
Original Paper

What helps to attract minority ethnic teachers in England?: Results from a national survey

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Abstract

This paper is concerned with the experiences and retention of minority ethnic teachers in England. There are proportionately many fewer minority ethnic teachers than there are pupils, and it is important to understand why and what can be done about it. Our national survey of 3,646 serving teachers can help address part of this. We report descriptive and comparative results for all ethnic groups, looking at factors attracting teachers to a school, or encouraging them to leave. We developed regression models explaining which teachers report intending to leave the profession, based on their background and teaching experiences. There are some small variations, mostly due to small numbers of cases in some ethnic groups such as Travellers, but many of the experiences and factors involved in moving schools and planning to leave teaching are common across all ethnic groups including White British. However, minority ethnic teachers report being more concerned about pay, and more interested in the ethnic mix of the leadership, staff and students in the schools they work in. Overall though, pay, along with promotion and the resources of schools, play little role in encouraging teachers to leave. Workload stress is the biggest and most constant factor in identifying teachers wanting to leave. For minority ethnic teachers, the ethnic mix of leaders, staff and students is a factor in planning to leave teaching. One implication for teacher retention would be that policy attempts should be made to improve the ethnic mix of schools across all regions of England. This may also help with the few reports of racism in this paper. Our next paper will look at how this might be achieved.

Introduction

This paper is mainly about individual teacher ethnicity in England and how this is related to their roles as teachers, and views on teaching and schools. There is strong and continuing evidence of ethnic disproportionality in the schools of England, partly in relation to the local population, but mostly in relation to the ethnic mix of their pupils (Gorard et al. 2023a). Put simply, there are more White British teachers (around 84%) than would be expected from looking at the students (around 64%) within schools (Gov.UK 2021a, 2021b). Minority ethnic teachers are more likely to be employed in schools in heavily disadvantaged areas, or with a high proportion of disadvantaged students (DfE 2018). They are more likely to move schools or even leave the profession (Worth et al. 2022).

Similar disproportions have been noted elsewhere (US Department of Education 2016, Blom et al. 2017, Lindsay 2017, Ingersoll et al. 2019), and their impact on the impoverished experience of students described (Dilworth and Coleman 2014).

There have been many initiatives in the UK to create a more balanced teacher workforce in terms of ethnicity, and the match between the ethnicity of teachers and their students. These include policies and interventions in England (Gov.UK 2018), Wales (Welsh Government 2023), and Scotland (Scottish Government 2021). And very similar policies have been tried elsewhere, especially in the US (Villegas and Lucas 2004, The Education Trust 2022).

The motivation behind such policies is manifold. There is a clear issue of justice and representation, especially at senior levels in schools. If there is bias in the appointment or promotion process this would need to be addressed. This could be related to problems in teacher supply and retention, as well

as fairness, and the attainment of minority ethnic students (Gorard et al. 2023b). A major mismatch between the ethnic mix of teachers and pupils could reduce the appearance of appropriate role models for some pupils, and so impact pupil aspiration. The ethnic mix could also affect the way in which students are treated in terms of attendance, behaviour, punishment, suspensions and exclusions (Lindsay and Hart 2017, Gottfried et al. 2022, Stiefel et al. 2022, Liu et al. 2023, Morgan and Hu 2023, Shirrell et al. 2023). It might also influence student happiness (Egalite and Kisida 2016).

When teachers are responsible for judging student learning and academic outcomes, then there is evidence that the ethnic match makes a difference, with students having matching ethnicity to the teacher rated higher on average (Driessen 2015, Gehlbach et al. 2016). In more formal testing the evidence for better outcomes, where the ethnicity of teacher and student matches, is less clear. Where research takes other student characteristics into account (such as poverty) they tend to find little or no difference in the attainment of minority ethnic students with matched or unmatched teachers (Howsen and Trawick 2007, Goldhaber et al. 2015).

Ethnic disproportionality of teachers and students might also be linked to the well-being of minority ethnic teachers. This new paper considers the related issues of the experiences of minority ethnic teachers in schools with varying mixes of the ethnicity of pupils, and the factors that might attract or deter teachers to/from schools, or might encourage them to leave teaching altogether. For example, ethnic discrimination in schools involving teachers has been studied in small-scale research (Hagenaars et al. 2023), but we want to look at the issues of ethnic match and racism in schools on a larger scale, using multiple approaches.

The evidence in this paper is part of a larger project that includes three large systematic reviews of other evidence, and an analysis of School Workforce Census data over 12 years, linked to the National Pupil Database. These sources will provide an authoritative picture of existing evidence on ethnic matching of teachers and students, and population data on historical trends and geographical patterns. We are also conducting interviews and cases studies in schools.

The paper presents a summary of the methods used to collect and analyse the data, and reviews the findings, before considering some of the implications.

Outline of methods

A national survey of teachers

We undertook a national survey of teachers in England from mid-December 2023 to the beginning of February 2024. It is important for work in this area to consider all teachers in order to be able to assess where the experiences of minority ethnic teachers may be different to other groups. And it is equally important to consider a range of experiences and factors, for example in making a decision to leave teaching. Therefore, completion of the survey was not restricted, and the items are about a lot more than ethnicity, to provide context. The on-line instrument yielded 3,646 responses with complete, or incomplete but with valid, information, of which 539 have not reported their ethnicity. It is not possible to compute a response rate, but this must be assumed to be low. The purpose of the survey was to obtain more detailed information than is available elsewhere from teachers about their views and motivations. So, the focus was on internal validity more than generality.

The instrument asked about teacher views and what might encourage them to work in a school, or to leave a school, or leave teaching altogether, along with some basic background information. It was developed by the research team, and piloted successfully. The items are described further below. A full version can be seen in Gorard et al. (2024).

The instrument was developed in Qualtric, with a QR code for teachers to complete using phone or tablet, and also transferred to School Zone, who gave it to their members. We emailed all school heads in England with the QR code, and also gave the link to helping organisations such as Schools NE, NATE, ACL, and the Chartered College of Teaching, We published the QR code with an appeal via X (Twitter). A reminder was sent via all routes in early January 2024.

Text responses to items such as “other – please specify” have been coded into the scales or other items as far as possible. Schools reported as junior or primary with nursery have been coded as primary.

“University” includes teacher training providers from colleges.

The responses included many comments in the blank boxes provided, and some of these are referred to in this paper where they were substantive (rather than about the format of the survey). The survey also invited respondents to provide contact details for follow-up interviews, and hundreds of these have been provided. Once all of the other elements are complete, the project will move on to detailed case studies to explore the issues raised by the survey and follow-up interviews.

Most of the items in the survey are on a scale of 1 to 10 (of increasing agreement with a statement). Other items include how long respondents have been teachers. The means of these scales and numbers are presented below for each ethnic group of respondents. Missing values for numeric data have been replaced with the mean (and recorded as originally missing, as described in Gorard 2022). Some responses are categorical, such as the type of teachers’ current school, current role in that school, and their economic region in England. These are presented below as percentages within each ethnic group. All missing responses for categorical data have been recorded as “not known”.

What we wanted to know, chiefly, was the drivers for teachers to move schools or leave the profession, and to what extent the ethnic mix of the school, relative to the respondent, was a factor in moving schools.

The numeric values were used to form potential factors (based on principal components analysis, with varimax rotation). This yielded 11 factors (described below). Varimax rotation was used, and so the 11 factors are necessarily not related (correlation of $R=0$ for all).

All items were used as predictors in regression models looking at teachers reporting wanting to leave the profession or not. The first was a linear regression model, using a flag variable for ethnicity (White British or not). The outcome was the respondent’s rating of likelihood to leave the teaching profession. Predictors were entered in three blocks – background, substantive responses, and the 11 factors. In each block, potential predictors were entered with a forward method, using the strongest predictors in turn until all successive predictors added nothing to the model (R). This means that where two or more potential predictors were highly correlated between themselves, only the strongest predictor was used. There will always tend to be some predictors that are correlated to some extent with others. This “multicollinearity” is only a concern under some circumstances (Allison 2012) – such as when significance tests based on standard errors are used, or when the correlation (R) between the items is very large (perhaps >0.6). Neither is the case here.

The second model was a logistic regression, with full ethnic categories, and the outcome was a high or low likelihood of leaving teaching. Both models used an interaction between respondent ethnicity and whether the ethnic mix of a school was an attractor. More details are provided below.

Results

Descriptive

We received 3,646 responses. Unsurprisingly, the majority of respondents described themselves as White British (67.6%), and a relatively large proportion (14.8%) did not record ethnicity, largely because they did not reach the end of instrument where that question was asked. Some refused to answer this item. Those with missing ethnicity also had missing responses to several other items (although all had some valid responses), and so this category of respondents will not feature heavily in what follows. Their results are simply reported here.

Only one respondent reported a Traveller/Roma origin. “Jewish” was not offered as a category but six respondents reported this origin anyway (Table 1). There will presumably be others who could have responded Jewish, but were coded differently, perhaps as White other. These six have been retained as a category for interest for the present. Several other categories are also small, and this must be borne in mind throughout.

Table 1. Frequency of responses by ethnic category

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percentage
Arab	11	0.3
Asian other	31	0.9
Bangladeshi	47	1.3
Black African	43	1.2
Black Caribbean	30	0.8
Black other	9	0.2
Chinese	28	0.8
Indian	100	2.7
Jewish	6	0.2
Mixed	95	2.6
Not known	539	14.8
Pakistani	63	1.7
Prefer not to say	15	0.4
Traveller	1	0.0
White British	2,466	67.6
White other	162	4.4
Total	3,646	100.0

Most respondents have been involved in teaching, or at least education, since they have been qualified (Table 2). They have generally been in the UK for more than the duration of their working lives, and have been in their current school (or role) for nearly 10 years on average.

Table 2. Length of service by ethnic group, in years

Ethnicity	Years qualified	Years teaching	Years in current school	Years in the UK
Arab	11.55	13.45	8.05	28.91
Asian other	17.00	17.86	10.98	34.86
Bangladeshi	13.52	14.00	7.96	36.11
Black African	12.17	12.47	7.04	34.21
Black Caribbean	19.32	19.31	9.02	39.89
Black other	9.78	14.22	7.31	35.88
Chinese	12.95	12.88	9.46	38.96
Indian	17.48	17.73	9.53	40.89
Jewish	16.50	14.83	5.17	44.83
Mixed	16.66	16.69	9.87	40.49

Not known	13.13	13.93	10.58	48.89
Pakistani	15.89	15.87	9.31	39.98
Prefer not to say	22.07	21.53	13.60	46.33
Traveller	45.00	45.00	21.00	68.00
White British	17.01	17.03	9.62	41.87
White other	16.56	16.81	8.94	32.39
Total	16.81	16.89	9.53	41.60

The descriptive figures reported so far cover all responses received, regardless of their teaching role. The descriptive results are presented partly to form a basis for the multivariate analyses that follow. Most responses were from serving teachers, but there were also trainees, teaching assistants, retirees and some central support staff (Table 3). A relatively high proportion of headteachers and senior staff are from ethnic minorities, compared to the overall figures.

Table 3. Current role by ethnicity, row percentages

Ethnicity	Headteacher	Other	Retired	School leadership team	SENCO	Support	TA	Teacher	Trainee	Trust leader
Arab	18.2	-	-	9.1	-	-	-	72.7	-	-
Asian other	6.5	-	-	22.6	-	-	-	71.0	-	-
Bangladeshi	4.3	-	-	12.8	-	2.1	-	78.7	2.1	-
Black African	-	-	-	25.6	-	4.7	-	69.8	-	-
Black Caribbean	13.3	-	-	26.7	3.3	3.3	-	53.3	-	-
Black other	-	-	-	44.4	-	-	-	55.6	-	-
Chinese	14.3	-	-	3.6	-	-	-	78.6	3.6	-
Indian	4.0	1.0	-	19.0	-	1.0	-	75.0	-	-
Jewish	16.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	83.3	-	-
Mixed	9.5	-	-	20.0	-	1.1	-	69.5	-	-
Not known	18.2	0.7	0.4	17.1	0.4	2.0	1.9	59.0	-	0.4
Pakistani	4.8	-	-	25.4	-	1.6	-	66.7	-	1.6
Prefer not to say	-	6.7	-	33.3	-	-	-	60.0	-	-
Traveller	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100.0	-	-
White British	12.2	0.2	0.1	23.6	0.9	0.9	0.6	61.2	0.1	0.2
White other	8.0	-	-	27.8	0.6	1.2	1.2	59.9	0.6	0.6
Total	12.2	0.3	0.1	22.4	0.7	1.1	0.7	62.0	0.2	0.3

As expected, most respondents work in primary (37.8%) or secondary (38.6%) schools, Full details appear in Table A1a, A1b in the Appendix. The numbers of most ethnic groups are too small to draw conclusions about the spread of roles here (but see below).

Around 16% of respondents did not complete the question about their sex, or said they would prefer not to specify. Most respondents were female (61%), which is expected given that the primary phase is known to have more female than male teachers. Other than Black Caribbean, the larger minority ethnic groups have more female teachers than the White British group does.

There is evidence here that different regions of England can have a very different ethnic mix of teachers (Table 4a/b). Only around 3% of White British teachers reported living in Inner London, compared to 33% of Black Caribbean teachers, and 46% of Arab teachers. This kind of disparity could be partly a result of differential response to the survey, but it is reflected in national figures for the deployment of teachers (Gorard et al. 2023a).

Table 4a. Respondent economic region by ethnicity, row percentages

Ethnicity	East Midlands	East of England	Inner London	North East	North West	Not known
Arab	9.1	-	45.5	9.1	9.1	-
Asian other	9.7	9.7	9.7	-	19.4	-
Bangladeshi	-	6.4	57.4	2.1	6.4	-
Black African	4.7	9.3	23.3	2.3	2.3	-
Black Caribbean	6.7	-	33.3	-	6.7	-
Black other	-	-	33.3	-	-	-
Chinese	3.6	14.3	7.1	3.6	3.6	-
Indian	17.0	4.0	19.0	2.0	8.0	-
Jewish	-	-	16.7	-	33.3	-
Mixed	4.2	7.4	18.9	1.1	12.6	-
Not known	0.2	-	0.6	0.2	0.2	97.4
Pakistani	9.5	3.2	30.2	1.6	12.7	-
Prefer not to say	-	-	6.7	-	13.3	-
Traveller	-	-	100.0	-	-	-
White British	9.2	11.1	3.3	15.4	11.2	-
White other	6.8	9.3	15.4	4.9	6.2	-
Total	7.5	8.6	6.3	10.9	9.1	14.4

Table 4b. Respondent economic region by ethnicity, row percentages - continued

Ethnicity	Outer London	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire and Humber
Arab	9.1	9.1	9.1	-	-
Asian other	19.4	16.1	3.2	6.5	6.5
Bangladeshi	10.6	8.5	6.4	-	2.1
Black African	20.9	30.2	2.3	4.7	-
Black Caribbean	26.7	13.3	3.3	10.0	-

Black other	22.2	22.2	-	22.2	-
Chinese	10.7	21.4	10.7	17.9	7.1
Indian	13.0	12.0	5.0	8.0	12.0
Jewish	33.3	16.7	-	-	-
Mixed	18.9	27.4	6.3	2.1	1.1
Not known	-	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.4
Pakistani	12.7	9.5	4.8	6.3	9.5
Prefer not to say	26.7	26.7	20.0	-	6.7
Traveller	-	-	-	-	-
White British	5.3	20.9	7.7	7.0	9.1
White other	15.4	25.9	6.2	4.9	4.9
Total	6.4	17.7	6.2	5.8	7.1

These background characteristics will be used in later modelling of substantive responses about the job of teaching.

Comparisons between the responses of ethnic groups

What attracts teachers to remain in a school?

Table 5a/b reports the mean ratings for 12 items suggested as reasons for being attracted to work in school.

Many of the responses are similar across ethnic groups (not counting the very small groups that might be volatile). This includes the behaviour of students, ease of travel to school, flexible working, and good school leadership. Minority ethnic teachers are more concerned with salary, and the ethnic diversity of students, staff, and school leaders.

Table 5a. School attractors by ethnicity, mean ratings

Ethnicity	Higher salary	High Ofsted grade	Ethnic diversity in leadership	Not in a deprived area	Well-behaved students	Little ethnic diversity in students
Arab	8.18	6.55	6.36	5.18	7.18	5.45
Asian other	8.00	6.28	6.58	4.94	7.19	3.91
Bangladeshi	7.38	6.68	7.83	4.43	7.28	4.51
Black African	7.46	6.72	7.21	4.79	7.29	4.61
Black Caribbean	7.47	6.13	7.83	3.47	5.37	4.70
Black other	8.33	7.11	6.78	6.11	7.67	4.67
Chinese	7.18	5.93	5.21	5.25	7.11	3.36
Indian	6.97	6.33	6.45	4.46	6.96	4.31
Jewish	8.33	5.83	6.00	4.33	7.33	3.33
Mixed	7.75	6.42	7.02	4.92	7.19	3.89

Not known	6.77	5.68	5.02	3.94	6.73	3.26
Pakistani	7.68	6.56	7.19	4.27	6.86	4.51
Prefer not to say	7.60	6.40	6.47	3.93	7.07	3.87
Traveller	10.00	5.00	10.00	1.00	5.00	1.00
White British	6.80	5.71	4.77	4.09	6.80	2.98
White other	7.39	6.05	5.66	4.78	7.43	3.15
Total	6.92	5.82	5.13	4.16	6.84	3.20

Table 5b. School attractors by ethnicity, mean ratings - continued

Ethnicity	Ease of travel	Flexible working	Good leadership	High attainment	Ethnic diversity in staff	Low property prices
Arab	7.91	6.55	8.91	6.64	7.36	5.55
Asian other	7.84	6.37	9.11	6.84	6.19	4.54
Bangladeshi	8.70	7.66	8.55	6.72	7.79	4.15
Black African	8.68	6.92	9.03	6.93	7.09	5.20
Black Caribbean	8.13	6.60	8.10	5.93	8.00	3.73
Black other	8.13	7.11	8.50	7.11	6.44	4.50
Chinese	7.68	6.50	8.18	6.86	5.54	3.64
Indian	7.69	6.71	8.15	6.32	6.36	4.24
Jewish	7.50	5.83	8.33	5.83	6.33	3.50
Mixed	8.36	7.12	8.71	6.54	6.57	4.25
Not known	7.92	6.19	8.43	5.79	4.99	3.55
Pakistani	8.19	6.90	8.59	7.00	7.03	4.46
Prefer not to say	6.87	7.27	8.13	6.67	6.60	4.60
Traveller	10.00	10.00	10.00	5.00	10.00	1.00
White British	8.09	6.44	8.48	5.79	4.55	3.54
White other	8.35	6.86	8.69	6.45	5.88	4.15
Total	8.08	6.48	8.49	5.93	4.97	3.67

There were many text comments about what teachers were looking for from a school, many of which were specific and individual in nature (like wanting to work in a forest school). The most common comments concerned staff well-being, workload and stress.

Well-being is a high priority (White British female teacher at a primary school in the South West)

School values work:life balance (White British female SLT at a primary school in the North East)

Several teachers preferred not working in an academy, or a MAT, or not in a faith-based school.

Not an academy, known for treating its teachers poorly (Mixed ethnicity female teacher at a primary school in Inner London)

The Trust it is in (White British female SLT at a primary school in the South West)

The feel for the school when you look around. The school ethos and values. The Trust it is part of. Colleagues' recommendations (White British female SLT at a secondary school in the West Midlands)

The school had to have a welcoming style for some respondents, and to fit with their views, whatever these are. Several of the comments were about race/ethnicity.

Ethos and values of the school matter. Must be in alignment (Arab female teacher in a secondary school in Inner London)

Explicitly states an anti-woke position on current cultural issues (Mixed ethnicity male teacher in a secondary school in the South East)

Race/gender does not matter to me in terms of my workplace and deciding where I would work - however, in general it is important it is discussed (White British female SLT in a primary school in the East of England)

Ethnic diversity in the local community (Black Caribbean non-binary teacher in a primary school in the South East)

A few comments were about the quality of school buildings, perhaps as a response to the recent RAAC "concrete crisis" (Gorard and Siddiqui 2024).

Good quality buildings (White other male teacher at a secondary school in the East Midlands)

Buildings in decent order (White British female headteacher at a primary school in Outer London)

Overall, the biggest attractor for teachers working in a school was "good leadership" (mean of 8.49), followed by ease of travel or proximity to home (8.09). The next highest, by some way, was high salary (6.92).

What encourages teachers to leave a school?

Table 6a/b/c reports mean ratings by respondents of the issues that would encourage them to leave their current school, and seek a new school. The question is phrased as hypothetical. Teachers are not responding about the actual nature of their school, although their experiences must be an influence in their judgements.

Again, the differences between the larger ethnic groups are small or non-existent. They have similar ratings for insulting comments from others, harassment, negative experiences in school, not feeling valued, feeling isolated, unreasonable expectations from leaders, and personal circumstances. Minority ethnic teachers are again more concerned with pay, but also lack of promotion and a culture of racism in the school. They differ most, again, in terms of a preference for an ethnic mix of pupils, staff and leadership.

Table 6a. Push/pull elements by ethnicity, mean ratings

Ethnicity	Higher salary elsewhere	Poor pupil behaviour	Insulting comments	High teacher turnover	Lack of promotion	Culture of racism	Personal
Arab	7.00	6.91	6.91	5.82	7.45	8.64	8.82
Asian other	7.83	7.35	7.04	6.58	7.05	6.73	7.53
Bangladeshi	7.83	7.11	6.68	6.70	7.94	7.23	7.09
Black African	7.32	7.02	6.82	6.42	7.50	7.62	7.08
Black Caribbean	7.27	5.90	5.70	6.00	7.60	7.30	7.28
Black other	7.67	7.33	5.78	7.22	7.44	8.22	7.56

Chinese	7.39	6.50	6.07	5.79	5.91	6.54	7.39
Indian	6.61	6.52	6.11	6.09	6.50	6.58	6.89
Jewish	8.00	8.33	6.67	5.67	7.50	8.33	8.33
Mixed	7.57	7.63	6.92	6.52	6.86	7.12	7.82
Not known	6.74	6.78	6.25	5.80	6.50	6.52	7.36
Pakistani	7.13	6.94	5.95	6.29	6.94	6.91	7.00
Prefer not to say	7.67	6.60	6.27	5.13	6.87	6.00	7.00
Traveller	10.00	10.00	10.00	5.00	10.00	5.00	10.00
White British	6.60	6.72	6.11	5.86	6.39	6.34	7.45
White other	7.04	7.35	7.02	6.31	7.00	7.26	7.84
Total	6.73	6.79	6.22	5.93	6.51	6.50	7.43

Table 6b. Push/pull elements by ethnicity, mean ratings - continued

Ethnicity	Lack of ethnic diversity, teachers	Poor resources	Difficult parents	Concern about the way I speak	Unreasonable expectations	High student ethnic diversity	Lack of CPD
Arab	5.36	8.18	5.82	6.82	7.73	4.55	7.91
Asian other	5.09	7.01	6.43	5.95	7.72	4.64	7.26
Bangladeshi	5.72	6.83	5.83	6.38	7.45	5.02	6.91
Black African	5.77	7.01	6.40	6.04	7.03	4.25	6.68
Black Caribbean	6.30	7.00	6.37	4.73	7.30	4.47	7.40
Black other	5.78	6.22	6.14	7.00	7.78	5.56	6.89
Chinese	4.18	6.46	5.86	5.86	7.39	3.93	6.00
Indian	5.44	6.35	5.92	5.76	6.65	4.09	6.02
Jewish	5.50	5.33	6.33	6.83	9.17	4.33	7.50
Mixed	5.18	6.77	6.79	6.26	7.69	3.79	6.26
Not known	3.90	6.21	6.21	5.52	7.27	2.82	6.07
Pakistani	5.84	6.71	6.00	5.95	7.03	4.03	6.30
Prefer not to say	5.07	6.53	6.67	6.33	7.20	4.47	6.27
Traveller	5.00	5.00	5.00	10.00	10.00	3.00	10.00
White British	3.59	6.20	6.26	5.40	7.42	2.57	6.00
White other	4.25	6.35	6.54	6.18	7.60	2.80	6.29
Total	3.91	6.28	6.26	5.53	7.39	2.84	6.09

Table 6c. Push/pull elements by ethnicity, mean ratings - continued

Ethnicity	Negative experiences	Harassment	Better job	Not valued	Feeling isolated	Poor working conditions	Lack ethnic minority leaders
Arab	6.36	7.91	8.09	7.64	7.09	7.64	5.64
Asian other	5.33	5.97	8.06	7.63	6.30	6.61	5.32
Bangladeshi	5.79	6.62	7.66	7.26	6.70	7.15	5.89
Black African	6.22	7.07	8.11	7.57	6.38	7.00	5.76
Black Caribbean	6.58	5.34	8.29	7.92	6.80	6.40	6.19
Black other	6.67	5.89	7.56	7.67	5.89	7.21	5.89
Chinese	5.18	6.00	7.86	7.82	6.29	7.61	4.04
Indian	6.43	5.96	7.22	7.21	6.15	6.62	5.74
Jewish	4.50	6.00	7.50	7.33	5.83	7.17	5.17
Mixed	6.23	6.43	8.16	7.77	7.26	7.48	5.24
Not known	6.20	6.05	7.62	7.47	6.24	6.77	3.81
Pakistani	5.70	6.29	7.41	6.83	6.10	6.32	5.38
Prefer not to say	5.53	6.53	7.67	7.87	7.47	7.33	6.20
Traveller	6.29	10.00	10.00	9.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
White British	6.35	6.02	7.75	7.53	6.29	6.92	3.40
White other	6.37	7.03	7.87	7.88	6.40	7.09	4.29
Total	6.29	6.10	7.74	7.53	6.33	6.91	3.78

Comments by teachers on things that would encourage them to leave a school were largely the inverse of attractors – better workload, more support, or access to TAs. Thirteen simply commented “Workload”. Poor and weak leadership was mentioned by several. Nine commented on unrealistic or unreasonable demands by school leaders, and as many again on lack of respect from their leadership team. Some teachers mentioned that other schools were closer to home. One White British respondent cited racism.

Some other comments were quite specific.

Put on a 'Support plan' by HoD who didn't like the way I taught (White British female teacher in a secondary school in the East Midlands)

Multiple “mocksteds” (White British male teacher in a primary school in the North East)

The last comment was in addition to many who just said “Ofsted” or “Ofsted pressure”. Ofsted inspections were mentioned several times, as well as a feeling of “burnout”.

Ofsted pressure (Black Caribbean female SLT in a primary school in Inner London)

Overall, the biggest issues encouraging teachers to leave their current school were personal circumstances (7.43), and “unreasonable expectations” from school leaders (7.39).

What encourages teacher to leave teaching?

Table 7a/b looks at the mean ratings of respondents concerning issues that would encourage them to leave teaching altogether. To some extent, these are similar to the factors that would encourage them to

leave a school, and the opposite to those that would attract them to a school, but leaving the profession altogether would be a much bigger decision. Teacher retention, or not, is a key issue facing policy-makers in England.

Table 7a. Why leave teaching by ethnicity, mean ratings

Ethnicity	Low salary	Too many initiatives	Better career prospects	Personal circumstances	Difficult parents	Lack of autonomy	Stress
Arab	8.18	7.18	7.91	8.91	5.73	7.45	7.73
Asian other	7.33	7.71	8.37	7.89	6.16	6.90	8.43
Bangladeshi	7.91	7.21	8.17	7.55	5.74	7.11	7.70
Black African	7.12	7.72	7.67	7.53	6.09	7.00	8.29
Black Caribbean	7.28	7.47	8.59	7.69	5.63	6.66	8.13
Black other	9.11	6.00	8.44	7.89	6.56	5.78	6.67
Chinese	7.64	7.50	7.96	8.14	5.21	6.57	8.46
Indian	7.50	7.79	7.53	7.39	5.78	6.61	8.00
Jewish	7.83	8.33	9.17	7.83	6.33	7.67	9.00
Mixed	8.25	8.03	8.37	7.88	6.44	6.95	8.26
Not known	7.39	7.99	7.62	7.73	5.91	6.78	8.29
Pakistani	8.16	7.60	8.12	7.50	5.46	6.90	7.96
Prefer not to say	8.40	7.87	7.13	7.20	6.13	7.80	7.73
Traveller	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	6.00	10.00	10.00
White British	7.14	7.97	7.44	7.73	5.94	6.72	8.32
White other	7.51	8.06	7.84	7.71	6.15	7.21	8.51
Total	7.28	7.94	7.56	7.73	5.94	6.77	8.29

Table 7b. Why leave teaching by ethnicity, mean ratings - continued

Ethnicity	Ofsted pressure	Worklife balance	Not enjoying teaching	Lack of support	Lack of promotion	Heavy workload
Arab	6.00	8.00	7.45	6.45	8.00	7.82
Asian other	7.22	8.71	7.34	6.40	7.27	8.79
Bangladeshi	7.09	7.57	7.15	6.72	7.23	7.83
Black African	7.69	7.91	7.60	6.80	7.26	8.47
Black Caribbean	7.97	8.33	7.92	6.45	7.78	8.77
Black other	5.89	7.56	5.22	6.00	7.11	7.38
Chinese	7.50	8.36	7.75	5.75	6.14	8.39
Indian	7.28	7.75	7.47	6.53	6.60	7.81

Jewish	8.50	8.50	8.83	5.33	7.83	9.17
Mixed	7.68	8.58	8.08	6.24	6.75	8.66
Not known	7.65	8.47	7.69	6.57	6.35	8.41
Pakistani	6.93	7.91	7.23	6.28	6.92	8.42
Prefer not to say	7.80	8.67	7.67	5.73	7.33	7.87
Traveller	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
White British	7.78	8.53	7.64	6.48	6.09	8.41
White other	7.69	8.68	7.17	6.47	6.52	8.51
Total	7.70	8.47	7.62	6.48	6.26	8.40

There are some small differences for some ethnic groups. But overall, there is widespread agreement across all groups on what matters. Among the issues reported here, three stand out and appear to be related. Teachers report that pressure to leave teaching comes mainly lack of work:life balance (8.47), workload (8.40), and workplace stress (8.29). Dealing with difficult parents (5.94) and lack of promotion prospects (6.26), for example, appear to be much less relevant.

Views on teaching

The final part of this comparative data concerns more general views on teaching, including whether the respondent plans to leave teaching soon, or would recommend teaching as an occupation to others (Table 8a/b). All of the substantial ethnic groups report similar ratings for some of these items, including wanting to remain a teacher. Minority ethnic teachers are less reluctant than White British to challenge others, more likely to report experiencing racism, but also more likely to recommend teaching as an occupation to others.

Table 8a. Views on teaching by ethnicity, mean ratings

Ethnicity	Enjoyed teaching	School encourages equality	Leaders value me	Experienced racism	Reluctant to challenge others	Plan to leave soon
Arab	7.91	8.18	8.27	4.36	3.45	3.36
Asian other	7.73	7.34	7.30	3.52	5.10	3.81
Bangladeshi	7.21	6.79	6.49	3.60	5.79	4.96
Black African	7.71	6.67	6.50	4.30	4.94	5.10
Black Caribbean	7.77	7.20	7.07	3.60	3.98	3.77
Black other	7.89	6.78	6.67	5.89	5.78	5.44
Chinese	6.25	6.07	6.00	3.86	4.79	5.75
Indian	7.17	7.00	7.04	3.60	4.87	4.65
Jewish	7.33	6.00	6.67	4.17	5.00	3.50
Mixed	7.69	7.33	7.18	3.31	4.83	4.49
Not known	7.55	7.59	7.34	1.95	4.24	4.28
Pakistani	7.41	7.14	7.09	3.55	4.51	4.26

Prefer not to say	8.00	7.33	6.93	3.60	5.73	4.47
Traveller	10.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	10.00	10.00
White British	7.54	7.70	7.51	1.59	4.14	4.20
White other	7.90	7.70	7.50	2.42	4.00	3.86
Total	7.55	7.60	7.41	1.95	4.25	4.25

Table 8b. Views on teaching by ethnicity, mean ratings - continued

Ethnicity	School values diversity	School welcome all ethnic groups	I feel included	Can be myself at work	Recommended teaching	Want to remain a teacher
Arab	7.73	8.00	8.91	7.73	6.55	6.18
Asian other	7.20	7.78	7.81	7.76	6.06	6.18
Bangladeshi	6.81	7.45	7.13	7.02	5.74	5.98
Black African	6.98	7.21	7.23	6.94	5.23	5.88
Black Caribbean	7.27	7.90	8.07	7.00	6.03	6.13
Black other	7.78	7.89	7.78	6.56	7.00	6.00
Chinese	6.00	6.82	6.32	6.54	4.32	5.11
Indian	7.03	7.60	7.85	7.34	5.26	5.75
Jewish	5.67	6.00	6.33	5.83	4.00	5.17
Mixed	7.26	8.01	8.00	7.32	5.23	5.69
Not known	7.19	8.08	7.91	7.51	5.00	5.69
Pakistani	6.78	7.76	7.55	7.45	5.48	5.60
Prefer not to say	7.93	8.53	6.93	6.87	5.73	6.27
Traveller	1.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	10.00
White British	7.26	8.18	8.01	7.63	4.88	5.66
White other	7.40	8.27	8.15	7.84	5.12	6.07
Total	7.22	8.10	7.95	7.56	4.98	5.70

In comments about teaching many of the same issues came up, such as burnout and workload, with additional points about lack of autonomy and the prestige (or not) of the profession.

Workload is too high (Pakistani female teacher in a middle school in Yorkshire and the Humber)

The lack of trust to teachers by the government, parents. The constant attack of teachers by media. Tell the media to back off slugging teachers and give us some credits for once!!! Government - stop cutting funds in education! (Chinese female teacher in a primary schools in the South West).

Many teachers reported how much they enjoyed teaching, and the satisfaction it gave them. Others were more cautious and five comments started with the same statement of enjoyment and then added one or more caveats.

I love teaching but.... (Indian male teacher in a secondary school in Inner London)

Overall, the strongest view was that schools welcomed students of all ethnic origins (8.10), and were welcoming and inclusive places (7.95). There was very little reported experience of racism overall (mean of only 1.95).

Principal Component Analysis

Given that there are a considerable number of variables about the views of teaching and schools, one way of reducing this number was a factor analysis. Ignoring variables with loadings of less than 0.7 for any factor, the most parsimonious solution, explaining 65.6% of the variance in the original responses, is as follows. Eleven hypothetical factors were used (Tables 11-13). Note that some items in some factors appear to be repeated (and sometimes even opposites). This is because they appeared both as attractors to a school/teaching or issues that might drive people away from a school/teaching.

The first factor links variables concerned with bullying by other staff, isolation, and a feeling of being ignored or unappreciated (Table 9). These would all act to drive someone out of a school or out of the profession entirely. The key indicator here (with the highest loading) is whether teachers report having been harassed. The second factor links variables about an inclusive and diverse school (leadership, staff and students), which would all attract someone to a school. The key indicator is whether the school promotes diversity. The third factor is about undue workload, pressure and stress at school. The key indicator here is poor work:life balance.

Table 9. First three factors underlying positive and negative views of teaching

Unpleasantness	Loading	Inclusive school	Loading	Workload	Loading
Experienced harassment	0.83	School promotes diversity	0.83	Work:life balance	0.78
Experienced isolation	0.76	School welcomes ethnic mix of pupils	0.82	Ofsted pressure	0.77
Comments about the way I speak	0.76	School values cultural diversity	0.82	Workload	0.75
Insulting comments	0.76	Leadership values me	0.75	Stress	0.73
Poor working conditions	0.73	I feel included	0.73		
Not feel valued	0.73				
Unreasonable expectations	0.73				

Factor 4 is the ethnic and cultural diversity of a school, another attractor, especially for some people (Table 10). The key indicator is ethnic diversity among the staff. Factor 5 represents what is often taken by outside observers to be a “good” school – with well-behaved, relatively well-off, students, getting good external exam results. The key indicator is good student behaviour. Factor 6 includes variables expressing enjoyment of teaching and the key indicator is an intention to remain as a teacher. Factor 7 is about salary, and both indicators are equally strongly linked to it.

Table 10. Factors 4 to 7 underlying positive and negative views of teaching

Diversity	Loading	“Good” school	Loading	Positive view	Loading	Pay	Loading
Ethnic diversity in teachers	0.87	Good student behaviour	0.77	I want to remain a teacher	0.82	High salary in this school	0.74
Ethnic diversity in leadership	0.84	School not in deprived area	0.75	Recommend teaching	0.74	High salary in another school	0.74
Lack ethnic diversity in teachers	0.81	High student attainment	0.73	Plan to leave teaching	-0.72		
Lack ethnic diversity in leadership	0.79			I enjoy teaching	0.71		

Factor 8 is about lack of promotion prospects, in a current school or in teaching more generally. The key indicator is lack of promotion prospects in the current school (Table 11). Factor 9 is a single item factor about having good school leaders. Factor 10 is personal circumstances. And Factor 11 comes from negative experiences in a school, indicted by feeling of not being valued or supported by school leaders.

Table 11. Factors 8 to 11 underlying positive and negative views of teaching

Promotion	Loading	Leadership	Loading	Personal	Loading	Unsupported	Loading
Lack of promotion	0.78	Good leaders	0.72	Personal circumstances	0.81	Lack of support	0.83
Lack of promotion	0.71			Personal reasons	0.73	Negative experiences	0.70

All other items in the survey did not cohere strongly to these factors or to each other. These may still remain important, and are examined separately in the rest of the paper.

A focus on teachers

Given the patterns above, the next phase of analysis removes those whose ethnicity is not known from the dataset, along with all cases who are not clearly teachers (including TAs, support staff, teacher trainers and other). This left 3,029 valid cases, for a focus on ethnicity and teachers (including heads, senior leaders, middle leaders and SENCOs). Some of the smallest ethnic categories are subsumed into their more common groupings from now on. Those listed as Jewish, and the sole Traveller case, are recoded as White other, simply because there are too few of them for meaningful further analysis.

Regression model

The focussed dataset was used to create a regression model. The outcome variable was the rating of whether a respondent planned to leaving teaching soon. The model had three blocks of predictors – the first block included the number of years a respondent had been a teacher, and whether they reported being White British or not. The ethnic flag variable was needed because otherwise there would have been too many dummy variables to represent ethnic groups in the linear regression model (Gorard 2021). This limitation is addressed by the logistic regression model that follows. The second step used most of the rated items in the survey representing teacher views and experiences. It did not use the

items - not want to remain, recommend teaching, enjoy teaching, and not enjoy teaching, or the “positive view” factor – because these would appear to be too closely linked to whether someone planned to leave teaching. Two interaction terms were added. One was the interaction of experiencing racism and being non-White British, and the other was the rating of wanting a good ethnic mix in a school and being non-White British. The third step used the factors derived from the factor analysis above to see if they explained the outcome over and above teacher background and individual attitude items.

Overall, the model predicted planning to leave teaching with R of 0.78. In each step, items were entered using the forward command.

The first step in the regression used as predictors whether respondents are White-British or not, and years since qualifying, years since being a teacher, in their current school, and living in the UK. Only years living in the UK helps predict whether teachers plan to leave or not (Table 12). This is presumably mostly linked to age, with older teachers being more likely to consider leaving teaching. But the correlation between these year measures and planning to leave are only about +0.07. Once years living in the UK (age proxy) is accounted for then none of the other background predictors helps explain the outcome.

The workload factor is a strong predictor of leaving teaching, increasing R by 0.140 even after accounting for many other predictors. No other predictor that correlates highly with workload, such as teaching time, is retained in the model.

The flag variable for individual ethnicity is not retained in the model. This is despite the fact that White British teachers report being slightly less likely to leave teaching (rating 4.22 versus 4.40 for non-White British). This cannot be explained by the years living in the UK, because the non-White British teachers report living in the UK for a slightly shorter average time (37 years compared to 42 for White British teachers).

Table 12. Result of a two-step regression model to predict leaving the teaching profession

Step	Predictor	R	Increase in R	Standardised coefficient
Background	Years living in UK	0.076	0.076	0.087
Teaching experiences	Stress	0.351	0.275	0.565
	Leadership values me	0.463	0.112	-0.134
	Difficult parents	0.498	0.035	0.410
	I can be myself	0.522	0.024	-0.049
	Too many initiatives	0.538	0.016	0.570
	Lack of CPD	0.547	0.009	-0.047
	Experienced racism	0.557	0.010	0.096
	Work:life balance	0.565	0.008	0.641
	Reluctant to challenge others	0.570	0.005	0.054
	Flexible working	0.574	0.004	0.071
	Feel included	0.577	0.003	0.041
	Racism	0.580	0.003	-0.189
	Good pupil behaviour	0.583	0.003	0.075
	Ofsted grade of school	0.587	0.004	-0.051

	Ofsted pressure	0.589	0.002	0.639
	Better career prospects elsewhere	0.591	0.002	0.173
Interaction	School ethnic mix and non-White respondent	0.593	0.002	0.047
Composite factors	<i>Workload factor</i>	0.731	0.140	-2.275
	<i>Pay factor</i>	0.747	0.016	-0.355
	<i>Leadership factor</i>	0.763	0.016	-0.297
	<i>Unpleasantness factor</i>	0.778	0.015	-0.407

Note: the signs of the coefficients reflect whether an item was listed as an attractor or a detractor. The emphasis is on the increase in R (the “effect” size, not the coefficients).

In addition, the model does not include the following items:

- Anything to do with low property prices near school, promotion, and poor promotion prospects. Although not being a discriminatory factor in predicting leaving teaching is different from it not being important, the fact that pay/salary does not contribute much to this model confirms our other studies suggesting that pay and financial incentives are not a major factor in teacher recruitment or retention (Gorard et al. 2024).
- Anything explicitly to do with the ethnic makeup of schools – ethnic diversity of leadership, of teachers, or students, little ethnic diversity among leaders, teachers, or students, and school welcomes minority ethnic pupils. We will examine in more detail the finding that experience of racism is included in the model. But presumably these are otherwise all things that teachers can affect by changing schools, without having to leave the profession.
- Most of the items in the factor analysis above which are linked to “good” schools – such as school not in a deprived area, and high student attainment – are not in the model. Again, these are all things that a teacher could alter by changing schools.
- Similarly, whether the school values and works for equality, and cultural diversity, are not included but could be changed for the individual teacher by changing schools, or working to improve the current school.
- Personal issues, and circumstances – these would presumably be idiosyncratic and not show up as a general factor. Issues like personal or family illness are raised by some respondents in their comments. These personal issues would often not be changed by moving schools or leaving the profession.
- Other specific items not apparently relevant to leaving the profession are poor resources in school, ease of access to school, level of teacher turnover, and the prospect of a better job.
- The model picks up issues specific to teaching, both push and pull, but little about what else teachers might do (“better career prospects elsewhere” is the final individual item included, with R=0.002).

The interaction term between experiencing racism and individual ethnicity was not retained in the model, over and above individual items about racism, ethnic mix and respondent ethnicity. This is despite the finding that non-White British teachers were somewhat more likely than White British teachers to report racism (7.12 to 6.33). Reports of racism are rated higher for Arab (8.64) and Black other (8.22) respondents but these two groups are the smallest (11 and 9 cases in total). Other groups have lower ratings, especially Chinese (6.54), Indian (6.65) and White British (6.33) respondents.

The interaction term combining the respondent individual ethnicity and the factor scores concerning the importance of an ethnic mix of teachers in a school, which was more clearly of importance to non-White British teachers (6.53 to 4.53), is retained, suggesting a small role (R=0.002) in intention to

leave teaching for minority ethnic teachers. There was certainly a large difference between reports of White British teachers (the only negative factor score) and every other group (Table 13). The ethnic mix of leaders, teachers and students in schools is most highly rated as an attractor by Black Caribbean and Bangladeshi teachers.

Table 13. Factor scores for ethnic mix of school, by ethnic group

Ethnicity	Ethnic mix of school
Arab	0.733
Asian other	0.559
Bangladeshi	1.069
Black African	0.865
Black Caribbean	1.223
Black other	0.791
Chinese	0.165
Indian	0.800
Mixed	0.659
Pakistani	0.890
White British	-0.161
White other	0.225
Total	0.000

The best single predictor of a teacher planning to leave is job-related stress ($R=0.75$), and none of others is nearly as important once self-reported stress has been accounted for. In fact, after stress, “leadership values me” ($R=0.112$), and the workload factor ($R=0.140$), most of the other predictors are relatively light in their association to the outcome. Of course, stress is quite a vague term, and can be the outcome of many of the items used here, and others such as home life, relationships and illness. However, the results suggests that while other reforms, such as teacher pay, may help reduce loss of teachers they do not target the main issue of teacher well-being and the stress experienced in the job.

Logistic regression model

What happens using a logistic model instead? One advantage of a logistic regression model is that all of the categorical items, most notably ethnicity, can be included as predictors in their more natural state (Gorard 2021). This provides a fairer assessment of the role of ethnicity in whether teachers plan to leave the profession. Logistic regression is also free of many of the assumptions about the nature and distribution of the data, that can bedevil linear regression models.

One disadvantage is that the outcome must be categorical. This means altering the item on “planning to leave” that was rated on a scale from 1 to 10. A flag variable was created using rating scores of 1 to 3 as clearly not planning to leave, and 4 to 10 as possibly planning to leave (the distribution of scores is shown in Table A2 in the Appendix). This created two reasonably balanced groups, using all cases, of 1,547 (50.7%) planning to leave and 1,492 (49.3%) not planning to leave.

With more variables in total, and more variables with many categories, it is easier for the logistic model to fit the data retrospectively, even if there is no real substantive link between predictors and outcomes. This is one reason for using a forward conditional model, as well as the fact that this is more similar to the linear regression approach above. Predictors are entered in the same three steps as the former model.

The model increases the accuracy of predicting which of the two groups (unlikely to leave versus more likely to leave) any case is in, from a base of 50.7% to 76.3% (Table 14).

The model retains many of the same predictors as the linear regression model. However, ethnicity now becomes a usable predictor. All other things being equal, Arab, Bangladeshi, Black African, Black Caribbean, Pakistani, and especially Indian and Chinese teachers are more likely to rate “planning to leave teaching” highly. Classroom teachers are more likely to want to leave than promoted staff, and teachers in PRUs are much more likely to want to leave than those in any other kind of establishment.

Table 14. Result of a two-step logistic regression model to predict leaving the teaching profession

Step	Item	Percentage predicted correctly	Percentage point increase	Odds (ExpB)
Base	-	50.7	-	-
Background				
<i>Role</i>	Headteacher	56.6	5.9	1.23
	SLT			1.15
	Teacher			-
<i>Years</i>	Years qualified			1.03
<i>School type</i>	All age mainstream			0.56
	Middle			1.61
	Nursery			0.31
	Other			1.53
	Primary			1.07
	Private			0.53
	PRU			5.93
	Secondary			0.68
	Sixth Form college/FE			0.79
	Special school			-
<i>Ethnicity</i>	Arab			2.14
	Asian other			0.93
	Bangladeshi			1.94
	Black African			2.76
	Black Caribbean			2.77
	Black other			0.83
	Chinese			4.43
	Indian			3.54
	Mixed			1.27
	Pakistani			2.01

	White British			1.38
	White other			-
Attitudes and experiences	-	72.2	15.6	
<i>In order of relevance</i>	Stress			1.11
	Can be myself			0.85
	Leadership values me			0.88
	Difficult parents			1.08
	Too many initiatives			1.10
	Lack of CPD			0.91
	Experienced racism			1.13
	Workload			1.11
	Pupil behaviour			1.09
	Better career prospects			1.09
	School values equality			0.92
	Ofsted grade			0.95
	Work:life balance			1.09
	Flexible working			1.05
	Good leadership			0.93
	Reluctant to challenge others			1.04
	Poor promotion prospects			0.96
Interaction	Non-White and school ethnic mix			1.28
Composite factors		76.3	4.1	
	<i>Workload</i>			0.21
	<i>Inclusive school</i>			7.89
	<i>Unpleasantness</i>			2.12

Note: the size of the odds (above or below 1) reflect whether an item was listed as an attractor or a detractor

The ratings of experiences and attitudes retained in the model are very similar to those in the linear model, with some changes presumably due to variation now explained by ethnicity, role and school type. Again stress is the first variable included in the model, improving the prediction by the most percentage points. There is more relevance for leadership, teacher workload and schools valuing equality and diversity, than with the linear model.

The interaction term combining individual ethnicity and experience of racism is again not retained in the logistic model. And again, the interaction between individual ethnicity and rating of the school ethnic mix factor is retained.

As above, missing from the model is anything directly to do with salary, the individual items about the ethnic makeup of schools, personal circumstances, poor resources, ease of access – all of which can be

altered for an individual teacher by changing schools.

The findings appear to be the same for all economic areas of England, since area of residence is not retained as a predictor in the model, once all other predictors have been accommodated.

Summary and discussion

The results presented here are only part of a much bigger study involving both larger-scale and more in-depth data. The focus here is on what was reported by the respondents to our survey. Any claims to wider generality will come in conjunction with our work on prior evidence, the School Workforce Census, and our international comparisons and case studies. Some of the main findings are consistent across all sections of this paper – the comparative frequencies, factor analysis, linear and logistic regression.

Work-related stress featured in all analyses, including as the key predictor of teachers reporting wanting to leave the profession. If accepted, then this is what needs to be addressed most urgently to try and retain experienced teachers of all ethnic backgrounds. Many of the other issues raised in this paper such as workload, student behaviour, or flexible working could be part of the solution, as could other ideas such as sabbaticals. However, none of these is highlighted in the models above, and none is yet ready to be implemented as a robustly tested solution. Such testing must be a future phase for research.

Perhaps equally as important the results suggest no variation in intention to leave teaching and the reasons for it in terms of area of residence. There is no role in the explanatory model for many factors often cited in the media, policy reports, and other research – including pay, promotion, and limited school resources (Gorard et al. 2024). Therefore, perhaps the policy focus should be less on these, and more on ways to reduce workload stress.

Good leaders, who are seen to value their staff, and do not make unreasonable demands, come a close second to stress in all analyses, linked to teacher retention. Again however, the problems are that the idea of “good” leadership is rather vague, and there are no robustly evaluated and promising approaches to improving the situation yet (See et al. 2024a).

Both the experience of racism in schools, and the individual ethnicity of teachers, emerge as potential but lesser explanatory predictors of wanting to leave the profession. More importantly, the ethnic mix of schools (leaders, staff and students) is important for minority ethnic teachers (the interaction term in the model). Improving the ethnic diversity of school leaders, teachers and students across England could help the situation somewhat, especially for minority ethnic teachers, and could help address the issue of teachers who report experiencing racism. Our systematic review of the barriers and facilitators to recruiting and retaining minority ethnic staff confirms the findings in this paper (but largely from the US). Increasing diversity in school leadership, and reducing segregation between schools by eliminating faith-based schools, or example, are key steps to improvement (Gorard et al. 2024). It is clear that policy and practices to reduce ethnic segregation between schools in England would not only be fairer, but could also encourage the retention of minority ethnic staff in areas without a high minority ethnic population. For more details on how this specific goal might be achieved see Gorard et al. (2022).

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Ethical approval

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Appendix

Table A1a. Current school type by ethnicity, row percentages

Ethnicity	All age mainstream	Middle	Not known	Nursery	Other role	Other school type	Primary
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	-	36.4
Asian other	3.2	-	-	-	-	-	25.8
Bangladeshi	4.3	-	-	-	-	-	17.0
Black African	2.3	-		2.3	-	4.7	25.6
Black Caribbean	3.3	-	-	-	-	-	40.0
Black other	-	-	-	-	-	-	55.6
Chinese	7.1	3.6			-	-	28.6
Indian	3.0	-	-	1.0	-	-	27.0
Jewish	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mixed	2.1	2.1	-	-	-	-	35.8
Not known	0.2		97.6	0.0	-	-	1.3
Pakistani	1.6	1.6	0.0	1.6	1.6	-	28.6
Prefer not to say	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.0
Traveller	-	-	-	-	-	-	100.0
White British	2.4	0.6		0.4	0.3	-	47.6
White other	1.2	0.6		1.9	0.6	-	35.2
Total	2.0	0.5	14.5	0.5	0.3	0.1	37.8

Table A1b. Current school type by ethnicity, row percentages - continued

Ethnicity	Private	PRU	Secondary	Sixth Form college/F	Special	University/ College
Arab	18.2	-	45.5	-	0.0	-
Asian other	3.2	-	61.3	-	6.5	-
Bangladeshi	2.1	-	76.6	-	-	-
Black African	2.3	-	53.5	2.3	2.3	4.7
Black Caribbean	-	6.7	46.7	-	3.3	-
Black other	11.1	-	33.3	-	-	-
Chinese	10.7	-	42.9	-	3.6	3.6
Indian	3.0	1.0	58.0	3.0	4.0	-

Jewish	16.7		66.7	16.7	-	-
Mixed	7.4	2.1	49.5	-	1.1	-
Not known	-	-	0.9	-		-
Pakistani	3.2	-	58.7	-	3.2	-
Prefer not to say	13.3	-	46.7	-	13.3	6.7
Traveller		-	-	-	-	-
White British	3.1	0.2	42.5	1.3	1.4	0.1
White other	3.1	-	54.9	1.9	0.6	-
Total	2.9	0.3	38.6	1.1	1.3	0.2

Table A2. frequency of ratings of item “I plan to leave teaching soon”

Rating	Frequency	Percentage
1	870	28.7
2	337	11.1
3	285	9.4
4	194	6.1
5	357	11.8
6	202	6.7
7	203	6.7
8	206	6.8
9	106	3.5
10	269	8.9
Total	3,029	100.0