School trips to museums: Survey report

schoolzone

WEST MIDLANDS MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT

DELIVERED BY

Ironbridge

BIRTHPLACE OF INDUSTRY

Contents

Which age students go on most trips?	6
Which locations are most interest to schools?	6
Barriers to school trips	9
Supporting visits	11
Facilities	12
Communicating with schools	14
Suggestions for closer links with schools	15
Work experience	17
Respondent profiles	19

Overview

Following consultation with teachers in an online discussion forum, teachers in the West Midlands were consulted through an online survey. Schoolzone's registered users, representing a broadly typical range of teachers, were invited to take part via email. Over 200 responded, answering a range of questions based largely on suggestions arising in the forums discussion.

A picture emerges of continued interest in taking trips: teachers clearly see the value in such activities and at primary, over half of children go on trips at least once a term, while at secondary over a third of children do so.

However, there are common barriers which prevent more trips taking place, the main one being cost – schools are operating with very constrained budgets at present.

Museums are still popular venues for trips, but so too are outdoor pursuits and theatre trips – these perhaps having broader appeal across or outside the curriculum.

Respondents appeared to be experienced school trippers – they know what to look out for and have common requirements.

The survey findings underpin the observations from the forum and validate them with a regional focus, but the two reports should be read together.

Survey findings

Virtually all primary schools (94%) in the West Midlands have provided trips in the last year to heritage venues, while over ¾ of secondary schools have done so. Similar proportions have provided visitors from external organisations.

Visits to heritage venues are less common at sixth form (59%) and FE level (31%), but external visitors are more common, with over ¾ in both cases having provided them.

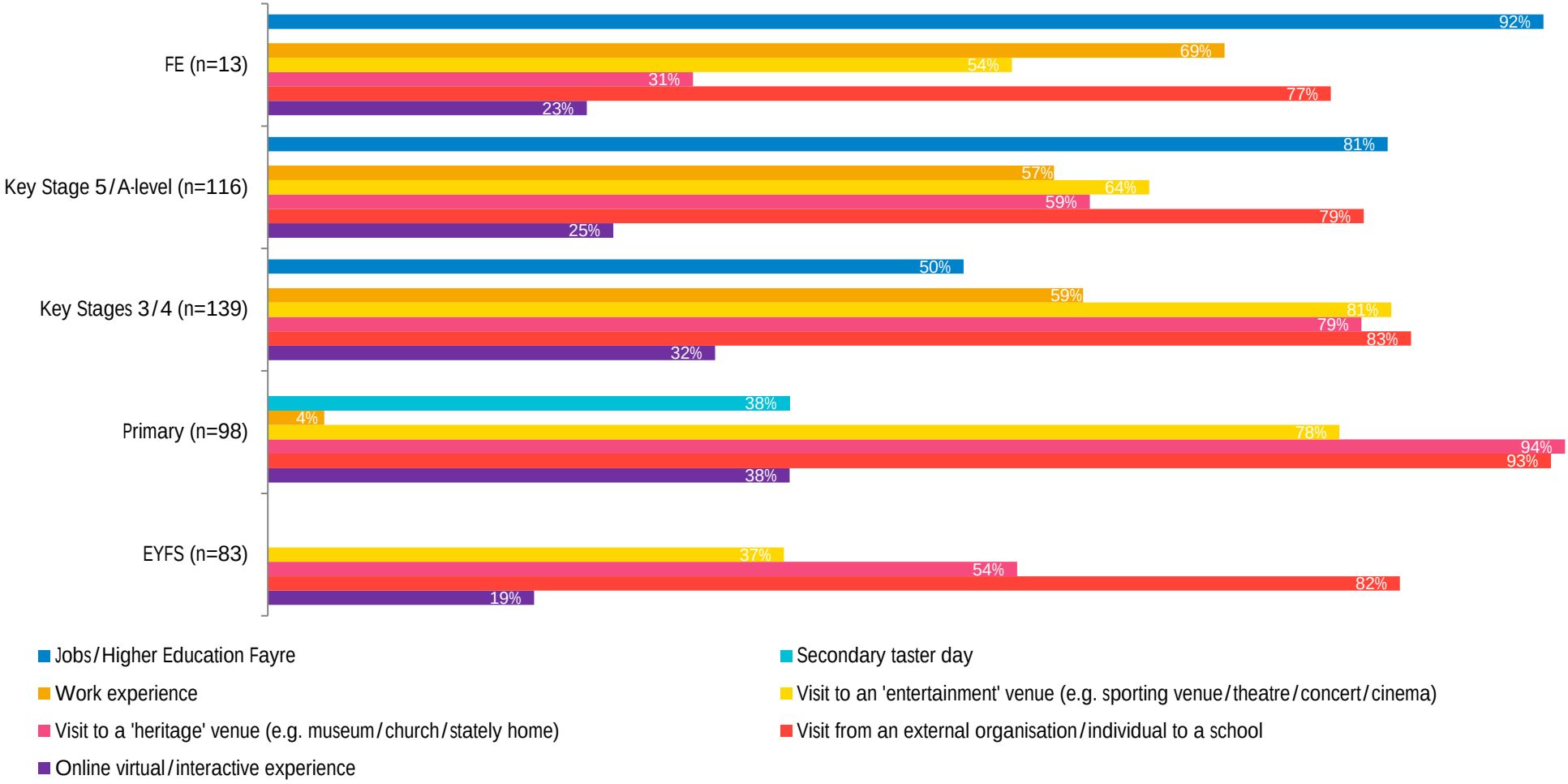
Early years providers seem to favour external visitors too, with 82% having used them, compared to 54% visiting heritage venues.

At secondary level, schools are equally likely to take trips to entertainment venues as to heritage venues, but primary schools are a little less likely to do so (78%). For early years this is even less likely (37%).

Online experiences are the least used, with about a third of primary and secondary schools using them, a quarter of post 16 and a fifth of early years.

Around 60% of secondary and 70% of FE providers offer work experience and very small proportion of primary schools (4%) do so.

What types of learning experiences has your establishment provided for your pupils over the past 12 months?



Which age students go on most trips?

Over half of schools take trips two or three times a year for all year groups; for FE this figure falls to about a third.

At primary, the number of trips taken increases in each successive year group.

At secondary, slightly more trips are taken in Y7 than in other years and there is dip at sixth form level.

These trends are probably explained by the demands and pressures of the curriculum: at primary level, there is more and more content to cover each year, so more opportunities for visits to link to the curriculum. In Y6, there is a curriculum time pressure during the first two and half terms, but after SATs, schools have time free to take such trips.

At secondary, KS3 has no external exams so there is less pressure than at KS4 or KS5, and in Y7 trips can be used as bonding activities for new students and tutors. Meanwhile at KS4 and 5 there are perhaps more opportunities to link to the curriculum, but also more pressure to stay in school.

Which locations are most interest to schools?

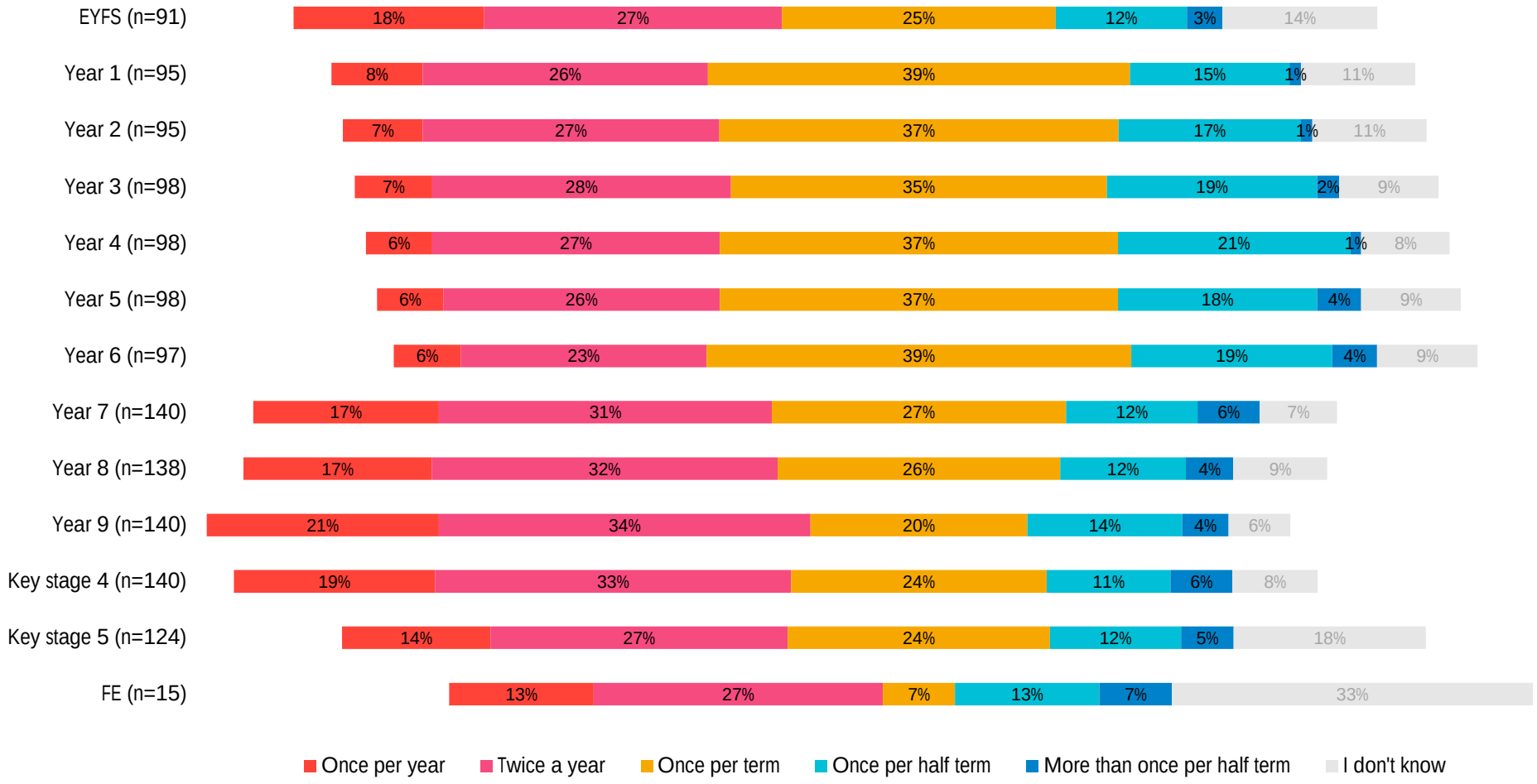
Outdoor activity centres seem to be most popular as trip venues, probably because they are fun, but also curriculum-agnostic: teachers of all subjects could choose this option. There does seem to have been a growth in both demand and provision for these kinds of activity in recent years: they are good for team-building and getting to know each other better. They are perhaps also something that schools feel more comfortable about asking parents for contributions towards.

Theatre trips are also very popular venues for schools.

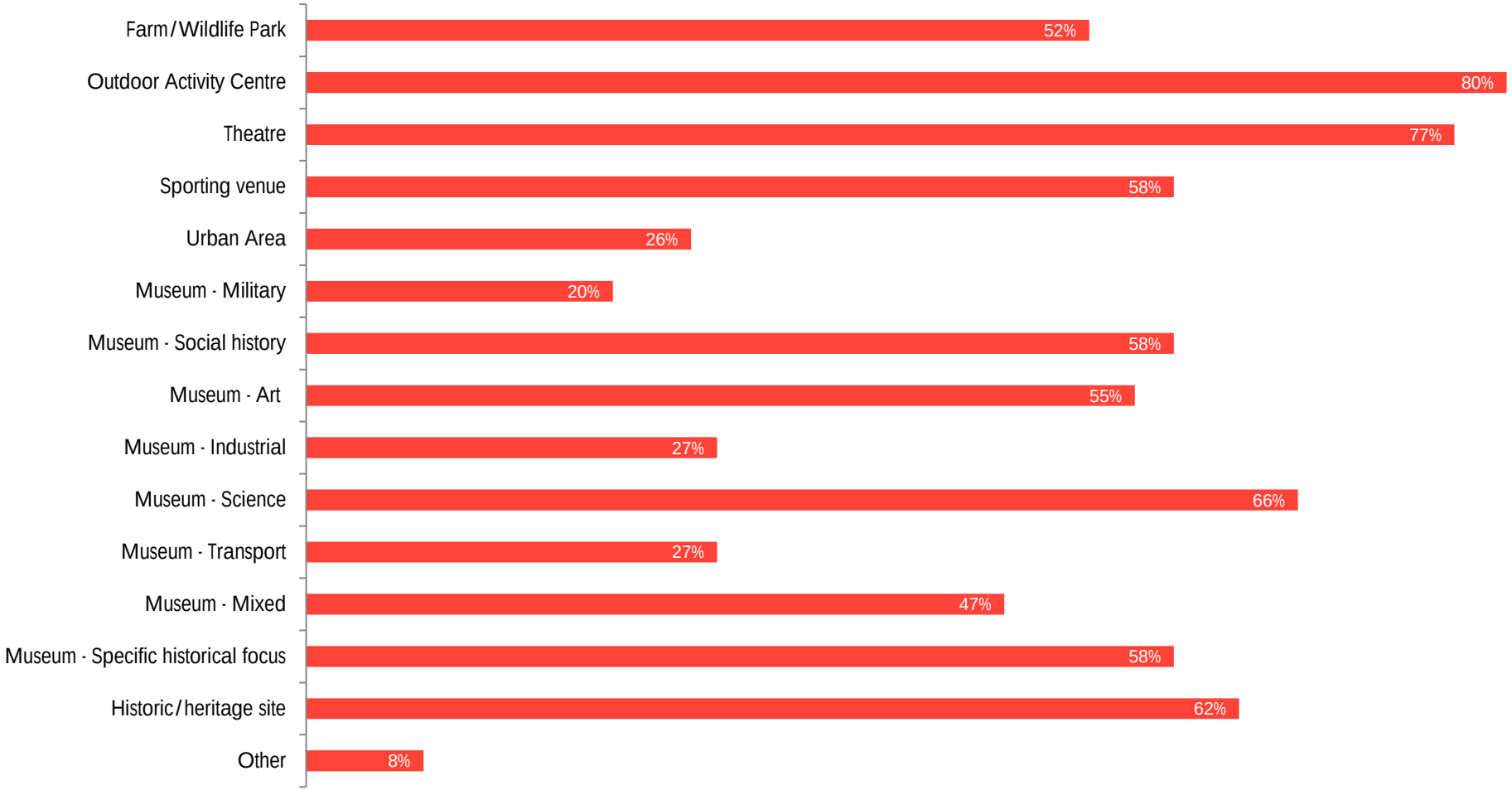
Among the heritage venues, science museums and historic sites are most popular, while those with a specific historical focus and with a social history focus are quite close behind (and on par with sporting venues).

Military, industrial and transport museums as well as urban areas are least popular, being of interest to only about a quarter of schools. This is probably mostly because of the perception that these have a narrower curriculum focus than the other types of location.

Approximately, how often do students go on school trips/educational visits?



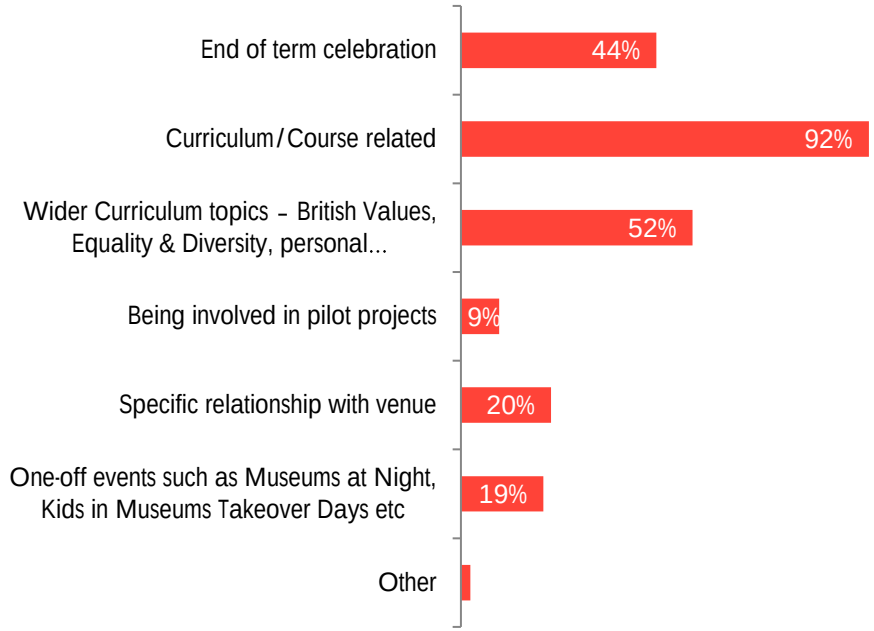
Which type of locations are of interest to your establishment/students? (n=230)



A curriculum focus is the main reason for taking trips, but around half of schools also take trips to support wider curriculum topics (possibly in association with the above) and just under half of school trips may (also) be associated with an end of term treat.

Around a fifth of schools have specific relationships with museums or go to specific one-off events as the main reason for attending.

What are the main reasons for your establishment taking a trip to one of these kinds of venues? (n=231)

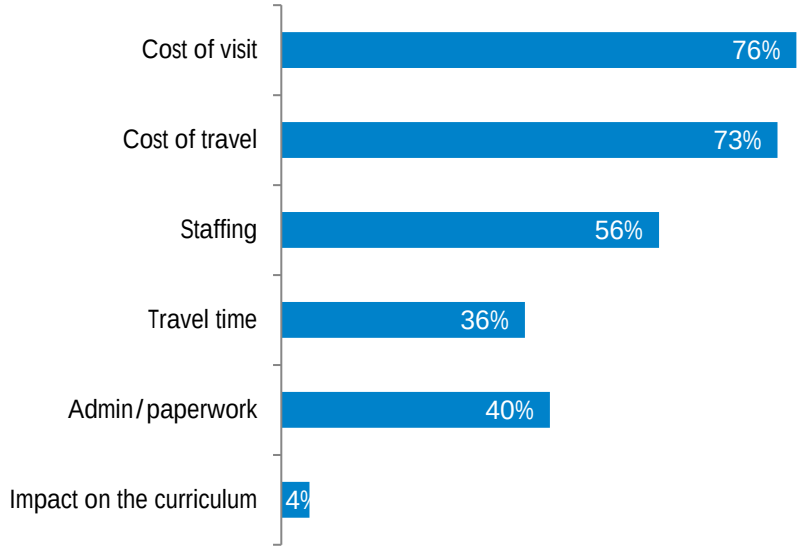


Barriers to school trips

Clearly, costs are a major barrier to taking trips and travel is a significant element of the cost. Interestingly, only 4% considered impact on the curriculum an issue, but it may be that this was subsumed by the 56% of respondents saying that staffing was a barrier, since it can be the removal of teaching staff from lessons to attend trips that has the biggest impact on the curriculum.

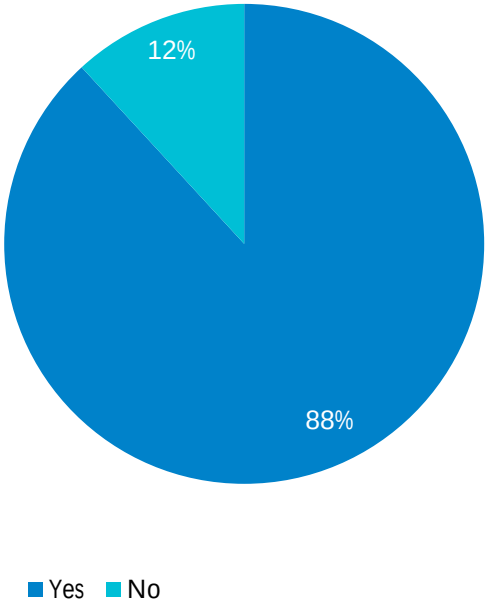
Forum participants noted that admin can be a problem, but it seems to be a barrier to only 40%, though this is a significant proportion, in conjunction with the others.

What are the barriers to organising school trips/educational visits? (n=217)



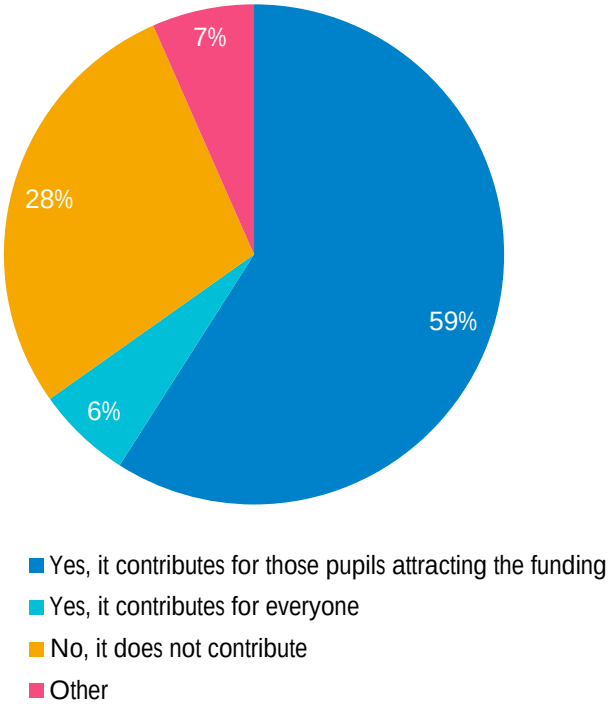
Cost of transport is clearly a barrier to taking trips, with 88% of schools considering that they would take more trips if the venue offered some financial support with transport. Note that this was not necessarily for trips to local (West Midlands) museums, but in the research forum teachers did say that even local trips were very expensive for coach hire.

Would you consider taking more trips like this if the venue offered a discount for transport? (n=228)



About two thirds of schools use pupil premium funding to contribute towards the cost of school trips, but for the vast majority of these, the funding goes to support only those who attract the funding, rather than being used to offset the cost for all pupils.

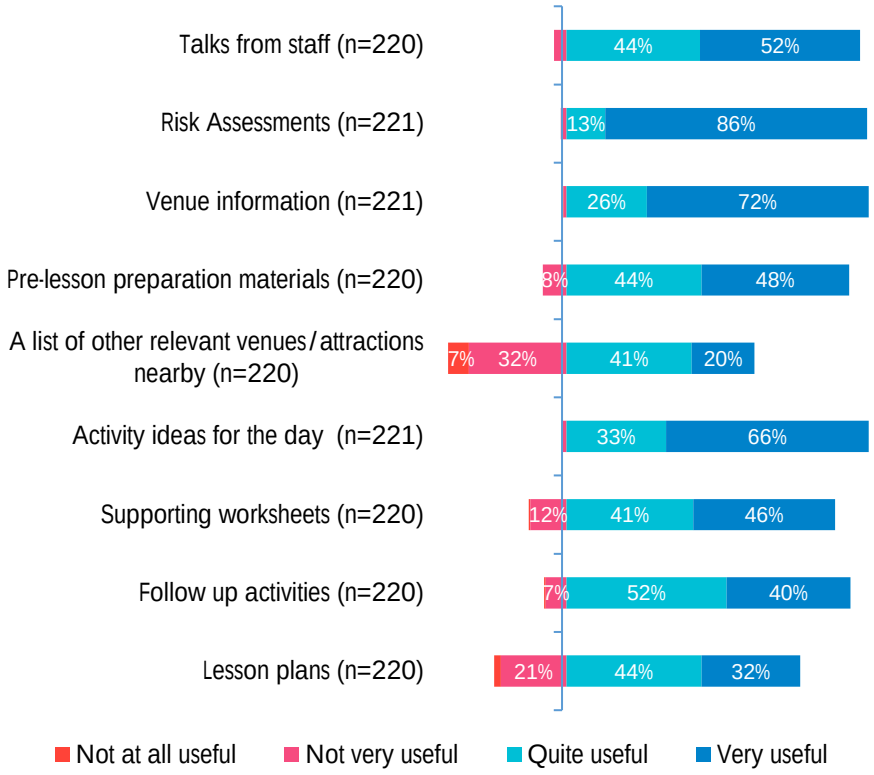
Does Pupil Premium funding contribute towards such trips? (n=227)



Supporting visits

Teachers say they would find most of the suggestions for supporting trips potentially useful, though they are least interested in nearby relevant venues and lesson plans – the latter perhaps being of more use before or after, rather than on the trip itself.

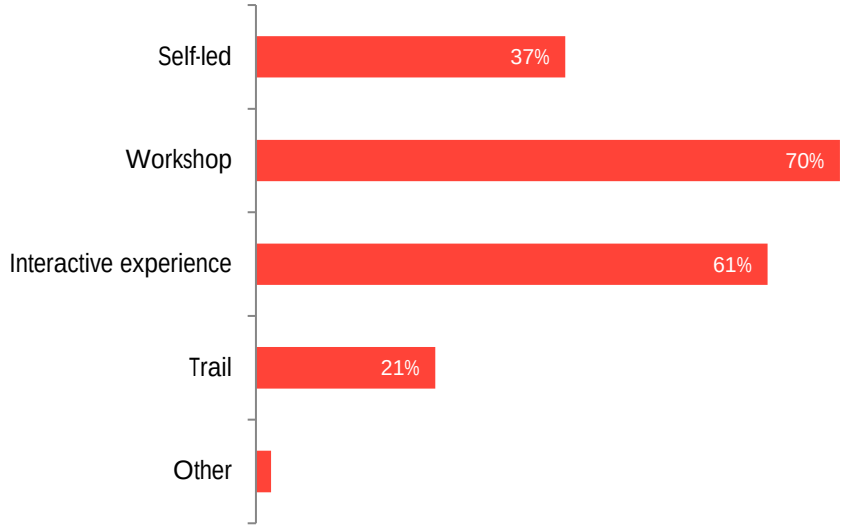
How useful would you find the following to support a 1 day trip?



Teachers obviously like their pupils to be engaged in some way during school trips, with workshops and interactive experiences of some kind being most popular. Self-led activities and trails are less interesting.

In the forum, teachers said that they really value the input of museum staff, whether in directing learning (as in the workshop approach) or by taking control of the organisation on the day, so that pupils aren't left to fend for themselves – teachers feel stressed in times where students roam free.

Thinking about any trips to one of these kinds of venues that you might take to support your own specialist or lead subject, which formats do you tend to prefer? (n=219)



Facilities

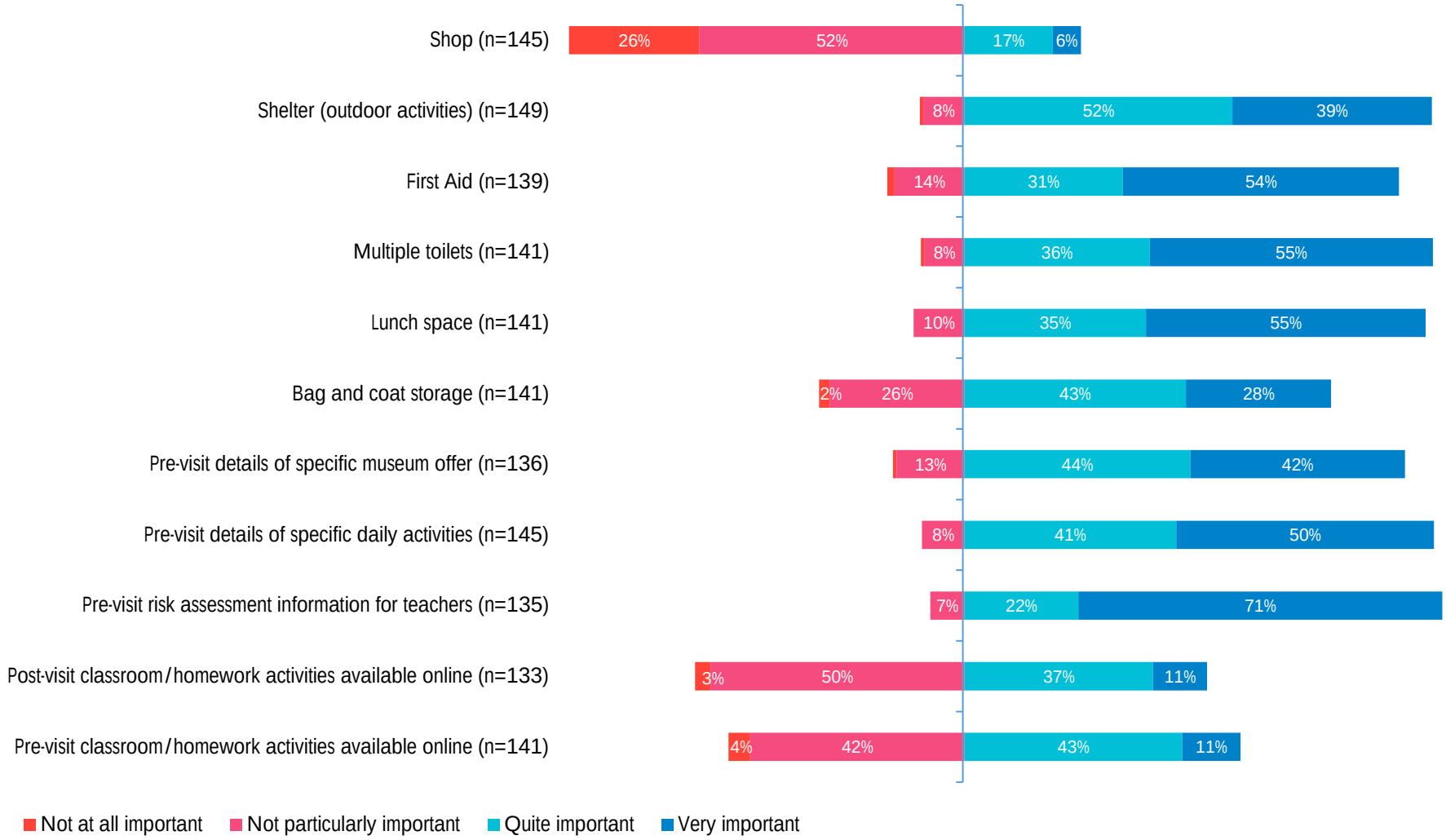
Although some teachers in the forum said that the museum shop was a big attraction for the children, it seems to the least important facility provided for all but about a quarter of teachers – see next page.

Activities for pre- or post-visit use in the classroom or for homework are also in relatively low demand, with only around half of schools wanting them – slightly more wanting post- rather than pre-.

Risk assessments are considered the most important, with 71% of teachers saying they are very important to have before the visit.

The high degree of conformity around these standard museum facilities shows that teachers responding to the survey were experienced in taking trips to museums and know what to look out for. Although the survey did not ask about specifics of each facility, this means that museums need to understand schools' requirements.

How important is it that the venue provides:

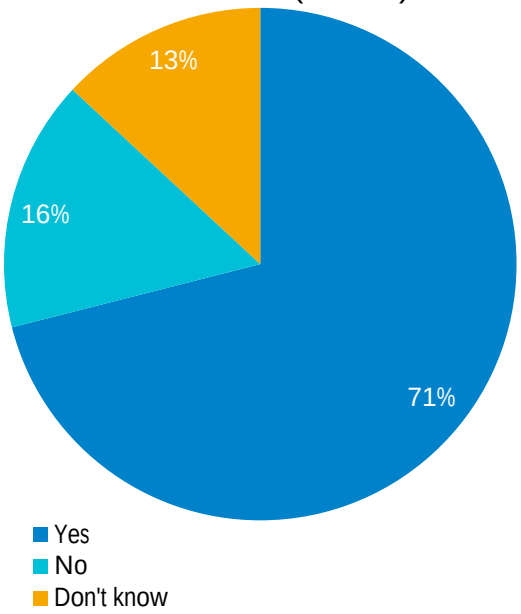


Communicating with schools

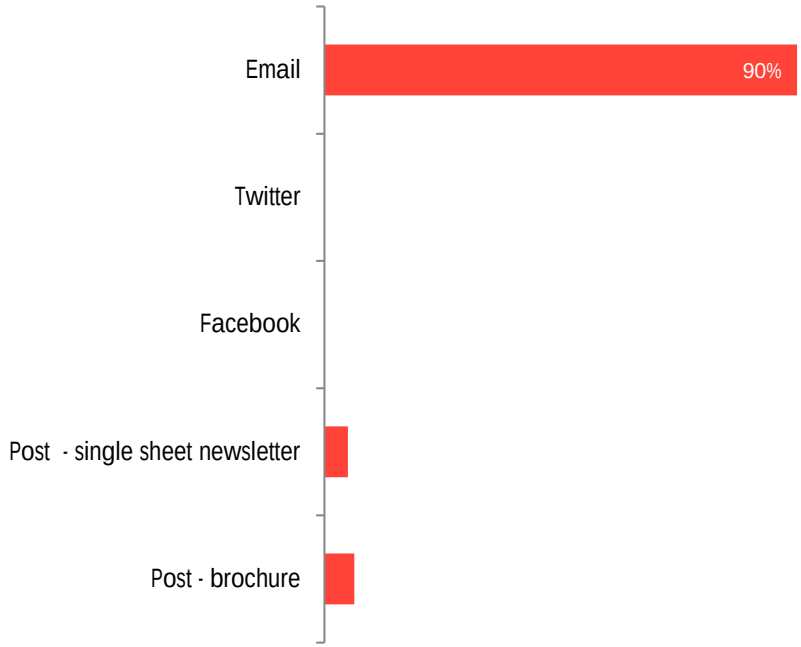
Almost three quarters of teachers would like to hear from local museums about their offerings. The 16% who said they didn't probably either have a regular favourite, or prefer or search for those that match their need – some are resistant to any suggestion that means more email.

Virtually all teachers want to be contacted by email. Interestingly none wanted to hear via Twitter or Facebook. It's worth noting that respondents were recruited via email, so it's to be expected that they would be open to this form of response. Also that teachers are generally active in social media, so it may be that although they prefer email, they could still be responsive to Twitter and Facebook.

Would you be interested in hearing from local museums about any relevant school/college-focused exhibits, events or visitors? (n=214)



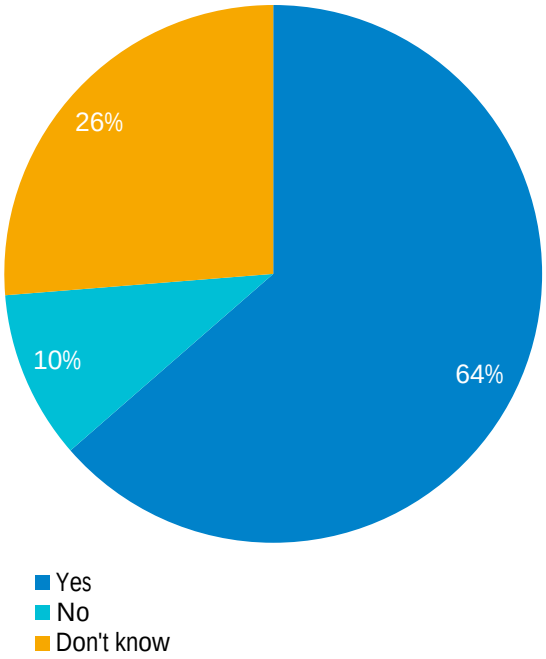
How would you prefer to be informed? (n=158)



Suggestions for closer links with schools

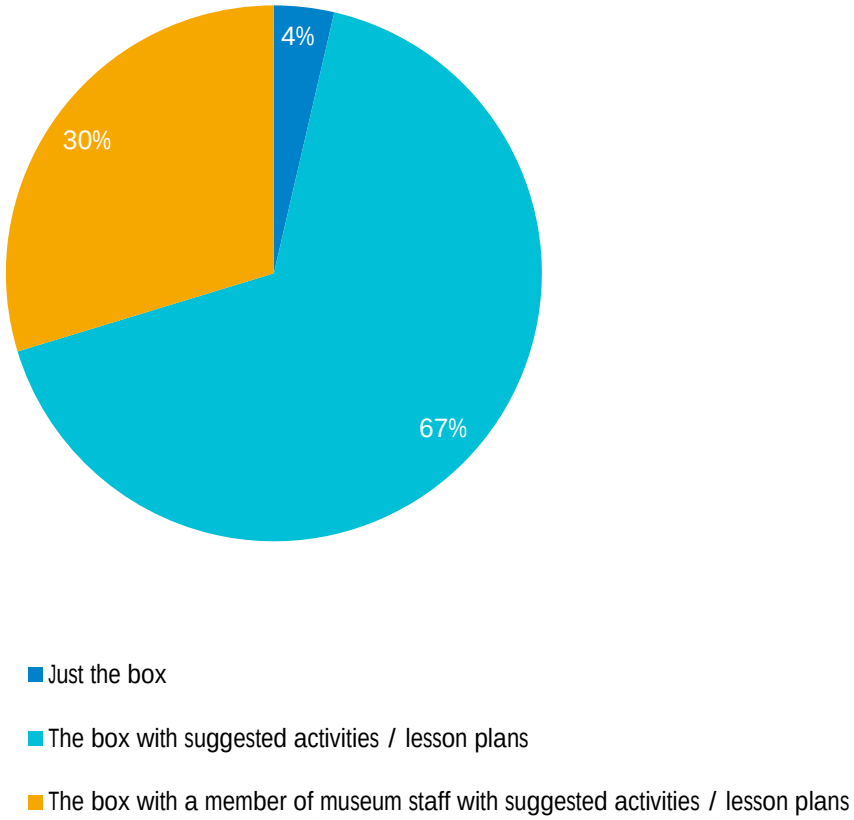
Loan boxes are clearly of interest, with almost two thirds of teachers expressing an interest in receiving these.

Would your establishment be interested in receiving a loan box from a local museum? (n=217)



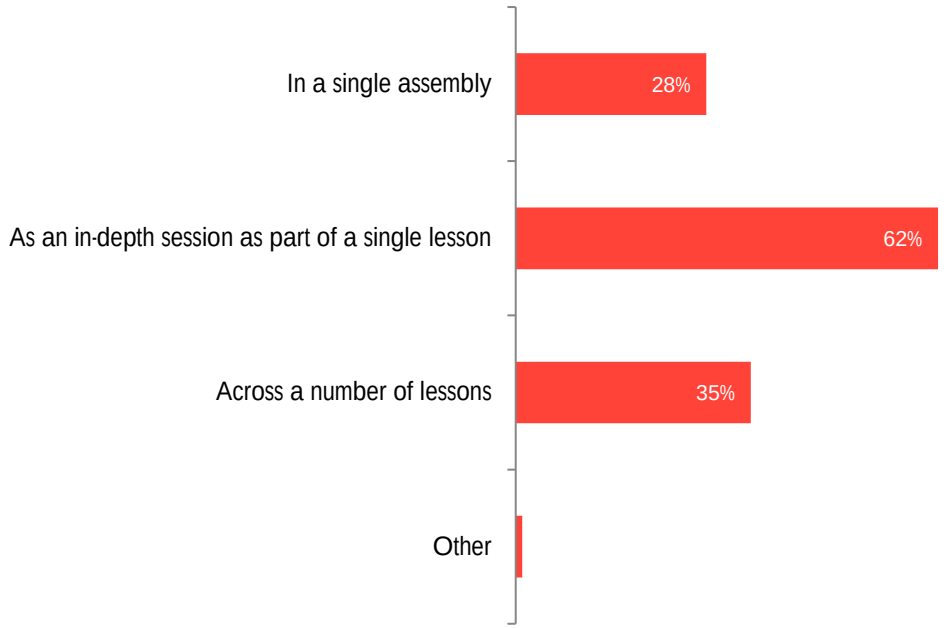
For two thirds of those interested, suggested uses and ideas would be welcome, while for a further 30%, a visit from a member of the museum staff alongside would be preferable. Only 4% would want the box alone.

How would you like to receive the box? (n=138)

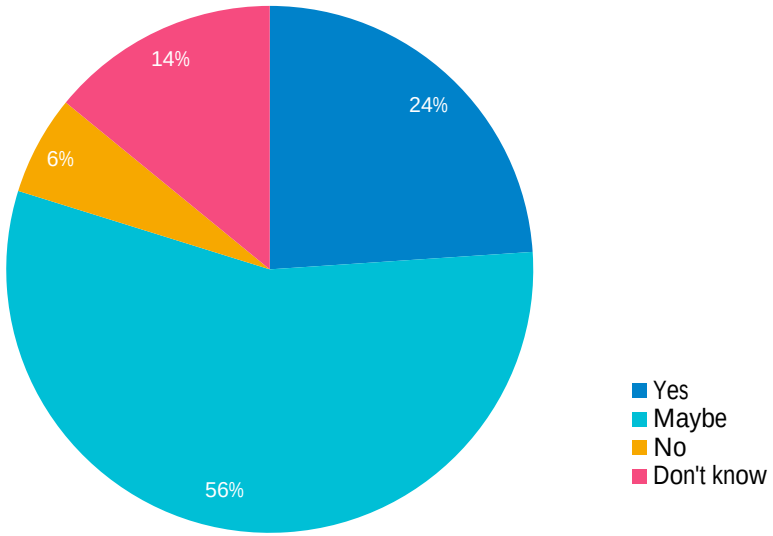


Teachers seem to prefer to limit the visits or museum staff to input into a single lesson. Probably, they would find it difficult to justify the time allocation to more than one. Just over a quarter would like assembly visits.

How would you like a local museum to help deliver a learning experience in your establishment? (n=214)



Would your establishment be interested in developing a longer term relationship with a museum?e.g. an intro session in your establishment followed by one or more museum visits and follow-up sessions. (n=213)

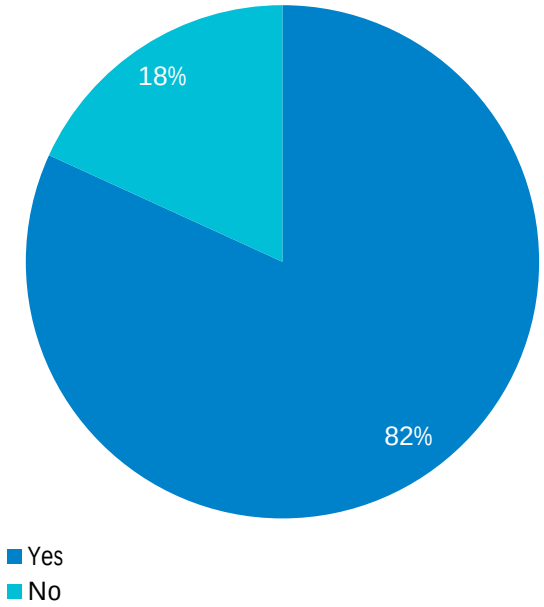


This is quite a difficult question for schools to answer without a clear idea of what the relationship might entail, but only 6% were outright against the idea.

Work experience

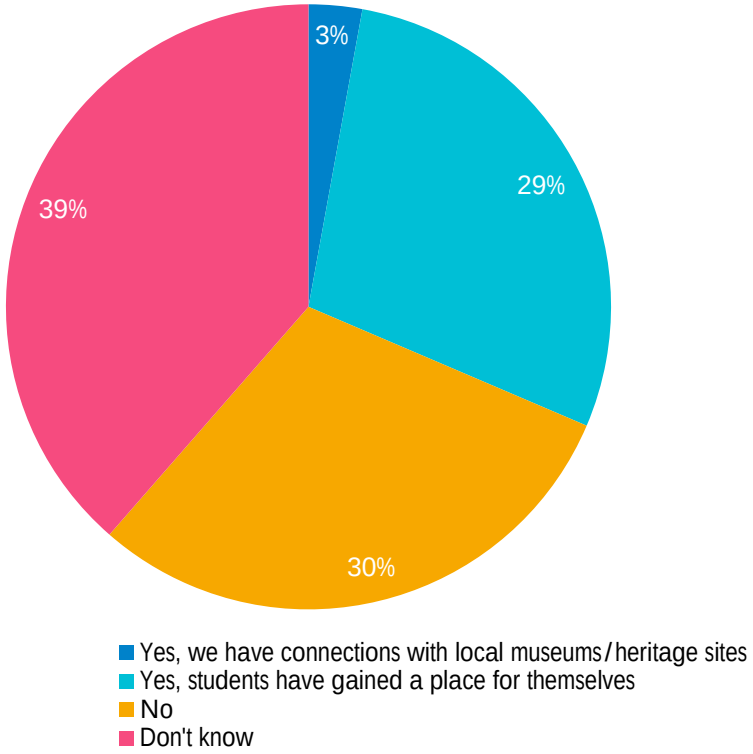
Secondary and FE teachers were asked specifically about this provision in West Midlands educational establishments. A large majority of schools and colleges offer this.

Do your students participate in work experience? (n=88)

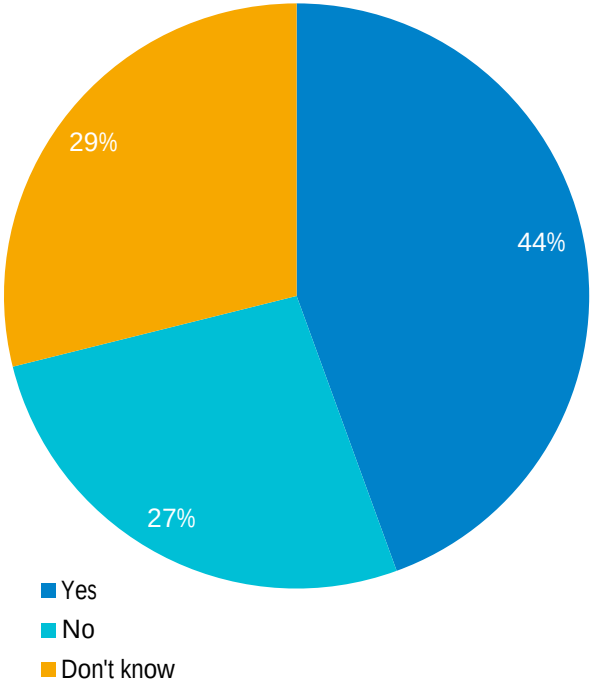


Most respondents did not know whether any of these were at museums or heritage sites, and it's likely that those saying their students did not gain places here, would not have been certain – just that they weren't aware of any. So we can say that *at least* a third of secondary schools and colleges in the West Midlands place students in museums or heritage sites for work experience at either KS4 or KS5 (and possibly some at KS3).

Do any of your students gain work experience at local museums/heritage sites? (n=70)

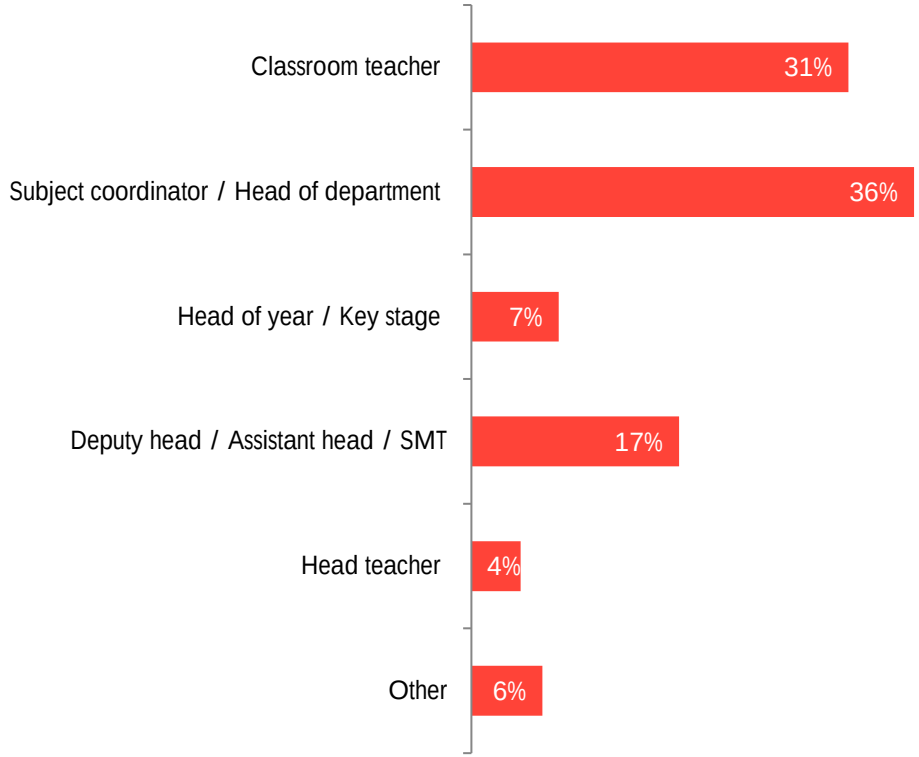


Would you like your local museum to get in touch if they feel they are able to offer such opportunities? (n=45)

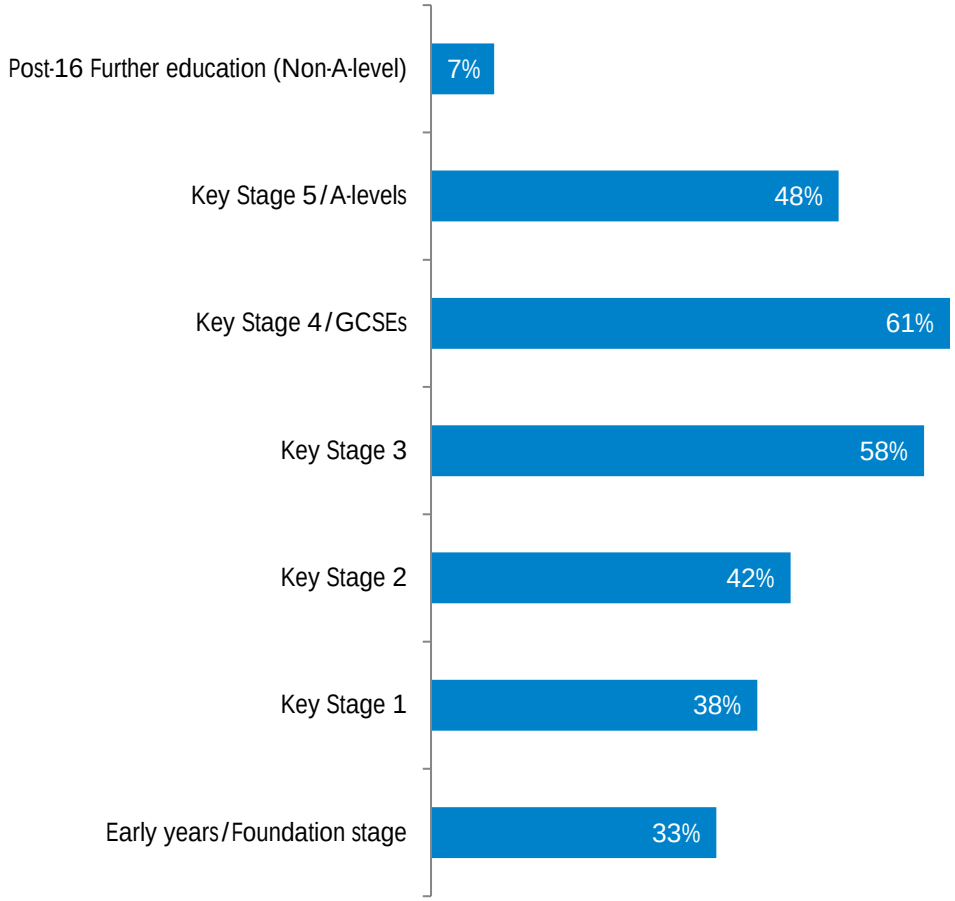


Respondent profiles

What is your job role? (n=231)



Which key stages does your establishment cover? (n=231)



schoolzone

research@schoolzone.co.uk

(+44) 1242 262906

besa BRITISH EDUCATIONAL SUPPLIERS ASSOCIATION

MRS Evidence Matters™ Company Partner