CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION

May 2019
ABOUT THE RESEARCH

In May 2019, Oxfam, on behalf of the UK Student Climate Network (UKSCN), commissioned YouGov to survey teachers working in primary and secondary education on their views on climate change education and the curriculum. The research was also supported by the National Union of Students’ (NUS) Sustainability team, now an independent charity - Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS-UK).

Surveys were completed during 21st - 30th May 2019, with 352 teachers in total completing the survey.

This report presents the findings of the research.
Which of these applies to you? [Base: 352]

- Secondary school teacher: 61%
- Primary school teacher: 39%

Which ONE of the following best describes your job role / position? [Base: 352]

- Working full time (30 or more hours per week): 74%
- Working part time (8-29 hours a week): 23%
- Working part time (Less than 8 hours a week): 4%
The Respondents contd.

Which, if any, of the following school years do you currently teach at your school or trust?
[Secondary school teachers, Base: 216]

- Year 13 in England and Wales / Year 14 in Northern Ireland / S6 in Scotland: 46%
- Year 12 in England and Wales / Year 13 in Northern Ireland / S6 in Scotland: 53%
- Year 11 in England and Wales / Year 12 in Northern Ireland / S5 in Scotland: 87%
- Year 10 in England and Wales / Year 11 in Northern Ireland / S4 in Scotland: 86%
- Year 9 in England and Wales / Year 10 in Northern Ireland / S3 in Scotland: 80%
- Year 8 in England and Wales / Year 9 in Northern Ireland / S2 in Scotland: 70%
- Year 7 in England and Wales / Year 8 in Northern Ireland / S1 in Scotland: 70%

Which, if any, of the following school years do you currently teach at your school or trust?
[Primary school teachers, Base: 136]

- Year 6 in England and Wales / Year 7 in Northern Ireland / P7 in Scotland: 35%
- Year 5 in England and Wales / Year 6 in Northern Ireland / P6 in Scotland: 30%
- Year 4 in England and Wales / Year 5 in Northern Ireland / P5 in Scotland: 32%
- Year 3 in England and Wales / Year 4 in Northern Ireland / P4 in Scotland: 30%
- Year 2 in England and Wales / Year 3 in Northern Ireland / P3 in Scotland: 31%
- Year 1 in England and Wales / Year 2 in Northern Ireland / P2 in Scotland: 22%
- Reception in England and Wales / Year 1 in Northern Ireland / P1 in Scotland: 13%
- Other: 4%
Approximately how many years, in TOTAL, have you been a teacher?
[Base: 352]

Which, if any, of the following subjects, do you currently teach at your school or trust?
[Base: 352]
“In general, how concerned, if at all, are you personally about climate change?”
[Base: 352]

[Survey results]

“Before taking this survey, to what extent, if at all, did you personally support or oppose the "Youth Strike 4 Climate" demonstrations that have been taking place recently across the UK in 2019?”
[Base: 352]
THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND CLIMATE CHANGE
Thinking generally about the UK’s education system... To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“The current UK education legislation needs radical change to make the education system fit for the times we live in” [Base: 352]

- Strongly agree: 28%
- Tend to agree: 42%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 15%
- Tend to disagree: 11%
- Strongly disagree: 2%
- Don’t know: 2%

“The current UK education system adequately educates students on climate change, its implications for the environment and societies around the world and how these implications can be addressed” [Base: 352]

- Strongly agree: 6%
- Tend to agree: 30%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 20%
- Tend to disagree: 32%
- Strongly disagree: 8%
- Don’t know: 4%

“UK students should always be taught about climate change, its implications for environments and societies around the world and how these implications can be addressed” [Base: 352]

- Strongly agree: 55%
- Tend to agree: 34%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 7%
- Tend to disagree: 3%
- Strongly disagree: 1%
- Don’t know: 1%
CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION

Thinking generally about students across UK schools or trusts... How important, if at all, do you think it is that UK students leave education with each of the following?

“The appropriate knowledge and understanding about climate change” [Base: 352]

- Very important: 61%
- Fairly important: 34%
- Not very important: 3%
- Not at all important: 1%
- Don't know: 1%

“The motivation to respond positively to the challenges of climate change” [Base: 352]

- Very important: 59%
- Fairly important: 34%
- Not very important: 5%
- Not at all important: 2%
- Don't know: 1%

“The ability to communicate well with others about the challenges of climate change” [Base: 352]

- Very important: 46%
- Fairly important: 45%
- Not very important: 8%
- Not at all important: 1%
- Don't know: 1%

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CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION

Still thinking in general about the UK's education system... Do you think there should be more or less teaching in UK schools about climate change, its implications for environments and societies around the world and how these implications can be addressed, or do you think the current level of teaching should stay the same? [Base: 352]

- 29% Much more teaching
- 40% Slightly more teaching
- 25% It should stay the same
- 2% Slightly less teaching
- 1% Much less teaching
- 1% Don't know

Thinking in general about ANY type of training you have had whilst in your current role at the school or trust you mainly teach at...Do you feel you've received adequate training to educate students on climate change, its implications for the environment and societies around the world and how these implications can be addressed? [Base: 352]

- 18% Yes, I do
- 75% No, I don't
- 7% Don't know
CLIMATE CHANGE AND MY SCHOOL

To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

“The headteacher and/or governors at my school/trust have a negative attitude towards teaching about climate change” [Base: 352]

- Strongly agree: 1%
- Tend to agree: 6%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 25%
- Tend to disagree: 28%
- Strongly disagree: 20%
- Don’t know: 20%

“The headteacher and/or governors take sustainability issues seriously (e.g. recycling, responsible use of electricity etc.) when making decisions about how to run the school/trust” [Base: 352]

- Strongly agree: 10%
- Tend to agree: 28%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 25%
- Tend to disagree: 25%
- Strongly disagree: 8%
- Don’t know: 4%

“My school/trust teaches students about climate change as set out in the national curriculum and/or exam syllabuses, but doesn’t teach anything beyond this” [Base: 352]

- Strongly agree: 7%
- Tend to agree: 43%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 16%
- Tend to disagree: 14%
- Strongly disagree: 4%
- Don’t know: 16%
CLIMATE CHANGE AND MY SCHOOL

To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

“Subject teachers at my school/trust collaborate with each other to teach students about climate change in an integrated way (i.e. allowing students to explore, gather and process all the information they are taught)” [Base: 352]

“I would like my students to argue for improved changes to be made to the curriculum about climate change” [Base: 352]
CLIMATE CHANGE DEMONSTRATIONS

To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

“UK educational institutions are right to punish students (e.g. detentions/ temporary exclusion etc.) who have been found out to miss school/ college to take part in climate change demonstrations” [Base: 352]

- **Strongly agree** 10%
- **Tend to agree** 14%
- **Neither agree nor disagree** 20%
- **Tend to disagree** 27%
- **Strongly disagree** 24%
- **Don't know** 6%

“UK educational institutions should allow students to participate in climate demonstrations, even if it involves them missing school/ college” [Base: 352]

- **Strongly agree** 16%
- **Tend to agree** 24%
- **Neither agree nor disagree** 18%
- **Tend to disagree** 19%
- **Strongly disagree** 17%
- **Don't know** 5%
CLIMATE CHANGE DEMONSTRATIONS contd.

To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

“UK educational institutions should provide opportunities for students to participate in climate demonstrations, but only as part of their lessons/studies” [Base: 352]

- Strongly agree: 9%
- Tend to agree: 33%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 26%
- Tend to disagree: 18%
- Strongly disagree: 8%
- Don’t know: 6%

“I would not like my students to argue for permission to participate in climate change demonstrations during school time” [Base: 352]

- Strongly agree: 11%
- Tend to agree: 19%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 20%
- Tend to disagree: 21%
- Strongly disagree: 22%
- Don’t know: 7%