



The University of
Nottingham

An investigation into schools for different age ranges

Headteachers' and Teachers' Surveys: Preliminary Report

Kathy Seymour

PhD Researcher
The University of Nottingham
School of Education

April 2008

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the 56 Dorset County Council schools who participated in this research by completing headteachers' and/or teachers' questionnaires. I am extremely grateful for their enthusiastic cooperation and for the useful and interesting information they supplied in their responses. I know that my request for assistance must have been one of many received by schools – so thank you to those who chose to respond and in doing so have made this a worthwhile piece of research.

My sincere thanks also go to the Nottinghamshire schools who helped to pilot the questionnaires in Summer 2007, and to Nigel Wyatt from the National Middle Schools' Forum and my PhD supervisors, Len Newton and Pam Sammons, for their valuable feedback on the various drafts of the questionnaires.

Contact details:

If you would like to contact me about this research, my email address is: txks3@nottingham.ac.uk

If you would like to find out more about my research, please see my website:

<http://www.middleschoolresearch.org.uk>

Contents:

Key Findings	1
Introduction:	4
Chapter 1: Respondent profile	5
Chapter 2: Teaching arrangements.....	6
Chapter 3: School ethos and nurturing social development.....	11
Chapter 4: Meeting individual needs	15
Chapter 5: Facilities at the school	17
Chapter 6: Transfer between schools	21
Chapter 7: The two-tier and three-tier schooling systems.....	23
Conclusion:.....	29
Appendix 1: The headteachers' questionnaire (middle school version)	
Appendix 2: The teachers' questionnaire (middle school version)	

List of figures:

Figure 1.1: Response rate	5
Figure 1.2: Responses by school type – Headteachers' survey	5
Figure 1.3: Responses by school type – Teachers' survey	5
Figure 2.1: Extent of teaching by of subject-specialist and general class teachers - First and primary / junior schools	6
Figure 2.2: Extent of grouping by ability - First and primary / junior schools.....	6
Figure 2.3: Extent of teaching by subject-specialist teachers - Middle schools	7
Figure 2.4: Age at which children are generally ready to be taught by subject-specialists - Headteachers and teachers.....	8
Figure 2.5: Age at which children are generally ready to be taught by subject-specialists - Headteachers and teachers - Two-tier and three-tier respondents.....	8
Figure 2.6: Age at which children are generally ready to be taught in groups set by ability for most subjects - Teachers only	9
Figure 2.7: Operation of condensed key stage 3: Middle and secondary headteachers	10
Figure 3.1: Levels of agreement with statement about school ethos and nurturing social development - Headteachers and teachers	11
Figure 3.2: 'Strongly agree' responses to 'Children have the opportunity to take on responsibilities': Headteachers and teachers – by school type	12
Figure 3.3: 'Strongly agree' responses to 'Most children treat staff with respect': Headteachers and teachers – by school type	12
Figure 3.4: 'Strongly agree' responses to 'Children are encouraged to express their views and opinions in front of teachers and peers': Headteachers and teachers – by school type	13

Figure 3.5: 'Strongly agree' responses to 'There is a great deal of social interaction between children in different year groups': Headteachers and teachers – by school type.....	13
Figure 3.6: 'Strongly agree' responses to 'Children are generally well behaved': Headteachers and teachers – by school type	14
Figure 3.7: 'Strongly agree' responses to 'There are few instances of bullying or harassment among children at this school': Headteachers and teachers – by school type.....	14
Figure 3.8: 'Strongly agree' responses to 'Children are involved in the way the school is run and are consulted on policy changes when appropriate': Headteachers and teachers – by school type	14
Figure 4.1: Effectiveness at meeting children's individual needs - Headteachers	15
Figure 4.2: Effectiveness at meeting children's individual needs – Headteachers, two-tier and three-tier systems: 'Very effective' responses	15
Figure 5.1: Facilities – First schools compared to primary/junior schools	18
Figure 5.2: Facilities – Middle schools.....	19
Figure 5.3: Facilities – Secondary schools compared to upper schools	20
Figure 6.1: Frequency of cross-system transfers – Middle and secondary schools.....	21
Figure 7.1: Likelihood of different educational and social experiences in the two-tier and three-tier systems – Teachers	23
Figure 7.2: Levels of agreement with statements about the two-tier and three-tier systems – Headteachers and teachers	24
Figure 7.3: Whether respondents are generally in favour of the three-tier system – Headteachers and teachers	24
Figure 7.4: Whether respondents are generally in favour of the three-tier system – Headteachers and teachers, by system currently worked in	25

Key Findings

- This report is based on a questionnaire survey for teachers and headteachers in Dorset County Council schools (excluding infants' schools). A response rate of 35% was achieved for the headteachers' questionnaire and 12% for the teachers' questionnaire (Chapter 1).
- First schools were slightly more likely to expose children to a mix of both subject-specialist teaching and teaching by a general class teacher than primary / junior schools (Chapter 2).
- Teaching in groups set or streamed by ability was slightly less common practice in primary / junior schools than in first schools (Chapter 2).
- There was evidence of middle schools providing a gradual introduction to subject-specialist teaching, particularly for the core subjects of English, maths and science where most middle school headteachers said children in the upper years of the school were taught these subjects by subject-specialist teachers (Chapter 2).
- The extent to which children are taught in mixed ability groups as opposed to groups set by ability varied between middle, secondary and upper schools though of the core subjects, English was the least likely to be taught in groups set by ability across these three school types (Chapter 2).
- While none of the participating middle schools taught modern foreign languages (MFL) in groups set by ability, almost two-thirds of secondary schools taught MFL solely in ability-based groupings (Chapter 2).
- Headteachers and teachers were asked at what age they thought children were ready to be taught by subject-specialists: the majority of responses fell between ages 9-11 (Chapter 2).
- Teachers suggested the age at which they thought children are generally ready to be taught most subjects in groups set by ability; this elicited a range of responses but the median was age 11 and the mean around 9½ years (Chapter 3).
- Respondents from schools in the two-tier system were more likely to strongly agree that 'children have the opportunity to take on responsibilities' than those in the three-tier system (with the exception of upper schools – Chapter 3).
- Secondary school headteachers and teachers were the least likely to strongly agree that 'most children treat staff with respect' – 36% strongly agreed (Chapter 3).

- Just one in five middle school headteachers and teachers strongly agreed that 'children are encouraged to express their views and opinions in front of teachers and peers' (Chapter 3).
- None of the respondents from secondary schools strongly agreed that 'there is a great deal of social interaction between children in different year groups' (Chapter 3).
- There was a sharp variation in agreement levels among respondents from the two-tier system to the statement 'children are generally well behaved': 84% of primary/junior respondents strongly agreed as opposed to just 27% of secondary headteachers and teachers (Chapter 3).
- Respondents from secondary schools were the least likely to strongly agree that 'children are involved in the way the school is run and are consulted on policy changes when appropriate' (Chapter 3).
- In terms of their effectiveness at meeting pupils' individual needs, headteachers in the two-tier system were most likely to say their school is very effective at accommodating those with SEN, though headteachers in the three-tier system were more confident in their effectiveness at dealing with other types of individual need (Chapter 4).
- Information on the range of facilities available at each school was collected in order to assess whether children in the three-tier system enjoyed earlier exposure to certain specialist facilities than those in the two-tier system. Though few differences were identified, there was some evidence that primary/junior schools were more likely to offer design and technology areas/rooms and drama or performing arts areas than first schools. However, middle schools all offered D&T areas and science labs (Chapter 5).
- Sixty percent of middle school heads said they accepted children transferring from the two-tier system every year, whereas 17% of secondary schools received transferring pupils from the three-tier system. The main reason given for such transfers was families moving to the area rather than parental preference for a given school or schooling system (Chapter 6).
- All schools offered a wide variety of activities and events to help ease the scheduled transfers to and from schools (Chapter 6).
- Forty-one percent of teachers thought 'a dip in performance on commencing KS3' was more likely to occur in the two-tier system (where the start of KS3 coincides with the first year in secondary school) as opposed to 21% saying it was more likely in the three-tier system (Chapter 7).

- Thirty-one percent of teachers thought 'bullying and harassment from other children' and 'anxiety about school work' were more likely to occur in the two-tier system, compared to 19% believing each to be more likely in the three-tier system (Chapter 7).
- Almost half of respondents thought 'access to a range of specialist facilities' was more likely in the three-tier system (Chapter 7).
- When asked to indicate the extent of their agreement with a series of statements about the three-tier system, respondents expressed higher levels of agreement with statements relating to its advantages as a gradual introduction to secondary schooling and were more likely to express concerns about over the practicalities of operating a three-tier system such as the alleged expense and the misalignment of school age ranges with the National Curriculum key stage structure (Chapter 7).
- Respondents' opinions were divided as to whether they favoured the three-tier system involving middle schools and unsurprisingly, they were more likely to express a preference for the system they were currently working within (Chapter 7).

Introduction:

This report summarises the findings from a postal questionnaire sent to all headteachers in Dorset County Council schools (with the exception of infants' schools) during the 2007/08 academic year. The questionnaire forms part of my PhD research into the suitability of schools catering for children of different age ranges, with a particular focus on the social, emotional and educational advantages and disadvantages of schooling systems involving middle schools for children aged 9-13. The research adopts a multi-method approach and attempts to gather the views of a variety of 'stakeholders'. In addition to the headteachers' and teachers' surveys, the research involves questionnaires for pupils in Years 4-9, a parents' survey, a secondary analysis of school performance data and qualitative research involving officers from the local authority and former pupils. The project focuses only on Dorset County Council and is, as such, a case study of this area.

Two questionnaires were developed, one for headteachers and one for teachers, with slightly different versions for each of the different types of school within both the two-tier and three-tier schooling systems. Some questions were asked of both headteachers and teachers, but others were only asked of one respondent type. Appendix 1 presents the middle school questionnaire for headteachers and the middle school version of the teachers' questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2. Each school received one questionnaire for the headteacher to complete and two teachers' questionnaires for any two members of teaching staff to complete. A covering letter and information sheet were also sent which explained the purposes of the research and Freepost envelopes were provided for the return of completed questionnaires. One email reminder and either one or two (depending on the school type) postal reminders were sent to non-responding schools. Web versions of each questionnaire were also developed providing respondents with the opportunity to complete the survey online. By the final closing date of 20th March 2008, 91 questionnaires had been returned.

This report presents a summary of the findings from this survey. The report is divided into themed chapters and results are presented in both tabular and graphical form with an accompanying narrative describing the key features of the findings. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number throughout and the number of respondents, or respondent count, is represented by 'n' in each table. Where open-ended questions were asked requiring textual responses, the main themes are summarised in the narrative and where appropriate, illustrative quotes are provided.

Chapter 1: Respondent profile

Figure 1.1 shows the number of questionnaires distributed and the number returned completed for both the headteachers' and teachers' surveys. An overall response rate of 19% was achieved. A response rate of 35% was achieved for the headteachers' surveys, while teachers' surveys were returned by 12%. The lower response rate for teachers could be due to the distribution method; headteachers were asked to pass the teachers' surveys to any two members of teaching staff, it is possible that some heads may have passed just one copy on, or in some instances, headteachers may have wished to protect their staff from additional demands on their time and may have chosen not to ask them to complete a survey

Figure 1.1: Response rate

	Total dispatched	No. unable to participate	No. returned completed	Response rate (%)
Headteachers	160	3	55	35
Teachers	320	8	36	12
All	480	11	91	19

Fifty-six different schools returned at least one questionnaire and schools of each type were represented in the headteachers' survey returns (Figure 1.2), though there were no teachers' surveys returned by either junior or upper schools (Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.2: Responses by school type – Headteachers' survey

School type	No. dispatched	No. unable to participate	No. returned completed	Response rate (%)
First	50	1	18	37
Junior	5	0	2	40
Primary	71	0	22	31
Middle	14	0	5	36
Secondary	16	2	6	43
Upper	4	0	2	50
Total	160	3	55	35

Figure 1.3: Responses by school type – Teachers' survey

School type	No. dispatched	No. unable to participate	No. returned completed	Response rate (%)
First	100	2	13	13
Junior	10	0	0	0
Primary	142	0	13	9
Middle	28	0	5	18
Secondary	32	4	5	18
Upper	8	0	0	0
Total	320	6	36	12

Chapter 2: Teaching arrangements

Headteachers were asked about the extent to which children at their school are taught by subject-specialist teachers as opposed to general class teachers and how far they group children according to ability.

Figure 2.1 shows that children in primary or junior schools are slightly more likely to be taught mostly by class teachers than those in first schools with 71% of primary or junior headteachers saying this was the case as opposed to 61% of responding first school headteachers.

Figure 2.1: Extent of teaching by of subject-specialist and general class teachers - First and primary / junior schools

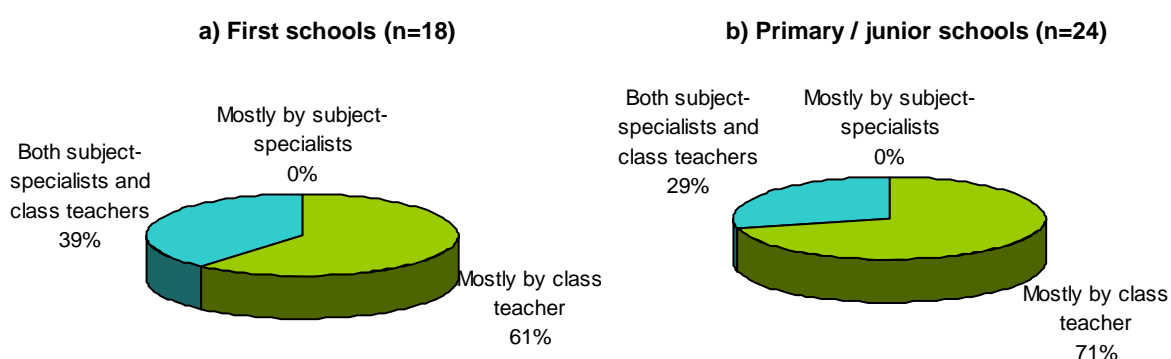
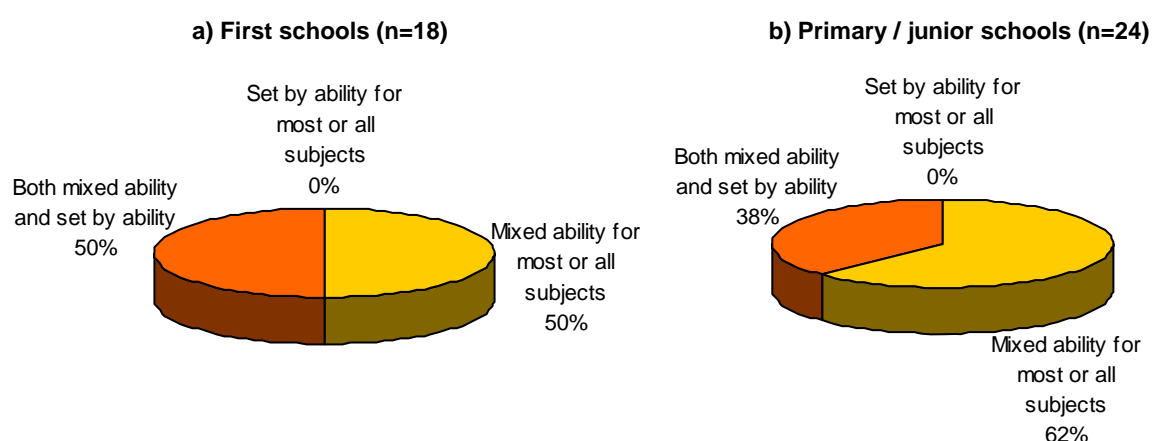


Figure 2.2 shows that the proportion of headteachers in primary / junior schools saying that children are taught in mixed ability groups for most subjects was slightly higher (62%) than the proportion of first school headteachers (50%).

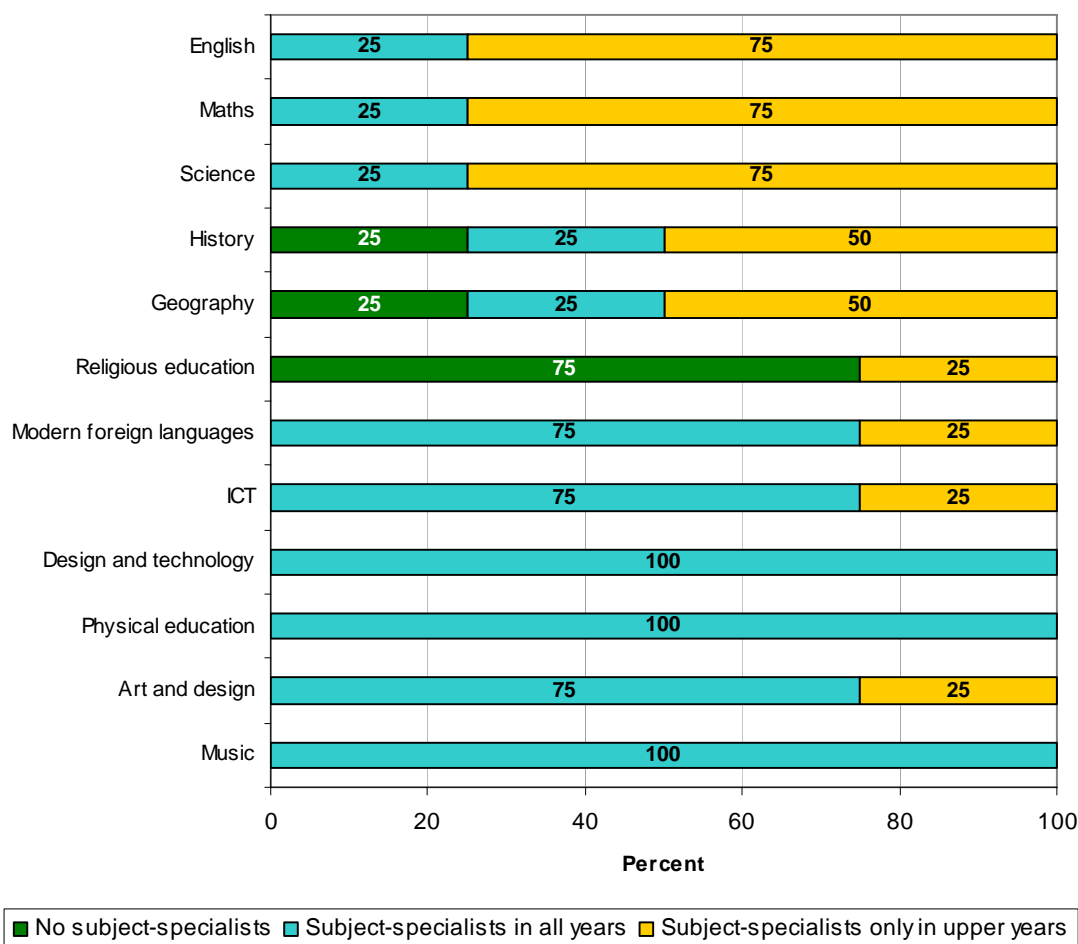
Figure 2.2: Extent of grouping by ability - First and primary / junior schools



Middle, secondary and upper school headteachers were asked which subjects were taught by subject-specialists. Unsurprisingly, all subjects listed were taught by subject-specialist teachers in both secondary and upper schools. Responses from middle school headteachers supported the general notion of middle schools providing a gradual introduction to subject-specialist teaching,

particularly for core subjects where most middle school headteachers indicated that subject-specialists taught children in the upper years at the school (Figure 2.3). Children in some middle schools are not taught by subject-specialist teachers for religious education, history and geography.

Figure 2.3: Extent of teaching by subject-specialist teachers - Middle schools (n=4)



In terms of teaching in mixed ability groups or groups set or streamed by ability, practices varied among middle, secondary and upper schools. In the core subjects, English was the least likely to be taught in groups set by ability across all three school types while maths was taught in groups set by ability in all middle, upper and secondary schools that took part in the survey. History, geography and religious education were taught in mixed ability groups in all participating middle schools, but in secondary and upper schools these subjects were more likely to be taught in mixed ability groups or in a combination of some mixed ability and some set by ability groupings. The teaching of modern foreign languages revealed the greatest difference between schools in the three-tier system and those in the two-tier system: three-quarters of participating middle schools taught languages in mixed ability groups only and none taught these solely as groups set by ability. This compares to 60% of secondary and 50% of upper schools teaching languages in groups set by ability, and none teaching languages in mixed ability groupings only.

Both headteachers and teachers were asked at what age they felt children are generally ready to be taught by subject-specialist teachers for most subjects. Figure 2.4 illustrates that the majority of responses fell between ages 9-11 (the median response was 10.0 and the mode was 9.98). Note that 81 respondents provided a valid answer to this question, and where an age range rather than a specific age was provided, e.g. age 9-10, the *lowest* value was taken as the response, and where a year group was provided, e.g. Year 6, the age of children at the *beginning* of that year was taken as the response.

Figure 2.4: Age at which children are generally ready to be taught by subject-specialists - Headteachers and teachers (n=81)

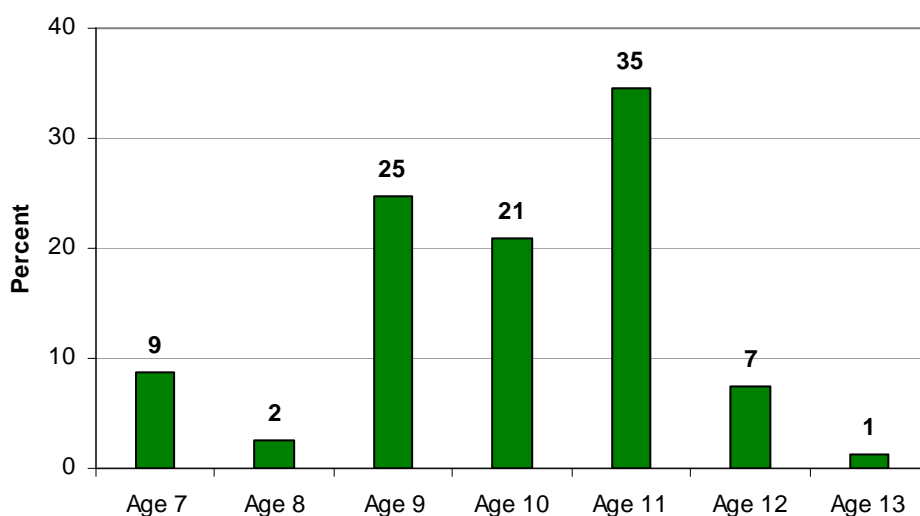
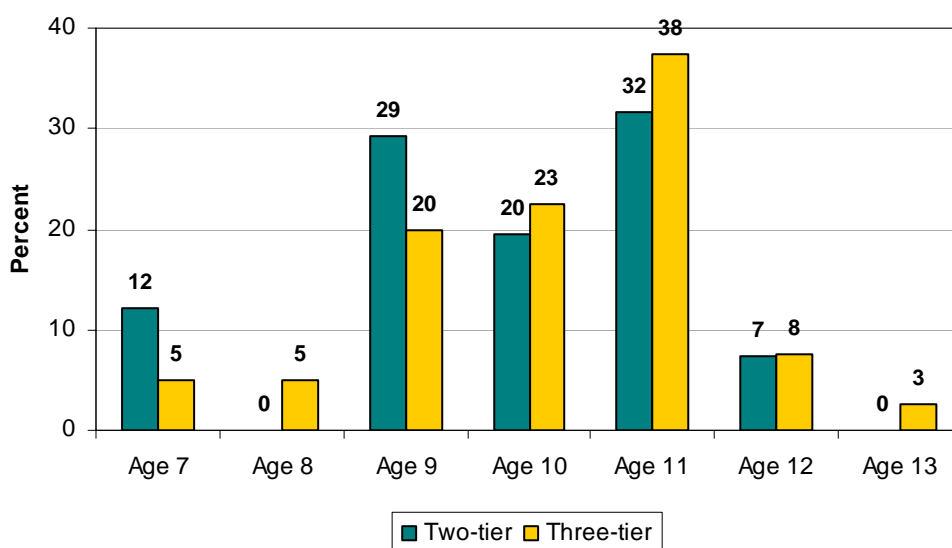


Figure 2.5 shows the age at which both headteachers and teachers feel children are generally ready for subject-specialist teaching according to whether they currently work in a school in the two-tier or three-tier schooling system.

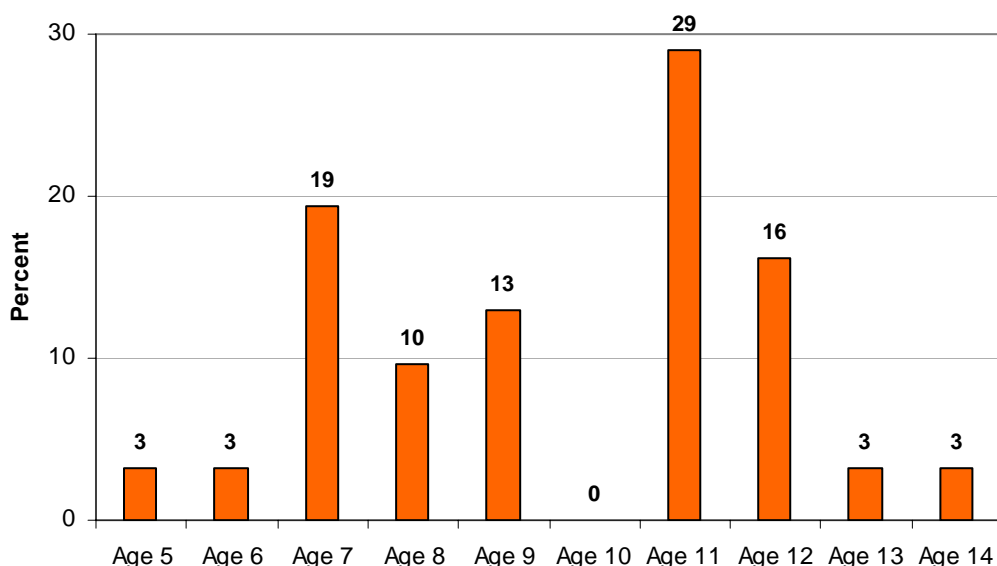
Figure 2.5: Age at which children are generally ready to be taught by subject-specialists - Headteachers and teachers - Two-tier and three-tier respondents (n=81)



There is not a great deal of variation evident between respondents from the different systems, though those in the three-tier system seem slightly more likely to suggest a higher age for the introduction of subject-specialist teaching than those in the two-tier system. This is confirmed by an examination of the mean ages: the mean age stated by respondents from the two-tier system is 9.8 years, and is 10.15 years for those in the three-tier system.

Teachers only were asked at what age they felt children were ready to be taught in groups set by ability for most or all subjects rather than mixed ability groupings. This elicited a wider range of responses than the question about subject-specialist teaching (Figure 2.6), though the mean value was 9.65 and the median 11. There was no significant variation in the responses given to this question when viewed by whether respondents worked in the two-tier or three-tier system, the mean age for those in the two-tier system was 9.73, and for those in the three-tier system, 9.56.

Figure 2.6: Age at which children are generally ready to be taught in groups set by ability for most subjects - Teachers only (n=31)



Middle and secondary school headteachers were asked whether their school operates the 'condensed key stage 3' where key stage 3 covers two years rather than three, and end of key stage assessments are taken at the end of Year 8 rather than Year 9. This means that 9-13 middle schools using this system cover the entire key stage rather than pupils completing it during their first year at upper school. Figure 2.7 shows that two middle schools currently operate the condensed key stage 3 and two intend to, whereas no secondary schools currently do though three said that they intended to implement this.

Figure 2.7: Operation of condensed key stage 3: Middle and secondary headteachers

	Middle schools		Secondary schools	
	n	%	n	%
Yes, currently	2	40	0	0
No, but we intend to	2	40	3	50
No, and we don't intend to in the foreseeable future	1	20	3	50
Total	5	100	6	100

When asked to comment on any benefits or problems with the condensed key stage 3, one middle school headteacher explained that it was too early to comment, while the other felt it beneficial in that pupils can complete the key stage within the middle school and make a fresh start on their key stage 4 studies at upper school, though this headteacher did identify some disadvantages in terms of the analyses they receive of their key stage 3 results:

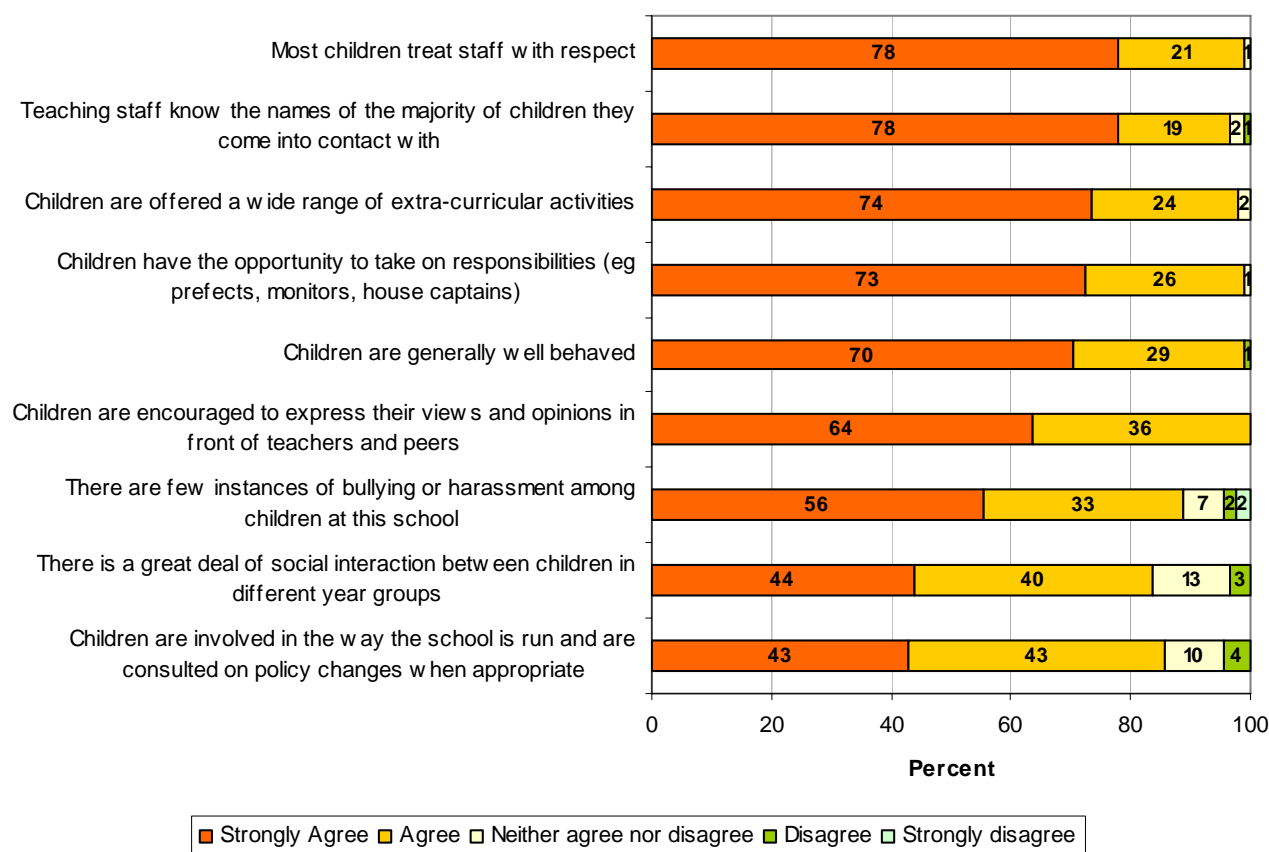
“Problems are when we receive RAISEOnline and FFT analysis although we have done well it always puts us in a bad light. Also in setting targets again CATs and FFT targets are for the end of year 9. What is not taken in to account is how much the programmes of study change in both science and English at KS3.”

Chapter 3: School ethos and nurturing social development

Headteachers and teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a series of statements relating to the general ethos of their school and the ways in which the school might nurture and encourage children's social development.

Figure 3.1 shows responses to all statements and shows that the statements most likely to elicit strong agreement were 'most children treat staff with respect' and 'teaching staff know the names of the majority of children they come into contact with'. The only statement to which any respondents strongly disagreed was 'there are few instances of bullying or harassment among children at this school'. In retrospect, this statement may have led to confusion, for example, if there are *no* instances of bullying or harassment, a respondent may be inclined to disagree with this statement, though the intention was to interpret disagreement as meaning there are more than a few instances, therefore responses to this statement should be interpreted with this in mind.

Figure 3.1: Levels of agreement with statement about school ethos and nurturing social development - Headteachers and teachers (min n=91)

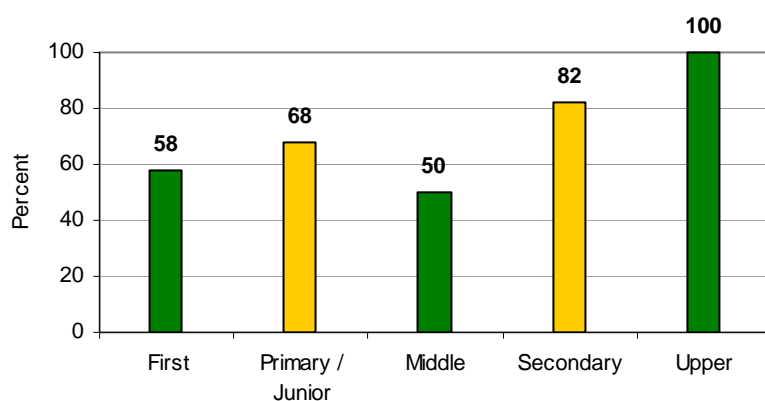


Responses to these statements were analysed according to the type of school respondents work in. Those which showed notable differences according to school type are discussed below and Figures 3.2 – 3.8 show the proportion of 'strongly agree' responses from respondents within each school type,

note that in each case, the minimum number of respondents on which percentages are based are as follows: first – 46, primary/junior – 37, middle – 10, secondary – 11, upper – 2.

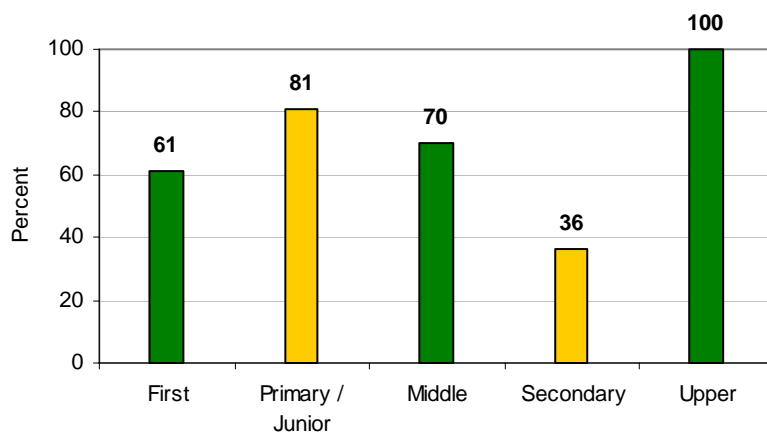
Figure 3.2 shows that with the exception of upper schools, respondents from schools in the two-tier system (shown in yellow) were more likely to 'strongly agree' with the statement 'children have the opportunity to take on responsibilities' than those in the three-tier system (green). Indeed, middle school staff were the least likely to 'strongly agree' with this statement (just 50% of middle school respondents strongly agreed). This is contrary to the notion that the three-tier system might encourage responsibility by introducing the teaching and learning environment of a secondary school earlier, and that by becoming the oldest pupils in the school more frequently in the three-tier system, pupils have more opportunities to take on responsible roles such as prefects and house captains.

Figure 3.2: 'Strongly agree' responses to 'Children have the opportunity to take on responsibilities': Headteachers and teachers – by school type



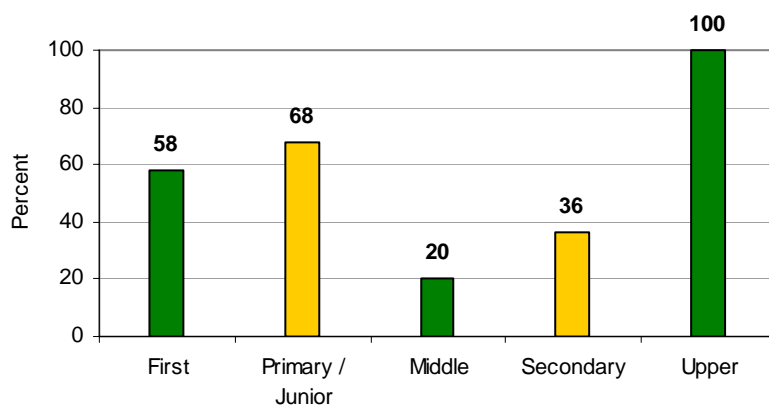
While the two-tier system attracted a higher proportion of 'strongly agree' responses to the statement 'most children treat staff with respect' for schools catering for younger children, the proportion of positive responses declines dramatically for secondary schools (36% of secondary school respondents strongly agreed), particularly in comparison to upper schools (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3: 'Strongly agree' responses to 'Most children treat staff with respect': Headteachers and teachers – by school type



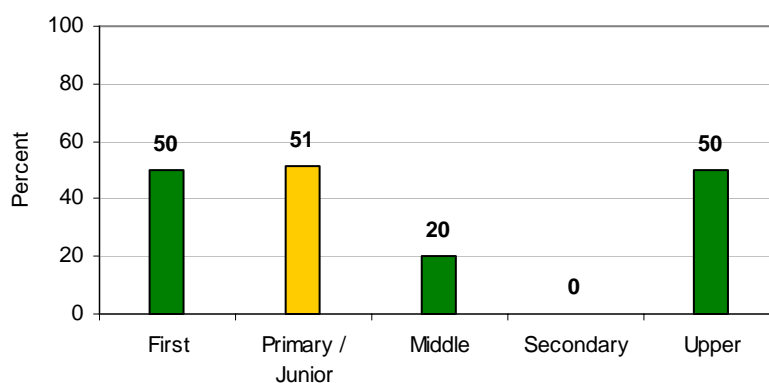
Just one in five middle school respondents strongly agreed that 'children are encouraged to express their views and opinions in front of teachers and peers', and though in the two-tier system just over two-thirds of primary or junior school respondents strongly agreed with this statement, the proportion dips for secondary school staff (36% - Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: 'Strongly agree' responses to 'Children are encouraged to express their views and opinions in front of teachers and peers': Headteachers and teachers – by school type



Respondents' perceptions of levels of interaction between children in different year groups demonstrate that this is more likely to occur in first and primary/junior schools. Twenty percent of middle school respondents strongly agreed that 'there is a great deal of social interaction between children in different year groups', and while no secondary school teachers strongly agreed with this statement, 50% of upper school respondents did – perhaps due to the smaller size and shorter age range of upper schools (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5: 'Strongly agree' responses to 'There is a great deal of social interaction between children in different year groups': Headteachers and teachers – by school type



While middle school respondents were the most likely of the three-tier school types to strongly agree that 'children are generally well behaved' (70%), there was a sharp variation among two-tier respondents: 84% of primary or junior headteachers and teachers strongly agreed with this statement, though just 27% of secondary school respondents did (Figure 3.6). A similar pattern of relative consistency among three-tier school respondents but a sharp decline in agreement levels between primary/junior and secondary staff is also apparent in responses to the statement 'there are few instances of bullying or harassment among children at this school' (Figure 3.7).

Figure 3.6: 'Strongly agree' responses to 'Children are generally well behaved': Headteachers and teachers – by school type

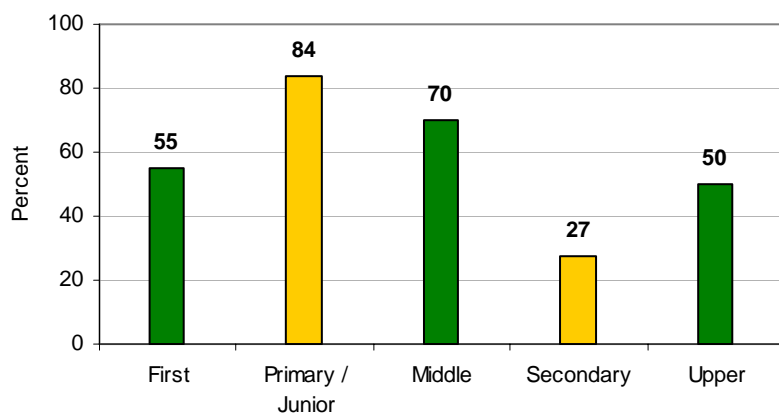
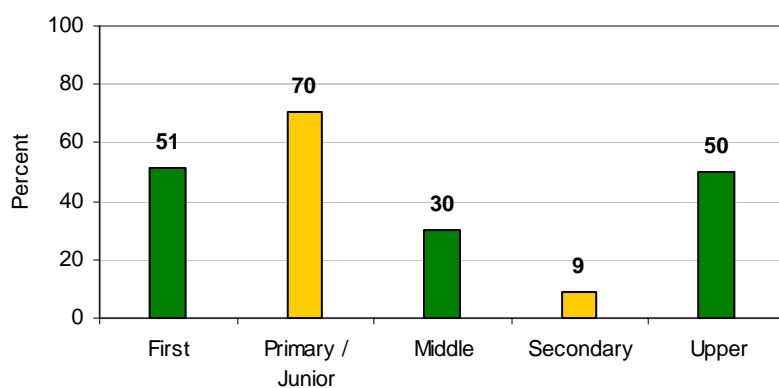
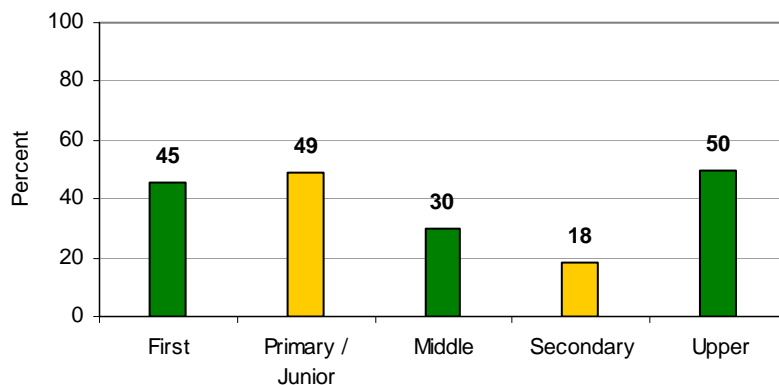


Figure 3.7: 'Strongly agree' responses to 'There are few instances of bullying or harassment among children at this school': Headteachers and teachers – by school type



Respondents from secondary schools were the least likely to strongly agree that 'children are involved in the way the school is run and are consulted on policy changes when appropriate' (18%); this may be due to the size of most secondary schools making thorough consultation difficult (Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8: 'Strongly agree' responses to 'Children are involved in the way the school is run and are consulted on policy changes when appropriate': Headteachers and teachers – by school type



Chapter 4: Meeting individual needs

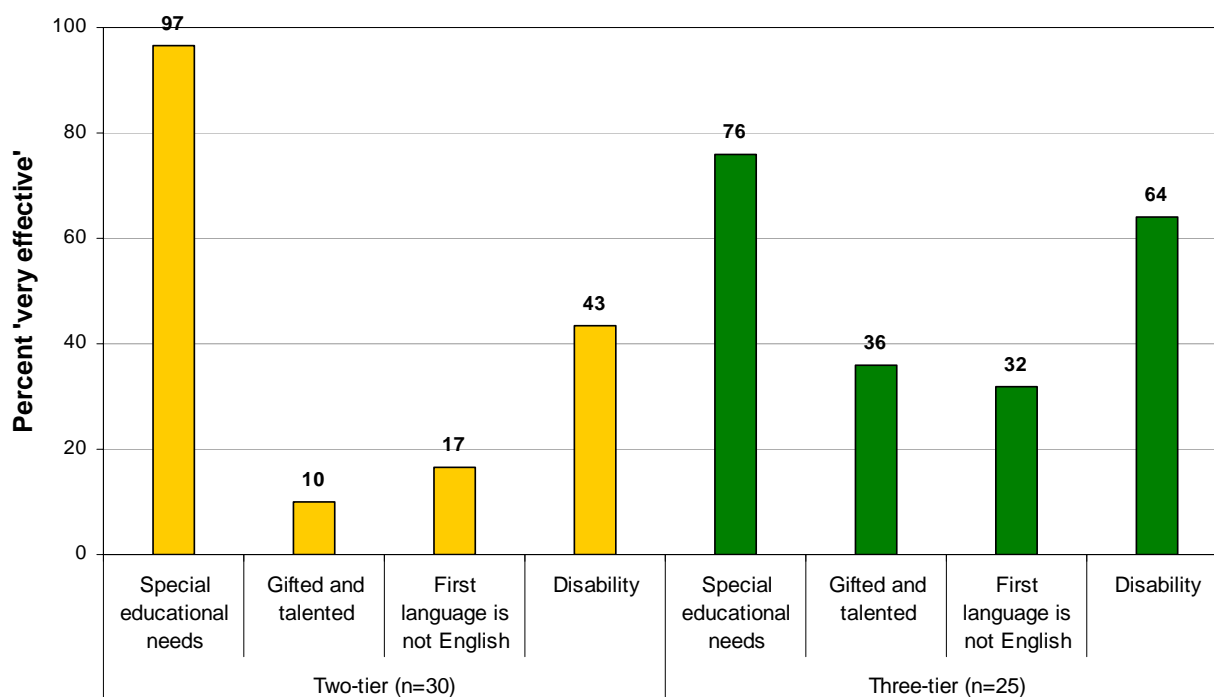
On the whole, headteachers were happy that their school was able to cater for children with special educational needs (SEN) effectively, though they were less satisfied with their effectiveness at dealing with other individual needs such as gifted and talented children, children whose first language is not English and those with a disability (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Effectiveness at meeting children's individual needs - Headteachers

	Children with special educational needs		Gifted and talented children		Children whose first language is not English		Children with a disability	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Very effective	48	87	12	22	13	24	29	53
Fairly effective	7	13	43	78	20	36	15	27
Not applicable / no experience	0	0	0	0	22	40	11	20
Total	55	100	55	100	55	100	55	100

Figure 4.2 reports the proportion of headteachers judging their school to be 'very effective' at meeting the various individual needs of children according to whether they are head of a school within the two-tier or three-tier system. While headteachers in the two-tier system were more likely to be confident in their effectiveness at accommodating the needs of SEN children, headteachers in the three-tier system were more likely to say their school is 'very effective' in meeting the three other types of individual need assessed in this question.

Figure 4.2: Effectiveness at meeting children's individual needs – Headteachers, two-tier and three-tier systems: 'Very effective' responses



In the open-ended comments on meeting individual needs, the most frequently recurring complaint was the lack of funding allocated to this aspect of pupil support.

Chapter 5: Facilities at the school

Headteachers were presented with a list of facilities and asked to indicate which were available to all children at the school, which were not available, and which were available only to children in specific year groups. The aim of this question was to assess whether children may have access to more specialised facilities at an earlier stage in either the three-tier or the two-tier system; however, headteachers' responses indicate that among the respondent schools at least, there is little difference.

Figure 5.1 (over the page) compares first schools with primary/junior schools and indicates that, as might be expected, neither type of school has science labs, language labs or indoor social spaces for children. There were slight differences in the availability of design and technology rooms or areas: none of the participating first schools said they had this facility whereas around a third of primaries did. Primary schools were also slightly more likely to have drama or performing arts areas (42%) than first schools (22%).

Figure 5.1: Facilities – First schools compared to primary/junior schools

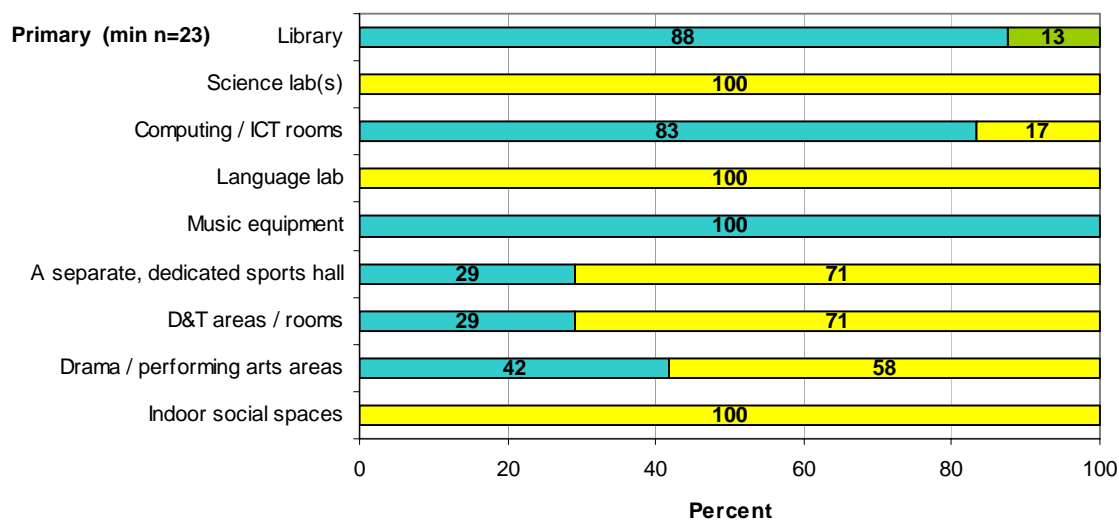
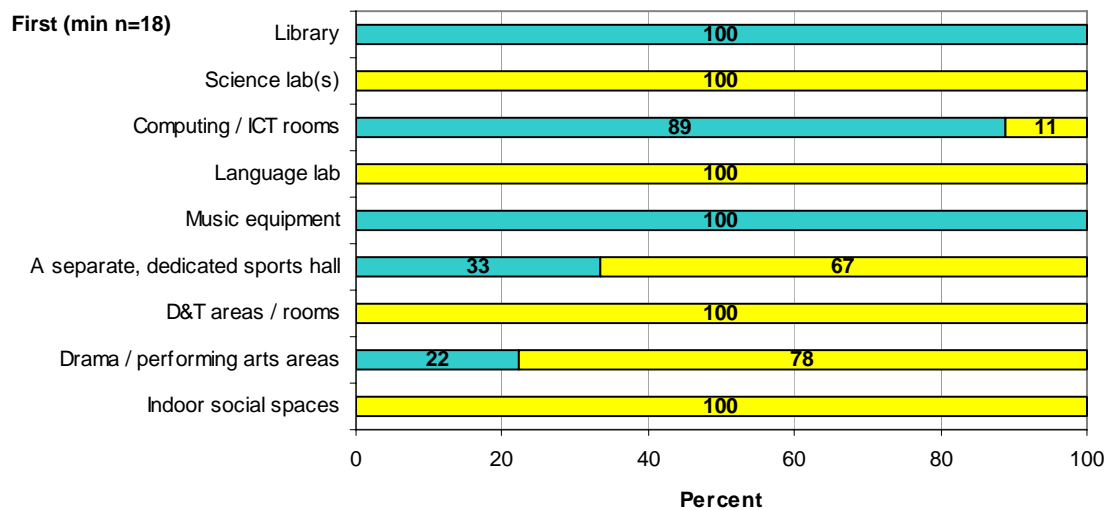
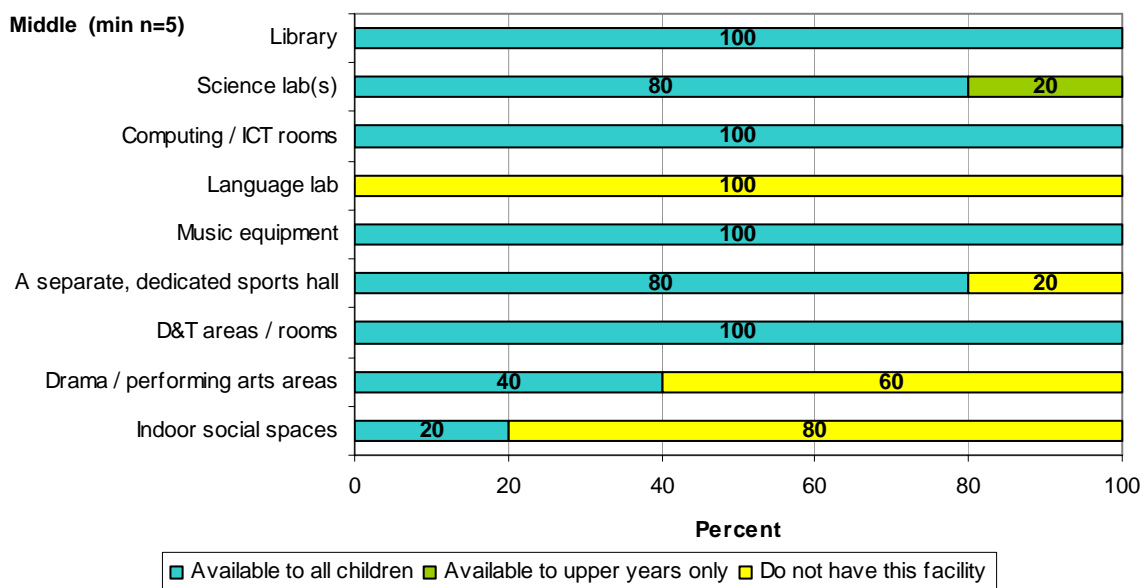


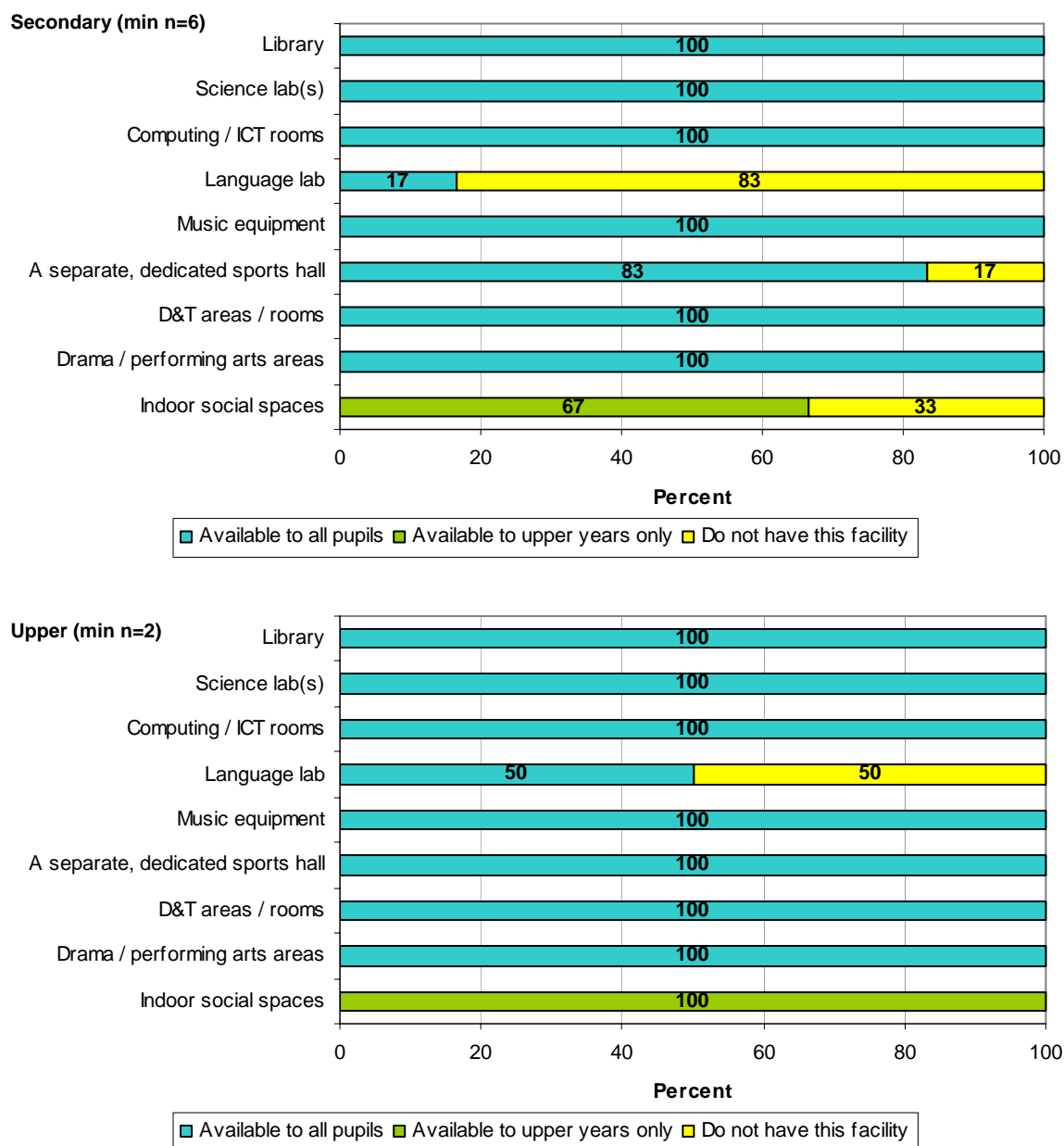
Figure 5.2 shows the facilities available at the five participating middle schools. Science labs are available to the majority of children and design and technology areas are available to all suggesting that children in middle schools are likely to experience these facilities at an earlier age than their counterparts in primary schools in the two-tier system.

Figure 5.2: Facilities – Middle schools



When secondary and upper school facilities are compared (Figure 5.3 – over the page) it is evident that most facilities are available to most children, though language labs, a separate dedicated sports hall and indoor social spaces are more widely available in upper schools than in secondaries.

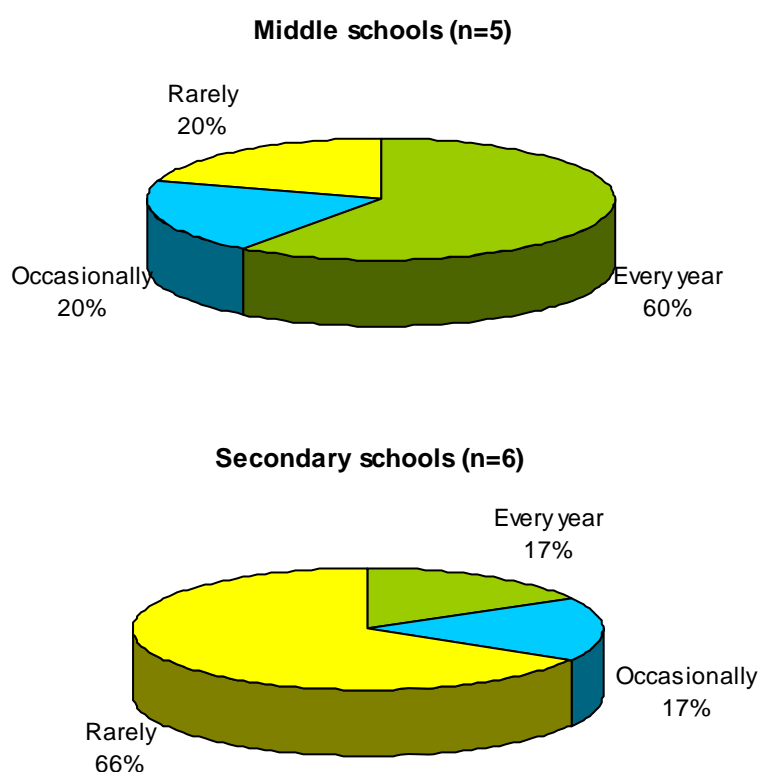
Figure 5.3: Facilities – Secondary schools compared to upper schools



Chapter 6: Transfer between schools

Middle and secondary school headteachers were asked to give an indication of how often they accept pupils transferring to their school from schools in the other system (cross-system transfers). Middle schools are far more likely to accept pupils from schools in the two-tier system than secondaries are to accept transfers from the three-tier system (Figure 6.1). This may be inevitable given that the two-tier system is far more common so it is more likely that transfers into the school will come from the two-tier system (particularly cross-border transfers from local authority areas operating only the two-tier system).

Figure 6.1: Frequency of cross-system transfers – Middle and secondary schools



When asked to briefly describe the main reasons for these cross-system transfers, most headteachers explained that they were due primarily to families moving to the area, rather than a preference for a particular school or schooling system.

All responding headteachers indicated that they undertook the following activities to help ease the transfer between schools:

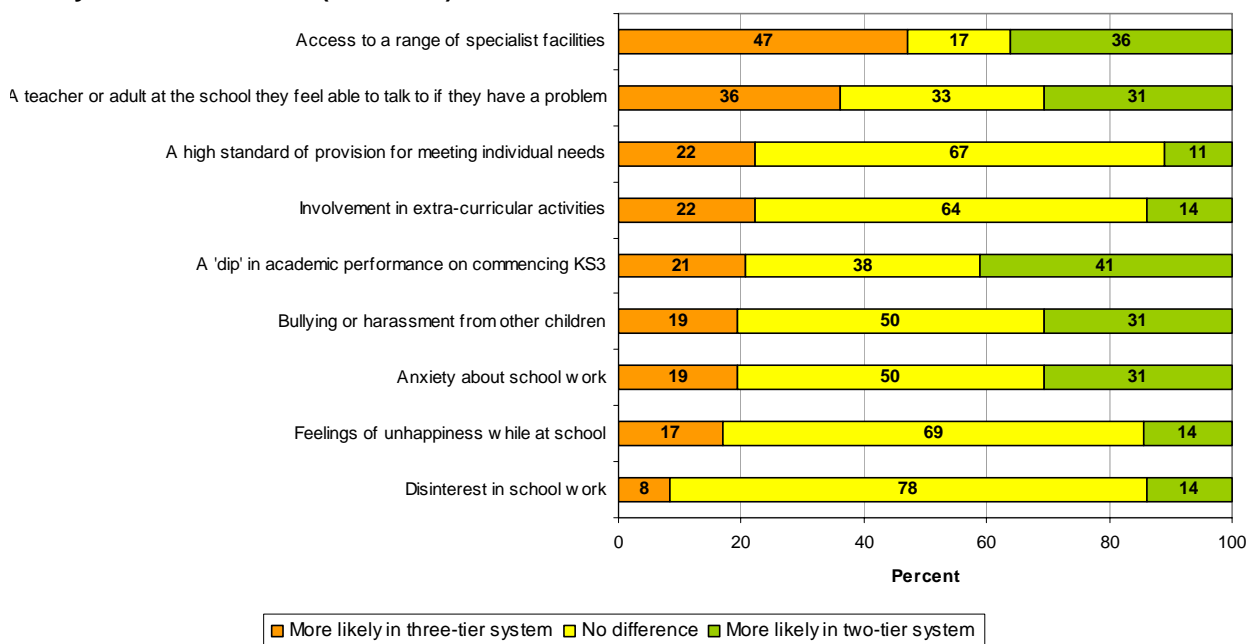
- Open days for pupils to see their new school prior to transfer
- Open evenings for parents held at feeder schools during the year prior to transfer
- Visits from teachers at the destination school to feeder schools during the year prior to transfer

The only activity which some headteachers said they did not operate was the use of 'buddy' systems whereby pupils due to transfer can contact existing pupils to talk about the change of school. When asked to describe any other activities undertaken to help ease the transfer a wide variety of initiatives were described including: joint sports or social events between feeder and destination schools, residential trips for children from feeder schools, teachers from the destination school visiting feeder schools to teach lessons and/or take assemblies, children from feeder schools attending lessons or extra-curricular programmes at the destination school prior to transfer, liaison and coordination between schools to ensure continuity of teaching and sharing of information on the new intake.

Chapter 7: The two-tier and three-tier schooling systems

Teachers were presented with a series of statements about the educational and social experiences children might have at their school and were asked to indicate whether they thought each one was more likely to occur in the two-tier system or the three-tier system (or whether there was no difference). Figure 7.1. presents responses to each statement and indicates that there is little consensus over whether one system is advantageous over the other according to the statements presented. Perhaps the most notable differences are in 'a dip in academic performance on commencing KS3': 41% said this was more likely in the two-tier system as opposed to 21% saying it was more likely in the three-tier system. Thirty-one percent thought 'bullying and harassment' and 'anxiety about school work' were more likely in the two-tier system, compared to 19% expressing the view that these are more likely in the three-tier system. 'Access to a range of specialist facilities' elicited the smallest proportion of 'no difference' responses and almost half of respondents thought this was more likely in the three-tier system (see also Chapter 5 on facilities).

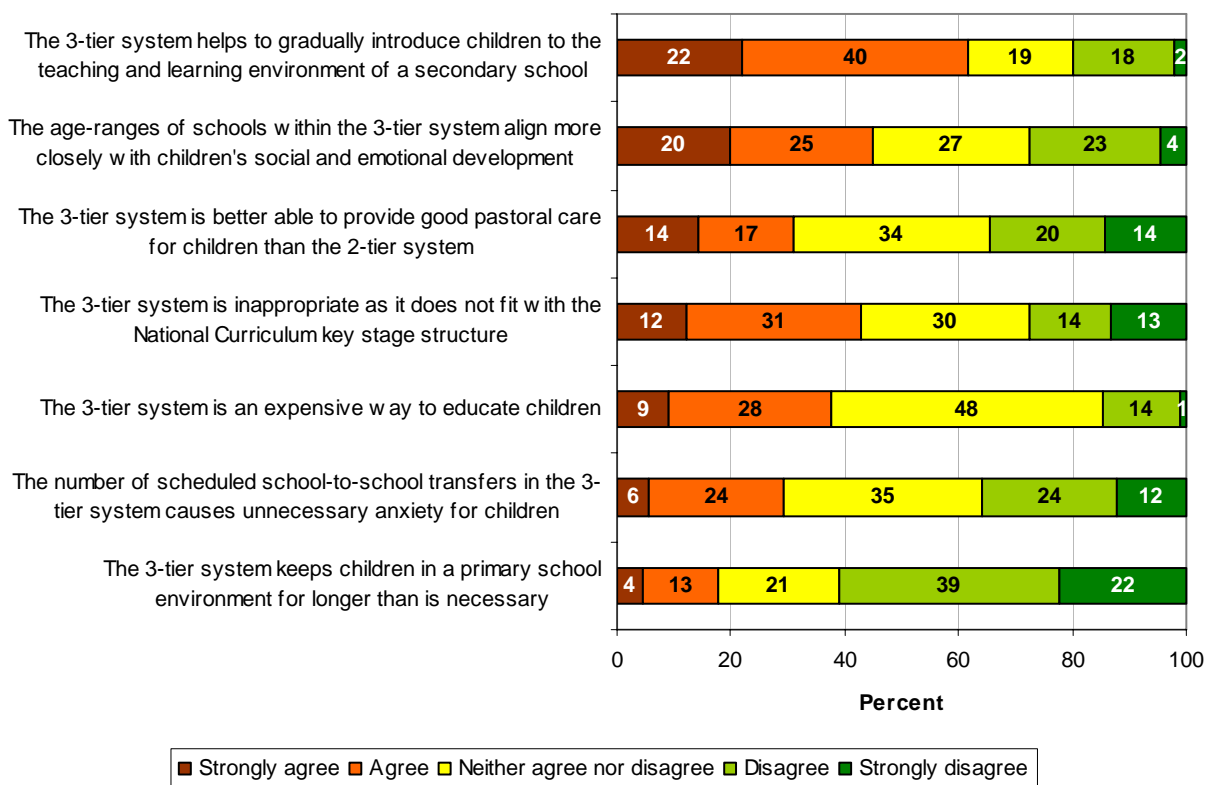
Figure 7.1: Likelihood of different educational and social experiences in the two-tier and three-tier systems – Teachers (min n=34)



Both headteachers and teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements relating to the different schooling systems (Figure 7.2). There were high levels of agreement with the statement 'the three tier system helps to gradually introduce children to the teaching and learning environment of a secondary school' (62% said they 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with this), and linked to this, high levels of disagreement with the statement 'the three-tier system keeps children in a primary school environment for longer than is necessary' (61% disagreed). Just under half of respondents agreed that 'the age ranges of schools within the three-tier system align more closely with children's social and emotional development than those in the two-tier system'

suggesting a degree of support for the three-tier system from a child development point of view. Although almost half of respondents had no strong opinion on the statement 'the three-tier system is an expensive way to educate children', 37% agreed or strongly agreed. There were also relatively strong feelings expressed about the statement: 'the three-tier system is inappropriate as it does not fit with the National Curriculum key stage structure' with 43% agreeing with this statement.

Figure 7.2: Levels of agreement with statements about the two-tier and three-tier systems – Headteachers and teachers (min n=88)



When asked whether they were generally in favour of the three-tier schooling system, mixed opinions were expressed: 40% said yes and 36% said no (Figure 7.3). Figure 7.4 shows these responses viewed according to which system the respondent currently works within. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those in the three-tier system are far more likely to be in favour of it (70%) than those in the two-tier system (13%).

Figure 7.3: Whether respondents are generally in favour of the three-tier system – Headteachers and teachers (n=89)

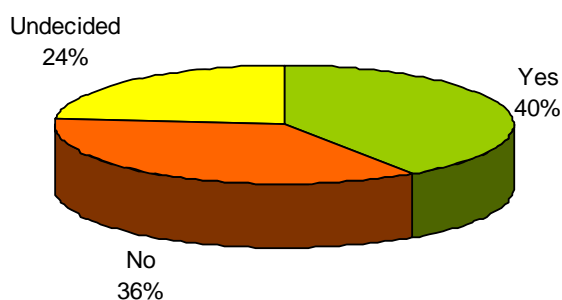
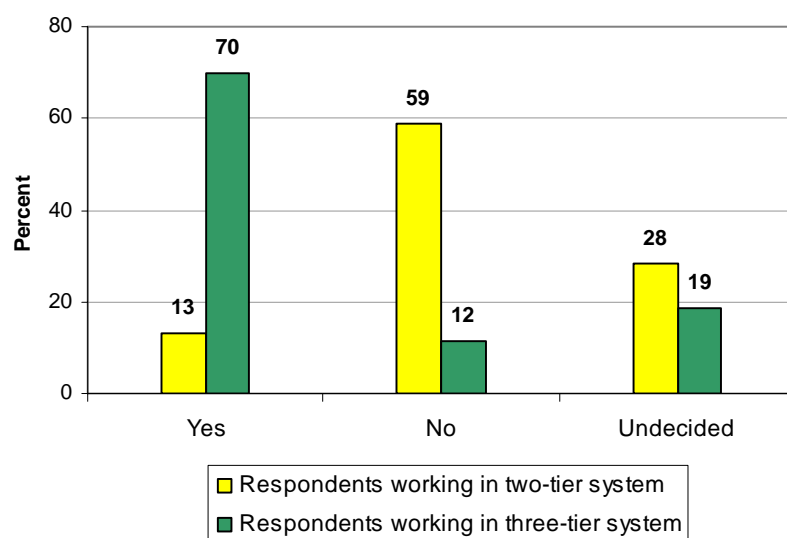


Figure 7.4: Whether respondents are generally in favour of the three-tier system – Headteachers and teachers, by system currently worked in (n=89)



Finally, respondents were invited to give brief reasons as to why they were in favour or against the three-tier schooling system. This elicited comments on a wide variety of issues, some of which are summarised below with illustrative quotes (the type of school the commentator currently works in and their response to whether they are generally in favour of the three-tier system is given in brackets alongside each quote).

Six of the 64 headteachers and teachers who made a comment said that they preferred the three-tier system because of its perceived benefits to children's social and emotional development and a further four respondents mentioned the academic advantages of the system:

"Having had experience of both systems I prefer the experiences on offer especially through social and emotional development in 3 tier system." (First, yes in favour of three-tier)

"Have only been in first school for just over a year, following many years in infant school in two-tier system - where moves match end of key stages. Am becoming more aware of how more suited three-tier system is to social / emotional development." (First, undecided)

"The system works well with good systems and procedures in place. Data and evidence show children perform well above national average in current system. Although there is evidence that some KS2 scores are better in primary (2 tier) than in middle schools (3 tier) this is counter-balanced by KS3 results." (First, yes in favour of three-tier)

"Having worked in both systems, I feel the benefits of 3 tier system, particularly academically in Yr 5, 6 and 7 are extensive." (Primary, yes in favour of three-tier)

Issues of transfer and transition were salient among respondents' comments. There were equal numbers of comments both in favour and against the three-tier system on the grounds of transfer;

those against felt the number of transfers can be unsettling for children and those in favour explained that the system provided a gradual transition to secondary schooling rather than one big step up at age 11:

"Movement between 3 schools is less efficient and more turbulent than 2 schools. Transfer of info more complicated. More time needed dealing with transition issues. Not a neat fit to the NC and assessment either." (Secondary, not in favour of three-tier system)

"I can see the arguments in favour, but overall I feel that the system adds an unnecessary layer to pupils' education. Perhaps the transition to secondary school is a little more daunting at 11, but the benefits in terms of specialist teaching and facilities are greater." (Secondary, not in favour of three-tier system)

"Much less stress moving from a small village first school to a 350 pupil middle then to a large upper school (1500 pupils)." (Middle, yes in favour of three-tier)

"I also remember my move from primary to secondary school which felt like such a big leap - although 3-tier means two moves I feel they are less disruptive and daunting." (Middle, yes in favour of three-tier)

While four respondents expressed concerns that the three-tier system perhaps introduces children to the secondary teaching and learning environment too early, one was of the opinion that this system is advantageous because it delays the transition to the secondary environment. A couple of commentators noted that where the primary phase of a two-tier system is split into separate infant and junior schools, there are equal numbers of transfers in both systems:

"I have seen the benefits of both systems, however I feel the primary age children are moved too quickly to the secondary style in the three tier system." (First, undecided)

"I believe the 3-tier system actually puts the children in a secondary school environment for longer than necessary." (Primary, not in favour of three-tier system)

"It keeps children in a primary environment for longer." (First, yes in favour of three-tier)

"Transfer to middle school at age 9+ is preferable to infant-junior transfer at 7+ because children are emotionally and socially much better able to cope at 9+." (First, yes in favour of three-tier)

Three respondents pointed out that the three-tier system enables children to take on responsibilities to a greater extent than the two-tier arrangement:

"In Years 7 and 8 children benefit from our more secondary approach to their timetable. The expectations placed upon them are also greater and they are expected to take more responsibility. We find this prepares them very well for upper school. (Middle, yes in favour of three-tier)

"Middle school allows children to grow in responsibility." (First, yes in favour of three-tier)

Though four respondents favoured the three-tier system for exposing children to specialist teaching and facilities at an earlier age than the two-tier system, a further four were concerned that children in their upper years at middle school can be taught by non-specialists when their counterparts at secondary school would not be:

"Years 5 and 6 can be challenging for the generalist class teacher in a primary school but can be taught by specialists at middle school." (First, yes in favour of three-tier)

"Three-tier is better, for fitting academic and psychological development but sometimes Y7 and 8 can still be treated as primary with little regard for emotional and social development. I find this concerning coming from secondary." (Middle, yes in favour of three-tier)

Opinion was divided as to whether either system was more likely than the other to contribute to a 'dip' in performance during key stage 3, and three respondents reiterated that the three-tier system does not align with the key stages:

"[In a middle school] the gradual transformation in Years 5-7 from class teacher to subject-specialist prevents the Year 7 dip common in the two-tier system." (Primary, yes in favour of three-tier)

"[The three-tier system] causes a dip in academic performance for KS3 SATs, has a negative impact on Y9 development (social / personal)." (Secondary, not in favour of three-tier system)

"KS3 does not fit with NC at present however I feel that moving the KS3 tests would mean middle and secondary able to accommodate KS3." (Middle, yes in favour of three-tier)

Eight respondents were of the view that different schooling systems work well in different contexts, in particular rural settings often necessitated one schooling arrangement over another, however, one commentator warned that having different systems operating in one local authority area can lead to confusion:

"In this local authority, both systems work equally effectively." (Primary, undecided)

"In Dorset the 3 tier system and 2 tier system creates confusion. It would be better to adopt a single system. There are advantages and disadvantages to both and both can work equally as well. However, due to Dorset's rural nature, first schools are often too small to be financially viable therefore the 2 tier system would suit Dorset." (Primary, not in favour of three-tier system)

Financial concerns were the subject of four comments and there was evidence of a perception among some that the 'more expensive' three-tier system diverts funding away from the two-tier system:

"From a purely financial position middle schools are expensive but in practice there are good ones that do well just as there are poor primaries that don't." (First, undecided)

"[The three-tier system] costs too much money. Primary schools are the poor relation. Performance (CVA) of primary schools is generally high, much better value for money." (Primary, not in favour of three-tier system)

"In favour on educational grounds, but not in favour on grounds of impact on funding for 2-tier schools." (Secondary, undecided)

Finally, four respondents expressed their preference for the three-tier system having experienced it themselves as children, or having seen their own children go through the system:

"For all the positive points I have ticked in this survey and because I was a three-tier student, and I choose to teach in this system because through experience I know it works." (Middle, yes in favour of three-tier)

"My children have all benefitted from the 3 tier middle school system. They have not had to experience a sudden complete change as would have been the case in a 2 school primary system." (First, yes in favour of three-tier)

"My children were educated in a three-tier system and benefitted from being taught by specialists, with facilities, and enjoyed the experience in the middle school phase best." (Primary, yes in favour of three-tier)

Conclusion:

This report presents a preliminary analysis of survey data based on questionnaire responses from 56 different Dorset County Council schools. All findings should be interpreted within the following context: the schools represented in the data are Dorset schools only, and what might work well in Dorset, may not necessarily work as well in other parts of the country; in addition, for some types of school, respondent numbers were very low (e.g. only two upper school questionnaires were returned) therefore the base for some of the figures is relatively low. With this in mind, the following points represent some concluding remarks which warrant further investigation:

- There is some evidence of differences across different schooling systems and school types in the extent of subject-specialist teaching and in the methods by which children are grouped for teaching purposes, though it is likely that this is largely due to practicalities at school level such a class sizes and numbers of teaching staff. What is not clear from this survey data alone is whether these differences could have an effect on pupils' teaching and learning experiences.
- The three-tier schooling system is sometimes praised for enabling children to take on responsibilities due to the earlier introduction of secondary teaching styles and the opportunities it provides for taking on responsible roles as and when children reach the upper years in each tier. Responses to this questionnaire do not provide substantial support for this notion, although upper schools do seem to offer such opportunities.
- Based on levels of agreement to statements about school ethos, secondary schools seem more likely than other types of school to have greater issues with pupil behaviour (including bullying), attitudes towards staff and in encouraging social interaction between children in different year groups; the contrast between secondary and upper schools is particularly marked on these factors.
- In terms of access to specialist facilities and equipment there was little conclusive evidence that one system is superior to the other from the headteachers' survey responses, though a substantial proportion of teachers said that access to specialist facilities was better in the three-tier than the two-tier system. It is likely that the availability of specialist facilities has less to do with whether the school is in the three-tier or two-tier system and more to do with the size of the school, the age of the school building and whether the school has specialist status in a particular subject area.
- Overall, respondents were more likely to favour the three-tier system in terms of its advantages as a gradual introduction to the secondary teaching and learning environment. However there were issues over the practicalities of the system, including the alleged

expense and the inevitable confusion where one authority operates both systems. Concerns were also expressed over the 'misalignment' of the age-ranges of schools in the three-tier system with the National Curriculum key stages, in particular the fact that key stage 3 straddles middle school and upper school. Headteachers within the three-tier system provided convincing evidence of sound liaison procedures to help ease the transfer to upper school and ensure consistency in the curriculum and some had successfully implemented the condensed key stage 3 enabling children complete key stage 3 at middle school. Teachers were less likely to agree that there was a 'dip' in academic performance during key stage 3 in the three-tier system than in the two-tier system.

Further investigation is required into some of these issues and as part of this PhD research, the findings from this survey will be triangulated with other data collected to help in drawing conclusions.

Appendix 1:

The headteachers' questionnaire (middle school version)

Investigation into the age-range of schools

Questionnaire for middle school headteachers

This questionnaire forms part of my PhD research into the advantages and disadvantages of schools catering for different age ranges with particular focus on the 9-13 middle school. Please complete the questions below and then return the form using the freepost envelope provided to: Kathy Seymour, c/o Survey Unit, University of Nottingham, University Park, FREEPOST NG6687, Nottingham, NG7 1BR by **20th March 2008**. If you would prefer to complete this survey online, a web version is available at the following address: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/survey-unit/middleheads>

The responses you provide will be treated in confidence and used solely for the work of this investigation. The identity of individuals and their schools will not be revealed to anyone outside of the research project and all data will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Section A: You and your school

1. What is your role at the school?

- Headteacher 1 Other (please specify) 3
 Deputy or Assistant Headteacher 2

2. Do you have any experience as a teacher, deputy headteacher or headteacher in any other types of school? [Please tick all that apply]

- Primary (ages 3, 4 or 5 to 11) 1 Upper or High (ages 12 or 13 to 16 or 18) 1
 Infant (ages 3, 4 or 5 to 7) 1 Secondary (ages 11 to 16 or 18) 1
 Junior (ages 7 to 11) 1 Other (please specify) 1
 First (ages 3, 4 or 5 to 9) 1
 Middle for ages other than 9-13 (eg 8-12) 1

3. For the following list of subjects, please indicate:

- a) Whether children are taught each subject by subject-specialist teachers (and if so, whether this applies to all year groups or just upper years)
 b) Whether children are generally taught this subject in mixed-ability groups or groups set or streamed by ability

	a) Are children taught by subject-specialist teachers?			b) Are children taught in mixed or set by ability groups?		
	Subject-specialists in all years	Subject-specialists only in upper years	No subject-specialists	Mixed ability only	Set by ability only	Both mixed and set by ability
English	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Maths	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Science	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
History	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Geography	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Religious education	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Modern foreign languages	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
ICT	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Design and Technology	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Physical education	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Art and design	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Music	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3

4. At what age do you think children are generally ready to be taught by subject-specialist teachers for most subjects rather than by class teachers?

5. Does your school operate a condensed key stage 3 (where key stage 3 covers two rather than three years of schooling)? *[Please tick one only]*

- | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Yes, currently | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | } | <i>Please go to Q6</i> |
| Yes, in the past but not currently | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | | |
| No, but we intend to | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | } | <i>Please go to Q7</i> |
| No, and we don't intend to in the foreseeable future | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | | |

6. If yes, please briefly describe any benefits or problems with the condensed KS3 to your pupils and/or the school more generally:

Section B: School ethos and nurturing social development

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Children have the opportunity to take on responsibilities (eg prefects, monitors, house captains etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Children are offered a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and activities	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Most children treat staff with respect	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Children are encouraged to express their views and opinions in front of teachers and peers	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
There is a great deal of social interaction between children in different year groups	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Teaching staff know the names of the majority of children they come into contact with	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Children are generally well behaved	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
There are few instances of bullying or harassment among children at this school	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Children are involved in the way the school is run and are consulted on policy changes when appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Section C: Pastoral support and meeting individual needs

8a. How effective are arrangements at your school for meeting the individual needs of the following children?

	Very effective	Fairly effective	Not effective	Not applicable / no experience
Children with special educational needs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Gifted and talented children	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Children whose first language is not English	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Children with a disability	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

Continued →

8b. Please use the space below to elaborate on any of your responses to Q8a (eg any limitations to meeting individual needs which are outside of the school's control):

Section D: Facilities at your school

9. Are the following facilities available to children of all ages at your school?

	Available to all children	Available to lower years only	Available to upper years only	Do not have this facility
Library	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Science lab(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Computing / ICT rooms	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Language lab	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Music equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
A separate, dedicated sports hall	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
D&T areas / rooms	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Drama / performing arts areas	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Indoor social spaces (eg common rooms)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

Section E: Transfer between schools

10a. How often do you accept children transferring to your middle school from schools in the two-tier primary/secondary system rather than from feeder schools within the three-tier system?

- Every year 1
- Occasionally 2
- Rarely 3
- Never 4

10b. If known, what are the main reasons behind these cross-system transfers (eg standards at nearby schools, parental preference etc)?

11. Does your school undertake any of the following activities to prepare children for scheduled transfers...
a) Into your school at age 9?
b) On to the upper or high school at age 13?

	a) Offered during transfer <u>to</u> this school	b) Offered during transfer <u>from</u> this school	Not offered
Open days for children to see their new school prior to transfer	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Open evenings for parents held at feeder and/or destination schools	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Visits from teachers at the destination school to feeder schools during the year prior to transfer	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
'Buddy' systems whereby children due to transfer can contact existing pupils to talk about the change of school	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3

12. Please briefly describe any other activities you arrange to help ease the transfer to or from your school:

Section F: The two-tier and three-tier schooling systems

13. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the two-tier schooling system involving 11+ secondary schools and the three-tier schooling system involving 9-13 middle schools:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The age-ranges of schools within the three-tier system align more closely with children's social and emotional development than those in the two-tier system	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
The three-tier system is an expensive way to educate children	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
The three-tier system keeps children in a primary school environment for longer than is necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
The three-tier system helps to gradually introduce children to the teaching and learning environment of a secondary school	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
The number of scheduled school-to-school transfers in the three-tier system causes unnecessary anxiety for children	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
The three-tier system is better able to provide good pastoral care for children than the two-tier system	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
The three-tier system is inappropriate as it does not fit with the National Curriculum key stage structure	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

14a. Are you generally in favour of the three-tier system involving 9-13 middle schools?

Yes 1 No 2 Undecided 3

14b. Please give brief reasons for your response to question 14a:

Further information about and participation in this research

If you would like to receive a summary of the findings from this survey, please provide an email address to which the summary can be sent:

The second phase of this research will involve a short questionnaire (available in either paper or web format) for pupils to complete. Further information on what this involves and what your school will receive in return is provided in the covering letter.

If your school is willing to participate in this survey, please indicate below the approximate number of pupils who will take part in each year group, and whether they will be completing the survey on paper or online. Further details will be forwarded to volunteering schools shortly.

<p>Please indicate below whether you would like to participate in the pupil survey:</p> <p>Yes, we would be willing to take part in the pupil survey <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, we would prefer not to take part in the pupil survey <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">No. of pupils</p> <p>Year 5 <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/></p> <p>Year 6 <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/></p> <p>Year 7 <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/></p> <p>Year 8 <input style="width: 50px;" type="text"/></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Prefer <u>paper</u> surveys</p> <p>Y5 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Y6 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Y7 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Y8 <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Prefer <u>web</u> surveys</p> <p>Y5 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Y6 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Y7 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Y8 <input type="checkbox"/></p>
---	---	---	---

Now please indicate for each year which format you would prefer to use

School name:

Thank you for completing this questionnaire, your assistance with this research is much appreciated.
 Please return your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided to:
 Kathy Seymour, c/o Survey Unit, University of Nottingham, FREEPOST NG6687, Nottingham, NG7 1BR

Appendix 2:

The teachers' questionnaire (middle school version)

Investigation into the age-range of schools

Questionnaire for middle school teachers

This questionnaire forms part of my PhD research into the advantages and disadvantages of schools catering for different age ranges. Your headteacher has been provided with an information sheet about the project, or this can be viewed online at: <http://www.middleschoolresearch.org.uk/infosheet.pdf>

Please complete the questions below and then return the form using the freepost envelope provided by **20th March 2008**. If you would prefer to complete this survey online, a web version is available at the following address: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/survey-unit/middleteachers>

The responses you provide will be treated in confidence and used solely for the work of this investigation. The identity of individuals and their schools will not be revealed to anyone outside of the research project and all data will be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Thank you for your assistance. Kathy Seymour, PhD Researcher, University of Nottingham

Section A: You and your school

1. Which year group(s) do you teach? [Please tick all that apply]

Year 5 1 Year 6 1 Year 7 1 Year 8 1

2a. Which of the following best describes your teaching role at this school?

A general class teacher 1 → Please go to Q3

A subject-specialist teacher 2

Both class teaching and subject-specialist teaching 3

Other (please specify) ↴ 4

2b. If your role involves subject-specialist teaching, approximately how many different subjects do you currently teach?

3. Which of the following best describes your initial teacher training?

Trained as a primary teacher 1

Trained as a middle school teacher 2

Trained as a secondary school teacher 3

Other (please specify) ↴ 4

4. Do you have any experience as a teacher in any other types of school? [Please tick all that apply]

Primary (ages 3, 4 or 5 to 11) 1

Upper or High (ages 12 or 13 to 16 or 18) 1

Infant (ages 3, 4 or 5 to 7) 1

Secondary (ages 11 to 16 or 18) 1

Junior (ages 7 to 11) 1

Other (please specify) ↴ 1

First (ages 3, 4 or 5 to 8 or 9) 1

Middle for ages other than 9-13 (eg 8-12) 1

5. Does your school operate a condensed key stage 3 (where key stage 3 covers two rather than three years of schooling)?

Yes 1 → Please go to Q6

No 2 → Please go to Q7

6. If yes, please briefly describe any benefits or problems with the condensed KS3 to your pupils and/or the school more generally:

Section B: School ethos and nurturing social development

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about your school:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Children have the opportunity to take on responsibilities (eg prefects, monitors, house captains etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Children are offered a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and activities	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Most children treat staff with respect	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Children are encouraged to express their views and opinions in front of teachers and peers	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
There is a great deal of social interaction between children in different year groups	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Teaching staff know the names of the majority of children they come into contact with	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Children are generally well behaved	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
There are few instances of bullying or harassment among children at this school	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Children are involved in the way the school is run and are consulted on policy changes when appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

Section C: Child development and the age range of schools

8a. At what age do you think children are generally ready to be taught...

i) By subject-specialist teachers for most subjects rather than by class teachers?

ii) In groups set by ability for most subjects rather than in mixed ability groups?

8b. If you would like to elaborate on the answers given to i) and/or ii), please use the space below:

9a. Which of the following schooling systems do you think is most beneficial for the majority of children in terms of encouraging their educational / academic development?

Two-tier system with transfer to secondary school at age 11 1

Three-tier system including middle schools for ages 9-13 2

Three-tier system including middle schools for ages 8-12 3

Other arrangement (please detail) 4

9b. Which of the following schooling systems do you think is most beneficial for the majority of children in terms of encouraging their social / emotional development and well-being?

Two-tier system with transfer to secondary school at age 11 1

Three-tier system including middle schools for ages 9-13 2

Three-tier system including middle schools for ages 8-12 3

Other arrangement (please detail) 4

Continued →

9c. Please use the space below if you wish to elaborate on your responses to Q9a and/or Q9b:

Section D: The two-tier and three-tier schooling systems

10a. Do you think children aged 9-13 are more likely to experience the following in the two-tier schooling system (with transfer to secondary school at age 11), or in the three-tier system (with middle schools)?

	More likely in two-tier system	More likely in three-tier system	No difference
Involvement in extra-curricular activities	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Bullying or harassment from other children	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
A teacher or other adult at the school they feel able to talk to if they have a problem	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Anxiety about school work	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Access to a range of specialist facilities (e.g. science labs, design and technology facilities, separate sports hall etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
A 'dip' in academic performance on commencing key stage 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Feelings of unhappiness while at school	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
A high standard of provision for meeting individual needs (e.g. special educational needs, gifted and talented children etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
Disinterest in school work	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3

10b. If you wish to comment on any of the responses you have given to Q10a, please use the space below:

11. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the two-tier schooling system involving 11+ secondary schools and the three-tier schooling system involving 9-13 middle schools:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The age-ranges of schools within the three-tier system align more closely with children's social and emotional development than those in the two-tier system	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
The three-tier system is an expensive way to educate children	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
The three-tier system keeps children in a primary school environment for longer than is necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
The three-tier system helps to gradually introduce children to the teaching and learning environment of a secondary school	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
The number of scheduled school-to-school transfers in the three-tier system causes unnecessary anxiety for children	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
The three-tier system is better able to provide good pastoral care for children than the two-tier system	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
The three-tier system is inappropriate as it does not fit with the National Curriculum key stage structure	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

12a. Are you generally in favour of the three-tier system involving 9-13 middle schools?

Yes ₁ No ₂ Undecided ₃

12b. Please give brief reasons for your response to question 12a:

Further information about this research

If you would like to receive a summary of the findings from this survey, please provide an email address to which the summary can be sent:

Thank you for completing this questionnaire, your assistance with this research is much appreciated.

*Please return your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided to:
Kathy Seymour, c/o Survey Unit, University of Nottingham, FREEPOST NG6687, Nottingham, NG7 1BR*