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AI in Education 2025: Navigating progress, pedagogy and pain points

A comprehensive analysis of artificial intelligence adoption in UK schools

Foreword

The emergence of artificial intelligence in education represents a defining moment in teaching and learning. As Portfolio Director of Bett, I've seen the rapid evolution of educational technology and the potential it holds for classrooms across the UK.

This report follows up on last year's "The Rise of AI in Education" paper and provides fresh insights into how the landscape has evolved. Our latest research, conducted by YouGov with over 1,000 teachers, reveals a fascinating picture of progress and hesitation. While AI adoption continues to accelerate – with 49% of teachers now using AI tools at least monthly, up from 33% using it regularly last year – significant challenges do remain. Nearly half of all teachers still feel they're "cheating" when using AI, and an equal number believe they're not doing their job properly.

This identity crisis is perhaps unsurprising. As one colleague noted during our research discussions, teachers are increasingly finding themselves in the unusual position of being less confident with AI than their students. In other words, the traditional teacher-student dynamic is being challenged in ways we've never seen before.

Yet the data also shows genuine promise. Teachers using AI report meaningful reductions in workload, with 34% experiencing decreased administrative burden. The Education Endowment Foundation's study[1] in late 2024 demonstrated that ChatGPT can cut lesson planning time by 31%. That's a 25-minute weekly saving that could transform how teachers approach their work.

The human elements of teaching - those essential transferable life skills, empathetic connections, and personalised support that teachers know AI cannot replicate - remain firmly in educators' hands. This is not a battle between humans and machines, but rather teachers working with intelligent tools to achieve better educational outcomes. AI isn't about replacing teachers. It's offering them the chance to focus more on what they do best: inspiring, guiding, and nurturing young people's minds.

As we all continue to manage this new AI environment, senior leaders must take decisive action to find budget, space and time to train their teachers about AI's potential. This top-down commitment will move the needle on trust and engagement. We also need to address the training gap that currently leaves 46% of teachers without proper AI support from their schools. Schools that are willing to collaborate and pool resources, insights and expertise will benefit from both building collective confidence and sharing costs. It's only by acknowledging the progress and the challenges that we'll be able to ensure AI enhances education rather than creates new burdens.

Duncan Verry
Portfolio Director, Bett

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As Bett's Global AI Partner for a second year, Lenovo is proud to sponsor this report exploring how educators are using artificial intelligence with both curiosity and caution. This powerful technology presents an unprecedented opportunity to reduce administrative burden, personalize learning, and support inclusive education. Yet significant challenges remain for schools to adopt and implement AI with a clear strategy grounded in pedagogy. That's why Lenovo and Intel pair responsible AI with robust professional development and AI literacy efforts to empower educators so they can focus on what matters most: inspiring learners and shaping future-ready citizens.

Delia DeCourcy, Worldwide Senior Strategist, Lenovo

To watch a video case study about how Lenovo has helped schools embrace AI by placing cutting-edge technology in the hands of educators click here. Or to read more, visit here and here.

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[1]ChatGPT in lesson preparation – Teacher Choices trial

Introduction

The integration of artificial intelligence into UK classrooms has reached a crucial moment. While the technology's potential to enhance teaching and learning is increasingly recognised, its implementation is uneven.

This report examines the current state of AI adoption in UK schools using research conducted by pollsters YouGov with 1,023 teachers across primary and secondary settings. The findings reveal a profession caught between enthusiasm for AI's possibilities and concerns about its implications for authentic education.

Government initiatives have further emphasised AI's growing importance. At Bett UK 2025, Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson announced plans[2] to introduce mandatory AI training for new teachers, alongside a £4 million investment in AI educational tools. Major technology companies including Google, Microsoft, Amazon Web Services, and Adobe have also committed to making AI tools safer by design through new government frameworks.

However, progress remains patchy. The Sutton Trust's recent research[3] highlighted a "digital divide," with independent schoolteachers more than twice as likely to have received formal AI training compared to their state school counterparts. This disparity threatens to exacerbate existing inequalities unless addressed.

Overall our research paints a nuanced picture. Although 68% of teachers expect to increase their AI use over the next 12 months, barriers do persist. The challenge is not merely about providing access to AI tools, it's also about fostering the confidence, training, and support necessary for their effective implementation.

[2]Bett 2025 keynote address

[3]Artificial Advantage report

Main findings

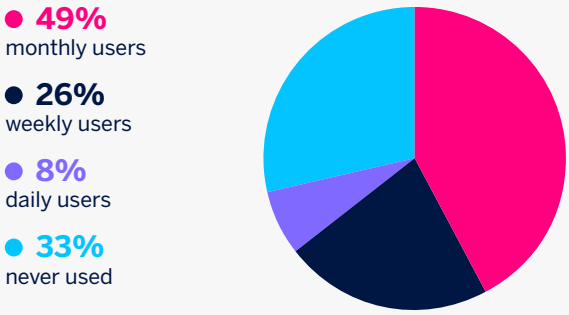
This research was carried out online by YouGov during July 2025 among a representative sample of 1,023 UK teachers. 573 teachers work in a primary environment and 450 work in a secondary or all-through setting. 62% of respondents are classroom teachers and 38% work in senior leadership roles. Not all percentage totals will add up to 100 due to rounding.

1. AI usage shows steady growth but remains inconsistent

Almost half of teachers (49%) now use AI at least monthly for teaching-related tasks. Weekly usage has reached 26%, though daily adoption remains limited at just 8%. Senior leaders demonstrate higher engagement, with 32% using AI weekly compared to 23% of classroom teachers.

Notably, one-third of teachers (33%) have still never used AI in their professional capacity. This suggests that while early adopters are embracing the technology, widespread adoption remains elusive. The variation in usage patterns indicates that AI implementation is highly dependent on individual initiative rather than institutional support.

Frequency of AI usage



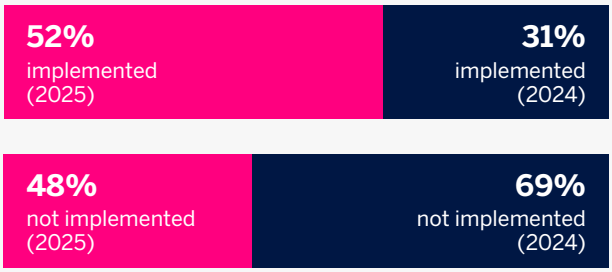
Weekly usage

2. Schools struggle with implementation strategies

Despite growing individual usage, 48% of schools have not officially implemented AI (though this represents an improvement from 69% in 2024). Among schools that have adopted AI, the primary motivation is reducing teacher workload (44%), followed by improving student outcomes (14%) and supporting assessment (9%).

The disconnect between individual usage and school-wide implementation suggests a significant gap in strategic planning. Teachers are experimenting with AI tools independently, often without clear guidance or support from senior leadership.

School-wide AI implementation

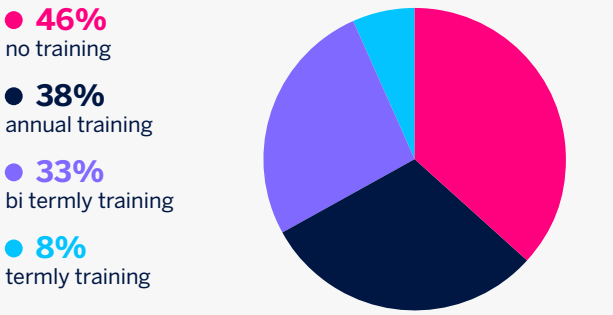


Main reason for AI implementation

3. Training gaps undermine confidence and adoption

Perhaps most concerning is the apparent training deficit. Almost half (46%) of teachers report receiving no AI support or training from their schools. It is therefore unsurprising that teachers remain divided over the benefits of using AI tools for teaching-related tasks. Half (50%) also say they are clear about the benefits, while 45% say they are unclear, and 4% don't know.

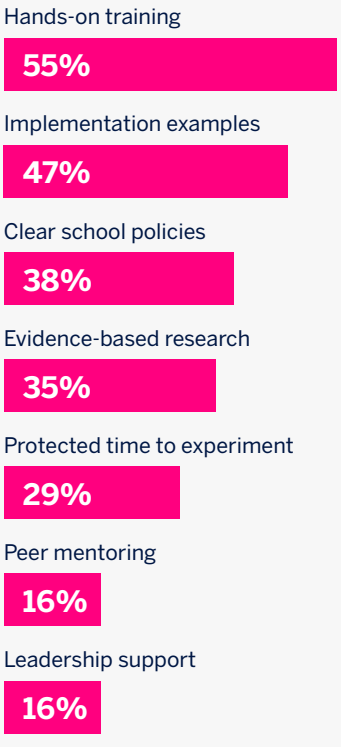
Training status



Confidence levels – teachers vs students

When asked what would help increase their understanding and usage, teachers identify clear priorities. Over half (55%) want practical, hands-on training sessions with AI tools, while 47% seek examples of successful AI implementation from other teachers and schools. More than a third desire clear school policies and guidelines on appropriate AI use (38%) and evidence-based research on AI's educational benefits (35%). Nearly three in ten (29%) want protected time to experiment with AI tools without pressure, while 16% each want peer mentoring from AI-confident colleagues and better leadership understanding and backing for AI initiatives.

Training needs

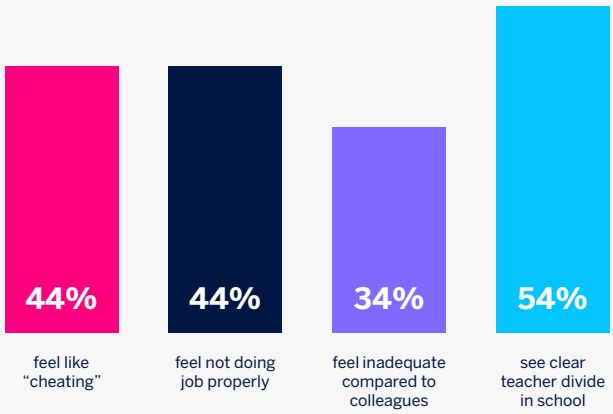


4. Professional identity crisis emerges

The most striking finding concerns teachers' emotional responses to AI usage. An alarming 44% feel they're "cheating" when using AI for core teaching tasks, with an identical percentage believing they're not doing their job properly. These feelings suggest a fundamental conflict between traditional pedagogical values and new technological possibilities.

Over half of teachers (54%) observe a clear divide in their schools between AI-confident colleagues and those struggling with adoption. This creates an additional layer of professional pressure, as teachers compare themselves to more technologically adept peers.

Emotional responses to AI usage

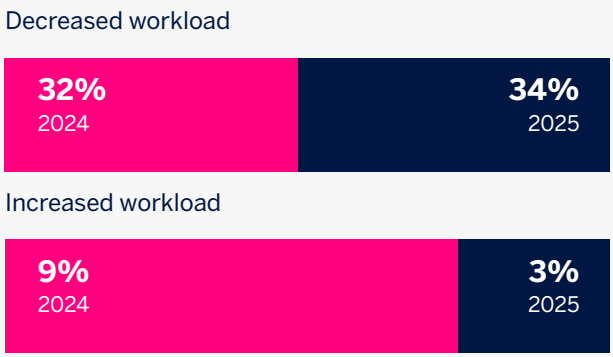


5. Workload benefits become apparent for early adopters

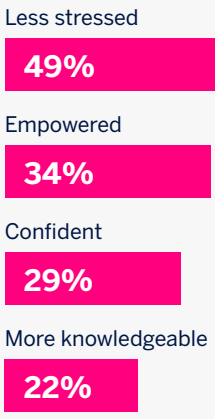
Despite these concerns, teachers using AI report tangible benefits. Among AI users, 34% experience decreased workload, while only 3% report an increased burden. This is a marked improvement from 9% reporting an increased workload in 2024. These findings align with the Education Endowment Foundation's research showing 31% reductions in lesson planning time.

More encouraging still are the positive emotions teachers experience when using AI tools. Nearly half (49%) report feeling less stressed, while 34% feel empowered, 29% feel confident, and 22% feel more knowledgeable. In other words, the majority of teachers using AI are having predominantly positive experiences. By contrast, only 10% report feeling overwhelmed and 10% confused, suggesting that negative reactions are relatively uncommon among actual users.

Workload impact comparison



Emotions teachers experience when using AI tools



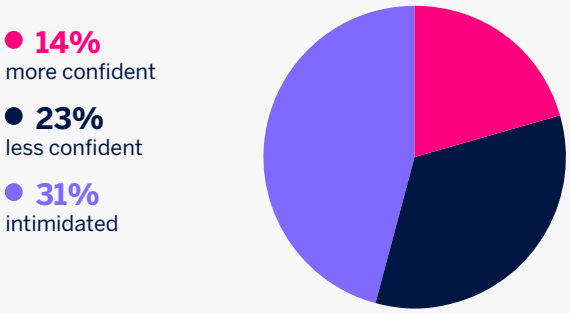
6. Student concerns and digital divides

Teachers express mixed feelings about their students' AI capabilities. While 25% are excited by their students' new AI skills, 26% worry about the growing gap between student abilities and their own. Nearly one-third (31%) feel intimidated by their students' superior AI knowledge.

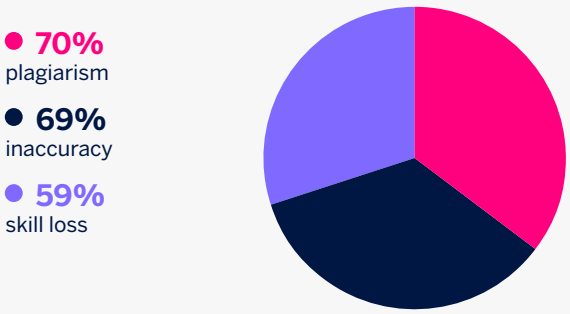
Concerns about student misuse dominate teachers' thinking. Seventy per cent (70%) worry about plagiarism and 69% are concerned about inaccurate AI-generated information. These fears reflect broader anxieties about academic integrity and the authenticity of student work.

Teacher-student AI relationship

Teacher confidence levels vs students



Concerns about student misuse

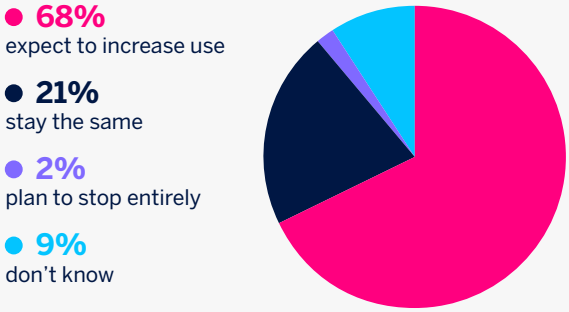


7. Future expectations reveal a cautious optimism

Looking ahead, teachers demonstrate cautious optimism about their own AI trajectory. Two-thirds (68%) expect to increase their AI usage over the next 12 months, with 15% planning significant increases and 52% expecting somewhat increased use. Only 21% anticipate their usage staying the same, while just 2% plan to stop using AI tools entirely.

However, teachers remain divided about AI's overall role in education. Over a third (36%) believe that the negatives of AI in education outweigh the benefits, while 44% disagree with this view and 20% are uncertain. This mixed assessment suggests that while teachers are personally willing to engage more with AI tools, broader questions about the technology's educational impact remain unresolved.

Future AI usage intentions



Conclusion

Our research presents a mixed picture of AI's role in education. Progress is evident. Nearly half of teachers now use AI regularly, and those who do report meaningful reductions in workload. The technology's potential to streamline administrative tasks is already apparent, offering hope for addressing the profession's chronic workload crisis.

However, significant challenges persist. The feelings of professional inadequacy and "cheating" among AI users suggest a misalignment between the technology's capabilities and teachers' understanding of their professional role. Nearly half of teachers lack any formal training in AI usage, creating a knowledge gap that potentially undermines confidence and effective implementation.

The findings from YouGov reveal a profession in transition, caught between traditional pedagogical values and emerging technological possibilities. While teachers recognise AI's potential to reduce the administrative burden, they remain steadfast in their belief – and we fully agree with them – that the human elements of education (empathy, relationship-building, and the nurturing of life skills) cannot be replicated by technology.

The path forward requires addressing several critical areas. The sector needs to prioritise comprehensive AI training that goes beyond mere technical instruction and addresses both the philosophical and pedagogical implications of AI adoption. Professional development should help teachers understand how AI can enhance rather than threaten their role.

Leadership support will prove crucial for successful implementation. The divide between individual usage and institutional adoption suggests that many teachers are navigating AI adoption without clear guidance or direction from their school leaders. This approach risks creating further inequalities and missed opportunities for systematic improvement.

The Government's announcements represent important and exciting steps forward. However, these measures must be coupled with sustained support for our existing teachers alongside clear guidance on best practices for AI integration.

The next phase of AI adoption in education will likely determine whether this technology becomes a powerful tool for educational improvement or another source of professional stress and inequality. Success depends not only on providing access to AI tools, but on developing the confidence, training, and institutional support necessary for their integration into teaching practice.

AI should serve as teachers' supportive assistant that handles routine tasks while teachers focus on the creative, empathetic, and inspirational work that defines great education. Achieving this will require continued dialogue, comprehensive training, and a commitment to ensuring that AI enhances rather than diminishes the profession.

> The journey ahead is exciting and challenging. AI has the potential to address some of education's most persistent challenges while preserving the irreplaceable human elements that make teaching a truly life-changing profession.

AI training doesn't have to break the bank

I recently volunteered to mark 40 Economics essays on the topic of airport expansion, economic growth and climate change that had been written by GCSE students. It made me empathise with the workload put on teachers. I wondered whether AI could do this seemingly repetitive task with me (or for me) in a way that would be easy, empathetic and educationally enhancing?

When we developed our framework for prompt writing skills, we found that motivation is a critical factor in success. Breaking this down further, it essentially comprises of an individual having the means, the motive and the opportunity to use Gen AI. In time and budget poor environments, as is too often the case in education, this can be seen as a challenge. On a recent trip to Abu Dhabi, I was struck by how much the situation can vary between nations. A recent DfE contract for nationwide AI teacher training had a budget allocated to it that my colleagues in Abu Dhabi assumed would be for a single or small group of schools!

The 46% of teachers feeling that they have inadequate AI training and support is a clear challenge. However, in our experience this does not require any advanced and costly training programme. From other sectors we have seen firsthand that a simple two-hour session that gives a brief overview of the theory and is followed by case studies and 'tips and tricks', is often all that is needed. It is critical for schools' leadership to create an environment where safe AI use is encouraged, and teachers feel confident to share both their successes and failures with each other.

The state sectors in both the UK and abroad can already look to examples from some independent schools for inspiration. I've been impressed with how Eton authored some simple guidance and example use cases for teachers not long after the virality of ChatGPTs initial releases. This sort of guidance can and should be shared widely.

That teachers who do use tools such as ChatGPT are already having some success in areas such as administrative burden is not a surprise. Some of the key skills required to use Gen AI tools well (such as logical phrasing of prompts) align very closely to the teacher skillset. The challenge is to give teachers more room to continue to experiment and find efficiency and quality gains. The EEF findings already show a potential 25-minute reduction in lesson planning per week. There are surely further time savings to be gained elsewhere too.

For more specialised areas of education such as SEND, effective use of AI could have real impacts on quality and efficiency by helping teachers to offer more personalised learning. This will require encouragement, training and peer development, but it has the potential to have real and near-term effects.

The survey results in this report are neither surprising nor discouraging. They feel in line with the rest of the business community. The challenge is how we accelerate from here. We must not use budget as an excuse. Engaging, empowering and experimenting are not significant cost drivers. As is nearly always the case, it's a people thing!

Rohin Aggarwal
Founder, PromptAbility

Rohin Aggarwal is the Founder at PromptAbility, one of the world's only suite of Gen AI assessment tools. The organisation helps professionals – including teachers – understand and improve their use of generative AI. For more information: www.promptability.org/

*This report is sponsored by Lenovo. The inclusion of PromptAbility's opinion piece is independent, and Lenovo has no formal affiliation with PromptAbility.

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