specified.

Membership Category

There are three levels of membership in the main COBIS Membership Framework:

- COBIS Patron's Accredited Schools have completed the COBIS Patron's Accreditation.
- COBIS Accredited Member Schools have undergone a successful British Schools Overseas (BSO) inspection, CIS Accreditation, NEASC Accreditation, or ISI inspection.
- COBIS Member Schools have completed COBIS Compliance.

In addition, COBIS Provisional Schools are those that are within two years of opening and are aiming to pursue COBIS Patron's Accreditation or Compliance.

Geographic Location

There are currently 262 COBIS schools worldwide, located in 77 countries. For the purpose of reporting and high-level analysis, COBIS schools are grouped into five geographical regions: Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East and North Africa.

- 39% of COBIS Schools are in Europe
- 26% of COBIS Schools are in the Middle East and North Africa
- 16% of COBIS Schools are in Africa
- 16% of COBIS Schools are in Asia
- 4% of COBIS Schools are in the Americas.

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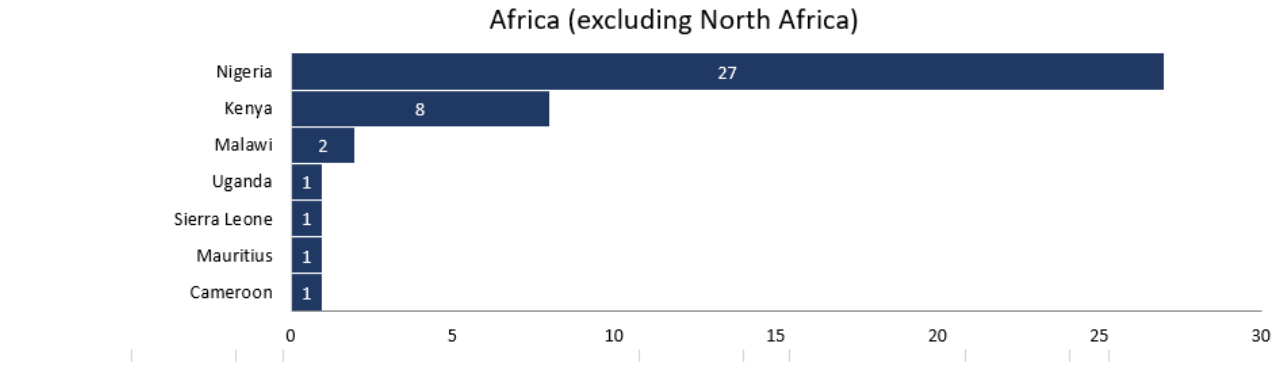
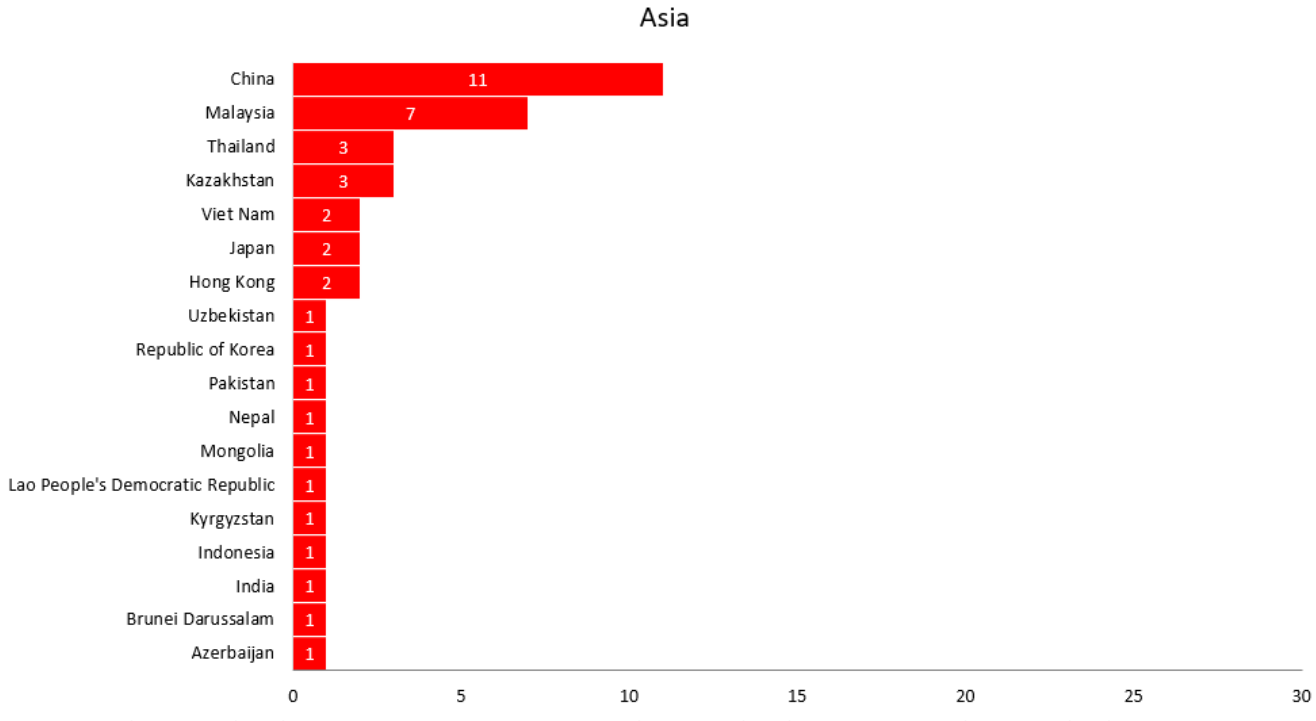
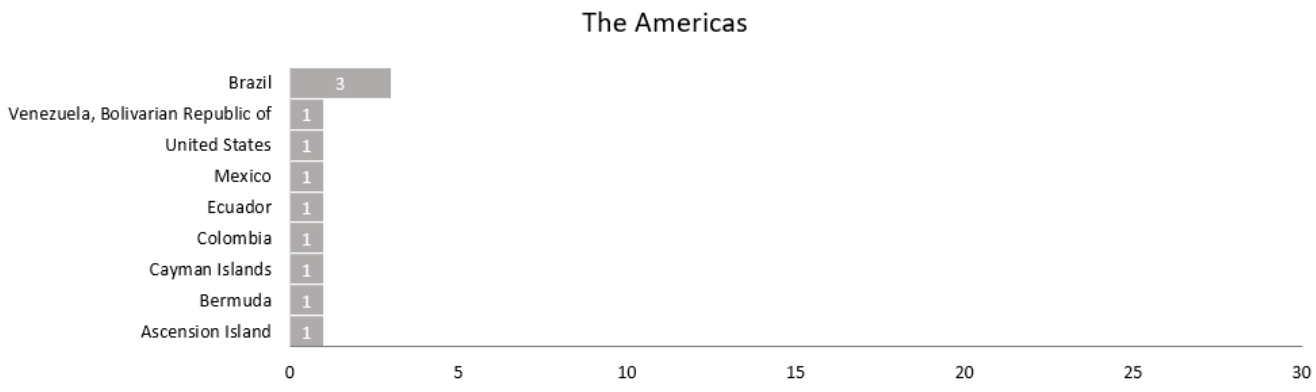
COBIS Schools by Country







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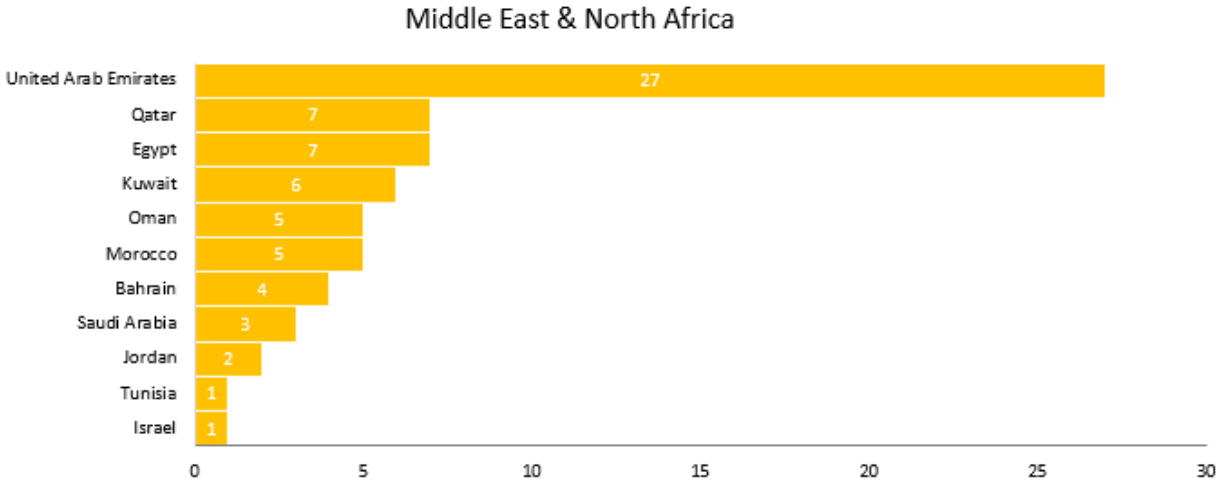

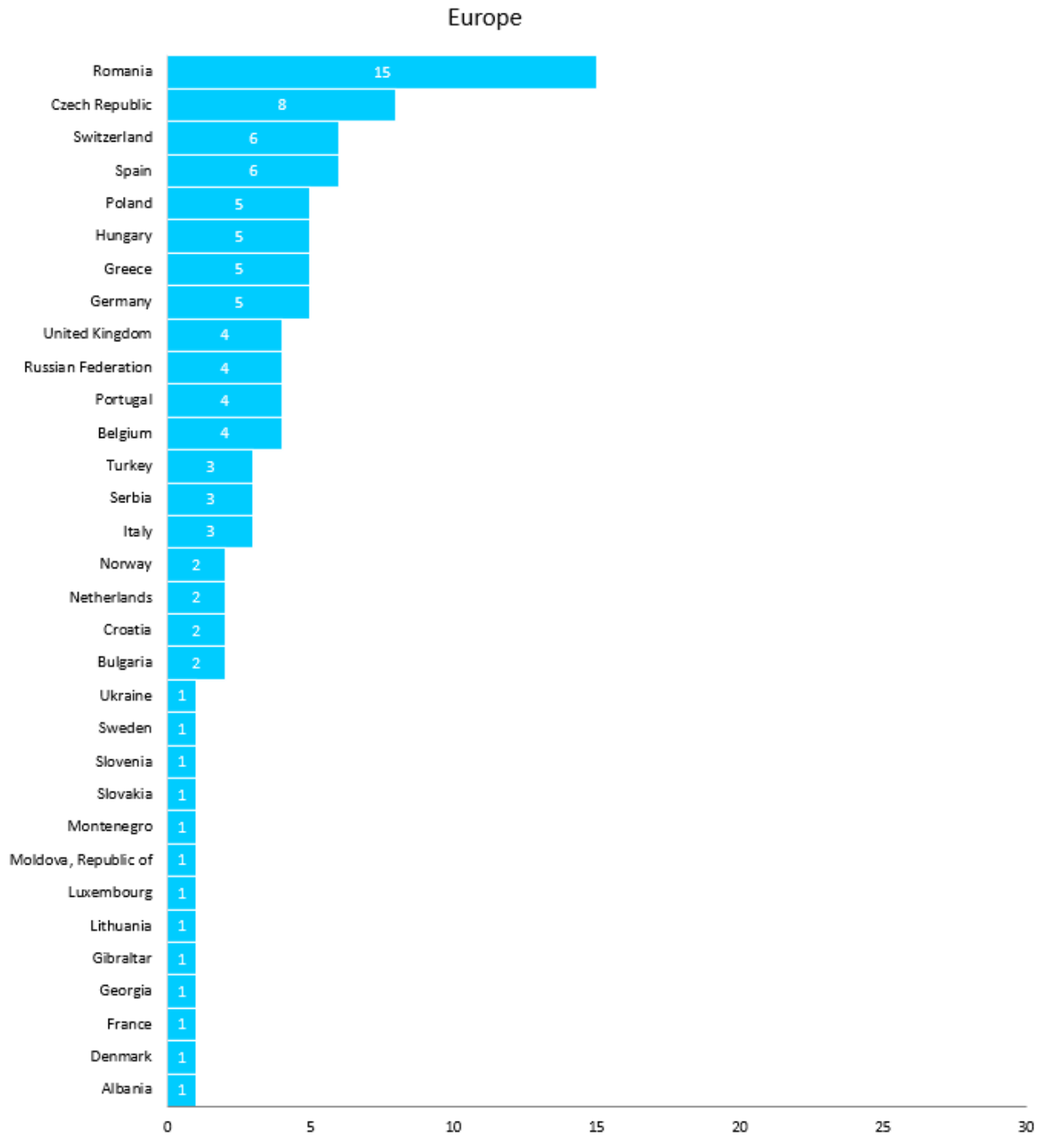

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Data Sources

The primary data contained in this report was collected during the COBIS Annual Research Survey; 130 schools responded to the survey which was open to members from 4 October to 4 November 2022. Additional data on the full COBIS membership is from COBIS records and ISC Research Ltd.

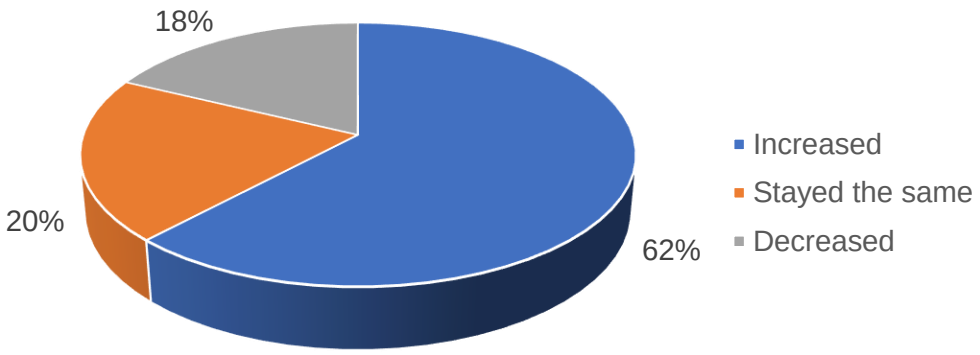
Survey Analysis

School Phases

- 79% of responding schools teach both primary and secondary phase.
- 11% of responding schools teach primary phase only.
- 10% of responding schools teach secondary phase only.

Student Numbers and Nationalities

62% of responding schools indicated that student numbers had increased compared to the previous academic year. This figure is up from 51% of schools reporting an increase in the 2021 survey. 18% of responding schools indicated that student numbers had decreased compared to the previous academic year (compared with 30% of schools reporting a decrease in the 2021 report).



- Overall school sizes vary greatly. COBIS schools range from 22 to more than 6,000 students. This figure represents the whole COBIS membership.
- Primary class sizes range from 6 to 30 and Secondary class sizes range from 5 and 30 students. The average class size for both Primary and Secondary schools is 20.
- Within the survey, the average number of student nationalities per school is 36, ranging from a minimum of 1 nationality to a maximum of 106. On average, the percentage of local nationals in the student body (including dual nationality) is 48%, and the proportion of UK nationals (including dual nationality) is 14%.

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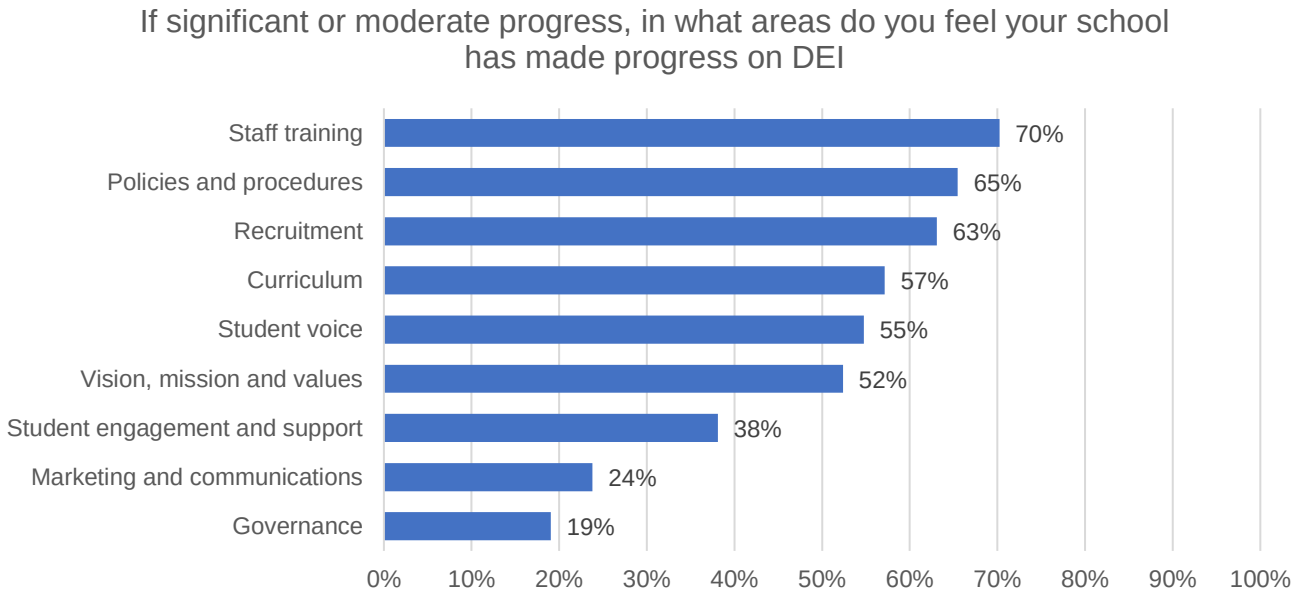
Teacher Nationalities

Teacher nationalities per school ranged from 1 to 35. On average 47% of the teacher workforce are UK nationals and 35% of the teacher workforce are local nationals (including dual nationality).

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

Overall, 74% of schools felt they had made moderate or significant progress on DEI since 2020; 19% felt they had made very little progress. For those who felt they had made moderate or significant progress, they were most likely to report progress in the areas of: staff training (70%), policies and procedures (65%) and recruitment (63%).



Within the survey, 29% of schools said they had an individual within the school with specific responsibility for DEI in addition to the Headteacher. Of these, a majority (89%) said this role was combined with other responsibilities, while 11% said this was a standalone role. A further 12% said they planned to create a new role with this responsibility.

The survey also found that:

- 53% of the schools felt that their school's approach to DEI was constrained by the local context in which they operate
- Considering protected characteristics such as race, religion or belief, sex, disability, sexual orientation, etc., a third of schools felt that their recruitment practice was not at all influenced by the local context in which they operate. However, the spread of responses indicates significant variation between schools.

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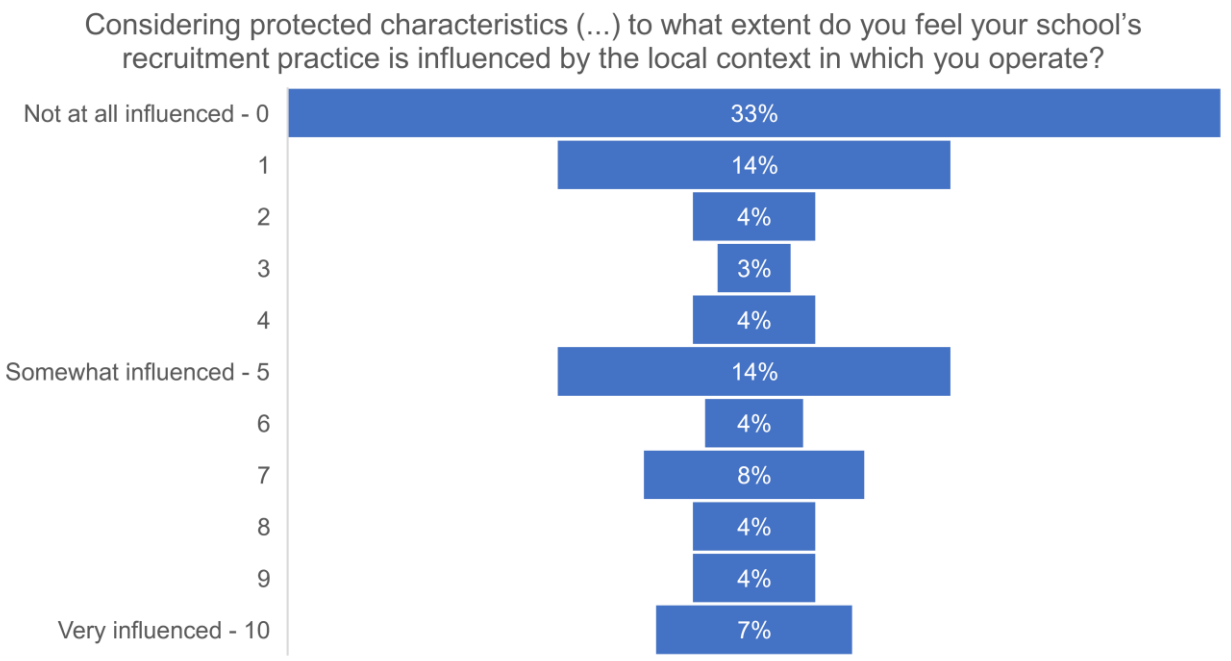
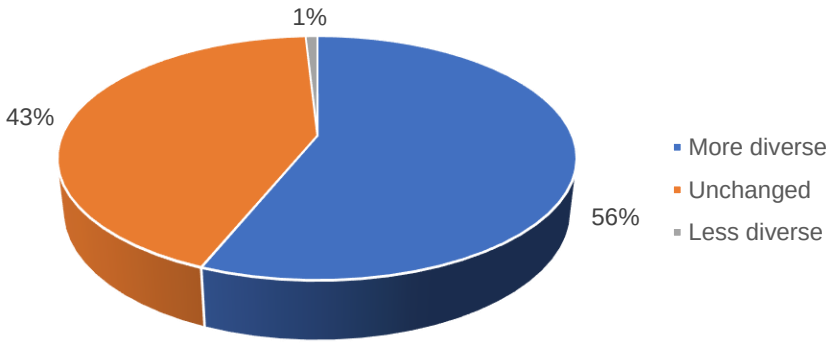


When compared with three years ago, 56% of schools felt their workforce was more diverse; 43% felt it was unchanged.



Designated Wellbeing Role

Schools were asked a new question this year about whether, in addition to the Headteacher, they had a member of staff with specific responsibility for wellbeing. 88% said they did. Of these schools, 20% said this was a standalone role, and a vast majority, 80%, said this was combined with other responsibilities.

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Curriculum Followed by Schools

COBIS schools follow a range of curricula, often used in combination. The following figures represent the full COBIS membership.

English National Curriculum	94%
Cambridge Secondary	71%
Local National Curriculum	33%
IB Diploma	25%
Cambridge Primary	16%
IPC	11%
MYP	3%
IMYC	2%
PYP	2%

N.B. “English National Curriculum” refers to the National Curriculum in England.

Examinations Offered by Schools

The examinations most commonly administered by COBIS Secondary schools are IGCSE and I A-Level. The following figures represent all COBIS Secondary schools.

IGCSE	79%
I A-Level	46%
I AS-Level	31%
IB (International Baccalaureate Diploma)	30%
GCSE	22%
A-Level	16%
BTEC	14%
AS Level	8%

Awarding Bodies Used by Schools

The awarding body most commonly used for examinations is Cambridge Assessment International Education.

Cambridge Assessment International Education	80%
Edexcel/Pearson	60%
International Baccalaureate Organization	31%
AQA	23%

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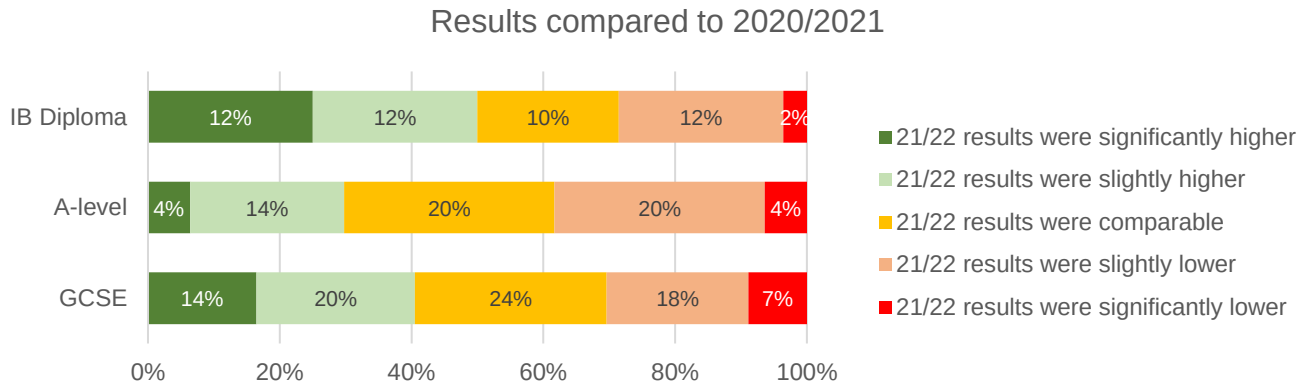
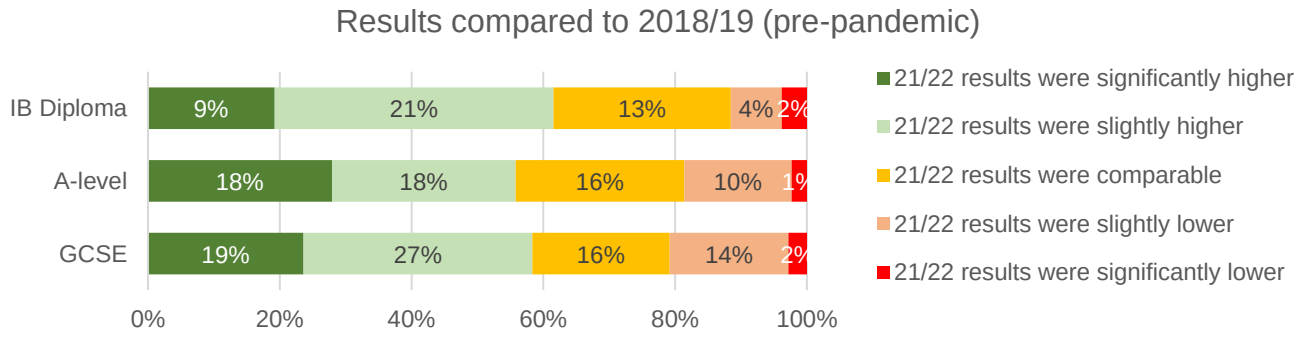
Examination Results

Schools were asked whether they had used teacher assessed grades, formal written examinations, or both in Summer 2021.

Teacher assessed grades only	45%
Both teacher assessed grades and formal written examinations	22%
Formal written examinations only	33%

Schools were also asked how the 2021/22 exam results compared to the results in the 2020/21 academic year and the results in 2018/19 (pre-pandemic).





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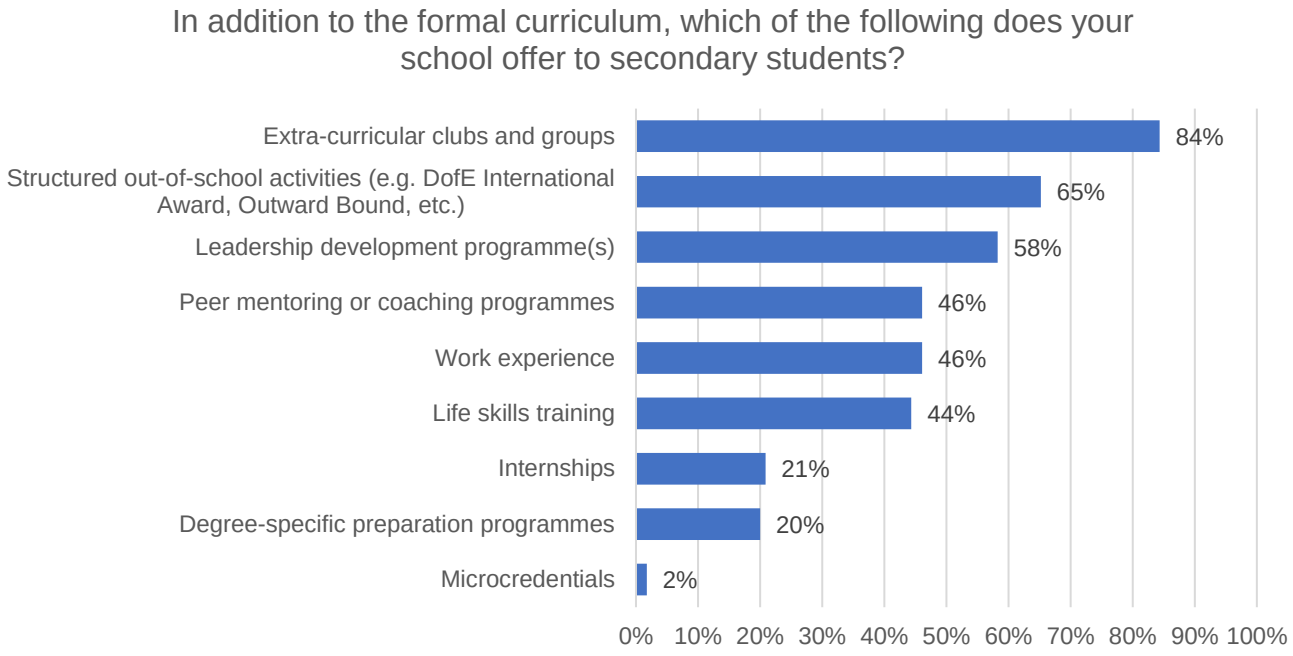
Additions to Formal Curriculum

To prepare students for the transition to Higher Education, schools offer a range of opportunities in addition to the formal curriculum. The top responses included extra-curricular clubs and groups, charity work and structured out of school activities and leadership development programmes.



Dedicated University Guidance and Counselling

Of the schools that responded to the questions, 59% have an individual responsible for career and university guidance and counselling, and 34% have a team responsible. In two thirds of these schools the responsibility was combined with other roles. Of the 7 schools that do not have anyone responsible for career and university guidance and counselling, 6 plan on creating a new role or adding to an existing one.

University Destinations

There were a total of 3,512 leavers across all responding schools at the end of the previous academic year. 3,377 students (96%) went on to University; 44% of those leavers went on to University in the UK. 19% of schools also indicated that some 2022/23 leavers/graduates were pursuing a UK Higher Education programme outside the UK, including studying at an international campus of a UK University or studying with a UK University via distance learning.

Proportion of leavers in 2021/22 going on to University/HE.	96%
Proportion of leavers in 2021/22 going on to University/HE in the UK.	44%
Proportion of leavers in 2021/22 going on to University/HE in the host country.	19%

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Top Non-UK University Destinations

For students who went on to University in countries other than the UK, the most popular destinations were the United States, the Netherlands and Canada for the second year in a row.

Country	Number of Students	Proportion of Non-UK leavers
USA	335	25.6%
The Netherlands	240	18.3%
Canada	187	14.3%
Nigeria	50	3.8%
Spain	47	3.6%
Australia	39	3.0%
Czech Republic	32	2.4%
Qatar	31	2.4%
Malaysia	27	2.1%
Romania	26	2.1%
Italy	25	2.0%
Germany	24	1.9%
France	22	1.8%
South Africa	22	1.7%
Other countries	220	16.8%

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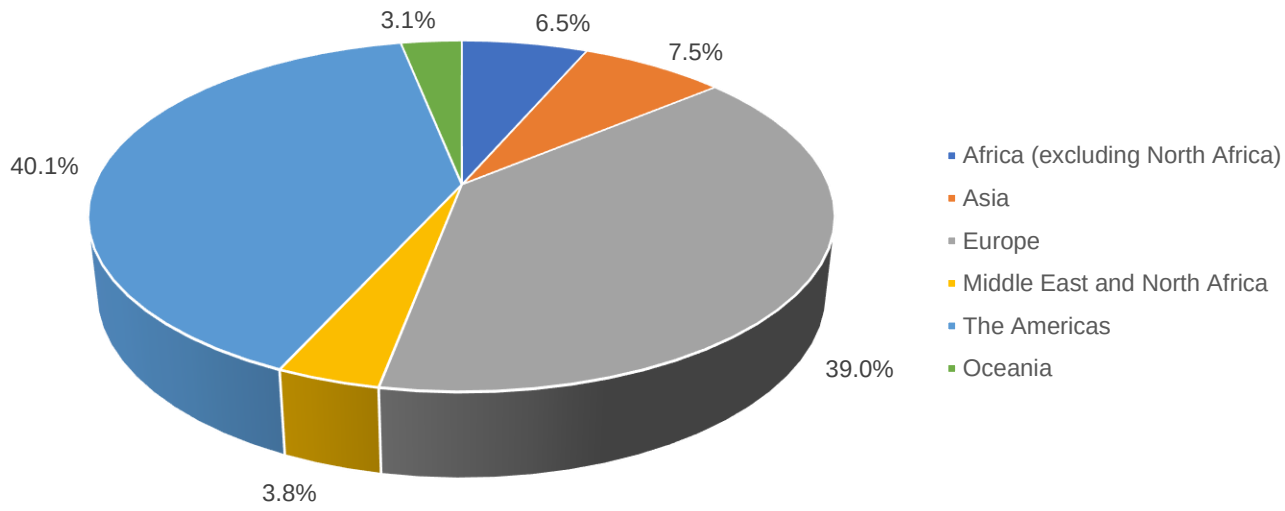
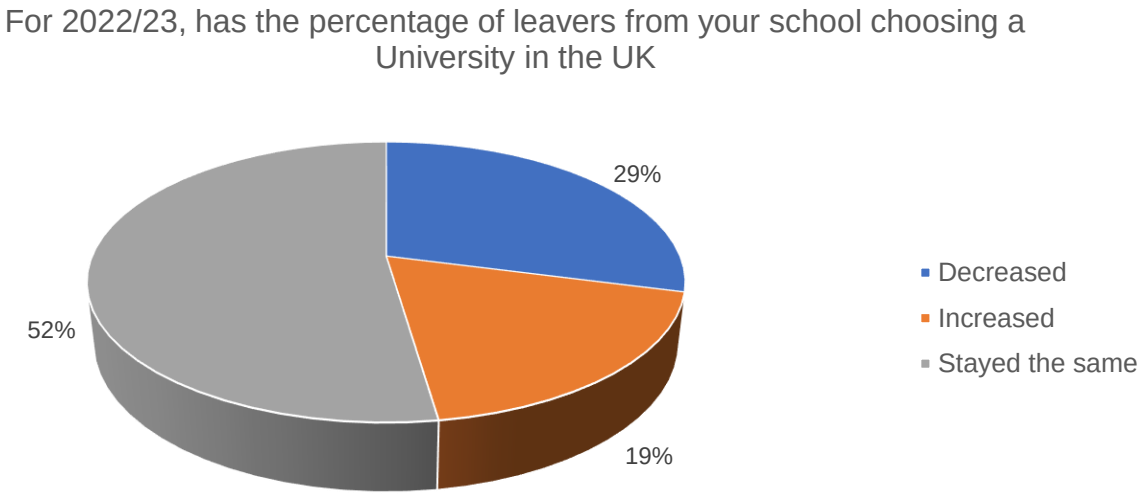
Top Non-UK University Destinations by Region



Factors Influencing University Destinations

52% of responding schools felt that the percentage of leavers from their school choosing a University in the UK stayed the same for 2022/23 compared to the previous academic year. 29% indicated that the percentage of leavers choosing a University in the UK had decreased (down from 42% in the 2021 report).



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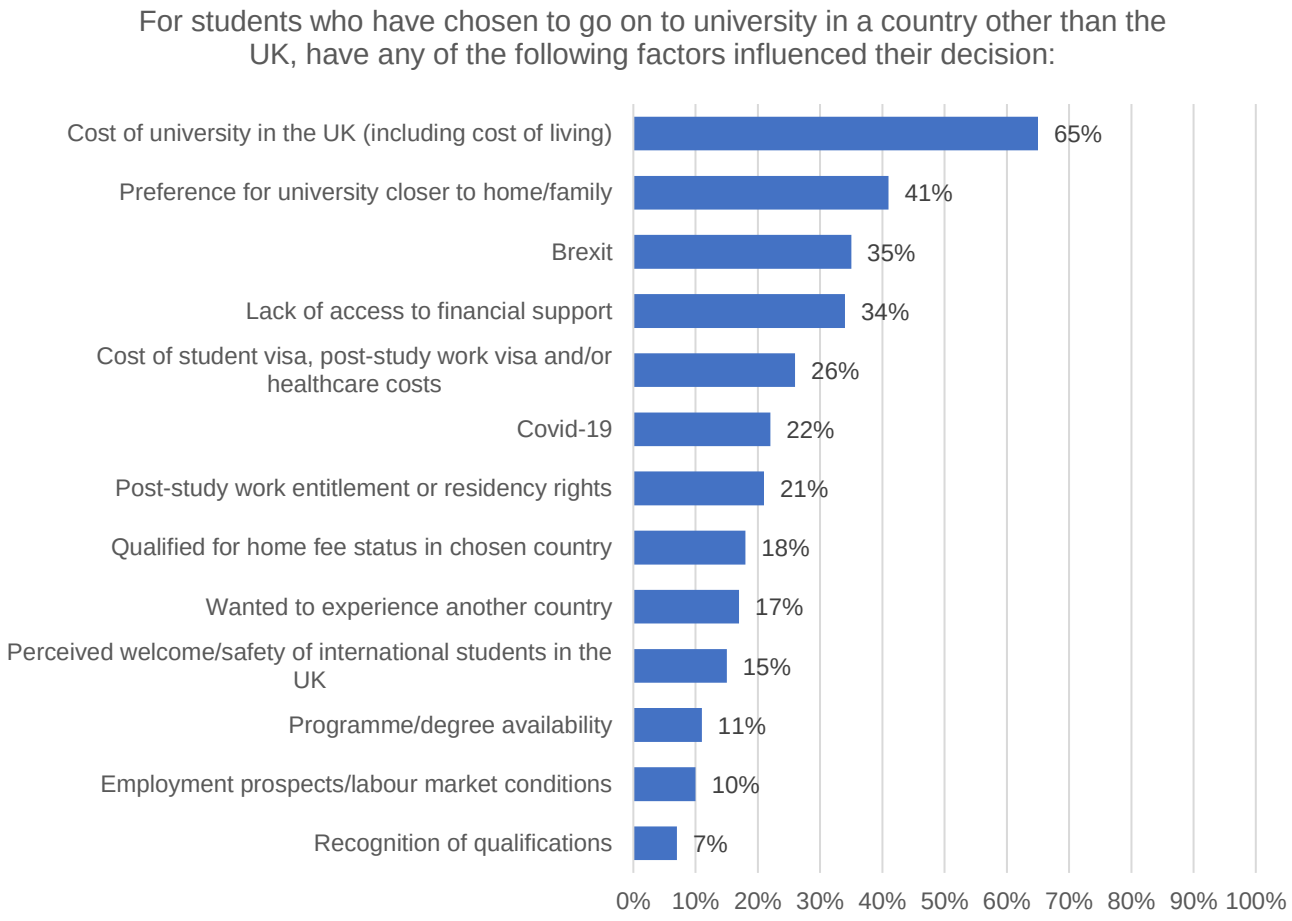
For students who chose University destinations in countries other than the UK, schools reported a number of factors that are thought to have influenced this decision. The top responses were cost of University in the UK (65%, up from 51% in 2021), preference for a University closer to home/family (41%), Brexit (35%), and lack of access to financial support (34%).



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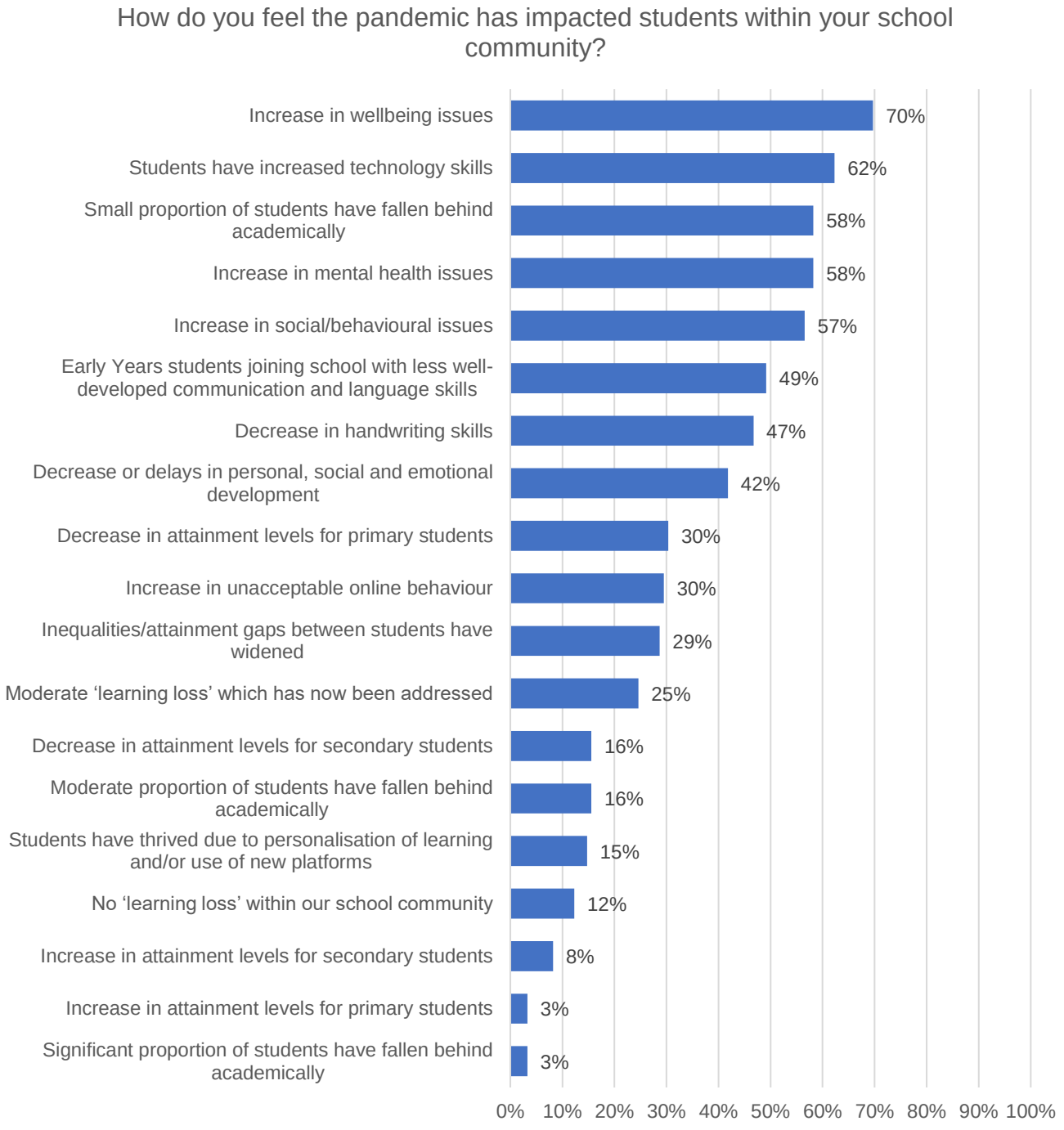
Impact of Covid-19 on Schools

Schools were asked how the pandemic has impacted students within their school community. A significant proportion of schools stated that they had seen increases in wellbeing issues (70%) and mental health issues (58%). 58% of schools felt a small proportion of students have fallen behind academically. On a more positive note, 62% of schools felt that students had increased technology skills.



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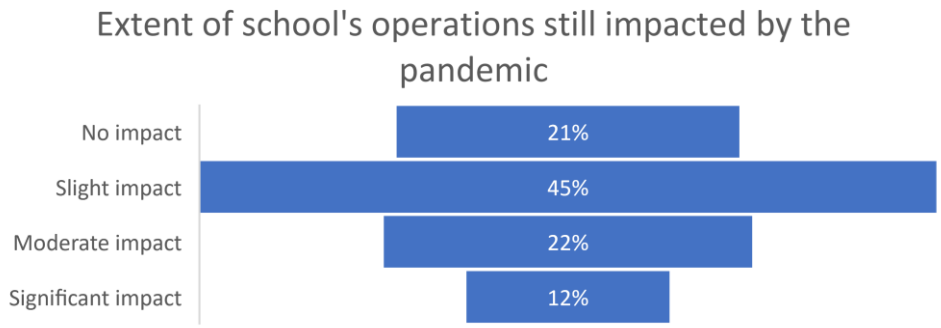
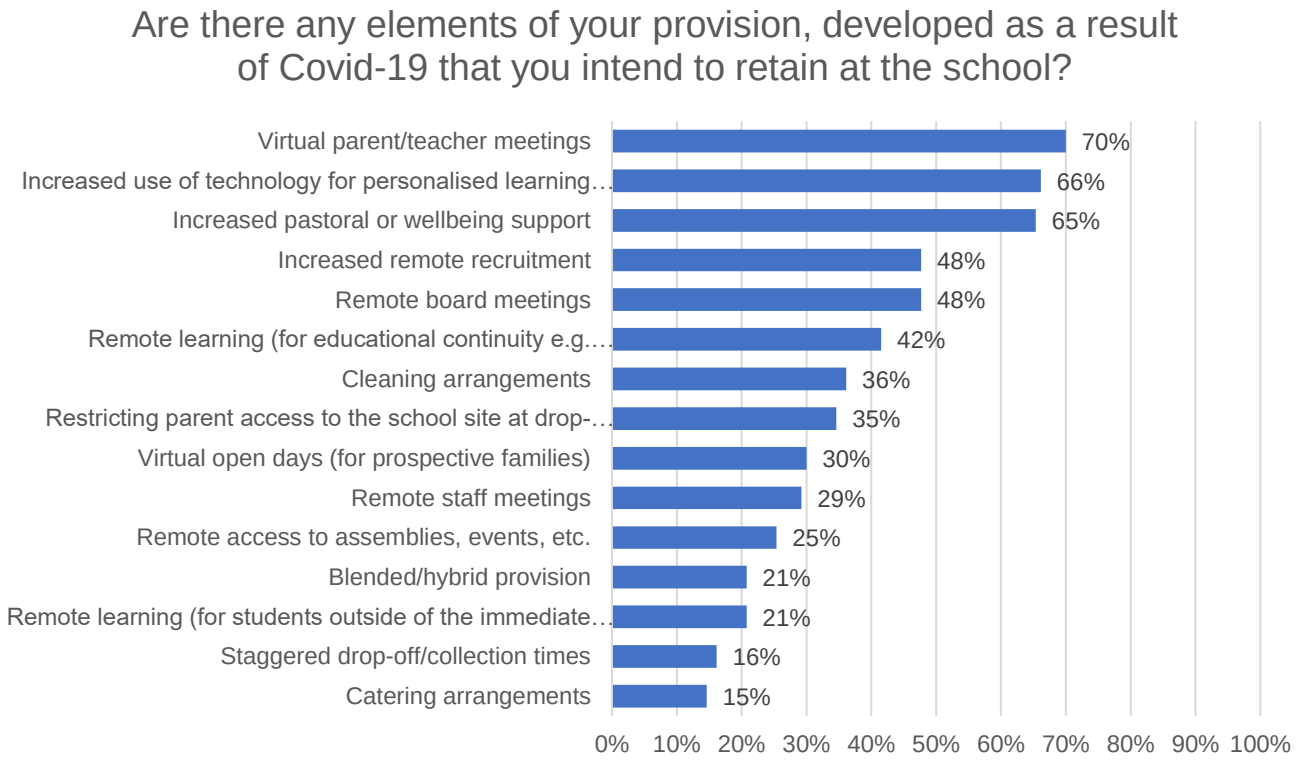
From an operational point of view, a third of schools still feel the impact of the pandemic is moderate or significant (33%), while 1 in 5 schools now feel the pandemic no longer impacts them operationally (21%).



Schools have also indicated that there are elements of their provision, developed as a result of Covid-19, which continue to be retained at the school. The top responses were virtual parent/teacher interviews (70%, down from 80% in 2021), increased use of technology for personalised learning or support (66%, down from 75% in 2021), and increased pastoral or wellbeing support (65%, down from 68% in 2021).



Two thirds of schools felt that teachers were still using technical and IT skills developed during the pandemic most or all of the time (66%).

Furthermore, elements of virtual schooling are being offered or developed by a number of schools. 16% of schools currently offer or are developing virtual classes, delivered by staff, for students on roll or in other schools. A further 24% of schools were considering developing this. A quarter of schools were also considering fully online schooling offers to extend the reach of their schools.

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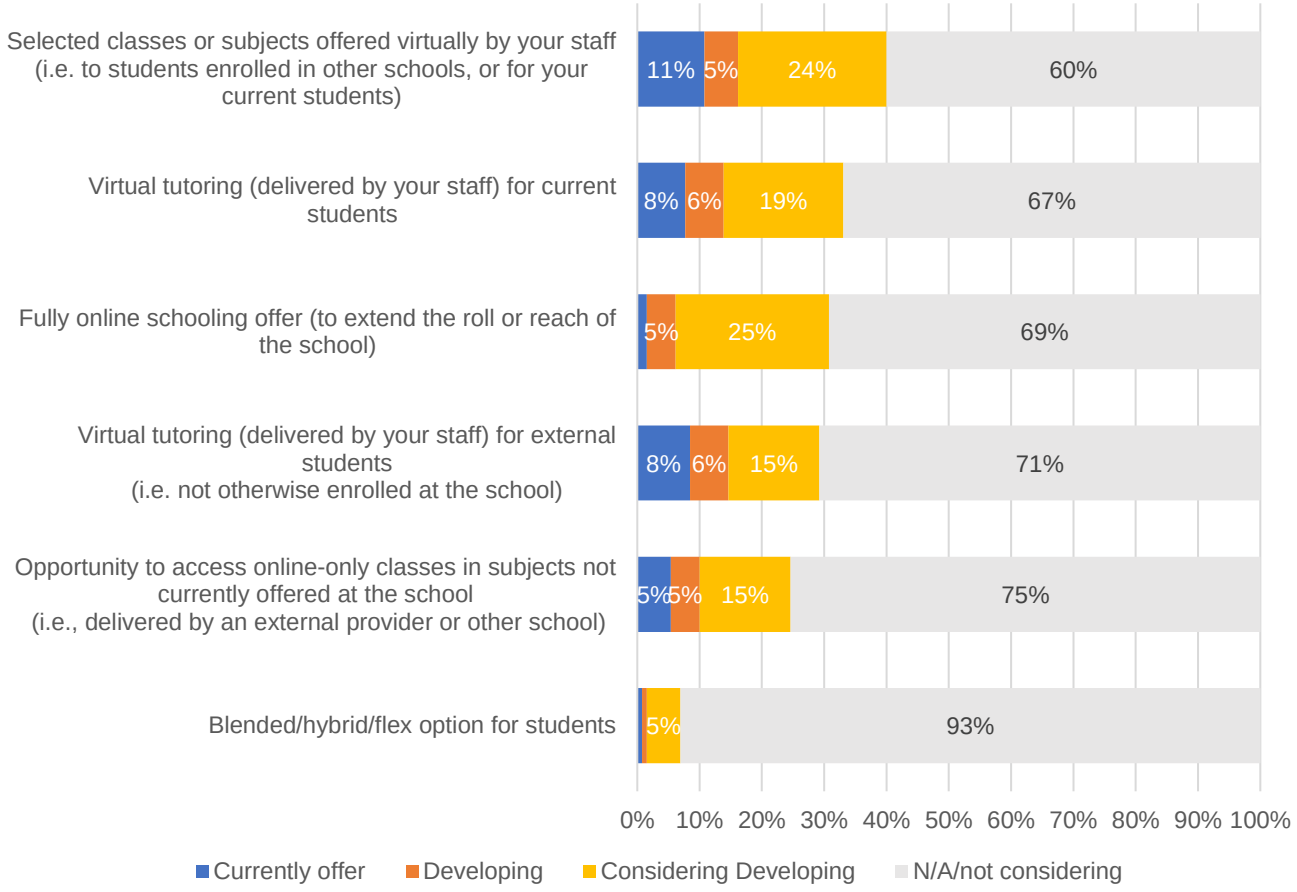
Does your school currently offer, or are you developing, or considering developing, any of the following?



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Recruitment and Retention Changes

Schools were also asked about teacher recruitment and retention patterns. 35% indicated that teacher recruitment had remained roughly the same for 2022/23; 35% reported that more new staff had been recruited for 2022/23 than the previous year (similar level to last year, 36%), and 22% reported a decrease in recruitment. Staff turnover stayed roughly the same for 2022/23 for 35% of schools (compared with over 50% last year), while 22% reported a higher number of teachers leaving or choosing not to renew their contracts. The average staff turnover between 2021/22 and 2022/23 was 16%.

Compared with the previous academic year, how did your recruitment change for the current academic year?

Recruitment stayed roughly the same for 2022/23	32%
More new staff were recruited for 2022/23 than 2021/22	35%
Fewer new staff were recruited for 2022/23 than 2021/22	22%

Compared with the previous academic year, how did your staff turnover change for the current academic year?

Turnover stayed roughly the same for 2022/23	35%
Higher % of teachers leaving or choosing not to renew contracts	22%
Lower % of teachers leaving or choosing not to renew contracts	31%

Compared with two years ago, how has your recruitment practice changed?

Increased use of remote/virtual interviews	73%
Earlier advertising of vacancies	43%
Increased recruitment of international staff who are already in the country	36%
Increased use of social media for recruitment	36%
Increased recruitment of local staff	35%
Increased focus on training new teachers within the school (i.e. local staff or members of the wider community)	34%
Improved marketing of the school to support recruitment	34%
Increased spend on recruitment (excluding salaries; including related costs such as travel, recruitment consultants, advertising, etc.)	32%
Increased focus on diversity of workforce	28%
Increased use of recruitment consultants	21%
Decreased spend on recruitment (excluding salaries; including related costs such as travel, recruitment consultants, advertising, etc.)	9%
Decreased use of recruitment consultants	7%

Schools were asked about how recruitment practice had changed in the last two years. Schools have increased their use of remote/virtual interviews (73% of schools), but had also advertised vacancies earlier (43%), increased recruitment of international staff who are already in the country (36%) and increased social media usage for recruitment (36%).

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