

Inspiring Teaching

What we can learn from exemplary practitioners

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CONTENT OF PRESENTATION

- **The Project**
- **Previous Literature on Inspiring Teaching**
- **Research Aims and Questions**
- **Mixed Methods Design and Methodology**
- **The Teachers' Voices: Interview Findings**
- **Relative importance of different teacher attributes**
- **What do Inspiring Teachers Do in the Classroom?**
- **Students' Perspectives on Teaching and Teachers**
- **Conclusions**
- **References**

THE PROJECT:

To investigate the notion of ‘inspiring’ teaching using mixed methods and drawing on multiple perspectives

Characteristics of the study

- Small-scale exploratory study
- Commissioned and funded by CfBT
- Case studies of a purposive sample of 17 primary and secondary teachers in England, nominated by their head teachers as exemplary practitioners
- Two Phases:
 - Phase 1: Led by OFSTED
 - Phase 2: Conducted by a research team (focus of this paper)

PREVIOUS LITERATURE ON INSPIRING TEACHING

- Use of ‘inspiring’ and ‘inspirational’ in UK education policy:
 - Teachers must “inspire, motivate, and challenge pupils” (DfE, 2013, p.7) as part of the “minimal level of practice expected of trainees and teachers” (p.3)
 - ‘Inspiring’ or ‘inspirational’ used to describe teaching/environment/school leadership (e.g. Ofsted, 2011)
- Handbooks and study texts for practitioners (e.g. Erwin, 2010; Harmin, 2006; McGuey & Moore, 2007; Ryan & Gilbert, 2001), often based on personal experience or anecdotal evidence
- Newspaper, magazine and journal articles, from opinion pieces (e.g. Furnham, 2010) to peer-reviewed non-empirical articles, often aiming to suggest criteria (e.g. Collins, 2006; Richards, 2004)
- Little empirical literature

PREVIOUS LITERATURE ON INSPIRING TEACHING

- Common themes:
 - Described as exciting, innovative and/or creative
 - Evidence often given in terms of: immediate student engagement, lasting effects on students' aspirations/self-concepts, and/or interest in the subject taught
 - Specific practices more usually linked to notions of 'effective' practice.
- There exists a more comprehensive knowledge base with respect to 'effective' teaching – to what extent do these concepts overlap/relate?
- Various operational definitions/frameworks for understanding 'inspiration'/'inspiring teaching' (e.g. Bryson & Hand, 2007; Bryan, Glynn & Kittleson, 2011)
- Possible framework for understanding inspiring teaching based on:
 - Positive student outcomes
 - Teacher behaviours and practices
 - Teacher characteristics
- Contribution of this research: Direct observation/measurement and use of multiple instruments; integration of observations, teacher interviews and student questionnaires to incorporate multiple perspectives

RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS

AIMS

- 1) To understand what ‘inspiring’ teaching means in terms of classroom practice as well as teacher, pupil and head teacher perspectives
- 2) To highlight examples of ‘inspirational’ practice for dissemination to other practitioners and schools

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What do inspiring teachers say about their practice?
- What do inspiring teachers do in their classrooms?
- What are their pupils' views and experiences?

MIXED METHODS DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

- Concurrent mixed methods design
- Case study approach – used to explore each teacher’s practice in depth, and to further investigate relevant perspectives of various stakeholders (teachers, pupils, and head teachers) in their classes and schools.
- Design, instruments and approach to analysis built upon the methodology of the Effective Classroom Practice study (Kington et al., 2011; Kington et al., 2012; Kington, Reed & Sammons, 2013). *Effective Classroom Practice book forthcoming in October 2014 (Kington et al., In press)*

Characteristics of the Sample

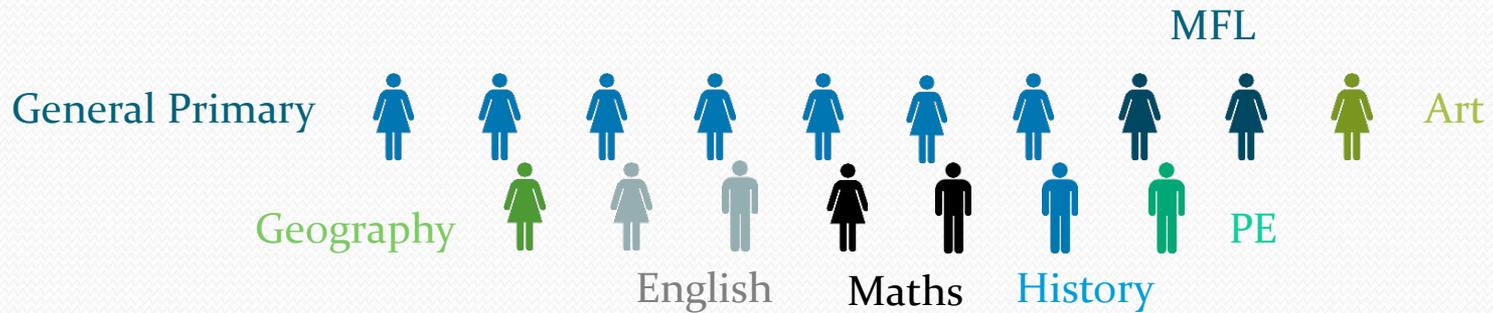
- Purposive sample
- 17 teachers in 9 schools in England
- Head teachers found examples of inspiring teachers with different subject specialties
- 14 out of 17 participants indicated they had additional responsibilities beyond classroom teaching (e.g. subject department head, assistant head teacher, etc.)

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS OF SCHOOLS

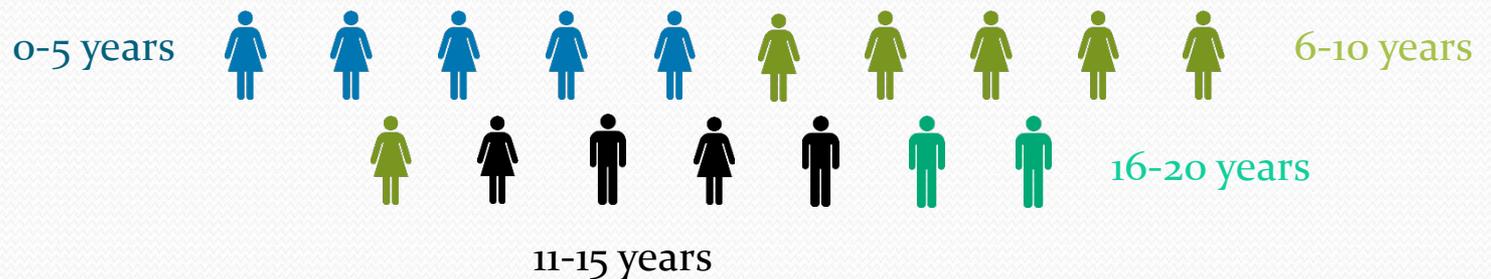


Characteristics of the Sample (cont.)

SAMPLE BY GENDER AND SCHOOL LEVEL/SUBJECT TAUGHT



SAMPLE BY GENDER AND YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

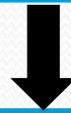


Summary of research design (procedural diagram)

Quantitative data:

- Lesson observation - 2 quantitative schedules,
- Ranking sheet (heads and teachers)
- Pupil surveys

QUAN
data
collection



QUAN
data analysis

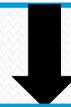
QUAL
data
collection



QUAL
data analysis



QUAN + QUAL
Integration &
Synthesis



Findings &
Interpretation

Qualitative data:

- Teacher interviews
- Lesson observation (field notes)
- Pupil surveys (final question, free response)

Analysis:

- Inter-rater reliability
- Ranking sheet agreement/frequency
- Pupil survey descriptives/frequencies
- Comparison/synthesis with qualitative findings

Analysis:

- Thematic analyses using Nvivo
- Coding using analyst triangulation
- Comparison of themes across instruments
- Comparison/synthesis with quantitative findings

Methods of data collection

Three main sources:

- Teachers' Voices – interviews and ranking sheets
- Observations of Classroom Practice – qualitative (field notes) and quantitative (systematic observation schedules, the *International System for Teacher Observation and Feedback* or *ISTOF* (Teddlie et al., 2006) scale & *Quality of Teaching* or *QoT* (van de Grift et al., 2004) lesson observation indicators)
- Students' Perspectives – questionnaire survey, including one open-ended question

SUMMARY OF THE SAMPLE SIZE BY INSTRUMENT

	Interview	Quantitative Observation	Qualitative Observation	Ranking Sheet	Student Survey
Teachers	17	45	28	16	-
Head Teachers	-	-	-	8	-
Students	-	-	-	-	203

Methods of data collection: Instrument validity and piloting

Instrument validation

- Instruments generated and/or validated in the English context by previous studies including the Effective Classroom Practice (ECP) (Kington, Regan, Sammons & Day, 2012) and Variations in Teachers Work, Lives, and Effectiveness (VITAE) (Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kington & Gu, 2007; Day, Stobart, Sammons, & Kington, 2006)

Piloting

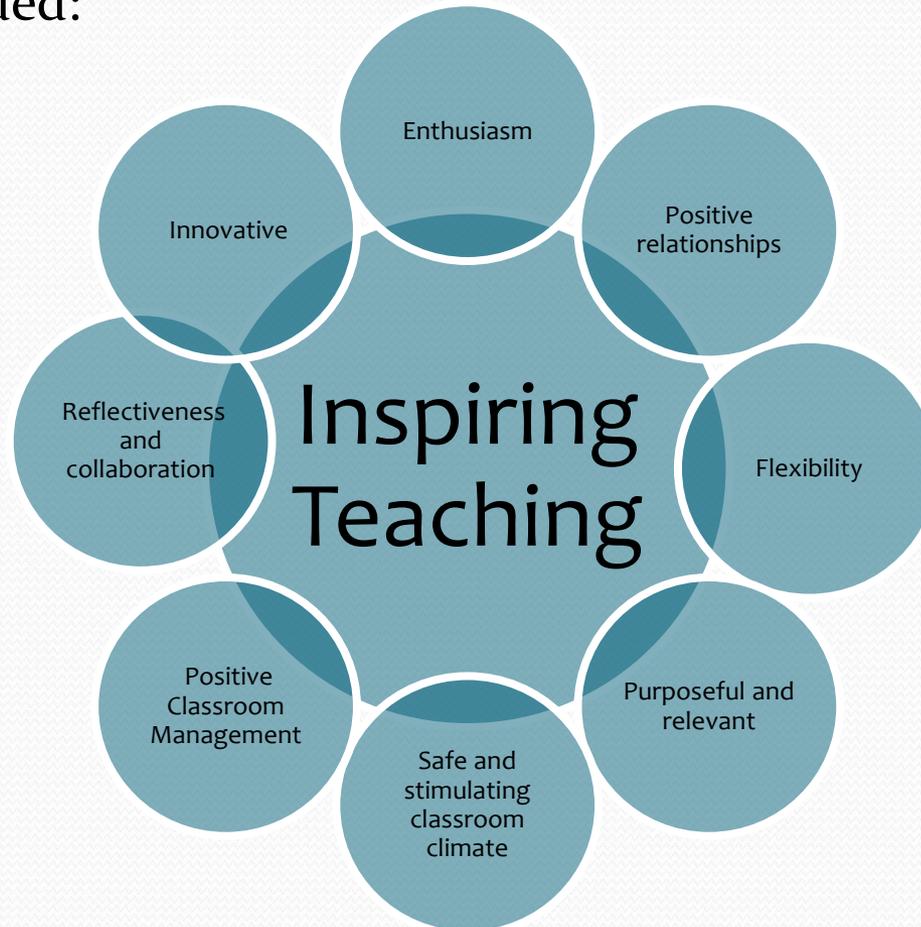
- Instruments were piloted prior to main data collection
- Piloting stage 1: Researchers watched videoed lessons to train for use of observation schedules, assess inter-rater reliability, and ensure common interpretations of items
- Piloting stage 2: Observation, interview and ranking sheet instruments were piloted in one participant school, and rating a group of 3 teachers (also nominated by head teachers, but not included in the main study)
- Team meetings to discuss issues that had arisen during piloting, and revisions to instruments made as appropriate

Approach to Analysis

- Mixed methods design incorporates and integrates multiple quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, as well as analytical approaches
- Integration at various stages of analysis:
 - Initial organizational themes for the qualitative coding compared to quantitative items from the observation schedules;
 - Qualitative analysis involved various amounts of 'quantizing' (counts, percents);
 - Quantitative data was 'qualitized', finding and describing a discrete set of dimensions or components which could then be compared to qualitative themes;
 - For classroom observations, qualitative and quantitative findings were compared to see how results aligned (triangulation), and also to explore how the qualitative findings elaborated upon aspects of quantitative findings.
- Variations according to three teacher characteristics (gender, career phase, and primary/secondary school sector) were explored

THE TEACHERS' VOICES: INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Participants identified characteristic of inspiring teachers, which included:



THE TEACHERS' VOICES: INTERVIEW FINDINGS

*“Number one for me is a **passion for their career**. I think there is a slight bit of madness to it, you have to be little bit crazy and a little bit different and I don't think you can inspire others to learn if you're not **willing to learn** as well.*

***Creativity, imagination** and, yes, there has to be an element of **fun**, you need to be **relaxed**, you need to be **confident**, and you need to have a **mutual respect** between yourself and your pupils, and your learning environment has to be in such a way that children feel that **they can take risks and that it's absolutely fine to do that**. There has to be **discipline**, there has to be **rules**, there has to be **procedure**, and there has to be an element of **fairness** and children have to be treated the same way and no one should ever feel as they are not a favourite, because every child is a favourite. **So there are a few things**”.*

Female, Primary school, 16-20 Years of experience

THE TEACHERS' VOICES: INTERVIEW FINDINGS

- Teachers expressed that aspects such as job satisfaction, external policy agendas, school ethos and support substantially affect their ability to inspire their students and learning community.
- Teachers associated the concept of inspiring teaching to effective teaching, but separated it from that of outstanding teaching as defined by Ofsted criteria.

*"I think **to be inspiring as a teacher you have to be effective**, you have to make sure that **the kids are learning**, and that **they're enjoying being in your classroom**".*

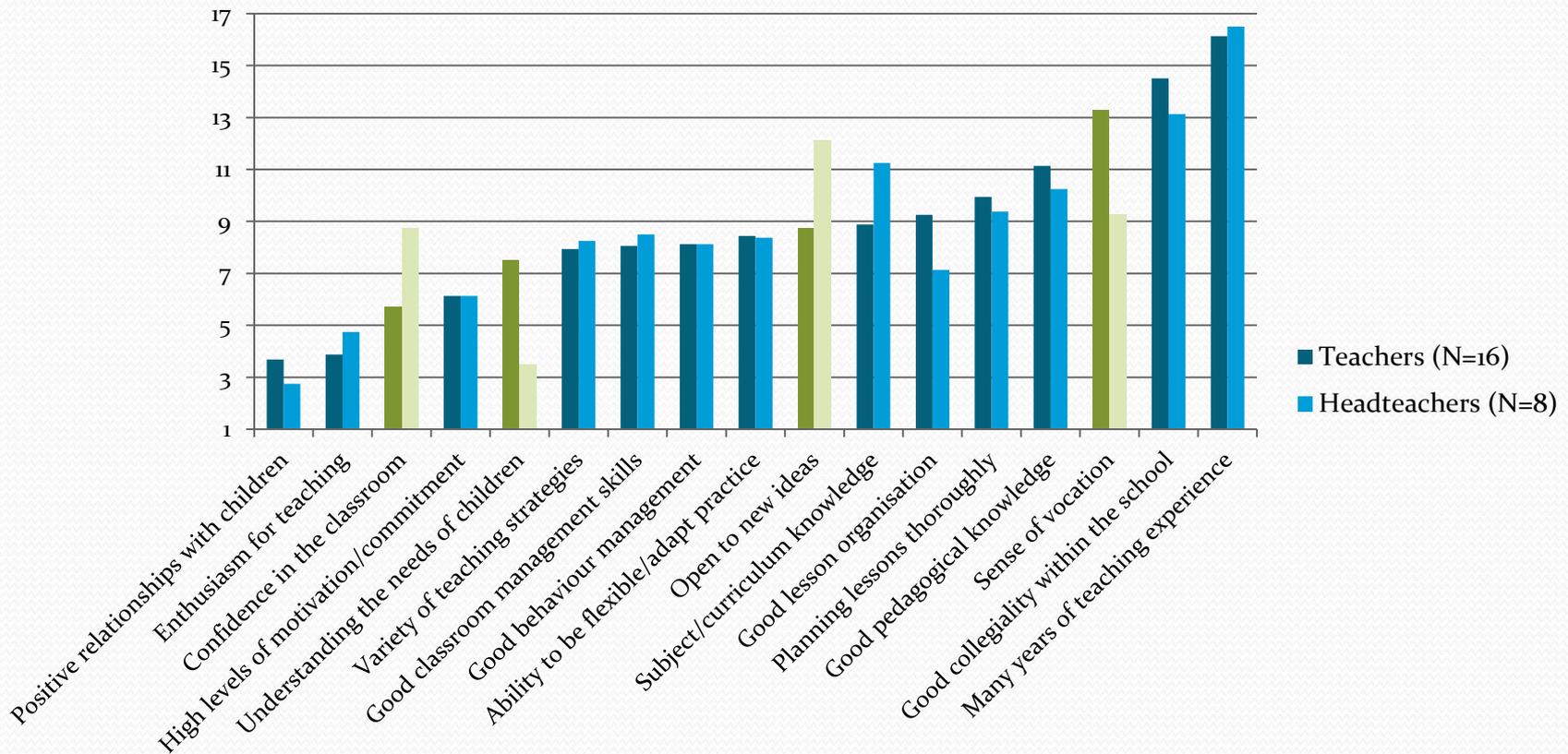
Female, Secondary school, 0-5 Years of experience

*"An **inspiring teacher isn't necessarily an outstanding teacher**. I think that **teachers do much more**, and I think you could observe a teacher in this school and give them a 1, and say they're **outstanding**, but they have **zero relationships with students outside of the classroom**, whereas you could give a teacher a 3 or a 4, **but they've really invested their time and they really care**".*

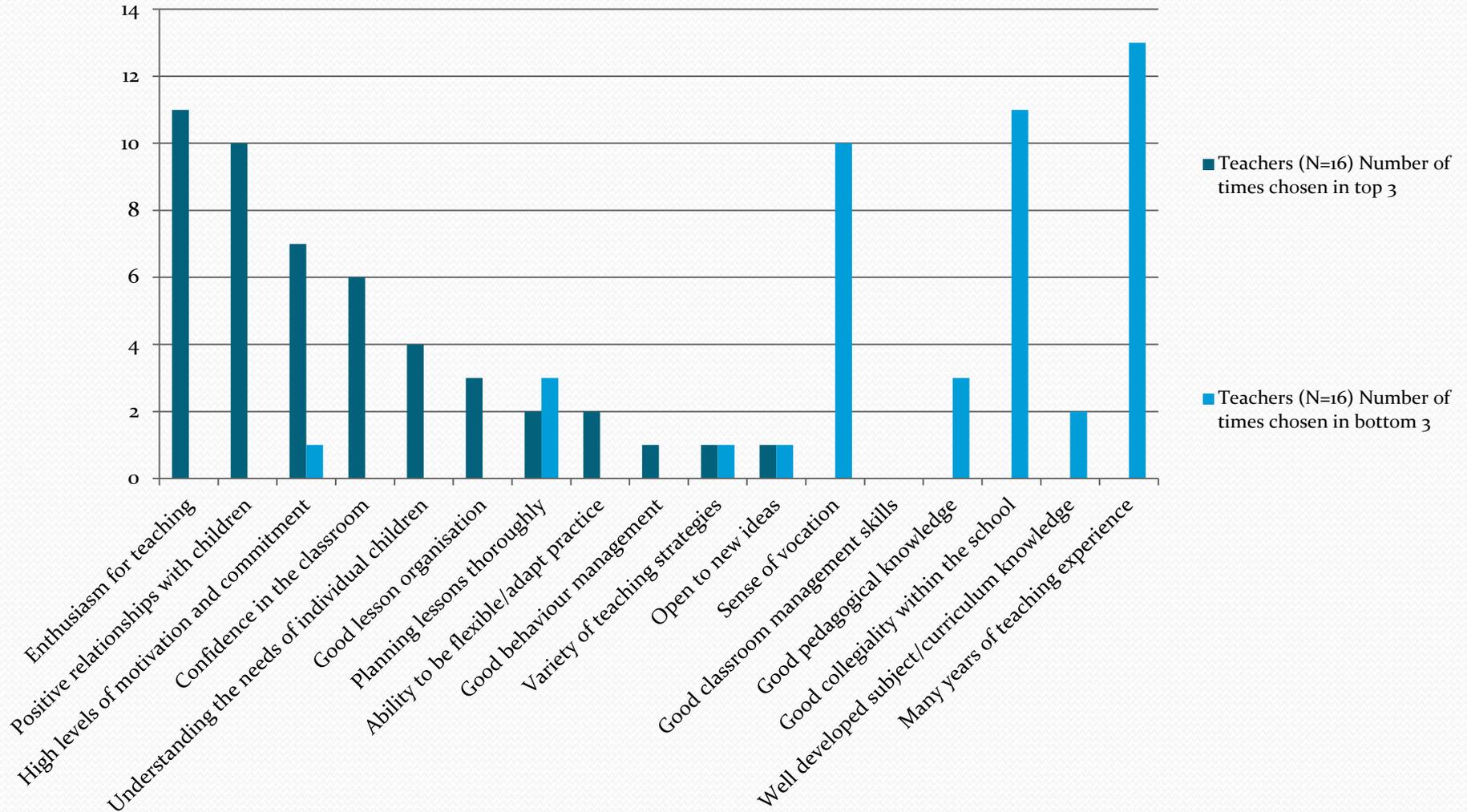
Male, Secondary school, 0-5 Years of experience

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER ATTRIBUTES: RANKING SHEETS

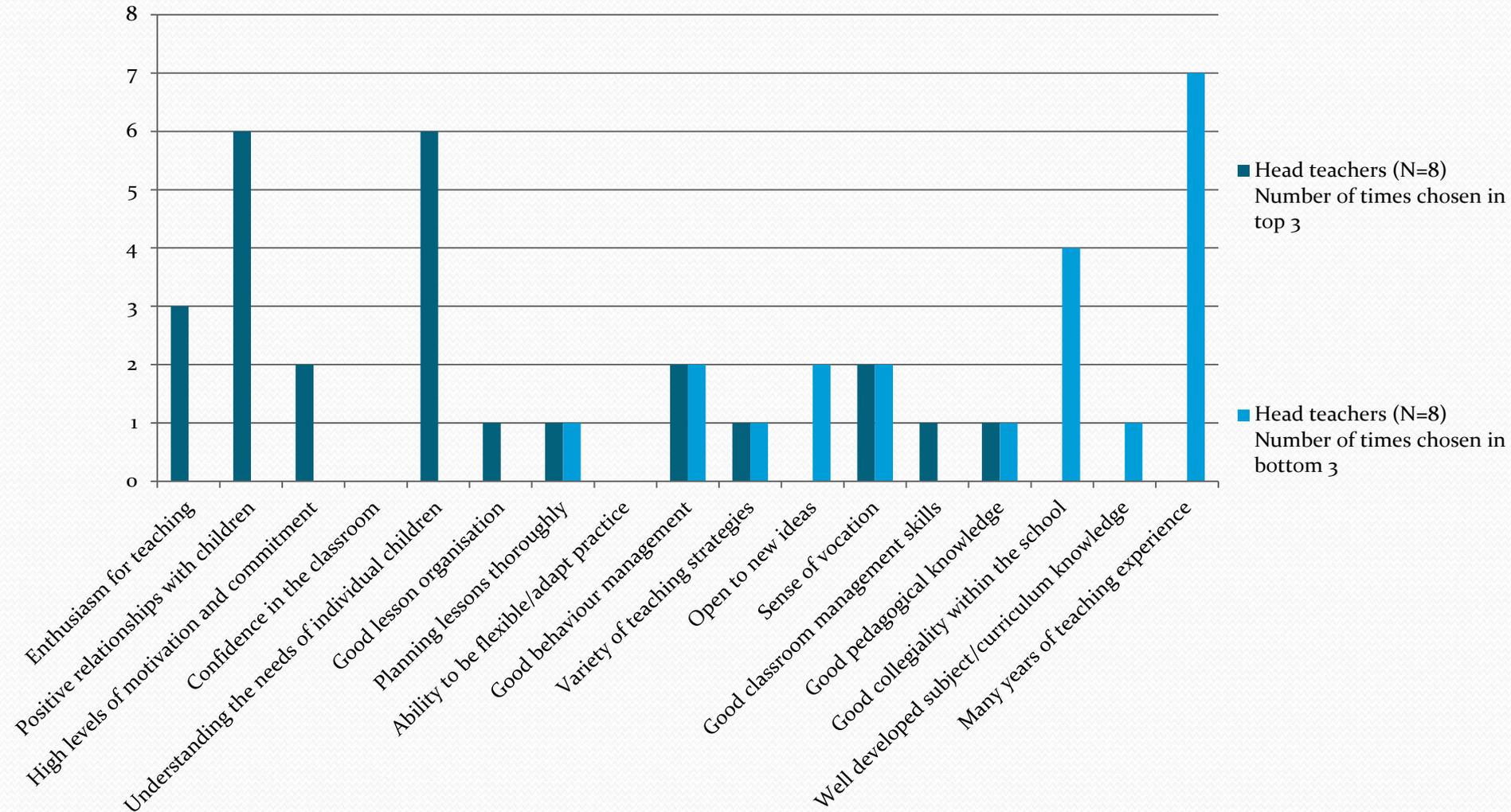
- High response rate (16 of 17 teachers, 8 of 9 headteachers)
- Several constructs showed differences between headteachers' and teachers' mean rank scores (Hedge's $g \geq 0.8$), but mostly similar across groups



RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER ATTRIBUTES (TEACHERS')

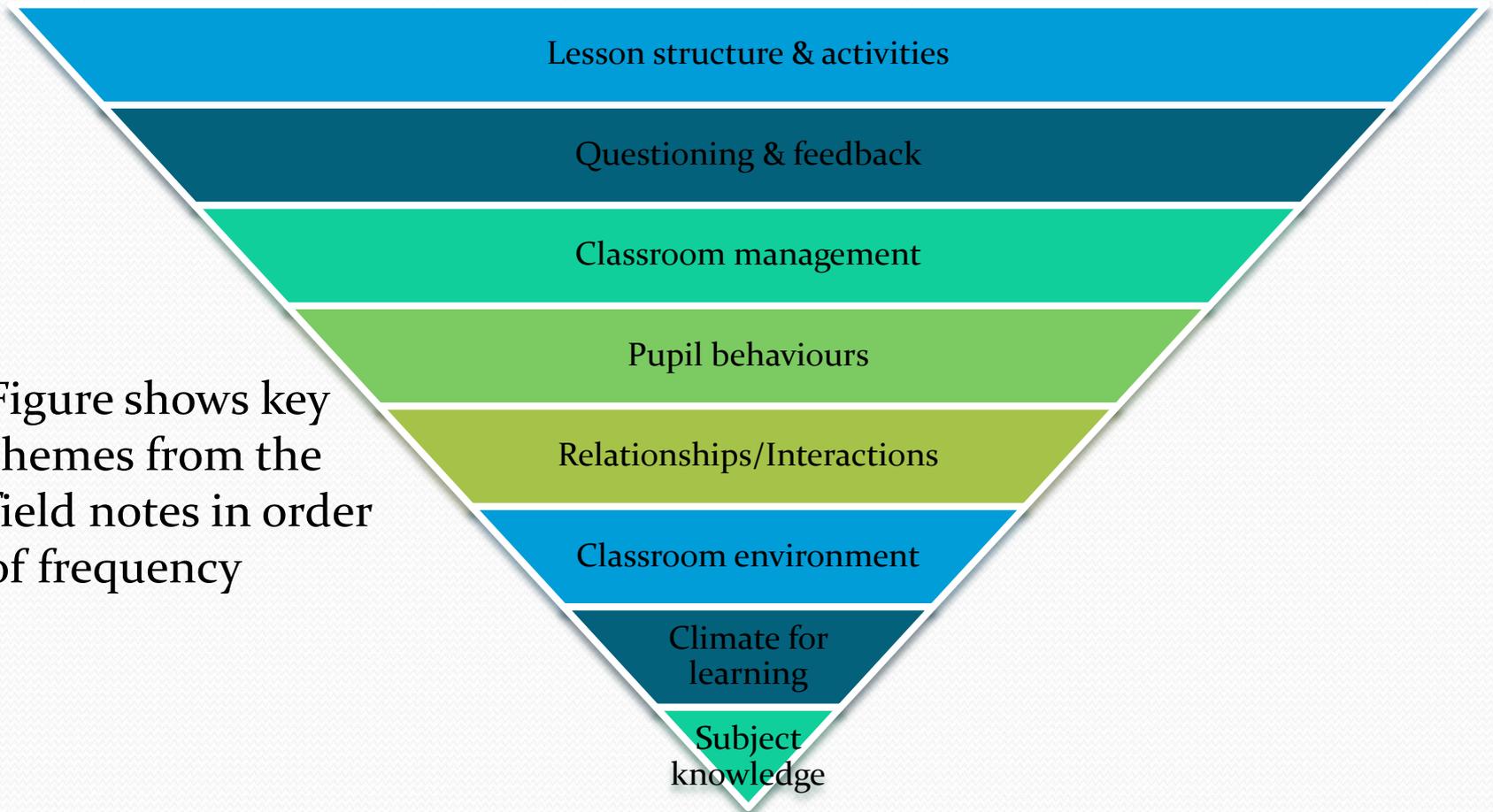


RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER ATTRIBUTES (HEADS')



Observations of classroom practice (qualitative)

- Figure shows key themes from the field notes in order of frequency



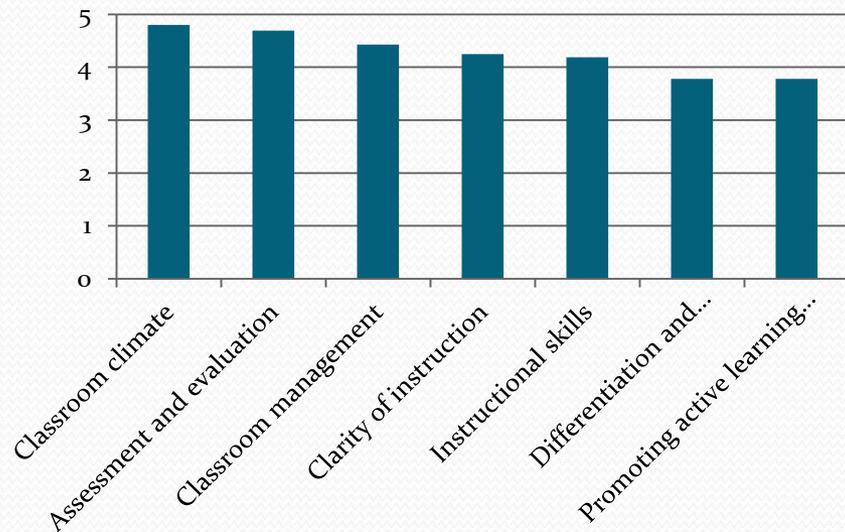
Observations of classroom practice (qualitative, cont.) – Most prevalent themes

- Lesson structure & activities: Smooth transitions, explicit and efficient use of time, distinct components, informal differentiation, connections to exams and real life situations, clarification, student input/choice, variety, use of technology
- Questioning and feedback: Positive feedback, circulation, open-ended questioning, all students encouraged to contribute
- Classroom/behaviour management: Evidence of established routines, response to disruptions, student responsibility for space/resources, student leadership roles, expectation to help each other

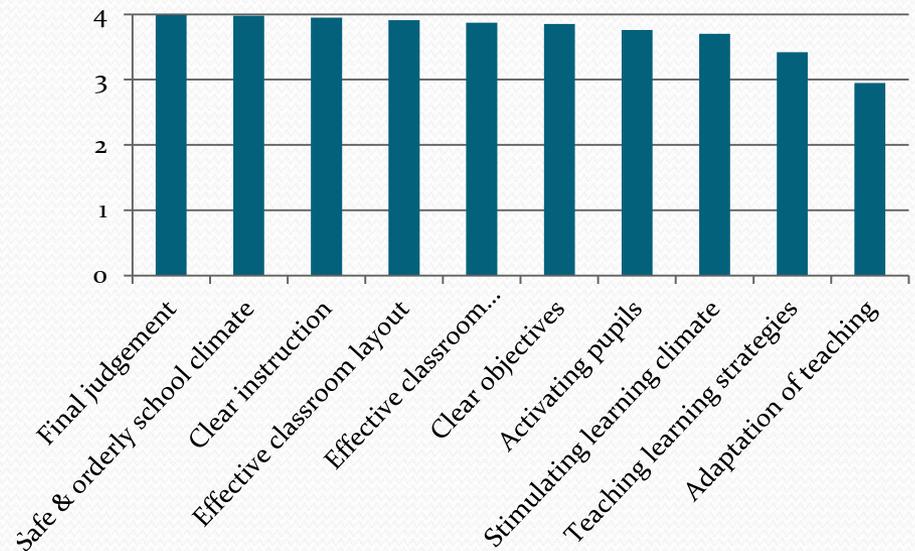
Observations of classroom practice (quantitative)

- For both systematic observation instruments, teachers' scores overall showed high means and small standard deviations
- Implication: Teachers in the sample demonstrated behaviours/practices associated with effective/high quality teaching according to previous literature

ISTOF



QoT



- Some evidence of differences by teacher gender, school sector, career phase, but differences were not consistent across instruments

Observations of classroom practice (quantitative, cont.)

- Triangulation with qualitative observations: Areas scored highly based on systematic observation schedules resonated with themes most prevalent in the field notes
- Qualitative observations elaborated on what teachers did that led to high scores on the ISTOF and QoT scales
- Qualitative notes suggest that teachers used informal approaches to some aspects of their classroom practice such as differentiation and teaching metacognitive skills, suggesting a possible reason for somewhat lower scores on ISTOF and QoT in these areas (i.e. not necessarily reflecting weak practices/behaviours in these areas)

Pupil surveys

- All items consisted of a statement and a Likert scale (from 1='agree strongly' to 4='disagree strongly'), except for one open-response item
- 2 primary classes (35 students) and 9 secondary classes (168 students) were surveyed
- Students' ratings were generally favorable overall across questionnaire domains
- Views about teachers were most positive and showed the least variation (with a mode of 1), though responses related to the school, classroom and involvement were also largely positive (mode of 2)
- Girls' ratings were slightly more positive than boys'
- Primary students' were substantially more positive than secondary students'
- No substantial differences according to teacher career phase

Pupil surveys (cont.)

- Approximately 80% of respondents answered an optional question asking what they thought helped to make a good lesson, and things they enjoyed that supported their learning
- Most commonly mentioned themes:
 - Groupwork/collaboration (~21% of secondary, 12% of primary students)
“Working in groups and pairs sometimes, not working independently all the time.” (Female, Key Stage 3, Art)
 - Variety (~16% overall)
“The teacher makes the lesson interesting. I don’t usually find this lesson boring because she has many different ideas for what we can do in class.” (Female, Key Stage 3, English)
 - Specific resources (~14% overall)
“...Class videos about the subject that is being taught helps me learn” (Male, Key Stage 5, History)
 - Student interest/enjoyment (~15% overall)
“...Teacher tries to do something that everyone likes.” (Male, Key Stage 3, Physical Education)
 - Clarity (~11% overall)
“We know exactly how we will do the work.” (Male, Key Stage 3, Geography)
 - Relationships (~18% overall)
“...My teacher always is KIND.” (Female, Key Stage 2, Primary)

Conclusions

Teachers' Voices

Having & transmitting enthusiasm

Innovation & variety

Positive relationships
Good classroom/behaviour management
Positive & supportive climate
Formative feedback
High quality learning experiences
Enjoyment

Purpose/relevance of learning
Strong links between effective/inspiring teaching
High expectations
Commitment to teaching

Pupils' Perspectives

Instructional clarity
Interactive learning
Varied activities
Good lesson pace
Knowing & caring for pupils
Pupil choice & input
Engagement & motivation

Observations of Classroom Practice

Conclusions

- The teachers showed strongly the characteristics of more effective teaching
- In terms of inspiring practice at the core we can highlight:
 - Positive relationships
 - Good classroom/behaviour management
 - Positive & supportive climate
 - Formative feedback
 - High quality learning experiences
 - Enjoyment

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Thank you!

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Appendix: Details of individual data collection methods

- Interviews & Classroom observation notes
- Classroom systematic observations
- Student survey
- Ranking sheets

Methods of data collection: Qualitative

Interviews

- Semi- structured, face-to-face
- Topics explored:
 - professional trajectory,
 - identification and definition of inspiring teachers,
 - factors affecting practice, and,
 - levels of job satisfaction, motivation and commitment.

Classroom observation notes

- Rich descriptive field notes to describe each lesson, including:
 - structure, organization, and flow of the lesson,
 - nature of lesson activities,
 - interactions between students and teachers,
 - classroom climate, and,
 - comments on the teachers' personas.

Methods of data collection: Quantitative

Classroom systematic observations

- To investigate whether the participating teachers identified as 'inspiring' also show behaviours typically associated with teacher effectiveness and to explore the extent of variations amongst the sample in their observed classroom practice.
- Established tool in teacher effectiveness research
- Two observational instruments were used:

<p style="text-align: center;">ISTOF International Schedule for Teacher Observation & Feedback (Teddle, Creemers, Kyriakides, Muijs & Yu, 2006)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">QoT Lesson Observation form for Evaluating the Quality of Teaching (van de Grift, Matthews, Tabak & de Rijcke, 2004)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">7 Components, 21 Indicators and 45 Items</p> <p>Components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and evaluation, • Differentiation and inclusion, • Clarity of instruction, • Instructional skills, • Promoting active learning and developing metacognitive skills, • Classroom climate, and, • Classroom management. 	<p style="text-align: center;">9 Components, 26 Indicators and 77 Items</p> <p>Components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and orderly school climate, • Stimulating learning climate, • Clear objectives, • Clear instruction, • Activating pupils, • Adaptation of teaching, • Teaching learning strategies, • Effective classroom organization, and • Effective classroom layout.

Methods of data collection: Quantitative (cont.)

Student survey

- Questionnaire administered to students in classrooms of 11 of the teachers
- Intended to provide evidence on students' engagement with school and their perceptions about their teacher and classroom climate.
- Questionnaire developed from instruments used in previous studies, such as ECP (Kington et al, 2012), VITAE (Day et al, 2007), PISA (OECD, 2005) and RAPA (Levacic, 2002; Malmberg, 2002).
- Two age-appropriate versions of the questionnaire survey (primary and secondary)
- Items organized into four sections: My school, My teacher, My classroom, and About you in this class.

	Number of Students	Number of Classes/Teachers	Number of Schools
Primary School Questionnaire	35	2	2
Secondary School Questionnaire	168	9	5
Total	203	11	7

Methods of data collection: Quantitative (cont.)

Ranking sheets

- To explore the relative importance that teachers and head teachers assigned to different teacher attributes
- Administered to teachers and head teachers in the sample
- Participants ranked 17 constructs in order of priority to them
- Constructs emerged from a semi-structured repertory grid interview with teachers for the ECP project (Kington, Reed & Sammons, 2013)
- Included several professional and personal skills related to effective teaching practice

Positive relationships with children	Enthusiasm for teaching	Confidence in the classroom	High levels of motivation/commitment	Understanding the needs of children
Variety of teaching strategies	Good classroom management skills	Good behaviour management	Ability to be flexible/adapt practice	Open to new ideas
Subject/curriculum knowledge	Good lesson organization	Planning lessons thoroughly	Good pedagogical knowledge	Sense of vocation
Good collegiality within the school	Many years of teaching experience			