

EDGE Annual Programme of Stakeholder Research: Business in Schools



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1 Summary

- 1.1.1 Opinion remained evenly balanced among parents on whether or not children have enough opportunities to experience the workplace while in school, while teachers were much more likely to think there were not enough opportunities; 51 per cent had this view while only 28 per cent thought there were enough opportunities.
- 1.1.2 Teachers were likely to think there was insufficient employer engagement in their school and this situation has not improved since last year. Sixty-nine per cent thought there was too little and only 32 per cent that there was the right amount; very few thought there was too much. Those with a nominated member of staff for employer engagement in their school were more likely to think the balance was correct.
- 1.1.3 Employers did not feel well informed about opportunities to engage with school. Two thirds felt that their organisation was on balance not well informed; this is in line with last year's findings. Small organisations were less well informed than large ones, and private sector organisations less than public ones. Work experience (79 per cent) remains the activity most employers are aware of by a considerable margin, however awareness of Apprenticeships has increased from 48 to 57 per cent.
- 1.1.4 Most young people (65 per cent) had taken part in work experience, but many other activities had very low participation. Young people were likely on balance to say they want or would have wanted more engagement activities; around half the sample felt that more of most types of activity would be beneficial.
- 1.1.5 Employers remained generally positive about engaging with the education sector. Two thirds were on balance more willing than not and only three per cent were not at all willing. Of those employers that currently do not engage, 44 per cent were on balance in favour of doing so in the future, while ten per cent indicated that they would definitely not be willing to do so. These results are in line with last year's findings.
- 1.1.6 Sixty-four per cent of employers said they currently engage with the education sector; again this shows no change since 2008. Engagement was lower in the private sector (54 per cent) than the public (92 per cent) or the third sector (76 per cent), and lower in SMEs (43 per cent) than large organisations (78 per cent).

- 1.1.7 The top benefits for employers continue to be recruitment opportunities and a better community image; very few of those who engage thought there were no benefits to the business.
- 1.1.8 The main barriers for employers remain a perceived lack of time and resources, concerns about bureaucracy, and whether there are suitable or appropriate opportunities. Some employers had concerns about having students in their workplace; indicating that the concept of engagement for many employers remains narrow and related only to work experience placements.
- 1.1.9 Young people identified a broad range of factors as important for a good work experience placement, but were particularly concerned with the variety of work available (48 per cent) and the preparation that goes into accommodating them (45 per cent). Teachers and employers were more focused on the work being meaningful, and the attitude of the young person, although employers also agreed with young people on the importance of good preparation.

The main factors which make for a poor placement were identified by young people and teachers as an unhelpful team or manager, only doing routine or mundane tasks, and having no plan in place or poor preparation. Young people and teachers were in agreement on these negative factors. Responsibility, objective setting and feedback were mentioned less, indicating that it is engagement with the task at hand that is of primary importance.

Young people were generally positive about their own work experience placement. The vast majority (92 per cent) said they approached it with a good attitude, while 71 per cent said they had a supportive manager and 64 per cent that they were given some responsibility. However around a third had a less positive experience, reporting that they did the same thing all day (38 per cent, or only did mundane or routine tasks (32 per cent).

There is less of a concern this year over the economy impacting on employer engagement. Only 22 per cent thought their engagement might decrease due to the recession compared with 30 per cent last year. Almost two thirds (63 per cent) expected no effect, compared with 48 per cent in 2008.

2 Methodology

2.1.1 In September to October 2009 YouGov conducted surveys of four key stakeholder groups. This was the second year of a three year programme. The research was carried out online and sample was sourced from YouGov's panel of 250,000 adults and young people in the UK.

Figure 1: Headline details about the four stakeholder surveys

Stakeholder group	Dates	Sample
Children and young people	1 st to 5 th October	2,198
Parents	17 th to 24 th September	1,013
Employers	25 th September to 5 th October	1,001
Teachers	2 nd to 8 th October	1,034
Total	-	5,246

2.1.2 Further detail about the sample composition of each stakeholder group is provided in turn below beginning with the survey of children and young people.

Children & young people

2.1.3 For the survey of children and young people the sample frame was fixed as those aged between 11 and 24 with an even spread of ages across that range. Sample was drawn to be representative of region and socio-economic classification based on pre-known data about their household and the data was weighted for age and gender of respondents. 953 respondents were included who also took part in the 2008 wave of research, allowing us to track decision making and changes in their attitudes as they get older. The key variables are presented in the table below.

Figure 2: Breakdown of the children and young people's survey sample

Variable	Value	Weighted	Unweighted
	Base	2198	2198
Gender	Male	1099	1100

Variable	Value	Weighted	Unweighted
	Female	1099	1098
Age bands	11 to 12	314	272
	13 to 14	314	336
	15 to 16	314	327
	17 to 18	314	352
	19 to 20	314	301
	21 to 22	314	299
	23 to 24	314	311
Which of these best describes what you are doing at the moment?	At school or college in full time education	1109	1106
	At University/ other higher education institute	504	509
	Working full time	350	348
	On a training course	16	16
	A combination of working and studying	69	68
	Doing an Apprenticeship	12	12
	Not working studying or on a training course	138	139
Current Key stage	Key Stage 3	467	454
	Key Stage 4	324	335
	Key Stage 5	286	283
School/ college type	State/ Comprehensive School	709	705
	Grammar/ State Selective School	78	77
	Special School	10	11
	Academy	32	31
	Independent/ Public/ Private School	60	62
	Sixth Form College	77	76
	Further Education College	120	122
	Tertiary College	3	3
Government Office of the Region	North East	122	119
	North West	230	229
	Yorkshire and The Humber	214	211
	East Midlands	165	166
	West Midlands	191	191
	East of England	203	206
	London	258	260
	South East	331	330
	South West	185	185
	Wales	114	113
	Scotland	186	188

Parents

2.1.4 The sample frame for parents was defined as parents or carers of at least one child currently aged between 11 and 18. The sample was controlled and weighted using the national population as a proxy for representativeness amongst parents. The data was weighted for region and socio-economic classification; sampling ensured a broad 50/50 split between gender, and age was not considered a key variable. The key variables are presented in the table below.

Figure 3: Breakdown of the parents survey sample

Variable	Value	Weighted	Unweighted
	Base	1013	1013
Gender	Male	482	531
	Female	482	531
Age	18 to 34	74	73
	35 to 44	365	365
	45 to 54	433	433
	55+	141	142
Social Grade	ABC1	557	569
	C2DE	456	444
Government Office of the Region	North East	44	44
	North West	118	112
	Yorkshire and The Humber	89	89
	East Midlands	76	75
	West Midlands	91	89
	East of England	97	102
	London	130	132
	South East	142	150
	South West	89	84
	Wales	51	49
Scotland	87	87	
Working status	Working	740	742
	Full time student	28	28
	Retired	35	35
	Looking after family full time	119	118
	Unemployed	34	33
	Not working for health reasons	49	49
	Not working for other reasons	8	8

Employers

2.1.5 The target sample profile for employers was to survey 1,000 managers / decision makers with responsibility for recruitment as a component part of their job. Respondents were not human resources personnel, but rather middle and senior management. The sample was drawn to be representative in terms of business size (as measured by the number of employees) and industry sector. The data was weighted on business size and industry sector using National Statistics data. The key variables are presented in the table below.

Figure 4: Breakdown of the employers survey sample

Variable	Value	Weighted	Unweighted
	Base	1001	1001
Government Office of the Region	North East	36	33
	North West	91	97
	Yorkshire and The Humber	65	61
	East Midlands	57	61
	West Midlands	96	92
	East of England	108	114
	London	138	131
	South East	196	190
	South West	88	92
	Wales	42	47
	Scotland	84	83
Organisation size	Micro (2 to 9)	132	229
	Small (10 to 49)	137	190
	Medium (50 to 249)	120	162
	Large (250 or more)	613	418
Sector	Private sector	723	743
	Public sector	208	172
	Charity/ voluntary sector	70	71
	Advertising/Marketing/PR	31	33
	Aerospace	6	6
	Agriculture/Chemicals/Forest Products	14	18
	Automotive	16	16
	Computers/Electronics	63	71
	Construction	68	67
	Consumer Goods	23	22
	Education	88	88

Variable	Value	Weighted	Unweighted
Industry	Energy/Mining	13	14
	Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	93	88
	Government/Military/Public Service	90	70
	Hospitality/Recreation	34	40
	Media/Publishing/Entertainment	24	23
	Medical/Health Services	84	78
	Pharmaceuticals	21	19
	Retail	60	65
	Service	61	68
	Telecommunications/Networking	23	21
	Travel/Transportation	39	31
	Other	151	163

Teachers

2.1.6 The target sample for teachers was to achieve 800 responses from working secondary school teachers and 200 from those in specific sixth form or other Further Education colleges (FE). The final survey sample consisted of 912 secondary teachers and 122 from FE colleges. Sampling was controlled for balance across age, regions and ages of pupils taught. The data was not weighted and the key variables are presented in the table below.

Figure 5: Breakdown of the teachers survey sample

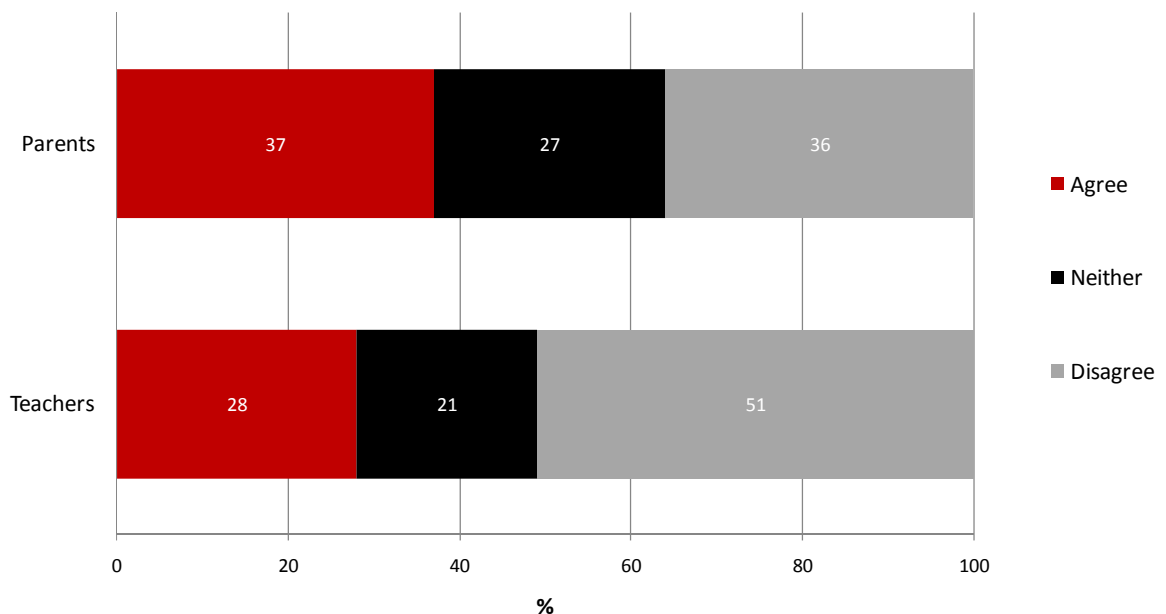
Variable	Value	Number
Base	Base	1,034
Gender	Male	458
	Female	576
Age	18-34	288
	35-44	200
	45-54	230
	55+	316
Government Office of the Region	North East	44
	North West	122
	Yorkshire and The Humber	103
	East Midlands	82
	West Midlands	96
	East of England	100
	London	112
	South East	156
	South West	82
	Wales	48
Scotland	89	
Role	Secondary teacher	912
	Sixth form / FE lecturer	122
For how long have you been a teacher or lecturer?	Up to 2 years	90
	Between two and five years	146
	Between five and ten years	201
	Ten years or more	596
Institution Type	State School	712
	Independent/ Public/ Private School	105
	Sixth Form/FE/ Tertiary	131
Age Group(s) Taught	11 to 13	719
	14 to 16	781
	16 to 19	607
	19 plus	169
Type of subjects taught	Academic	722
	Vocational	70
	Mix of both	205

3 Business in Schools

3.1 Experiencing the workplace whilst in school

- 3.1.1 As in the research carried out last year, opinions among parents and teachers are relatively evenly balanced in relation to whether children have or will have enough opportunities to experience the workplace. However teachers remain more likely than parents to disagree that students have enough opportunities (51 per cent compared with 36 per cent of parents). Parents are more evenly split among those who agree that there are enough opportunities (34 per cent), disagree (36 per cent) or neither agree nor disagree (27 per cent).
- 3.1.2 Older parents remain more likely to feel students get enough opportunities for workplace experience (39 per cent of parents aged 55+ compared with 29 per cent among parents aged 35-44). Teachers in sixth form/ FE colleges are also less convinced that there are enough opportunities (17 per cent compared with 30 per cent of state school teachers).

Figure 6: Students have enough opportunities to experience the workplace whilst at school (teachers and parents)



Base: parents (926), teachers (1,012). Figures exclude don't knows.

3.2 Supply of opportunities and types of employer engagement

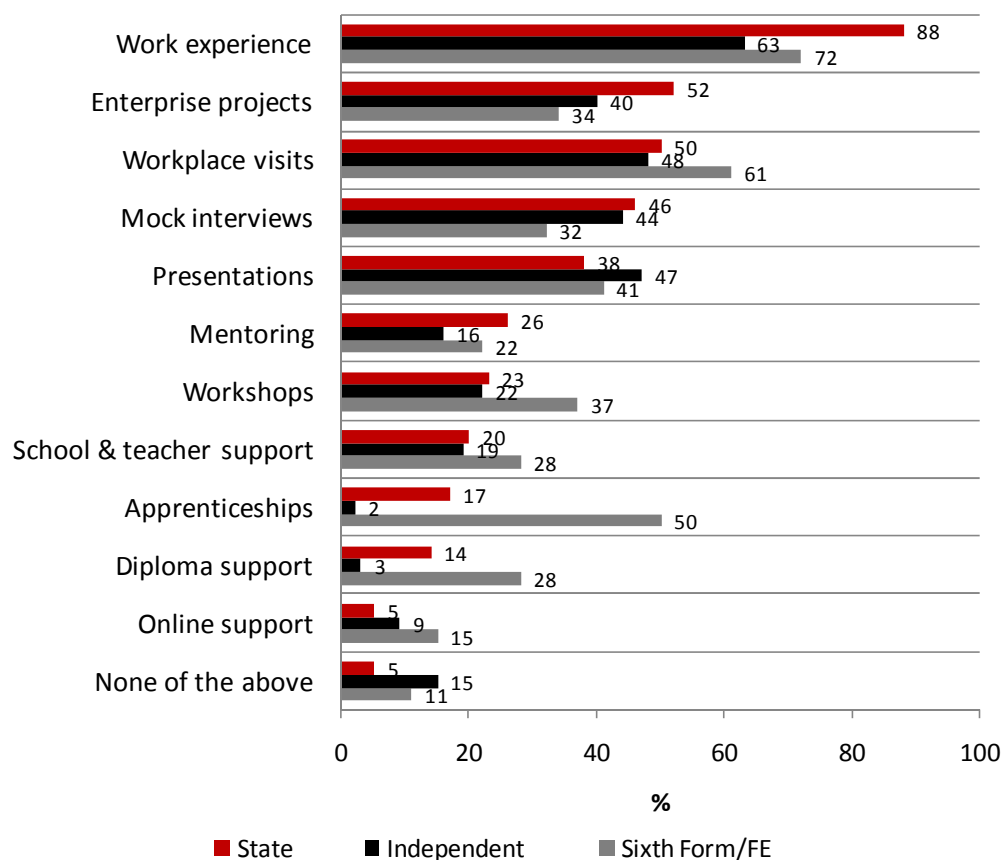
From the teacher's viewpoint

- 3.2.1 Just one per cent of teachers felt there is currently too much employer engagement at their school – a slight decline from the five per cent reported last year (although this is not statistically significant). Similarly to last year nearly two-thirds (59 per cent) felt there is too little employer engagement and a further third (32 per cent) that the balance was about right.
- 3.2.2 The largest pool of teachers in the research (from comprehensives) were most likely to report too little engagement (62 per cent), followed by nearly half of teachers in other types of school (independent schools 49 per cent, sixth form/ FE 52 per cent).
- 3.2.3 As may be expected, teachers from schools that have a nominated staff member to liaise with local businesses were significantly more likely to report the balance of employer engagement is about the right amount (41 per cent), although it is important to note that more felt that there was not enough (54 per cent).
- 3.2.4 Rather than the teachers in sixth forms or FE colleges who were identified last year as more likely to feel the balance was correct, this year's research identifies independent school teachers (41 per cent) as those most likely to think so, followed by a third of state school teachers (31 per cent) and sixth form/FE teachers (33 per cent).
- 3.2.5 Teachers of vocational and work-based learning programmes were the least likely to think there is the correct amount of employer engagement (24 per cent, compared with 34 per cent of those who teach academic subjects), while 67 per cent of these think there is too little.
- 3.2.6 A third of teachers with more than two years experience say their school has not been involved in any employer engagement activities. Among those whose school had been involved in engagement activities the top five most frequently reported activities were work experience, enterprise projects, workplace visits, mock interviews and presentations.
- 3.2.7 Teachers from the independent/ private sector were least likely to report that their school had been involved in business engagement activities (15 per cent had not taken part in any activities). The one activity which their schools *were* more likely to have taken part in than

other types of schools was presentations by businesses (47 per cent compared with 38 per cent of teachers in state schools).

- 3.2.8 Over half of teachers in sixth form/ FE education report that their college had been involved in workplace visits (61 per cent) and Apprenticeships (50 per cent). State schools were more likely to have taken part in work experience (88 per cent), enterprise projects (52 per cent), and to a lesser extent mock interviews (46 per cent).
- 3.2.9 Due to a slight change to the question wording there is no direct comparison to last year's research. However the top three most common engagement activities are broadly similar to those reported last year, when teachers were asked if they themselves had been involved in any of the activities rather than their school as a whole.

Figure 7: In the last TWO years, has your school/ college been involved in any of the following activities with businesses?

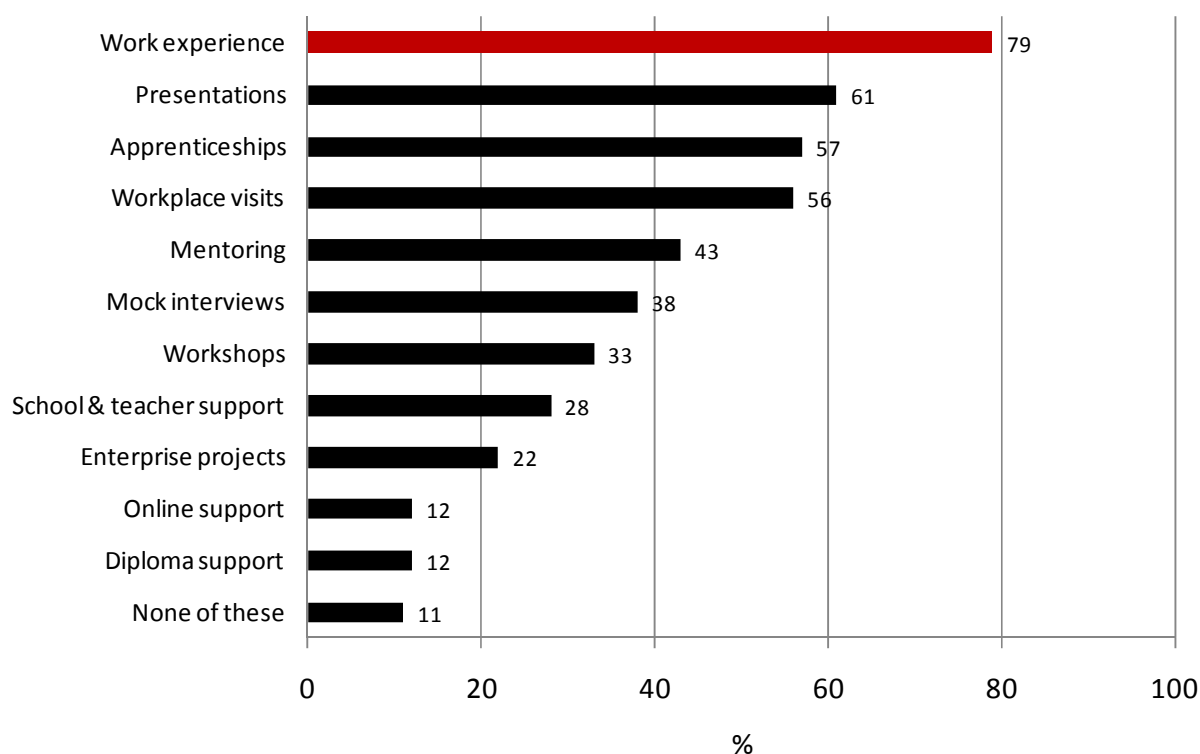


Base: state teachers (712), independent teachers (105), sixth form/FE lecturers (131)

From the employer's perspective

- 3.2.10 In line with the findings from last year, two-thirds (67 per cent) of employers felt their organisation was not well informed about opportunities to engage with schools. On a scale of one to ten, where one is very poorly informed, and ten is fully informed, the average answer given was 4.45. Only four per cent said they were fully informed, with a third (33 per cent) ranking their level as 6 or above. Employers based in the East of England were the least informed (answering an average of 3.9), while those in the North were the most (5.02).
- 3.2.11 A clear distinction based on the size of businesses remains. Large organisations continue to be most informed, answering an average of 4.81 on the 10 point scale. In contrast, smaller organisations are much less informed (micro organisations gave an average score of 3.69 out of ten, and small organisations 3.92). Among business sectors, public sector employers continue to be the most informed (5.75), followed by those in the charity/voluntary sector (4.94), and lastly the private sector (4.03).
- 3.2.12 Work experience was the activity employers were most aware of (79 per cent). Presentations (61 per cent), Apprenticeships (57 per cent) and workplace visits (56 per cent) were also recognised by over half of employers. These results show little change since 2008, however awareness of Apprenticeships has increased somewhat (from 48 per cent last year).
- 3.2.13 Work experience was by far the most recognised activity among employers who do not currently engage with the education sector (64 per cent), with a drop of eighteen per cent to the next most recognised activity (Apprenticeships 46 per cent).

Figure 8: Which of the following types of engagement activity were you aware of?



Base: all employers (1,001)

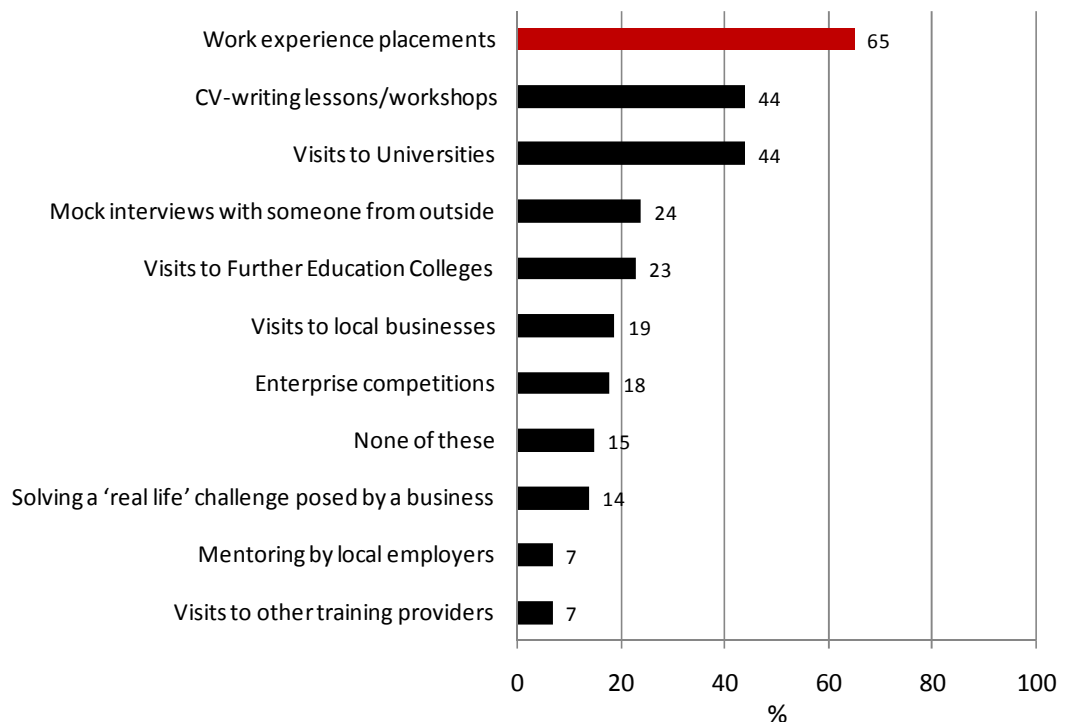
3.2.14 Awareness of specific engagement activities reflects the pattern of which groups feel most informed generally about opportunities to engage. That is, awareness of all activities was higher amongst public sector employers (only six per cent were not aware of any), and large businesses (nine per cent not aware of any).

3.3 Demand for engagement activities from young people

3.3.1 Students in Key Stage 4 and above were asked which activities that involve local businesses they had taken part in while at school/ college. The most common activities were work experience (65 per cent), visits to universities (44 per cent), and CV workshops (44 per cent). Other activities such as visits to local businesses (19 per cent), enterprise competitions (18 per cent), real-life challenges (14 per cent) and mentoring (seven per cent) were less commonly experienced.

3.3.2 As would be expected participation levels increased amongst those still in education at Key Stage 5 (12 per cent in Key Stage 5 compared with 27 per cent in Key Stage 4 said they had not participated in any of these activities).

Figure 9: Which, if any, of the following activities have you taken part in while in school/college?



Base: All at Key Stage 4 and above (1,710)

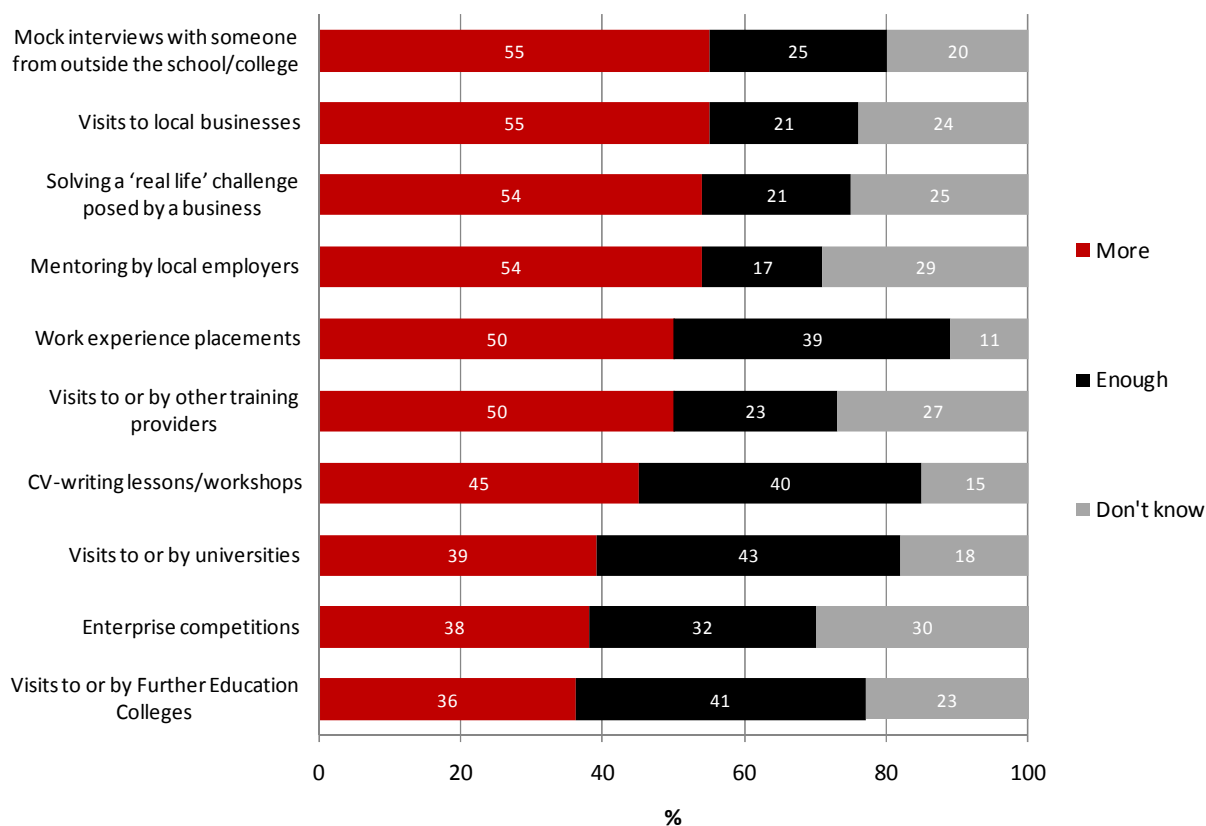
3.3.3 As was reported last year, children and young people would generally like more opportunities to engage in activities. Mock interviews and visits to local businesses were viewed highly, with 55 per cent wanting more of these opportunities. Around half of those interviewed felt that more of most types of activity would be beneficial.

3.3.4 The profile of those wanting more opportunities was more likely to be:

- Female rather than male *although enterprise competitions are equally popular for both males and females;
- In state schools rather than independent schools;

- Currently on a training course, Apprenticeship or not working, studying or training.

Figure 10: For each of these activities would you say that you have or had enough opportunities to take part or would you have wanted more?



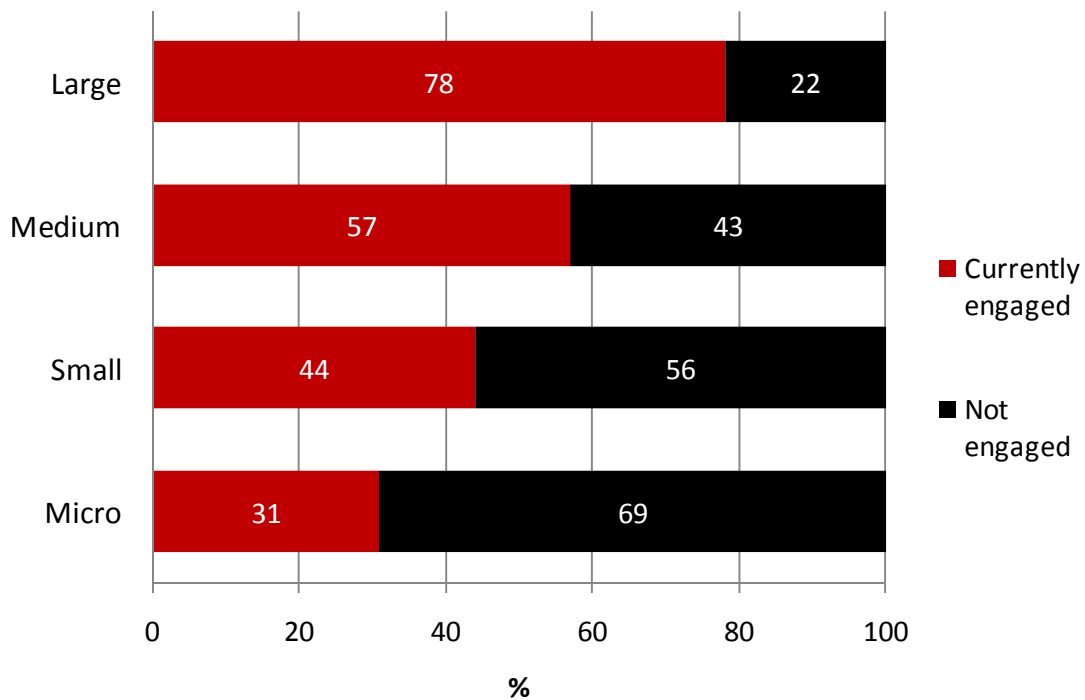
Base: All at Key Stage 4 and above (1,710)

3.4 The willingness of employers to engage

- 3.4.1 As reported last year, employers remain positive about engaging with the education sector. When asked to rank how willing their organisation is to engage with the education sector the average answer was 6.66. Just three per cent answered 'one', that is, not at all willing to engage, while two-thirds gave an answer of six or above (66 per cent).
- 3.4.2 Employers in the private sector were slightly less positive about engagement opportunities, answering an average of 6.24, behind the 7.89 reported by those in the voluntary/ charity sector, and 7.70 by the public sector.

- 3.4.3 Among employers that currently do not engage with the education sector, over half indicated low willingness to do so (55 per cent answering 1-5) and of these ten per cent are not at all willing. However, 44 per cent are generally willing to do so (answering 6-10). This shows little change from the forty per cent reported last year.
- 3.4.4 There were few regional differences, although London does stand out as generally less willing to take part (answering an average of 5.99 out of ten).
- 3.4.5 Perhaps unsurprisingly, it is the education sector that is most willing to engage in activities (reporting an average answer of 9). As was reported last year, professional services such as finance reported a lower willingness to engage (answering below 6). It is important to note that the representation of each industry sector is small and so these findings can only be indicative; they do, however, follow a similar pattern from last year's research.
- 3.4.6 Sixty-four per cent of employers are currently engaged with the education sector – the same proportion reported last year (63 per cent). Engagement was lower in the private sector (53 per cent) than in the public (93 per cent) and third sector (89 per cent). There remains a clear difference between smaller and larger organisations, with 78 per cent of large employers currently engaging with the education sector, compared with just 43 per cent of SMEs. Engagement was lowest among micro organisations where just under a third (31 per cent) were involved.

Figure 11: Does your organisation currently engage with the education sector in any way? (by organisation size)



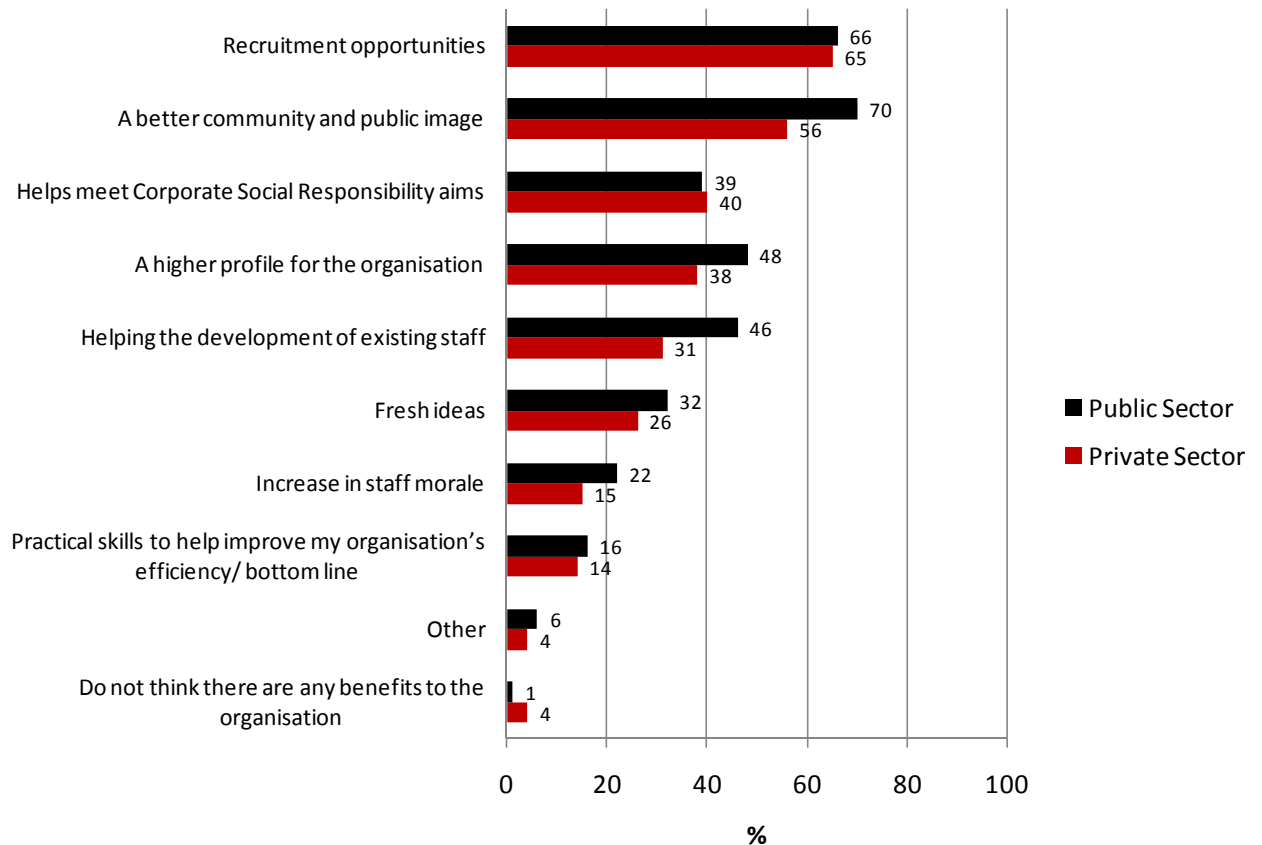
Base: employers (934). Figures exclude don't knows.

3.5 The benefits of engagement

For an employer

- 3.5.1 Recruitment opportunities and a better community image were the key benefits mentioned for engaging with the education sector, as they also were last year. These were the benefits mentioned by employers who currently engage in activities with the education sector. Employers in the public sector were generally more likely to mention any activity, excluding Corporate Social Responsibility, which was slightly more popular among private employers (although this is not a statistically significant difference).

Figure 12: What do you see as the main benefits which engagement with the education sector brings to your organisation? (by private / public sector)



Base: employers who currently engage (private sector=325, public sector= 143)

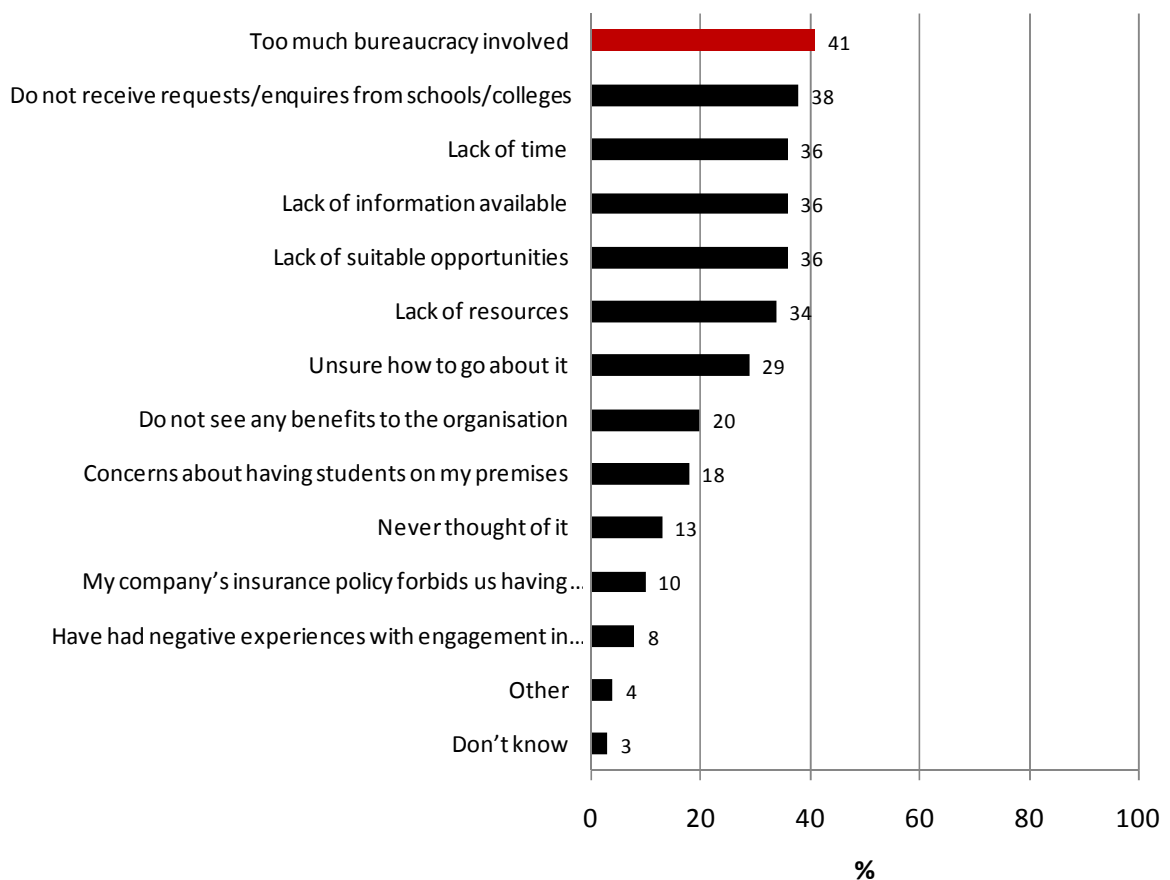
3.5.2 Just one per cent of public sector employers who are currently engaged with the education sector, and four per cent in the private sector did not think there were any benefits to their organisation.

3.6 Barriers to engagement

3.6.1 All employers were asked what barriers exist which stop them engaging with the education sector, or engaging with it more. At least a third mentioned lack of time (35 per cent), lack of resources (34 per cent) and too much bureaucracy (33 per cent), demonstrating no change from last year. This wave of research also reinforces that very few are concerned by a lack of benefits to the organisation, and negative experiences (eight per cent and seven per cent respectively).

- 3.6.2 Many employers did not highlight particular concerns that are stopping them from engaging with the educational sector; rather that a lack of requests from schools or colleges to get involved (25 per cent), lack of information (23 per cent) or being unsure as to how to go about it (15 per cent) are stopping them engaging. Almost a third also mentioned a lack of suitable opportunities (30 per cent).
- 3.6.3 Concerns about having students in their workplace were mentioned by fourteen per cent, and eight per cent were concerned that their company's insurance policy forbids having underage people working on site. This was initially emphasised in last year's research, and is again apparent in the current research; indicating the narrow concept of engagement for many employers who associate it largely with work experience or placements.

Figure 13: What are the main factors which prevent your organisation from engaging more with the education sector?



Base: All employers not currently engaged (406)

- 3.6.4 Among employers who are not currently engaged the top reasons that are stopping them from becoming so is the bureaucracy involved (41 per cent) and a lack of requests from schools and colleges (38 per cent). This was closely followed by a lack of suitable opportunities (36 per cent), information (36 per cent), and perhaps as a symptom of this, a lack of time (36 per cent).
- 3.6.5 In no change from last year, employers in London and the South East were more likely to report a lack of contact from schools and colleges (18 per cent compared with 30 per cent in the north). Likewise, SMEs are more likely to say that they do not receive requests or enquires from schools and colleges (32 per cent), and that they lack the information (31 per cent) or are unsure how to go about engaging with the education sector (19 per cent).
- 3.6.6 The main issues stopping SME's engaging are a lack of suitable opportunities (38 per cent), bureaucracy (37 per cent) and lack of time (35 per cent).

3.7 Work Experience

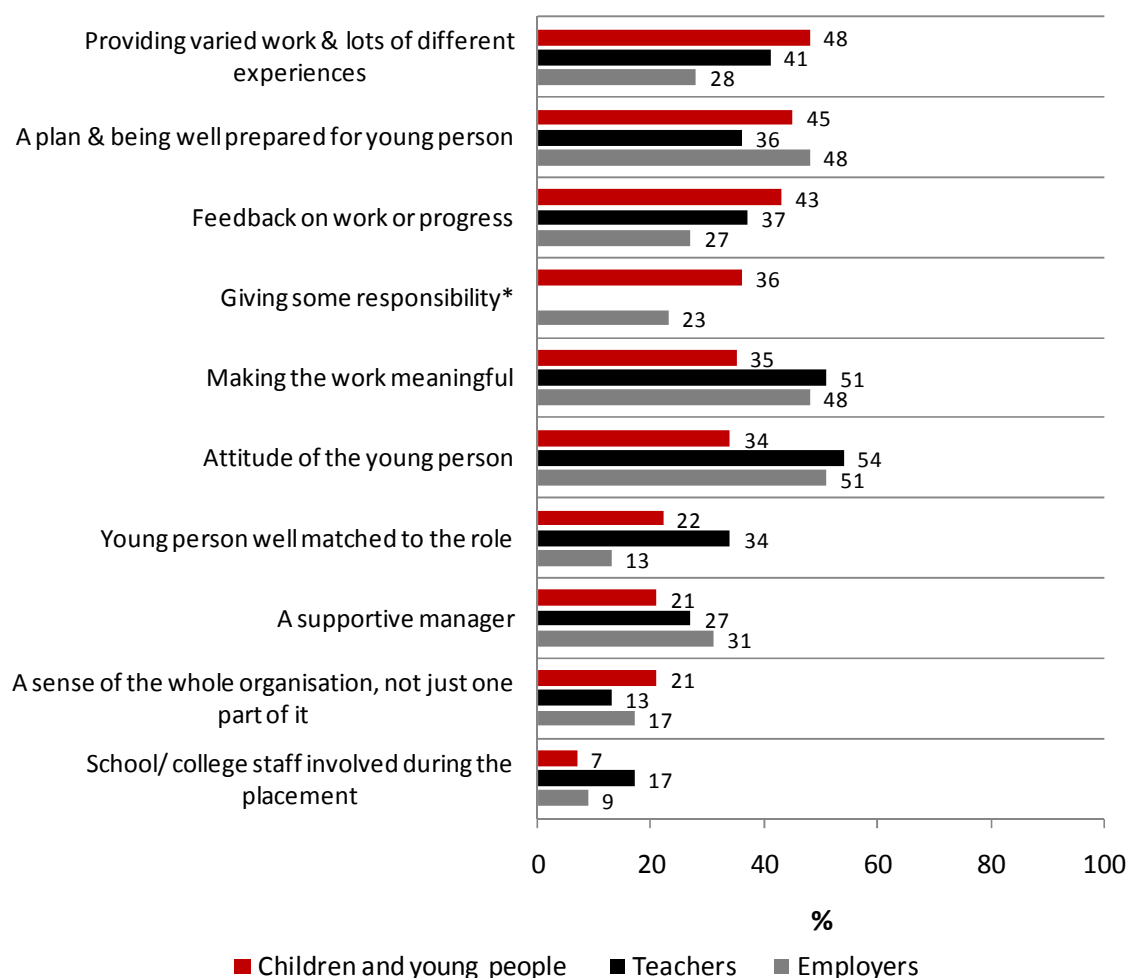
What makes a good placement

- 3.7.1 A new section on work experience was included into the 2009 research, with the aim of identifying what makes a good placement, and conversely, what makes a bad one, and how these factors are borne out by the children and young people in work experience.
- 3.7.2 In highlighting what makes a good work placement, children and young people were generally more likely to mention the range of work available to them and the preparation that goes into accommodating them. Children and young people mention a broader range of factors; excluding involvement of school/ college staff during the placement, the least mentioned factors are nevertheless mentioned by one in five (getting a sense of the whole organisation and having a supportive manager).
- 3.7.3 One student explained the key factors in providing a good work placement:
- *'I think the key thing is that you are actually given an opportunity to experience the business, preferably with a variety of tasks, as opposed to being given something set aside for work experience candidates.'*
- 3.7.4 Both teachers and employers emphasize the attitude of the young person themselves (54 per cent/ 51 per cent respectively) and that the work is meaningful (51 per cent/ 48 per cent). Furthermore teachers agree with students that the work should be varied and involve

lots of different experiences (41 per cent, likewise 48 per cent of children and young people). Employers are keen that there is a plan and they are well prepared for the young person (48 per cent, as also mentioned by 45 per cent of children and young people).

- 3.7.5 Other than teachers themselves, there is not much indication that involvement of school/ college staff during the placement makes for a good work experience (mentioned by seven per cent of children/ students, and nine per cent of employers). Among teachers themselves seventeen per cent thought their involvement is beneficial, although this declines to eight per cent among independent/ public/ private school teachers (compared with 16 per cent of state school teachers, and 29 per cent of sixth form/FE lecturers).

Figure 14: Based on your experiences what are the THREE MOST important factors in making a successful work experience placement?



Base: Children and young people who have been on work experience (1123), teachers who have been involved with work placements (424), employers currently engaged with the education sector (420)

3.7.6 Employers who are generally less engaged, that is the private sector and smaller organisations, are more likely to mention providing varied work and lots of different experiences (31 per cent in the private sector, compared with 21 per cent in the public sector, and, less significantly, 32 per cent in SMEs compared with 26 per cent in large organisations). This is interesting, since in the previous chapter SMEs and the private

* 'Giving some responsibility' not asked to teachers

sector were also more likely to mention that it is a lack of suitable opportunities stopping them from engaging with the education sector.

What makes a poor placement

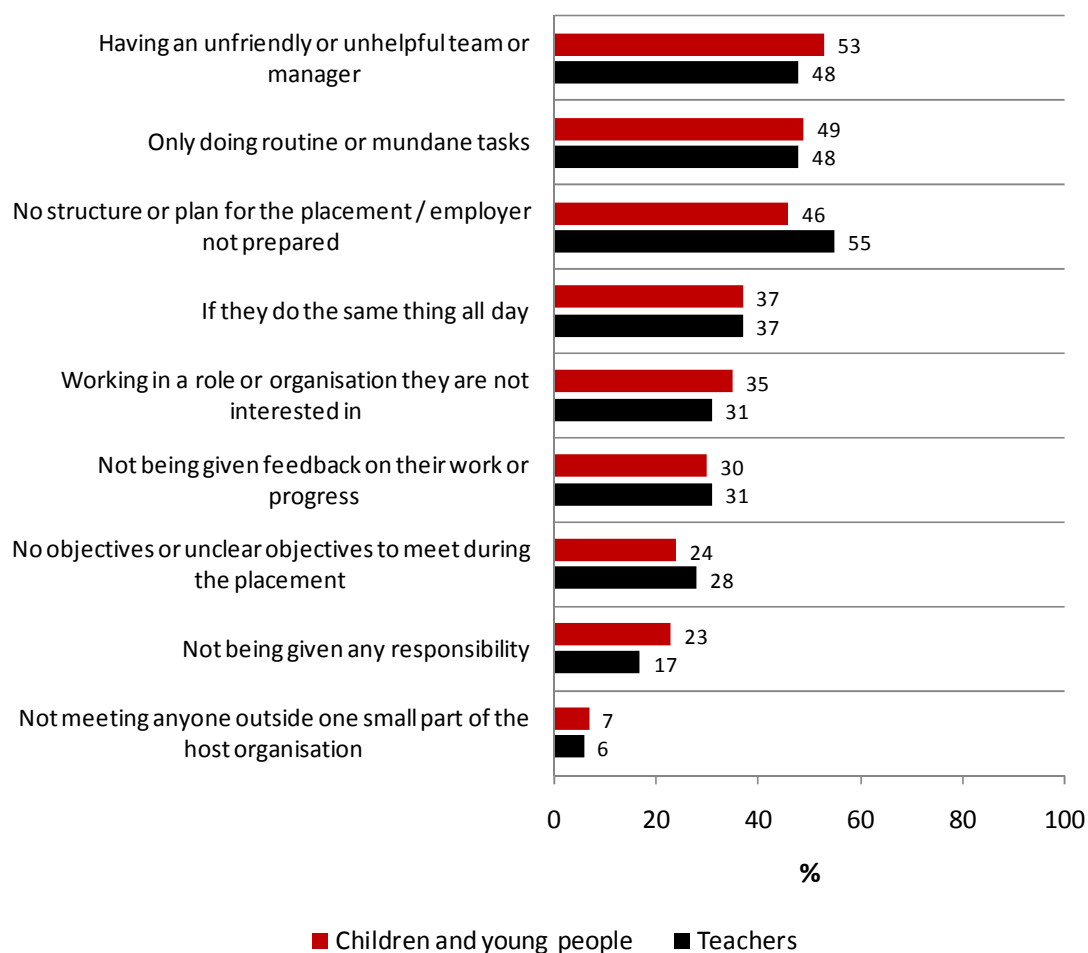
3.7.7 Both students and teachers highlight factors that would discourage interest in a work placement generally, such as unfriendliness and unhelpfulness of the work placement team, doing mundane tasks, and lack of structure or unpreparedness on the employers part, all of which are mentioned by around half of children, young people and teachers.

3.7.8 Asked to elaborate on what makes a poor placement, one student exemplified the importance of engaging tasks and a sense of being involved:

- *'Completely irrelevant to anything I was studying or interested in at the time. Being left alone a lot to get on with mundane tasks. Not becoming part of the team, just feeling another chore for the teachers asking for work.'*

3.7.9 Responsibility, objective setting and feedback are mentioned less, indicating that it is engagement with the task at hand that is of primary importance. This was emphasised by the higher proportion of children, young people and teachers who mention a poor experience as one in which the person does the same thing all day (37 per cent each), or works in a role or organisation they are not interested in (35 per cent/ 31 per cent respectively).

Figure 15: And in your view, which THREE of the following factors make a POOR work experience placement?



Base: Young people who have been on work experience (1123), teachers who have been involved with work experience (424)

3.7.10 Young people who are not working, studying or on a training course are significantly less likely to mention that a lack of responsibility makes for a poor work experience placement (15 per cent compared with 24 per cent who are in full time education, or at university or other higher education institute).

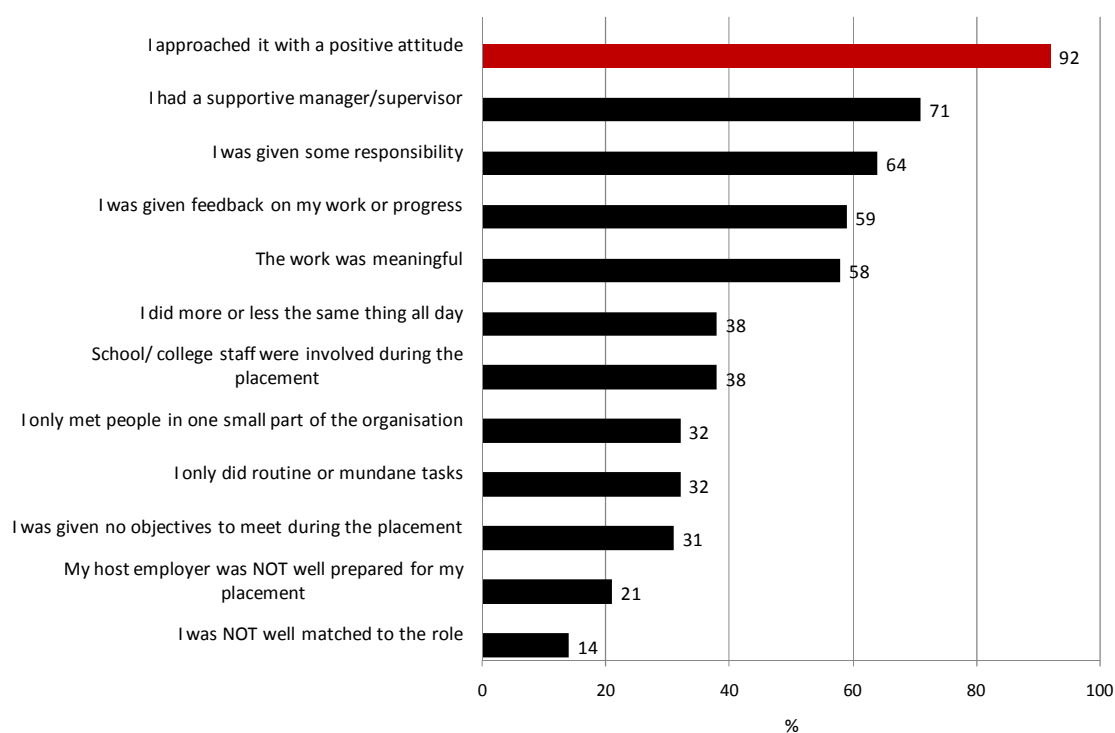
Specific experience of work experience

3.7.11 Overall children and young people who have taken part in work experience are more likely to agree with positive statements than they are with negative ones, in relation to their own experience. The majority agree that they approached the placement with a positive attitude

(92 per cent), and at least half agree they had a supportive manager, were given some responsibility, feedback, and that the work was meaningful.

3.7.12 Around a third had a less positive experience, and felt they did more or less the same thing every day or only did routine or mundane things (38 per cent/ 32 per cent respectively), factors highlighted earlier as ones which make for a poor placement. A further one in five thought their host employer was not well prepared for them (21 per cent).

Figure 16: Thinking about your work experience placement, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (those who agree)



Base: Young people who have been on work experience (1123)

3.7.13 Females are significantly more likely than males to say they did more or less the same thing all day (41 per cent compared with 34 per cent), perhaps reflecting variations in the sectors favoured by each gender for work experience. Those in Key Stage 5 are much more likely to say they did more or less the same thing all day than young people in Key Stage 4 (43 per cent compared with 26 per cent), and are also more likely to agree that the

work was routine or mundane (33 per cent in Key Stage 5, compared with 25 per cent in Key Stage 4). This may reflect higher expectations on the part of older students.

- 3.7.14 There is more agreement among those in Key Stages 4 and 5 that their host employer was not well prepared for them (14 per cent and 17 per cent respectively), however, this remains a significant difference between girls and boys, with girls more likely to think the employer poorly prepared (24 per cent compared with 19 per cent).

3.8 Trends in employer engagement

- 3.8.1 Among employers who are currently engaged with education, a third (34 per cent) are doing so *more* than they did three years ago. Thirteen per cent report less activity and over half (52 per cent) no change over that time period. This situation has remained largely the same from last year.
- 3.8.2 There is more of a sense of optimism with regard to the how the economy is likely to affect engagement in the future; only 22 per cent now see their engagement as likely to decrease – a significant decline from the 30 per cent reported last year. There has been a two per cent rise in the proportion who think their engagement is likely to increase (to 15 per cent *this is not a statistically significant difference from last year). More people now see the economy has having ‘no effect’ on their level of engagement; 63 per cent, a significant rise from the 48 per cent reported last year.

Figure 17: Does your organisation engage with schools more or less than it did three years ago or has there been no change?

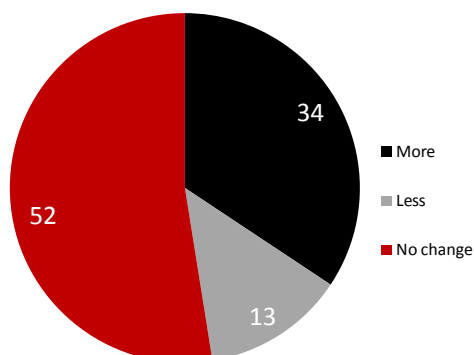
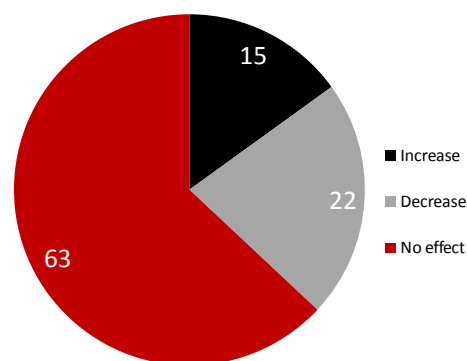


Figure 18: do you think that the future economic situation might increase, decrease or have no effect on your engagement?



Base: Employers who currently engage (493). Figures exclude don't knows.

3.8.3 Seventeen per cent of employers not currently engaged with the education sector felt that economic conditions would decrease their level of involvement. Very few of these employers reported that the economic conditions were likely to *increase* their engagement (seven per cent), while the vast majority expected economic conditions to have no effect (76 per cent).

3.9 Do schools have a nominated member of staff to liaise with local employers?

3.9.1 Just over a quarter of teachers did not know whether their school had a particular member of staff who is nominated to liaise with local businesses (27 per cent). Just over half (51 per cent) say they have a nominated staff member, with the remaining 22 per cent stating they have no such person. These results do not show a significant change from the 2008 research.

3.9.2 Teachers in independent schools were significantly less likely to have a member of staff whose responsibility it is to liaise with local employers (37 per cent do not have such an individual, compared with 20 per cent in comprehensives). As was reported last year, it is

teachers in sixth form/ FE colleges who were most likely to report that there is a nominated person (55 per cent); perhaps a reflection that employer links are a core activity for many FE colleges.

- 3.9.3 Among teachers of vocational and work-based learning programmes 66 per cent say they have a nominated member of staff to liaise with local businesses. as do 58 per cent of those who teach a mixed programme of academic and vocational subjects.