

Summary of evaluation

Introduction and context

This project explores teacher and leader experiences of offsite PPA (planning, preparation and assessment time completed away from the school site) and examines the feasibility of conducting an impact evaluation of its effect on teacher retention.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) commissioned UCL Institute of Education and the Chartered College of Teaching to conduct this research.

How we carried out the research

To explore feasibility, barriers, and enablers of offsite PPA, the research team conducted:

- ❖ Focus groups with 21 primary school teachers
- ❖ Interviews with 12 primary school leaders and MAT CEOs
- ❖ Surveys of over 300 primary school leaders
- ❖ Secondary data analysis
- ❖ Workshops with 12 secondary school timetablers

Headline findings

Many primary school teachers view offsite PPA positively, valuing it as a way to support well-being, work-life balance, and professional trust. However, leaders in primary schools that do not currently offer offsite PPA reported facing barriers such as budget constraints, difficulties in ensuring equitable access for all staff, and logistical constraints. In secondary schools, additional barriers are linked to perceptions of what constitutes a good quality timetable (i.e. spreading PPA throughout the week and minimising split classes).

Key lessons for schools

- ❖ **Explore flexible solutions:** Adjusting meeting times, supporting remote collaboration, and regularly reviewing timetables can help address barriers.
- ❖ **Protect PPA time:** Teachers reported being often required to use PPA-time for tasks outside planning, preparation, assessment.
- ❖ **Consider equity:** Ensure part-time staff and others have fair access to offsite PPA.
- ❖ **Safeguard collaboration:** Use hybrid or flexible approaches to maintain teamwork.
- ❖ **Plan timetables carefully:** Block scheduling (e.g. half-day PPA) makes offsite PPA more practical.
- ❖ **Protect wellbeing:** Teachers value choice, quiet environments, and reduced interruptions.

What did we find?

Teachers' and leaders' perceptions

- ❖ Many leaders only allow offsite PPA at their discretion, requiring teacher approval.
- ❖ Teachers reported that offsite PPA enhances wellbeing, productivity, and trust, and that its availability is a factor in job decisions.
- ❖ Risks include reduced collaboration and consistency in lesson content between teachers.
- ❖ Budget pressures, especially in small schools, limit flexibility to provide offsite PPA.
- ❖ Leaders did not perceive clear effects on pupil learning but did report benefits for staff wellbeing.

Planning & implementation

Primary schools that successfully implemented Offsite PPA adopted flexible approaches and tended to:

- ❖ Use block timetabling at the start or end of the school day
- ❖ Rotate PPA slots to ensure fairness
- ❖ Avoid Mondays and Fridays to reduce clashes with bank holidays or INSET days
- ❖ Allow teachers to swap PPA time when meetings or parents' evenings conflicted
- ❖ Support hybrid or remote collaboration for staff working offsite
- ❖ Distinguish PPA clearly from other responsibilities, such as ECT support

Secondary school timetablers highlighted that block PPA scheduling is generally not possible or desirable, suggesting adoption may require timetable changes and additional resources.

Find out more:

A more detailed report on these findings is available via the EEF website.