Google for Education

Future of the Classroom

Emerging Trends in Primary and
Secondary Education
United Kingdom Edition

Our approach

This report is part of a series on the evolution of primary and secondary education, mapping out current and emerging trends in classroom education. In collaboration with our research partner, **Canvas8**, we conducted a global analysis spanning:

- Fourteen expert interviews with global and country-specific thought leaders in education

- Academic literature review focusing on the last two years of peer-reviewed publications

- Desk research and media narrative analysis across the education sector, including policy research and teacher surveys, as well as input from Google for Education representatives across the globe

We acknowledge that some of the areas discussed in this report are ones that overlap with Google-led products and programs. In order to maintain a focus on the research and studies presented, we've intentionally excluded them.

Edtech is highly valued in Britain

Education in the UK is highly valued – among the 36 countries that make up the OECD, the UK spends the highest proportion (6.6%) of its gross domestic product on education.[1]

Technology is increasingly seen as a tool that can be harnessed to improve education, and The Department for Education's 2019 report: 'Realising the potential of technology in education', actively promotes the value of technology in the classroom. In 2018, 25% more educators and school leaders selected front-of-class technology as a key growth area in the next 1-3 years compared to 2017. However, despite 53% of educators and school leaders reporting that technology is "a necessary part of life and education," less than 36% of teachers believe their training in edtech is adequate.[2]

93%

of British parents say that having a positive experience with technology is important for their child's career and job prospects.
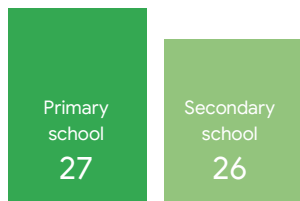
Dell EMC (2018)[3]

92%

of British parents believe schools need to offer lessons that develop their kids' IT skills.
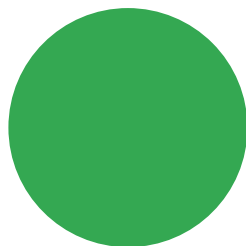
Dell EMC (2018)[3]

The British classroom at a glance

27

students is the average class size for primary public schools, which is higher than the average of 21 in developed countries. In secondary schools, the average class size is 26, higher than the OECD average of 21.
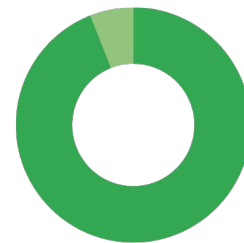
OECD (2017)[1]

50.9 hours

a week are reported to be worked by UK teachers, which is longer than all but three of the other 35 developed and emerging economies polled.

Global Teacher Status Index (2018)[4]

94%

of UK educators and school leaders say educational technology can improve student engagement.

Promethean (2018-19)[2]

Primary school 27

Secondary school 26

Key Trends

From our Global Report, we've analyzed three of the most prominent trends in the UK's primary and secondary school classrooms

01 Digital Responsibility
Parents want schools to help students to have healthy relationships with technology, and to be safe and confident explorers of the digital world.

02 Life Skills & Workforce Preparation
Parents and educators want children to have a more holistic education that goes beyond standardized testing to include social and vocational skills.

03 Innovating Pedagogy
Motivated teachers have more engaged classes, and they want to streamline administrative tasks to focus on teaching.

"Technology is not just the responsibility of the IT teacher. I think every teacher, whether an art teacher or a science teacher, needs to become familiar with technology and be supportive of it, because it is very much a foundational literacy almost, a foundational competency."

Vikas Pota, Group CEO of Tmrw Digital and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Varkey Foundation

Digital Responsibility

Children are online at a younger age than ever before – those under 18 years of age account for an estimated one in three Internet users globally.[5] In the UK, more than 46% of young people get a social media account by the time they're 12 years old.[6]

This high usage has resulted in higher concern – 73% of parents in the UK are concerned about their kids accessing inappropriate material online, 61% worry that social media is an overwhelming distraction from other activities, and 49% worry about their child oversharing personal information.[7] It has created a desire to help students develop a healthy, responsible relationship with technology – something that often falls under the jurisdiction of the education system.
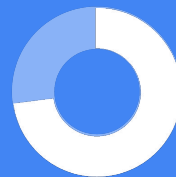
73%

of parents in the UK are concerned about their kids accessing inappropriate material online.

Children's Commissioner (2017)[7]

"Digital citizenship and digital literacy programs are about more than learning how to use something. They must navigate the challenge of encouraging a healthy relationship with technology as a whole."

Vikas Pota, Group CEO of Tmrw Digital and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Varkey Foundation

Considering that 37% of UK teachers have seen an online safety incident at their school, it's not surprising that 99% say online safety should be part of the curriculum.[8] It's why guidance from the Department of Education, to be rolled out in 2020, is focusing on helping children keep personal information safe, challenge harmful content, and balance their online and offline worlds.[9]

Research shows that including online safety within a school's curriculum is key to helping children become responsible users, especially if they are taught how to manage their own behavior as part of reducing risk.[10] A study by Oxford University found that whether 11- to 16-year-olds accessed inappropriate material was more than 99.5% down to factors *other* than internet filters.[11] It's not enough to just block inappropriate content – students need to be educated around how to navigate these issues.
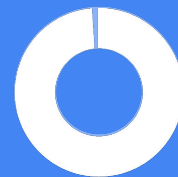
99.5%

of times, 11- to 16-year-olds acces inappropriate material due to factors other than internet filters.

University of Oxford (2018)[11]

Life Skills & Workforce Preparation

With just 44% of 11- to 18-year-olds in the UK feeling prepared for employment, concerns are growing about how current curriculums will prepare students for adult life.[12] Students are looking for a more holistic education that includes general life skills, rather than focusing on memorizing and repeating information. For example, 81% want their school or college to expand its offerings of vocational qualifications.[12]

The desire to prepare students for the world of work is also driving a new focus on socio-emotional skills – 91% of CEOs globally say that they need to strengthen their organization's soft skills to sit alongside digital skills.[13] So, UK schools are incorporating empathy, confidence, articulation, and teamwork into lessons to be taught alongside traditional subjects like math and English.[16]

81%

of young people in the UK want their school or college to expand its offerings of vocational qualifications.

CVQO (2018)[12]

"If we're in the era of automation, it's even more important that we prioritize people's EQ not their IQ, that we make them adaptable."

Rachel Wolf, Founding Partner of Public First and Founder of the National Schools Network

Research suggests that higher levels of emotional intelligence are linked to better leadership and the ability to cope with pressure.[14] In fact, these qualities are being prized more highly than the traditional measures of success – 53% of UK teachers believe soft skills are more important than academic qualifications to students' success, and 72% believe their school should increase the teaching of them.[15] Students agree – 88% of young people report that life skills are "as important" or "more important" than academic qualifications.[16]

It's also a way of future-proofing students for the unknown. As technology can be used to automate aspects of jobs - the Office for National Statistics expects 1.5 million jobs in England to be automated in the future - more value will be placed on human skills such as empathy and creativity.[17]

"The conversation about what I refer to as 21st-century skills is already out there. There are a lot of people thinking, doing, innovating what 21st-century skills programs look like."

Vikas Pota, Group CEO of Tmrw Digital and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Varkey Foundation

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Innovating Pedagogy

From marking to preparing resources, teachers invest a lot of time and energy in administrative tasks. In the UK, 72% of teachers report that their workload is unmanageable and 67% say they are stressed at work.[18] Yet despite 62% of school leaders in the UK thinking that their workload is contributing to high levels of stress, only 20% of schools are addressing this problem.[2]

Freeing up time can have a big impact on teachers' engagement and motivation, and technology can be harnessed as a tool to achieve this. In fact, 84% of UK teachers say that technology saves educators time, and 88% add that educational technology enables pedagogical innovation and improves educational quality.[19]

88%

of UK teachers report that educational technology enables pedagogical innovation and improves educational quality.

Tes (2018)[19]

"You cannot introduce tech successfully by disrupting the relationship between the teacher and the student. The introduction of tech will have to take place in the context of the fundamental human interaction in the classroom."

Rachel Wolf, Founding Partner of Public First and Founder of the National Schools Network

This is especially important as teachers are increasingly seen as 'agents of change'. The 2018 Global Teacher Status Index found a direct correlation between the status of teachers in their country and students' academic outcomes - and teacher status in the UK rose to 7th place in 2018 relative to other countries.[20]

This ranked it higher than the US (9th place in the same year) and the Netherlands (16th place), although still some way behind China and Malaysia (1st and 2nd place). So, schools are looking for ways to help motivate teachers and give them resource to focus on professional development, rather than spending time on administrative tasks. With a third of primary school teachers in the UK reporting they "lack confidence" teaching science, technology can also be used to fill gaps in knowledge.[21]

"Lesson planning or marking are tasks that take a disproportionate amount of time. This is where I think tech can be leveraged to free up time and allow teachers to do what they're meant to be doing, which is teaching."

Vikas Pota, Group CEO of Tmrw Digital and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Varkey Foundation

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"Tech is augmenting the human relationships that already exist in classrooms. That's probably where the greater potential is, rather than disrupting the whole relationship altogether."

Rachel Wolf, Founding Partner of Public First and Founder of the National Schools Network

Read the **Future of the Classroom**: *Global Edition*
for insights across all eight emerging trends

Digital Responsibility

Computational Thinking

Collaborative Classrooms

Innovating Pedagogy

Life Skills & Workforce Preparation

Student-led Learning

Connecting Guardians & Schools

Emerging Technologies

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