

Factors affecting secondary teacher wellbeing in England: Self-perceptions, policy and politics

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Abstract

After the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, the NEU (2021) report states that one in three teachers plan to leave the profession in the next 5 years. As previous studies published by the DfE focusing on workload have not affected the wastage rate of the profession, there is something deeper at work which needs to be explored. A critical theory, mixed-methods approach is used to gain a breadth and depth of understanding of the attitudes of 55 respondents to a survey and 17 participants in semi-structured interviews. All data collection was carried out in secondary schools in Lincolnshire, where teacher pay is good in comparison with the county average of workforce pay. These methods aim to test the assumption that concerns about workload and pay are causing teachers' discontent. The findings reveal that teacher attitudes towards their working lives are complex owing to individuals trying to internalise the values of both traditional and new professionalisms. Owing to this, teachers can appear contradictory in their demands and tolerance of the demands of the profession and themselves. The characteristics of neoliberal management including transactional leadership, competition and ambivalence to processes in favour of outcomes, do not match traditional professional values of dedication, expertise and working for the greater good.

KEYWORDS

management, neoliberalism, professionalism, teachers, wellbeing

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Key insights

What are the main issues that the paper addresses?

This paper considers wider issues which affect teacher wellbeing which are not currently acknowledged in the recruitment and retention literature.

What are the main insights that the paper provides?

Findings from the survey and interviews suggest that issues which affect teacher wellbeing are far more complex than the current focus on pay and workload suggests. Professionalism, the political paradigm and the interplay of differing leadership styles also have an impact.

INTRODUCTION

From the Department for Education (DfE, 2016) workload survey and subsequent guidance reports (DfE, 2016a, 2016b and 2016c) to the Teacher Wellbeing Index (YouGov, 2019), studies have identified many factors which teachers believe could impact their work lives, including the administrative load of assessment, data tracking and planning. However, according to Foster (2019), recruitment to teaching has been below target every year since 2011–2012 and 32.3% of new teachers leave the profession before completing five years in the job. The NEU (2021) also report that this is a concern for the future as one in three current teachers plan to leave the profession in the next five years. National education policy is not improving the situation by promoting performativity, a form of governmentality seeking to manage employee performance and pay through measurable key indicators. Clarke et al. (1994) and Ball (2013a) summarise this as 'new public management' (NPM) which focuses on management strategies with some form of transactional element such as pay awards. Performativity through performance management (PM) and performance-related pay (PRP) has also given rise to a number of studies such as Forrester (2011) and Ball (2003), which suggest that this style of management is not being viewed by teachers as completely positive.

Factors which could affect teacher wellbeing in addition to the administrative tasks previously identified can be summarised in four levels: control theories, control mechanisms, control styles and control impacts.

Control theories – Governmentality and neoliberalism

Theories of control explain grand-scale operations at an international level and can be taken from Foucault's concept of governmentality (Foucault, 1982). Foucault (1977, 138) established that the modern state creates 'docile bodies' that 'not only do what we want but do it precisely in the way that we want', through three strategies – hierarchical observation, normalising judgements and examination. To govern, in this sense, is to control the possible field of action of others. As one of the technologies of government, hierarchical observation creates the notion that perpetual improvement is possible and that it is possible to be abnormal, so beyond what is socially acceptable. This second notion means that people in modern society are constrained at all times and made to feel that they must act within the bounds of social acceptability, creating self-governance with the impression of choice but

hiding a highly controlling condition. Foucault asserts that there is no single centre of power, no 'us' or 'them' so there is no clearly defined location of power to aim resistance at. For Foucault, politics is always local as this is the sphere in which an individual has more contact and more ability to exert control.

Davies (2014) suggests that Foucault saw neoliberalism as a platform which uses enterprise and performance as a way to try to remake social and personal life. Therefore, competition gives legitimacy to inequality as it indicates ethical worth through 'scores' of who is winning and losing (Davies, 2014, 315). Fear of failure is also a strong neoliberal mechanism, encouraging competition, and so this fear enables the state to direct 'winning' behaviours. Foucault (1977) concludes that the impacts of a fear regime can lead to stress and mental ill health but that these are presented as self-governance issues and so the mechanisms of fear remain hidden and affect individual wellbeing. This strategy cannot create optimum conditions for all as, by design, some must do better than others, but it 'is agnostic about the right solution to institutional, cultural and political problems' (Davies, 2016). The ambivalence that neoliberalism shows towards the mechanisms of policy in favour of the measurement of outcomes creates a constant comparison of the self with others and induces unhappiness as things could always be better. Ball (2013b) identifies that governmentality within education operates through a number of interrelating policies which are regulatory measures and disciplinary techniques aimed at education professionals.

Control mechanisms – Policy

Control mechanisms refer to national policies used to influence organisations and individuals. Foucault (1977) argued that discipline operates by coercing and ordering a person's experience with observation being a key instrument of power. Dobson and Fisher (2007) suggest that in the modern era, observation is ubiquitous through management tracking systems and social media. As long as there are benefits, the political cost of resistance to the observation will be low and serves to disassociate power from particular individuals. Observation is seen as omnipotent and subjectifies individuals (Boyne, 2010; Foucault, 1977; Hope, 2013). Foucault (1994) suggested that this premise which he first identified in prisons progressed through capitalism into other institutions such as schools. By focusing on teacher outputs and side-lining individual beliefs, processes can be used to control the actions of individuals and 'produce bodies that are docile and capable' (Foucault, 1977, 294). Hall and Noyes (2009) also include normalising factors such as OFSTED inspections and PRP through PM as ways in which self-discipline is embedded in schools. Ball (2003) observes that this field of judgement has led to conflicts with teachers who can find their personal values of creativity, autonomy and integrity at odds with an inspection regime which looks for standardisation and conformity. Forrester (2011) and Troman (2000) state that the style of policy implementation in England suggests a lack of trust in the teaching profession from the government and, as a consequence, from the profession towards the government. Such control mechanisms prevail in schools and have power to influence a certain control style through leadership in schools.

Control styles – Leadership

Performance-related pay is an example of governmentality technologies in England that influence the style of leadership evident in schools as it uses tangible rewards. Keskes (2014, 28) attributes these features to transactional styles of leadership saying, 'The transactional leader uses tangible rewards (e.g. money and status) while the transformational uses

intangible rewards (e.g. personal growth, self-esteem and professional values). Ball (2013a) argues that the global trend towards performativity and measurability has led to a new public service paradigm, which gives importance to 'hero managers' who mentor employees by giving guidance through the benefit of their experience and knowledge. This position suggests that the managers have all the answers, which gives a sense of security to the employee who should follow the instruction of the leader but puts a lot of pressure on the leader to be right. A transformational leader aligns more with a coach (Gildea, 2014), who empowers employees to find their own solutions but this may also lead to anxiety as the individual is more responsible for the processes and outcomes of their work. Ball (2013b, 53) issues a warning about a transactional system: 'The rethinking of education in economic terms bites deep into institutional practises and values'. Therefore, an understanding of the values held by teachers and the importance of relationships in the workplace helps understand wellbeing. Miller and Miller (2001) go on to suggest that transactional leadership moves people from commitment and supportive relationships to individualism, contractual-style working practises, organisational obligations and competition. When contact between leaders and employees focuses on measurable targets, little room is left to develop self-actualisation, loyalty, professional respect and emotional bonds which are important for positive wellbeing (Briner & Dewberry, 2007; Vittersø, 2004; Wang et al., 2015).

Control impacts – wellbeing

Wellbeing is defined by Briner and Dewberry (2007, 2) as the balance between 'feeling valued and cared for, feeling overloaded, job stimulation and enjoyment'. The Teacher Wellbeing Index compiled by Saville-Smith and Scanlan (2022) reported wellbeing statistics using the Warwick–Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale as being at 44.01 for school teachers and 43.37 for senior leaders and suggests that scores between 41 and 45 should be considered as showing high risk of psychological distress and increased risk of depression. This is an improvement on 2021 when the score was 43.90, but below that of 2020, when teachers were most immediately affected by the pandemic, when it was 45.66. IFF Research (2023) in the School and College Panel, March 2023 suggests that this could be due to increased pupil misbehaviour. However, close inspection of the data reveals that this is only considered an influence to a great extent by 6% of school leaders and 12% of teachers. Saville-Smith and Scanlan (2022) go on to observe that over 5 years of the study being collected (2017–2022) the percentage of teachers considering leaving the profession has remained relatively stable at just over 50% and so it can be concluded that the pandemic has not had a significant effect on this. There are concerns that the attrition rate from the profession suggests an alternative understanding of teacher wellbeing (Briner & Dewberry, 2007; Foster, 2019). Roffey (2012, 8) states that a lack of focus on the social capital in schools is affecting teacher wellbeing, defining social capital as 'expectations and interactions that promote trust, respect, value and collaboration'. Reis et al. (2000) identify this as 'autonomy' which is one of three basic needs, with competency and relatedness, which they propose for positive wellbeing. All three of these basic needs can be influenced by leadership and policy within the working life of a teacher but Davies (2015) and Cederstrom and Spicer (2015) suggest that society views wellbeing as a personal issue for individuals to address. Foucault's (1977) discussions of the impacts of governmentality strategies, such as fear, suggest there is a need to understand the influence of societal structures on individuals. He (Foucault, 1994) suggested that there are possibilities for resistance as part of our ability to recognise and question social norms. Knights (2002) observes that acts of resistance are a way of understanding our interactions with society. However, he opines that modern organisational techniques

individualise people, rendering them separate and less resistant to power exercised over them. Resistance facilitates the internalisation of discipline because it expresses an investment in a relationship which can influence wellbeing. Foucault suggests that governmentality mechanisms can be hidden, which results in the rise of dualisms (Curtis, 2002). Ball (2003) states that when teachers are expected to live up to social expectations of what a teacher should be and the demands of meeting PRP targets, it leaves teachers feeling fearful that they cannot meet these dual expectations. When this occurs, the state sees the management of these wellbeing impacts as a personal issue, while simultaneously, international comparisons have tried to turn wellbeing into quantitative data to allow the judgement and ranking of countries (Davies, 2015).

These four main themes can be summarised into a hierarchy of control which forms the theoretical framework for this study (Figure 1).

This study aims to understand how the interplay of the neoliberalisation of the global education industry, English education policy and leadership styles that facilitate this affect the wellbeing of teachers in secondary education. The key perspective drawn upon in this research is that of the teachers' perceptions of wellbeing and of themselves as educators and workers. It aims to look further into why teachers are completing tasks even if they do not agree with them or where there is a conflict between different 'expectations' of the teacher's role. Hays (2020) found that 65% of teachers have considered leaving the profession owing to poor wellbeing and the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER, 2015) found that, on average, the wages of departing teachers were 10% lower than those staying in teaching. These findings suggest that pay is not the answer to the problem of recruitment and retention. A knowledge of how the job is viewed by teachers could lead to better initiatives to improve the wellbeing of teachers with knock-on positive effects on students (Roffey, 2012).

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research was conducted by an insider researcher (Eppley, 2006), as it was carried out by a serving secondary school teacher who understood and was connected with the field researched. It took the form of a survey of 55 teachers and further interviews with 17 of those

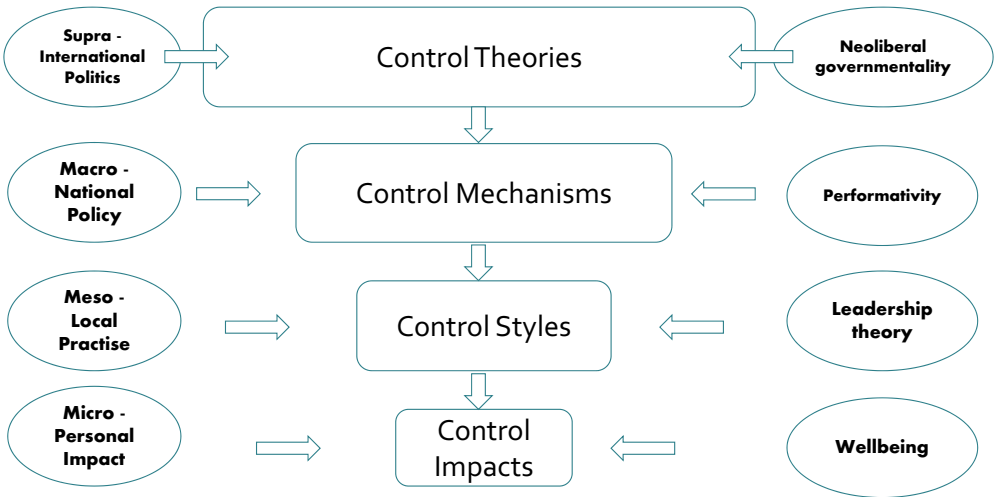


FIGURE 1 Hierarchy of control. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/berj.3973)]

respondents. The rationale of a mixed method approach is that the survey gains a broad view of the issues and informs areas for further discussion in semi-structured interviews. Johnson and Onwueguzie (2004, 20) refer to this style of design as a quantQUAL approach because the qualitative section is the dominant one of the two stages and the stages are conducted sequentially.

Munn and Drever (2004) identify the advantages of surveys as including being time-effective and enabling anonymity. This anonymity overcomes some of the criticisms of insider research as Mercer (2007) suggests that a researcher who is known to the participants could be perceived as judging people if the comments do not adhere to the organisational outlook. The survey supplies a vehicle for the participant to contribute without identifying themselves or putting themselves at odds with the researcher's professional position. The participants in this study were self-selected from a range of schools both familiar and unfamiliar to the researcher and so an anonymous survey allows for an equitable research environment. It also allows for a larger sample than interviews alone in a shorter timeframe, which is important as it was identified in the pilot survey that wellbeing can be dependent on time of year and proximity to the school holidays. Therefore, a 2 week window was set for the collection of survey data, but within this window, there was an allowance for participants to complete the survey in their own time. Gillham (2000) highlights this as an advantage which allows for contemplation but also removes interviewer bias. Limitations of surveys include the difficulty of deducing explanations as answers are given without explicit reasoning or a chance to probe ideas further (Munn & Drever, 2004; Opie, 2004). Some of the questions were matched to those that have been asked in wider surveys on differing issues to allow comparability. For example, including the wellbeing questions suggested by Tinker and Hicks (2011) for the Office of National Statistics ensures that this research is in line with other wellbeing studies in the UK. Other questions originate from the TALIS (OECD, 2013), Higon et al. (2017) for the DfE Teacher Workload Survey, the NASUWT Leadership Survey (2016) and the NUT stress survey (2016).

A benefit of surveys is that they can reach a large sample and the return rate of 15% is within the acceptable return rates for external surveys (Fricker, 2008; Smith et al., 2019; Van Mol, 2015).

The main aim of the survey was to identify patterns giving an overview and inform interview questions and so basic descriptive reporting, such as percentages and cumulative percentages, have been used. Most factors in this survey are nominal and ordinal and this makes cross-tabulation possible (Karran, 2017). These do not prove causation but can give an indication of connectedness. Cross-tabulations were also completed using the background information of the participants to ascertain if certain demographic factors were affecting different subgroups.

Gillham (2000) says that interviews are beneficial because most people get their views across more easily when speaking face-to-face with a researcher than in writing and this benefit extends to include the researcher's ability to clarify meaning and ascertain explanations from the participants. For this study, a semi-structured interview style was selected (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012), which has the advantage of allowing the researcher to explore trends identified in the survey and ask for clarification to aid understanding during the interviews. This approach also encourages a conversational style which helps build rapport to make the interviewees feel more comfortable and relaxed.

The sample of 17 participants who were interviewed was taken from respondents to the questionnaire who expressed a willingness to take part. Ideally, a stratified sample would then be taken to ensure a representative sample of teacher demographics and all possible viewpoints. However, the numbers volunteering to be interviewed were not large enough to make this technique effective. Gaining a representative sample is not easy when discussing complex issues as the position of even a single respondent can change depending on the

topic being discussed and while the aim of this sample was to get a maximum variation of the population, it is also recognised that this variation is influenced by the availability of those willing to respond (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Seidman, 1998). Therefore, all volunteers were interviewed and this sample size gives a good basis to cross-reference responses.

Analysis of the interviews consisted of thematic coding as outlined by Ely (1991), Coffey and Atkinson (1996), Braun and Clarke (2006) and Saldana (2016). The techniques used for this study are a synthesis of those suggested by the above authors as Patton (2015) states; 'Each qualitative study is unique, the analytical approach used will be unique'. This allowed for flexibility with a mixture of inductive and deductive techniques. It is important within the design of this research to allow codes to be introduced by the participants as this avoids researcher assumptions, but it was not wholly inductive owing to the analytical framework devised before the interviews were conducted.

Ethics

The ethical position of this study is that wellbeing should be considered above all else both professionally and within the research. One issue highlighted by Drake and Heath (2011, 55) is that there are added complications to the situational ethics of an insider researcher. The research design aimed to overcome this through the flexibility of participation as individuals could take part in the survey, which was advertised county-wide and so gave opportunities for anonymity without having to commit to interviews, which may leave the views of individuals more open to identification. Denscombe (1998) observes that the simple action of asking people for their opinions can improve wellbeing as it gives them a sense of importance and empowerment. When designing this study, BERA (2018) guidelines were observed and sections applicable to this study were followed. To avoid negative impacts on participants, consent was gained at the start of the survey and when interview dates were arranged. As the participants may discuss sensitive issues during the interview, the consent form highlighted possible avenues of support including in-school union reps and the teacher support network. Drever (2003) and Lichtman (2006) have advised that participants should be given as much anonymity as possible and so pseudonyms are given when individual responses are discussed.

Through all this runs the reflexivity of critical theory which requires the researcher to constantly question their position as an insider researcher.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Quantitative results

Wellbeing

The overall wellbeing score, on a scale of 1 being lowest and 10 being highest, for respondents was 5.95. This is low in comparison with the Office of National Statistics (2016) wellbeing survey which gave average wellbeing for secondary school teachers as 7.8. While these teachers may be stressed, they gain satisfaction from their life. However, the more anxious a person is, the less likely they are to feel happy, indicating that these participants could find life worthwhile without being happy. Only 11% of the respondents had been in teaching less than 5 years but they were the group least likely to be satisfied with their life, with an average score of 4.8. This may explain the high number of teachers leaving the profession within the first 5 years of teaching. In addition, 82% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed

with the statement that the teaching profession is valued in society, but most felt that the advantages of the job outweigh the disadvantages, even when they perceived their wellbeing as unimportant to their school.

Teacher workload is a serious problem with 81% reporting that not being able to complete work in contracted hours is a primary influence for working additional hours.

Figure 2 shows that most teachers feel valued at work. However, they consider their skills to be more valued than their opinions by employers.

The survey aimed to ascertain which type of motivation and leadership style might appeal to teachers. Pay rises align with transactional, trust to transformational and promotion is a mixture of both styles, with 1 being most important.

Figure 3 shows that trust is the most important motivational factor and promotions the least, although pay rises are considered quite important or most important for 78% of the responses. Continuing professional development (CPD) is another tool that leadership can use to indicate that they value and invest in their teachers. In Table 1, 93% of respondents said that they had taken part in CPD during the year before completing the survey. However, fewer felt that this CPD met their personal needs.

Policy

The final area of analysis from the survey is policy, which could help understand what influences a teacher's work.

Figure 4 shows that Senior Leadership Team (SLT) (31% scored 8) and OFSTED (31% scored 8) are perceived by teachers to have the most influence over their work. However, teachers consider their own decision-making more influential to their work than academic research or international influences. This indicates that the participants value autonomy.

The use of exam targets as part of a teacher's PM is very common. Some 93% of the respondents had been asked to use this style of indicator to assess their professional ability. However, in Table 2, the processes of PRP and PM were not seen positively.

Finally, when asked about their personal experiences with leadership in school, the experience was positive for the majority of respondents. In fact, respondents were far more

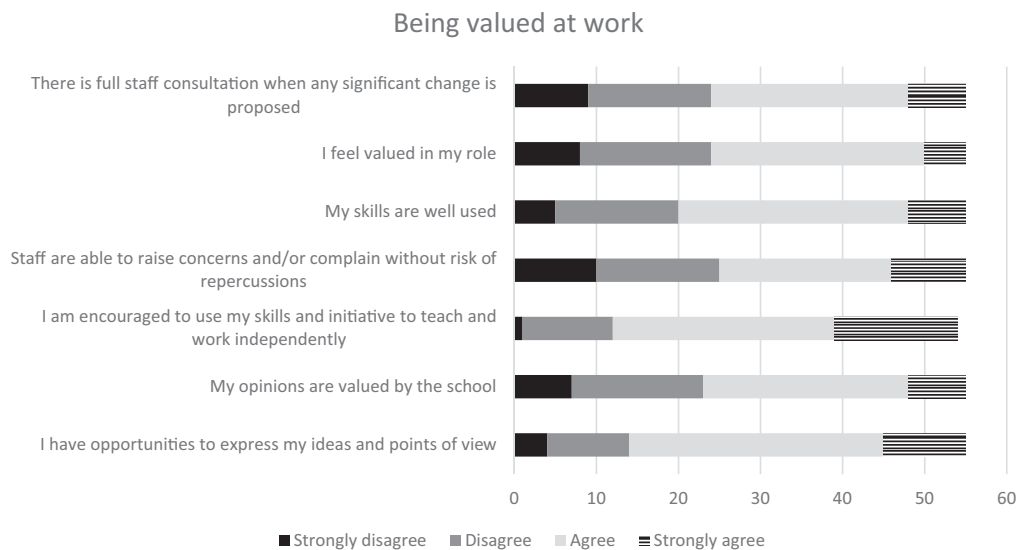


FIGURE 2 Being valued at work.

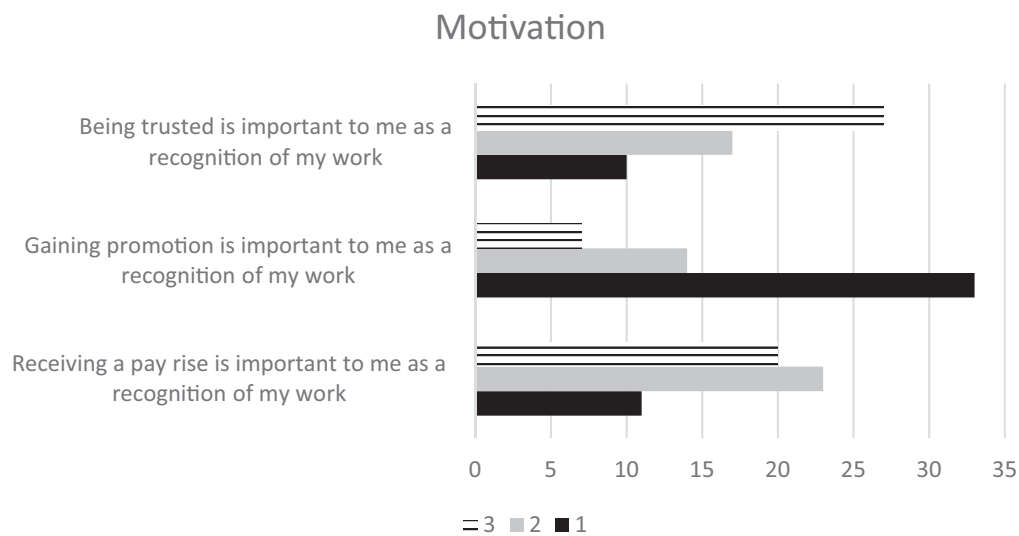


FIGURE 3 Motivation.

TABLE 1 The continuing professional development (CPD) offered has met my personal professional needs.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	6	10.9	11.1	11.1
	Disagree	16	29.1	29.6	40.7
	Agree	23	41.8	42.6	83.3
	Strongly agree	9	16.4	16.7	100.0
	Total	54	98.2	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.8		
Total		55	100.0		

positive about their relationships with leadership than other survey results would suggest. However, as [Table 3](#) shows, the questions that elicited more negative results could be attributed to transactional techniques such as lack of positive feedback, decisions on pay progression and a lack of a collaborative culture.

Qualitative results

In this section, several themes are focused on to illustrate teachers' views on factors that are affecting their wellbeing. The themes identified in analysis included teacher self-perceptions, issues of control and issues of relationships. [Table 4](#) gives a brief overview of the participant characteristics for those who took part in this study and [Table 5](#) sorts participant quotes into the themes identified. The interview guide used to gather this data can be found in [Appendix A](#).

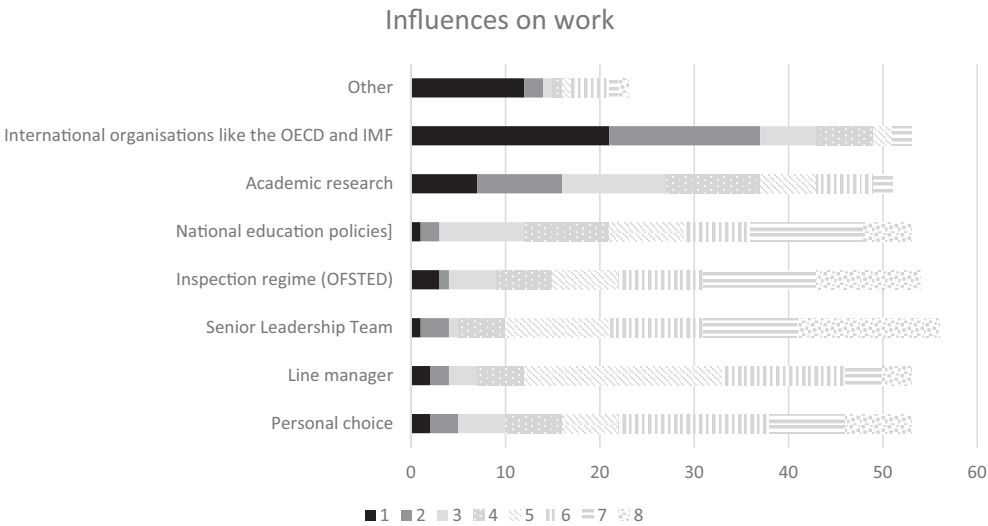


FIGURE 4 Influences on work.

TABLE 2 What affect you think performance related pay and performance management is having on education?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent	Key: 0 being very negative to 10 being very positive
Valid	0	13	23.6	23.6	23.6	
	1	4	7.3	7.3	30.9	
	2	14	25.5	25.5	56.4	
	3	11	20.0	20.0	76.4	
	4	2	3.6	3.6	80.0	
	5	7	12.7	12.7	92.7	
	7	2	3.6	3.6	96.4	
	8	2	3.6	3.6	100.0	
Total		55	100.0	100.0		

Teacher self-perceptions

The purpose of this analysis is not to compile a ‘teacher identity’ but to help understand why teachers react in the way they do to certain policy decisions and relationships within education.

One of the strongest aspects of ‘guilt’ was feeling guilty for having an evening out with friends when they could be working or for being ill and letting the students down if the teacher could not be with them. This suggests that teachers feel a lot of personal responsibility and this is one of the factors that drives them to overwork. The sense of guilt about not doing enough may be an internalisation of the accountability culture.

Accountability proceedings have also left some teachers feeling that they should defend themselves as they perceive that the ‘blame’ is often put on them for factors that are beyond their control. In some schools, the CPD that is provided to improve teacher wellbeing puts

TABLE 3 Relationships with managers.

Sub question	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
My managers are supportive	77.8	22.2
I regularly receive positive feedback on my own work	40.7	59.3
The school benefits from effective leadership	53.7	46.3
I have a good relationship with my line manager	88.9	11.1
I am trusted to make important decisions on my own	70.4	29.6
I am clear about what is expected of me at work	83	17
I trust the leadership in school to make fair and balanced pay decisions	46.3	55.6
There is a collaborative school culture which is characterised by mutual support	46.3	53.7
My line manager is considerate of my life outside work	70.4	29.6
I am satisfied with my level of involvement in decisions that affect my work at school	48.1	51.9

TABLE 4 Participant characteristics.

Pseudonym	Type of school grammar – G comprehensive – C	Years in teaching	Level of role
Jack	C 1	20+	Teacher
Jane	C 1	14	Assistant Head of faculty
Sarah	G 1	10	Head of Department
Amy	C 1	20+	Assistant Head of faculty
Jessica	G 2	15–19	Teaching and learning responsibility
Daniel	C 2	22	Teaching and learning responsibility
Jenny	C 1	2	Teacher
Heather	G 2	5	Assistant Head of Department
Chris	Ex teacher C1	2	Cover supervisor
Nicole	C 3	18	Teacher
Mark	G 3	15–19	Assistant Head of Department
Paul	G 3	10–12	Assistant Head Teacher
Liz	C 4	10+	Assistant Head Teacher
Lisa	C 5	10	Teacher
Karen	G 4	20+	Head of Department
Sean	C 6	24	Deputy Head
Adam	G 4	?	Head teacher

responsibility on teachers to overcome their problems, whereas individuals feel that policies prevent them from implementing the training.

Lisa: Oh it was ridiculous. It was putting it back on you. No. The reason I have an issue with wellbeing is because ridiculous deadlines are imposed on us and there is no other way than either working all weekend or working through the night to meet said deadline.

Respondents saw themselves as naturally hard-working individuals who love their job and want to do well for the students, which gives them a sense of self-worth. They can feel shame and

failure if they exhibit non-compliance to policies, which creates anxiety because participants feel that they could always do more and can also lead to exploitation because teachers aim to do whatever it takes to do their best.

Issues of control

The control a teacher perceives themselves to have over their own classroom and the many other influences that make them feel powerless results in some teachers wanting more clarity about the conditions under which they are working.

Some of these agencies of control are internalised by teachers, making it difficult for them to understand the source of control. The interviews suggest that teachers see their motivation to be intrinsic, as Sean concludes: 'Teachers make their own pressure'. Internalisation of pressure is also exhibited through an inability to 'turn off', meaning that teachers feel that they are always thinking about work and this makes them feel out of control of their own thought processes (Karen). Owing to the widespread teacher belief in being rule followers, not following the rules can play on a teacher's mind even when they are 'discovered' (Mark) to not be following the rules and nothing is done.

Chris: It was just the constant worry. Someone's going to come in. They're going to ask the kids to show an example of marking and the kid's not going to be able to show it.

Researcher: But they never did have a go at you about it.

Chris: No, they didn't. It feels like the issue was ignored. In my mind, it should not get to a point where I'm just so panicked.

Chris chose to leave teaching as his internalisation was at odds with the reality of not being held to account, which was causing stress.

Some teachers would rather go to work ill than run the risk of losing control over their area, and others have stood down from middle leadership roles or moved to work part-time in order to meet workload expectations

Nicole: It worries me and fears me, the idea of taking on any more because I wouldn't be able to do anything to a good enough standard ... And that, to me, is important.

If participants feel that they made the choice to work over contracted hours it does not impact their wellbeing negatively, as it might for someone who feels coerced. Schools can allow teachers to feel more in control of their working lives by sharing the rationale behind what they are being asked to do.

Paul: The top-down approach doesn't work particularly well. Sometimes it has to happen but if there's an element of discussion in there and an element of teamwork in the decision-making it, I think it works better.

Teachers expressed a desire to be able to manage their workload by knowing the upcoming demands, thereby removing uncertainty. Uncertainty may reflect how SLT sometimes forget to use transformational management strategies to encourage teacher retention.

Teachers accept the need for management so that the school community can work towards a common goal. However, control can be hidden and result in teachers having contrary expectations placed on them, leading to teachers feeling under constant pressure. According to Baker (2020), on average 17% of the population will report experiencing

TABLE 5 Themed participant quotes.

Teacher self-perceptions	Issues of relationships	Issues of control
Heather – ‘The guilt feeling because you’re not spending time with your family and trying to fit in, I don’t go anywhere in the evenings or weekends with the children without taking a bag of books with me so I can possibly mark it and I go to the hairdressers I take a bag of books and when I’m sitting with my colours in I mark books ... People laugh at you because I turn up and I don’t go anywhere without marking. Any 5 min I’m sitting down I’m marking’.	Chris – ‘And another thing that put massive pressure on me. They decided to do weekly, they called them, “temperature tests”. They were temperature tests which are learning walks in all but name. But what I didn’t like was you didn’t know when it would be. Each SLT member had a corridor to do but they would name and shame the department in the SLT notes. And if you are in a two-person department, you are going to know if it’s you or not. Equally, if you’re in a bigger department you’re going to think “was that me?” ... I was constantly on edge ... It was just the constant worry’.	Daniel – ‘I think it’s that lack of control. We control our own classrooms but there seems to be an awful lot of external agencies that seem to be sticking their oar in all the time, taking away that sense of control and by doing that they are making it far more stressful than it ever should be ... There’s too many demands from too many places’.
Jessica – ‘If they were my beliefs then I would not mark anything and I would plan a lot better. I would be more efficient in what I do. I believe I should be more efficient in my classroom but the emphasis of my management is different so as a good worker I think I should follow their emphasis but I think my counselling is making me realise that if it’s important to me to do it, the other way round, then I should and if the management doesn’t agree with it maybe I’m not in the right place of work’.	Jane – ‘[Deputy head], who’s received his NPQH this week, emailed me to say thank you personally for my involvement in his NPQH ... and then I spoke to him in person and I said “thank you for your email and congratulations” and he was ever so pleased because I think that thing about compliments and recognition of everything for everyone else goes both ways’.	Chris – ‘It was just the constant worry. Someone’s going to come in. They’re going to ask the kids to show an example of marking and the kids’ not going to be able to show it to her. Researcher – but they never did have a go at you about it. Chris – no, they didn’t. It feels like the issue was ignored. In my mind it should not get to a point where I’m just so panicked about marking, I don’t mark. And it continues forever. I didn’t mark, apart from maybe one class. I didn’t mark any year 8 work all year ... How can I go that long and it not be picked up on and tackled?’

(Continues)

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Teacher self-perceptions	Issues of relationships	Issues of control
Jack – 'I don't want people thinking I can't deal with them [the students] because they're difficult ... I also don't want them to know that I'm struggling'.	Jessica – 'They are responding to society, I can't be completely mad at them. However, I do believe that they have choices as managers. Yes they have their guidelines but there are plenty of studies, and your own experience shows, that a happy child, or worker for the matter, succeeds better'.	Sean – 'Teachers make their own pressure'.
Jane – 'I know my Dad did not want me to tell the school at all that I had depression and that I was taking anti-depressants and anti-anxiety pills. He didn't want me to tell them because "well they'll judge you and they'll fire you".'	Amy – 'The whole talk of that [OFSTED] seems to have died a death ... We were expecting it [OFSTED] in October and it didn't come and they've not mentioned anything about it ... It's only been progress 8 and in some ways that's a bit better because at least progress 8 on SISRA is measurable. I can look at it every time I do the results and I can say "yep, I think I'm going to be ok" or "oh no, I think I'm going to be rubbish. That kid's red, let's get him back up to where he should be. How can I get him back up?" ... which has helped me a lot I think'.	Nicole – 'It was reassurance that it wasn't just me being a bit mental. That it is a normal thing and that people do need to, and it's ok to go to your boss and say "I cannot do this, so give me another 2 days". So I've gone to them in the past and we've had weekly meetings set up under my negotiation. I've organised that because that kept them off my back. That kept me out of capabilities because I went to them and said "I am not doing my job. I need help please". And by doing it and going to the CBT that kind of gave me the strength and the knowledge that I could do that and it was acceptable to do that'.
Paul – 'I think teachers by definition, well (A) they're all intelligent people. They've all got degrees, all very capable but they don't particularly like being told what to do unless they understand why they're told to do it'.	Daniel – 'I think it was the feeling of how daft the lesson observation criteria had become. And that no matter what somebody said, as somebody who had taught for 22 years, it didn't matter at all. If somebody had their own private little vendetta, they could then personally apply whatever they wanted in the criteria to get whatever result they wanted'.	Lisa – 'I have negotiated an afternoon off a week which I call my wellbeing afternoon. Which will mean that I've got a couple of hours breathing space so it's either catch up time or just go swimming or just go to the supermarket. But I've got that stop time. It's there and it means I can put the pause on school and say "no more. That's it, I'm going out. That's it. Lunchtime". I get to go on that 1 day. And I've learnt lessons from that past as well. I won't ever allow a school to get to me the way that I have done a few years ago'.

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Teacher self-perceptions	Issues of relationships	Issues of control
Heather – 'I suppose maybe I'm a black and white character. If to make life easier [in the] marking policy, you want it to be marked in a colour. Doesn't bother me. Some people will not like that because they think it's dictating. It doesn't bother me. If I can see a reason for something and sometimes I would prefer just for a decision to be made. Tell us, fine I'll go away and do that'.	Lisa – '[SLT who] have not forgotten what it's like to be in the classroom and understand the pressures so they are prepared to put realistic deadlines in place and actually do a proper costs benefits analysis of some things and actually look at which things are going to have to go. [For example] year 11 is paramount, we must have a set of mock exams taking place. Do we really need to have year 7 parents evening scheduled while that is happening? ... That would be my ideal, somebody that's a realist'.	Paul – 'The top down approach doesn't work particularly well. Sometimes it has to happen but if there's an element of discussion in there and an element of team work in the decision making it I think it works better'.
Nicole – 'I love standing in front of kids and I love making them go "oh wow, tell me more". That idea of a kid being able to walk out of my room and going "I'm going to look at that tonight on the internet" or "I'm going to ask my mum about that". It's that inspiring. It's just that wanting to pass on something that they've maybe never seen before, never done before'.	Karen – 'They do say thank you. The thing is right, when [ex head] was there, he used to say all the time "oh you're doing brilliant, thank you so much" but it was so insincere, it didn't sound sincere'.	Nicole – 'It worries me and fears me, the idea of taking on any more because I wouldn't be able to do anything to a good enough standard ... And that to me is important. Now what I was in charge of, things got dropped. I dropped the balls so people's performance management wasn't done properly or learning walks weren't done properly. I felt I wasn't giving my best because I couldn't, I was spread too thinly. So you can't do everything so what ended up happening was I was keeping everybody else happy doing my management role which meant my lessons and my books suffered. But then I came under scrutiny so then I was in charge of people on incapability knowing full well if somebody caught me, I would also be on incapability'.

(Continues)

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Teacher self-perceptions	Issues of relationships	Issues of control
<p>Lisa – ‘Oh it was ridiculous. It was about mindfulness. It was putting it back on you. You take time out. You take time to watch the traffic light. You watch the kettle boil. No. The reason I have an issue with wellbeing is because ridiculous deadlines are imposed on us which then there is no other way to meet that deadline than either (A) working all weekend or working through the night to meet said deadline and that’s what impacts on your wellbeing ... Just thinking that if they do a presentation or pay for some group to come in. Say here we are, we’ve addressed your wellbeing but not actually looking at what the issues are in the first place that are causing it’.</p>	<p>Sean – ‘I’ve been spoken to by parents in the past where I’ve given up my time during the holiday and was told, well I shouldn’t worry about it because I’m getting paid overtime. I take trips and it’s uncommon for someone to thank me for doing it ... The expectation that teachers will go up, above and beyond what they’re contracted to do time and time again’.</p>	<p>Nicole – ‘You are the queen of your castle. King of your castle. You are in charge, nobody else. If you’re off sick, you have to plan the lessons coz nobody can take it over ... Nobody else can do it. Whereas if you’re in an office job, the stuff that’s on your desk sits on your desk and you set up the email to say, I am out of the office, and people just wait for the next day. Whereas, the kids are going to turn up. And the data has to be entered in because everybody else is entering the data at the same time and it has to be done to be sent home to parents. That isn’t negotiable. That can’t be delayed because you’re sick for the day because you’re busy. It’s a case of, you’re made to feel you are one small part of this massive situation and if you drop out then the whole thing stops so you have to be on your game and you have to be functioning because otherwise, what’s going to happen?’</p>

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Teacher self-perceptions	Issues of relationships	Issues of control
Jenny – ‘I think it’s that value. I don’t feel there is that sense of being valued properly. I have to prove my value to them to get a pay rise. That they won’t give me, they won’t show me that I have any value until I say “right I’m off”. Which is a shame really because just as kids respond to positive reinforcement, so do people in general. That doesn’t stop when you turn 18’.	Mark – ‘I think there’s an expectation you are a social worker and a police officer but then in the same breath a lot of people say “I couldn’t do your job. I couldn’t do that”. They give you lots of credit but at the same time tell you how you probably should of fixed all problems of society’.	Researcher – ‘Do you feel like teachers have freedom to express themselves?’ Nicole – ‘Not really. Because you have to be careful ... Because we’re seen in that old style, as very traditional upstanding members of the community but at the same time we’re expected to be a venting board for parents. So, no longer are we an upstanding member of the community that people look up to. But we’re expected to behave like that but people don’t treat us like that’.
Sean – ‘You have to do it to the best of your ability every single time because each child has only one chance. You can’t come into teaching as a job. At which point expectation means you have to do the best you possibly can’.	Sarah – ‘The year before I had a kid who failed AS, I didn’t want him to continue and we had to keep him. He got a D which I was quite impressed with because he went from a U to a D but he hadn’t got a B. So he destroyed our residuals really and I was like well (sign)’.	Paul – ‘There’s a freedom in being an outstanding school. Because we had an OFSTED and we knew we were safe for a little bit at least so that gave us a bit of freedom’.

Sean – ‘The profession exploits or the government exploits the fact that lots of teachers believe strongly and passionately about educating children and therefore, will continue to work beyond their hours to achieve that’.

Jack – ‘Kids are cool and kids can be cool so they’re not bad to work with’.

Jessica – ‘Because they give me rules, I have to do that. So if the policy said you have to do these books on a 2 or 3 week rota, I have to do that until there is a breaking point and I can’t do it anymore. But until that point, I do if there are rules’.

(Continues)

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Teacher self-perceptions	Issues of relationships	Issues of control
Jack – ‘The full expectation, the unwritten rule [is] that you will keep up with all that marking all the time, that you can’t have a night in the week where you could be doing something else. That is a nightmare. That’s the bit that stops you being happy, it’s the work–life balance. So what I do is worthwhile otherwise there’s no point but what makes me happy is the stuff I do outside of work that makes me me’.	Researcher – ‘I know you work outside of your contracted hours. What motivates you to do that?’ Lisa – Generally, it’s (A) usually for the students, making sure that you’re doing a good job for them or when I’ve had a really, really motivated group – like with year 11 I’ve been prepared to put those extra hours because I feel like they really deserve it because they’re working. I’ll be honest, this year, I didn’t have a particularly nice or motivated year 11 group. Despite my best efforts I didn’t feel that motivated to do that extra for them’.	Daniel – ‘I’ve done a long time teaching and never ever had to mark in great detail and in great depth and write little essays and reports on kids’ work. It just seems totally stupid to me and amazingly the kids have done well without me having to do any of that extra work. I see it as a massively oppressive regime which requires a huge amount of effort on the teacher part with very little outcome for the kids’.
Nicole – ‘It is the expectation and [it’s] becoming worse, that everything from the league tables from the government point of view, this has filtered down. And we are expected to deal with the kids. We are expected to be responsible for the grades. You know, they’re our grades. But they are not our grades. And if we don’t get the GCSE grades and the pass rates, why are you not getting them? What are you doing about it? I think that pressure comes right from the very top because we have those league tables’.	Sarah – ‘My head here is obsessed with OFSTED and to be fair the school’s not been OFSTED’ed for 10 years so it is overdue an OFSTED. However, the results are good.’	Researcher – ‘What’s your school’s way of judging somebody’s pay rise?’ Sarah – ‘Absolute nightmare. Your first thing is each of your exam groups, if you’re M1–M4 50% of every group has to hit or exceed their target to get a two, which is good. So it’s based one, two, three and four. So based on the OFSTED gradings. To get a one I think it has to be 50% and a positive value added. If you’re above M4 it’s 60% of every single group. So the more exam groups you have, the more likely you are to trip up. If that doesn’t happen that’s it. It’s stopped. You don’t get your pay rise. Now thankfully, that’s never happened to me. I know some people have argued for it but it’s all a bit cloak and daggers and I’m not quite sure who gets it and who doesn’t. I know some people haven’t had it but no one really wants to talk about it I guess. If you get past that bit you then have two observation lessons which again are graded one to four so you add those points up. You have your marking scrutiny, your normal targets which I have three of, two of which you pick from a list of things you’re going to do and one is coz I’m head of department. So that’s the only one, I’m lucky because I get a choice of something I am working on’.

TABLE 5 (Continued)

Teacher self-perceptions	Issues of relationships	Issues of control
<p>Lisa – 'I teach because I love my subject and I love working with young people and I enjoy learning and I wanted to pass that on and I believe that I have skills in order to inspire students to encourage them, to bring them on, to help them make progress and that's why I did it. On the whole I feel like I am able to do that. It's just some of the little parameters that get in the way'.</p>	<p>Liz – 'Oh no. Can't do things like that. Might get into trouble.'</p> <p>Researcher – 'With who?'</p> <p>Liz – 'OFSTED. Obviously, we don't want to rub them up the wrong way do we? At the end of the day, if they came in and said we were failing, that would be a huge issue wouldn't it? It only takes one thing to cock you up when it comes to OFSTED doesn't it. And that could be, that one little thing could land you in so much trouble and it is in the back of your mind and you do have to talk about it as SLT and you have to talk about it in your line management meetings and you have to talk about it in your staff meetings because ultimately, it is always there.</p>	<p>Amy – 'I've not made my targets. I made them 1 year and then I didn't make them the next year so I didn't get my PM. And then I made them the next year after that but I didn't get my PM ... I think it had a huge impact on staff morale. It had on mine. Me personally, I was just like, I give up. You know for a while I wasn't really giving my best because I'd had enough. I was fed up, I was tired, I'd hit rock bottom. Yeah. And I feel that now because I'm, (whispers) I don't care. I'm not going to be worried if I don't get my pay progression'.</p>
	<p>Paul – 'There has been, the two external pressure I think that act on teachers is OFSTED really and the fear of that or the expectations and some of the rumours that stem from that and the misconceptions. Again I think the OFSTED programme is moving in the right direction, the OFSTED philosophy is moving in the right direction but certainly I've seen teachers damaged by the OFSTED experience'.</p>	<p>Researcher – 'So what was it about when they decided that they couldn't afford to give pay rises that really got to you?'</p> <p>Lisa – 'It was loss of trust because they were naughty. They didn't tell us until after the deadline had gone for being able to hand your notice in so that felt like that was shady because they obviously knew'.</p>
	<p>Lisa – 'I don't even know, I'm not even certain OFSTED even want to see it half the time and I think there's a lot of myths surrounding what OFSTED actually want or don't want. I just think schools have got themselves tied up in knots about what they think OFSTED needs to do'.</p> <p>Sarah – 'But he [The Head Teacher] was like "but I need to measure it so I can tell OFSTED how I'm measuring it". And I just think well, he obviously feels that he's getting that message from OFSTED, whether he's interpreting it rightly I don't know and then he's passing it down to us so. I just feel like the pressure, he's obviously under pressure probably from the governors as well to be honest and then he passes it on to us. Who pass it onto the kids'.</p>	

common mental disorders. Of the 17 participants interviewed for this study, 88% reported a mental health problem resulting in medication, counselling or both.

Teachers feel that they have a professional persona to maintain which can reduce their confidence in speaking out when necessary.

Nicole: You have to be careful [about speaking out] ... Because we're seen in that old style, as very traditional upstanding members of the community ... but people don't treat us like that.

Another avenue of control is OFSTED, a national agency that the government uses to monitor the quality of provision. However, it is perceived by teachers to be a control mechanism that ensures government policy is adhered to which influences not only school policy but also the way SLT work to ensure that schools toe the government line. Often, participants felt that they were being asked to do tasks on the basis that OFSTED expect it but they were not sure whether that was actually true. Uncertainty seems to be a strong characteristic of how teachers view inspections.

Issues of relationships

Schools with good relationships between SLT and staff generally have better wellbeing and participants valued this. These good relationships are based on trust, communication and a sense of control for staff.

The relationships between teachers and SLT are very important to teachers, but they had mixed views of the role of SLT in their lives. Teachers want to be trusted by SLT with increased autonomy but also think that SLT should intervene when there are wellbeing issues, as teachers feel that they are not good at recognising when they need to work less for the good of their health. Meaningful work relationships can create better working conditions for both parties.

Jane: [Deputy head], emailed me to say thank you personally for my involvement in his NPQH ... and then I spoke to him in person and I said 'thank you for your email and congratulations' and he was ever so pleased because I think that thing about compliments and recognition of everything for everyone else goes both ways.

When participants had less time with a member of SLT, relationships were generally less positive and they blamed excessive workloads on SLT being 'scared' of OFSTED. Overall, it was considered that SLT also have excessive workloads which impacts on teachers, with one participant saying of their head teacher, 'he gets really stressed and then puts it on us' (Sarah).

Relationships with students were sometimes strained owing to the analysis of student data, which can result in teachers using terminology that objectifies students. Overall, teacher/student relationships were seen as a positive aspect of teaching. When teachers had more control over situations, they spoke warmly of children but if they felt that they did not have control they viewed students more negatively and participants felt that there was too much responsibility for results on teachers rather than students. However, there was a strong feeling that teachers think that they are part of the problem because they can pass on the pressure they feel to students.

The interaction between the two leadership styles is complex. Teachers do not consider themselves to be motivated by money. However, if they feel that the wage is not

commensurate with workload, it is seen as a sign that teachers are not valued. As long as the wage gives them an acceptable standard of living, transformational actions are valued more than transactional ones. There was a feeling that, as teachers invest so much time on the job, a school should be more than an employer.

In schools with more negative wellbeing there were issues of loss of faith in the management which could result in low retention rates:

Researcher: So what was it about when they decided that they couldn't afford to give pay rises that really got to you?

Lisa: It was loss of trust because they were naughty. They didn't tell us until after the deadline had gone for being able to hand your notice in so that felt like that was shady because they obviously knew.

Lisa went on to talk about how this incident caused her to relax her efforts in that school. However, she found this way of working 'uncomfortable' and so used her energy to find a job where her efforts would be recognised. This is an example of where a transactional leadership technique was not honoured and so the teacher cut their workload, which made little difference to the data on which transactional actions rely.

Overall, there was a feeling that PRP did not have any impact on learning (a view supported by the EEF, 2018) and was a mechanism used by the national government to reduce wage costs in education.

Sarah: But it's a way of saving money. I really do think that. It's just a way of them depressing the wages and saving some money.

Pay can be seen as a transactional way of showing the profession respect and so when pay progression is withheld it has a financial impact but also impacts wellbeing as teachers perceive respect to have also been withheld.

As most participants indicated that they would work over contracted hours for the benefit of their students, the issue for participants was whether they saw the additional work as fair or not.

Sean: The government exploits the fact that lots of teachers believe strongly and passionately about educating children and therefore, will continue to work beyond their hours to achieve that.

However, there were a number of contradictions to the assertion of exploitation throughout the interviews. There were many examples of a teacher's standards being higher than the standards expected of them. Conversely, the first sentence of the preamble for the Teachers Standards states, 'Teachers make the education of their students their first concern (DfE, 2013)'. 'Expectations' are enacted on a local level but are set by national policy.

'Expectation' is value-laden and used as a way of controlling teachers' behaviour, which influences a teacher's sense of being professional. The participants had a strong sense of professional pride but there was a strong feeling that people cannot meet all these expectations and this creates feelings of unhappiness. As accountability procedures rely on contractual factors such as PRP, teachers' awareness is heightened as to what they are contracted for and it becomes clear that a teacher who is working more hours than they are paid for is being exploited irrespective of willingness.

DISCUSSION

Overview of the current situation for teachers

The current paradigm of State governance is neoliberal, which is ambivalent to mechanisms used to elicit desired, measurable outcomes (Davies, 2016). This paradigm in education is being enacted through policy technologies such as PM and PRP which are transactional structures designed to give clear guidance for goal achievement (Avolio & Bass, 2002). These encourage transactional leadership styles which assess teachers according to pre-defined targets, some of which include too many external factors influencing students. These teachers were also concerned that PM targets were too narrow to reflect all aspects of the job. The participants have internalised aspects of competition in the form of competition with the self. However, this research asserts that this is an insidious form of neoliberalism which does not result in large-scale open resistance but uses a teacher's identity to elicit behaviours which include overwork and impact on wellbeing. This encourages a form of transformational leadership which manipulates aspects of 'expectation' to make teachers feel like failures if they do not live up to these demands. More visible neoliberal policies, such as PM, give teachers a feeling of there being a safety net which monitors their performance and will step in if needed. However, when actions do not improve outcomes, teachers lose faith in the system and ultimately exert self-governance by leaving the profession. This form of neoliberalism leads to certain aspects of the work being hidden and perceived to be valued less by the education system, although highly valued by professionals.

Teacher management structures put forward by government policy are highly transactional in nature but the leadership style of individuals is a continuum between transactional and transformational, depending on the personality of the leader and the situation they are addressing (Hater & Bass, 1988). If managed transactionally, teachers exhibit poorer wellbeing expressing concern and frustration. Conversely, when leadership are more transformational, teachers respond positively. This can be negative as the agreeable feelings this creates can be used to manipulate behaviours, including overwork, through the use of the term 'expectation'. However, teachers are aware that exploitation is occurring owing to teachers' dedication to their students and the existence of PRP targets which feel like they have been designed to make the achievement of them very difficult, ensuring a limit on the rising wage bill for schools.

Teachers consider themselves to be effective self-managers, valuing positive work relationships and welcoming sincere expressions of appreciation from students, managers and parents. Providing a relatively good standard of living is maintained, these expressions of appreciation are more important for wellbeing than transactional pay rewards. However, if these affirmations are lacking, it can result in individuals showing forms of resistance. Resistances reported in this research were mainly supportive of the overall aims of the organisations employing the individuals and so tolerated by SLT. These are felt as uncomfortable when enacted by teachers owing to a sense of counterculture behaviour.

Issues that trouble teachers

The overarching neoliberal concept uses performativity as a form of governance which enables international comparisons (Ball, 2003; Sellar & Lingard, 2014) and facilitates competition, taking the view that survival of the fittest is a better form of regulation than State interventions. Through an amalgam of traditional and new professionalisms, teachers are being presented with a wide range of 'expectations' which change depending on the demands of the organisation. While being held accountable to the formal structures of PM, teachers are also

expected to assume other behaviours which do not get transactional recognition. To adhere to varying images of what it is to be a teacher, internalisation of standards is occurring to enable individuals to protect their sense of self-worth through the development of deep acting, which reduces the excessive emotional labour involved in surface acting (Yin, 2015). There is a conflict between a neoliberal approach which rewards measurable aspects of teaching and more transformational behaviours of SLT. Teachers look to enact their agency by holding onto the traditional image of highly trained professionals who have earned the right to be seen as upstanding members of the community. However, this is at odds with neoliberalism which requires individuals to prove their worth continuously. In this research, teachers felt that they were being held to account for things they would have done anyway because they want to do their best for students which makes them feel like they are not trusted to carry out these actions without being overseen. Overall, neoliberal leadership styles appear to challenge teacher agency which these participants see as being given professional respect to making decisions which are best for their context.

The conflicts between the two dominant styles of leadership results in an inconsistency of expectation which leaves teachers feeling insecure and their wellbeing is negatively affected. Transactional leadership also constrains the language available to teachers and SLT when the need for positive affirmation is identified and places a stronger emphasis on PRP which ignores difficult-to-measure behaviours and relationships. Teachers value the more intangible characteristics of the job and become frustrated when these are ignored. However, these can also be used by leadership to elicit behaviours, creating a conflict which could cause serious threats to wellbeing as individuals become complicit in their own control (Lewis, 2007).

Teachers guard against further negative impacts on wellbeing by internalising aspects of the job so that they can 'buy in' to the actions they are being asked to perform. From the viewpoint of wellbeing, developing an internalisation of 'expectations' should be encouraged as it leads to deep acting and reduces burnout. However, deep acting results in high stress levels owing to the anxiety around meeting expectations and not letting others down (Yin, 2015). As neoliberal strategies are only concerned with the outcome rather than particular strategies, it leaves teachers feeling confused about what the deep acting should be. This makes it difficult for teachers to fully internalise mindsets which dehumanise students or contradict more traditional, hard-to-measure professional beliefs. Teachers seek to influence local practice as this is the level of politics that they feel is most accessible to them as individuals (Foucault, 1994). However, the examples of resistance in this research would appear much weaker than illustrations in other sectors (Knights, 1990; Spencer, 2000). Moving to part-time work or asking leadership for their reasoning can lead to anxiety and guilt as they conflict with ingrained ideals of what it is to be a teacher. The formation of self-identity is, in part, due to the social construction of 'teacher' which is ingrained before teacher training but also due to the wide-ranging standards (DfE, 2013) teachers are held accountable to. When an individual feels that they struggle to meet standards without challenge or support from SLT, they opt for the final form of resistance and leave.

Current solutions to issues impacting teacher wellbeing

The DfE (2016) assumed that it was workload that causes poor teacher wellbeing, as this is what wellbeing studies have indicated (Bajorek et al., 2014; DfE, 2017a; Holmes, 2005; Roffey, 2012). However, the current research focuses on measurable indicators and an inadequacy of language within which teachers can frame their communication of complex influences and feelings. Therefore, teachers are offered guidance on mechanical aspects of teaching including planning, managing data and marking. When the more difficult-to-measure

aspects of teaching such as emotional labour and relationships are addressed, the current ethos is to use wellbeing CPD sessions and PM strategies which put responsibility onto individuals.

As personal responsibility is encouraged, there is little recognition that there are different leadership styles at play within a school and that these styles can contradict or complement each other. While teachers question the validity of PM structures, they also want the sense of security that transactional leadership can offer, provided it is also coupled with the positive aspects of transformational leadership. Most schools appear to be following government guidance for teacher management as this is what OFSTED inspects. As a result of this, strategies that help improve individual wellbeing are sidelined as efforts are focused on that which is inspected. Solutions for teacher wellbeing commonly offered by leadership focus on the symptoms of the problem, i.e. individual mental health management, but these are not having the desired outcome. According to neoliberalism, this lack of success should encourage a market shift that aims to improve wellbeing outcomes. However, teacher wellbeing is not a high educational priority and CPD sessions focusing on wellbeing have been seen by participants as a 'tick box exercise'.

Actions taken to address issues with workload (DfE, 2016) give the impression that concerns are being tackled on a national level, but these are doomed to failure as teachers have already internalised the behaviours expected of the profession. The issues affecting wellbeing are more complex and often more hidden than the profession realises. Neoliberal influence and the pressures (internal and external) to overwork to deliver the best possible experience for students are denying individuals the possibility to reflect on what drives them.

CONCLUSION

The limitations of this study are important to recognise and it does not claim generalisability of the findings owing to the small sample sizes of the survey and interviews. The local context also creates limitations as Lincolnshire has a secondary school that which is not common across England. There are only 163 grammar schools out of around 3000 state secondary schools (BBC, 2016) across the country, which makes a percentage of around 5.4%. However, out of the 10 schools that participated in the interviews, 40% were state grammars. The relative pay of a teacher in this county is high and ensures that teachers here have a comparatively good standard of living. This is a benefit for this study as it means that pay concerns can be put aside to reveal deeper issues such as how PRP can influence trust. However, when pay threatens living conditions, this may be prioritised in the minds of teachers who live in areas with higher costs. A limitation which was highlighted in the pilot for this study was that the time of year when the surveys and interviews are conducted has significant impacts on reported wellbeing scores and, in turn, could influence the feelings being expressed in interviews. The pilot showed that data gathered just after longer holidays or towards the end of the summer term are generally more positive than that gathered mid to late autumn and winter terms, which was the case for this data collection. Finally, this research ignores a variety of other leadership styles but even with all this acknowledged, the following conclusions can add to the current evidence base.

Teachers hold a strong sense of their professional identity which is built on the ideals of traditional professionalism and transformational leadership, underpinned by intense emotional labour which is difficult to quantify and so is invisible to neoliberalism. However, there are factors within this hidden arena of teachers which neoliberalism has recognised as useful, namely appealing to 'expectation' through transformational leadership. This is not easy to measure but provides a useful technology to induce conforming behaviour. Through this, teachers become compliant in their own control. Neoliberalism

has offered a clear structure for the management of education based on measurement against predefined targets which creates a system where schools and teachers become more and more similar through standardised expectations, normative judgement and the expectation that teachers and leaders should behave in certain ways to be considered valid or acceptable in their position. Traditional professionalism assumes respect owing to the work given to attaining the position of teacher whereas new professionalism expects constant proof of ability; transformational leadership offers personal recognition and self-actualisation whereas transactional leadership offers a material reward for work completed and does not regard the emotional payback for work; professional identity values many aspects of teaching that are hard to measure whereas performativity only measures predefined targets; and emotional labour values an individual's ability to be reflexive and adaptive to circumstance whereas new public management expects everyone to react in similar ways at all times. The process of internalising a professional identity – while influenced by the overarching concept of neoliberalism through both leadership styles – results in teachers attempting to adopt traditional and new professionalism concurrently. When the full complexity of the influences is considered, it is no surprise that teacher wellbeing is low as teachers are being torn by the demands of many conflicting or competing values. The knowledge this research has put forward is the first step in understanding how politics, policy and leadership factors can shape professional identity and emotional labour in ways which are sensitive to the lived experience of individuals. It could also help leaders identify the barriers that exist at different levels of governance which may be hindering improvements in teacher wellbeing. For researchers, this hierarchy opens up avenues for deeper investigation as to how these levels and strands of governance are operating in and through schools.

The workload directives of the DfE (2016, 2017) and the latest moves to reduce workload post-pandemic (DfE, 2023) miss the point if they focus on the mechanics of teaching (managing data, planning and marking) rather than overarching pressures (such as perceived efficacy, social relationships and autonomy) that influence teachers. By synthesising the supra-, macro- and meso-levels which intertwine to impact on an individual teacher, this study provides a new way of viewing the issues affecting wellbeing and teacher retention. The aspects of teaching that individuals value, including the wealth of different relationships and the possibility to exercise regular autonomy within their working environment, are ingrained into a teacher's sense of professional identity. However, this identity can be used by management technologies on national and local levels to encourage overwork, which is damaging to the wellbeing of teachers as it is an impossible task to always deliver the best, not least because the definition of 'best' keeps changing. Therefore, neoliberal performativity manipulates behaviours and leaves individuals feeling unfulfilled as they can never achieve the traditional image of a respected, professional in their field. However, owing to the internalisation of neoliberalism, this tension has not resulted in vocal resistance but acts as an insidious influence that leaves teachers struggling to verbalise their disquiet effectively. The way individuals are being managed in education comes into conflict with the way they are brought up to think of as 'teacher'. By reducing the need for individuals to work in the contradictions of traditional and new professionalism or transformational and transactional leadership, the emotional labour of teaching can be reduced. However, this conclusion could result in teachers being manipulated without pay issues through the emotional blackmail of 'expectation' which may equally result in negative wellbeing for different reasons. The next stage is to research how leadership styles and national policy can be influenced to value the more difficult-to-measure aspects of teaching for the benefit of both teacher and pupil wellbeing. This researcher proposes that this could be done through a more in-depth exploration of teacher emotional labour which could then inform quantitative systems of measuring

this for school quality assurance structures. This is important for staff and students as a happier teacher has positive impacts on their students too (Roffey, 2012).

FUNDING INFORMATION

This research received no external funding.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

There are no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Ethical approval was granted by the Lincoln University Ethical Approval Board and follows the guidance in the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018) document. All participants gave their written consent.

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How to cite this article: McQuade, L. (2024). Factors affecting secondary teacher wellbeing in England: Self-perceptions, policy and politics. *British Educational Research Journal*, 50, 1367–1395. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3973>

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Thanks for taking part – how do you feel about teacher wellbeing now?

What are your views on work–life balance?

What would your ideal member of SLT look like?

Are your SLT like that? Why?

Is happiness the same thing as finding your life worthwhile? Which is more important? Why?

What is the role of the international organisations in education? How does this impact on your teaching? Why?

What do you feel are society's views on teachers?

Have you noticed and changed in education over your time as a teacher? How do you feel about it?

Are you happy to talk about mental/physical health? Where do you see the cause of that coming from?

How do your SLT show that they value you?

Do you regularly receive positive feedback on your work? Why do you think this is? How does it make you feel?

What motivates you to work outside contracted hours?

How do you feel about government policies like inspections, changes in exams and PRP?

What are your experiences of CPD?

What would you rather have, money in the form of a pay rise, or that SLT made it clear they trusted you? Why?

Have there been any impacts on your partner or family life owing to being a teacher?