

CRUMBLING BUILDINGS, TEMPORARY CLASSROOMS AND RISING CLASS SIZES – MAJOR CHALLENGES FACING SCHOOLS

Schools are struggling to accommodate increasing pupil numbers, with the impact of extra pupils exacerbating the already significant strains on school buildings, a survey by the **NASUWT-The Teachers' Union**, has found.

Nearly half (48%) of teachers who responded to the survey said that the number of pupils on roll at their school has significantly increased in the last five years, with 72% saying class sizes have become larger as a result. More than one in five (21%) said that classrooms had been created in Portacabins or by using other areas of the school to accommodate extra pupils.

Teachers have serious concerns about the condition of their school buildings and the impact this is having on pupils' learning.

The survey, which received over 1,200 responses, also found:

- 70% said that communal areas such as dining halls and entrance ways are not large enough for the number of pupils and staff using them and 64% said the same of their classrooms and teaching spaces;
- 55% said there is not adequate room for staff and pupils to move around their classroom safely and for effective learning to take place;
- 72% said the size and layout of the school does not support positive pupil behaviour and 57% said the same of their classroom;
- 58% said the overall physical condition of their school has declined since they started working there;
- 71% said there were signs of leaks, damp or mould around their school and 55% said the same for their classroom;
- 77% said the temperature in their classroom was not comfortable all year round and they did not have the means to control the temperature themselves;
- 58% said there are not adequate numbers of toilets for staff and pupils and 53% said they were not in good condition;
- Only 15% said their school was fitted with sprinklers in the event of a fire.

These findings have been released as the NASUWT's Annual Conference gets underway today (Friday) in Birmingham.

During the conference, representatives will debate a motion on the misuse of school funding, highlighting concerns that in some schools money is being used to fund vanity projects rather than to support the delivery of high-quality education and the maintenance of buildings.

Half of those who responded to the survey said that their school has embarked on significant spending projects in the last five years, with 29% saying that this money had been spent on new branding or rebranding for the school, a quarter saying money has been spent on appointing extra members of the management team and 22% saying money has been spent on hiring consultants.

Chris Keates, General Secretary of the NASUWT, said:

“This is a disgraceful picture of schools in the 21st Century and revealing about the spending priorities of some schools.

“The impact of the Government’s failure to plan adequately for the predicted increase in the number of school places is clear for all to see. Instead of supporting schools to plan for increases in pupil numbers, millions of pounds have been poured into its ideological free schools project while pupils and teachers in other schools are crammed into inadequate buildings.

“The failure of government is compounded by those employers which, rather than invest in the maintenance of their school buildings and improving the learning environment, have chosen instead to stockpile their funds in reserves or give priority to vanity projects which have little or no impact on educational outcomes.

“Our children and young people deserve a learning environment which enhances their experience and provides them with the fit for purpose spaces and facilities they need and deserve.”

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The Teachers’ Union