

Fact sheet

2025 Alternative Supervision Arrangements Survey

Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation

Background

When teaching staff are absent, schools typically engage casual teachers to cover scheduled classes so students can continue the curriculum. However, when insufficient casual teachers are available, schools use alternative supervision arrangements to fulfil their duty of care. These arrangements can involve merging classes or placing multiple classes under group supervision, known as minimal supervision. While these measures ensure student supervision, they may disrupt learning continuity.

The NSW Department of Education launched the Alternative Supervision Arrangements (ASA) Survey in 2023 and has conducted it annually since then, using the same questions and delivery methods. Over a 15-day period, schools report on the number of casual teachers they require and the number of casual teachers they actually engage each day. Where there are not enough casual teachers to cover absent teachers, schools report on the forms of alternative supervision arrangements used to meet duty-of-care requirements.

After the findings of the 2023 and 2024 surveys, a range of changes to policy were introduced and initiatives were implemented to strengthen recruitment support in schools, including the expanded priority recruitment support model and the launch of the dedicated recruitment officer model. After the significant improvements seen in 2024, the ASA Survey was conducted again in 2025 during Term 3 to review the ongoing impact of these initiatives.

This fact sheet presents the results of the 2025 survey and compares these to results from previous years.

Key findings between 2023 and 2025

NSW public schools had an average **casual teacher shortfall of 26%** per day across the survey window. **This is a decrease of 3 percentage points (pp) from 29% in 2024 and a decrease of 16 pp from 42% in 2023.**

On average, NSW public schools were estimated to be **short 1,784 casual teachers** across all types of schooling per day of the survey window. **This is a decrease of approximately 10% from 2024, where the estimated average gap was 1,973 casual teachers per day, and a decrease of 44% from 2023 where the estimated gap was 3,184 casual teachers.**

Casual teacher shortfalls were reported across NSW, with **78% of public schools** reporting at least one day with a casual teacher shortfall in the last 2 years. **This is an improvement of 9 pp from 87% in 2023.**

As in previous years, some geographical areas and individual schools were more affected by casual teacher shortfalls and experienced greater lesson disruption.

Shortfalls by school type

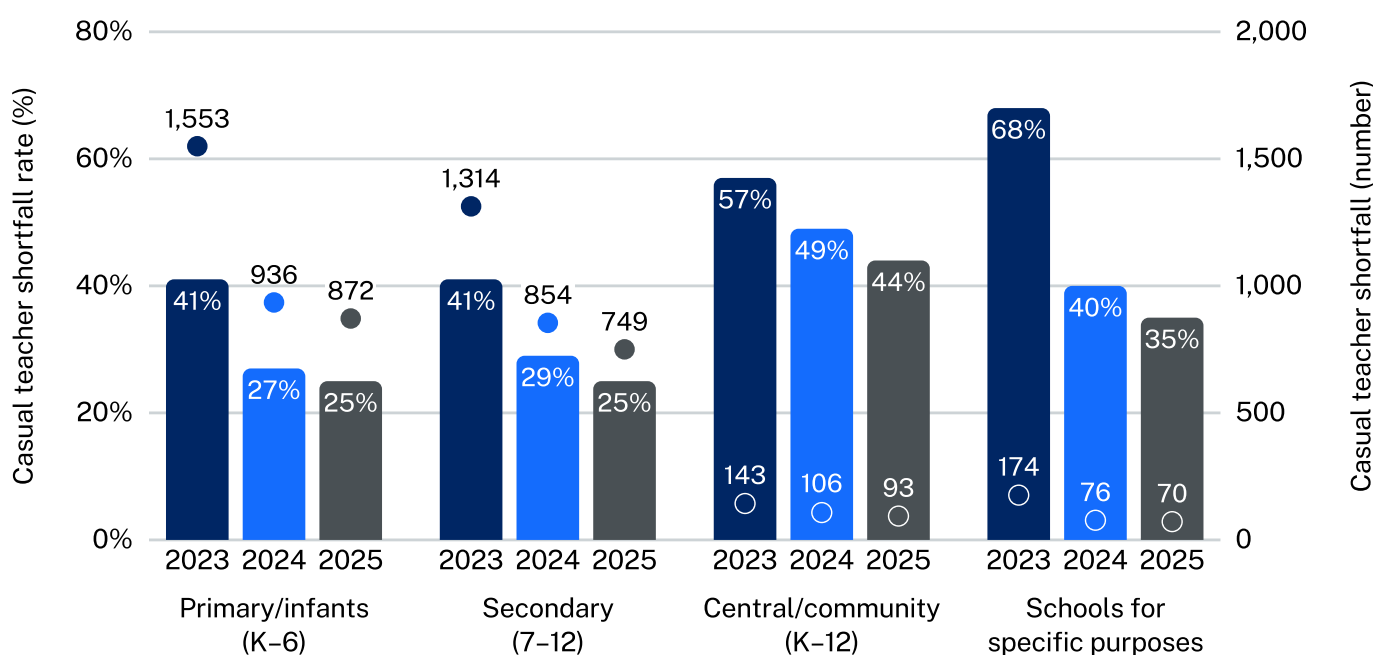
Findings from the 2025 survey show that shortages of casual teachers improved across all school types.

In 2025, NSW public schools reported an average daily shortfall of 26%, compared to 29% in 2024 and 42% in 2023. This means that the rate – the difference between the number of casual teachers required and the number actually engaged, expressed as a proportion of the number casuels needed – decreased by 3 pp compared to 2024 and by 16 pp from 2023. A 26% shortfall means that schools successfully engaged 74%, or around three-quarters, of the casual teachers needed during the 2025 survey period.

The number of casual teachers required fell from 7,539 in 2023 to 6,912 in 2025 – in other words, around 8% fewer casual teachers were required. However, the improvement in the shortfall rate was mostly driven by an increase in the number of casual teachers engaged, rising from 4,355 in 2023 to 5,128 in 2025 – that is, around 18% more casual teachers were engaged.

Primary and secondary schools had similar rates of average casual teacher shortfalls. Central and community schools had a larger gap than either primary or secondary schools, reflecting the challenges experienced in regional areas of NSW. Schools for specific purposes (SSPs) recorded the largest improvement, with their shortfall decreasing from 68% in 2023 to 35% in 2025 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Casual teacher shortfall by school type, 2023 to 2025



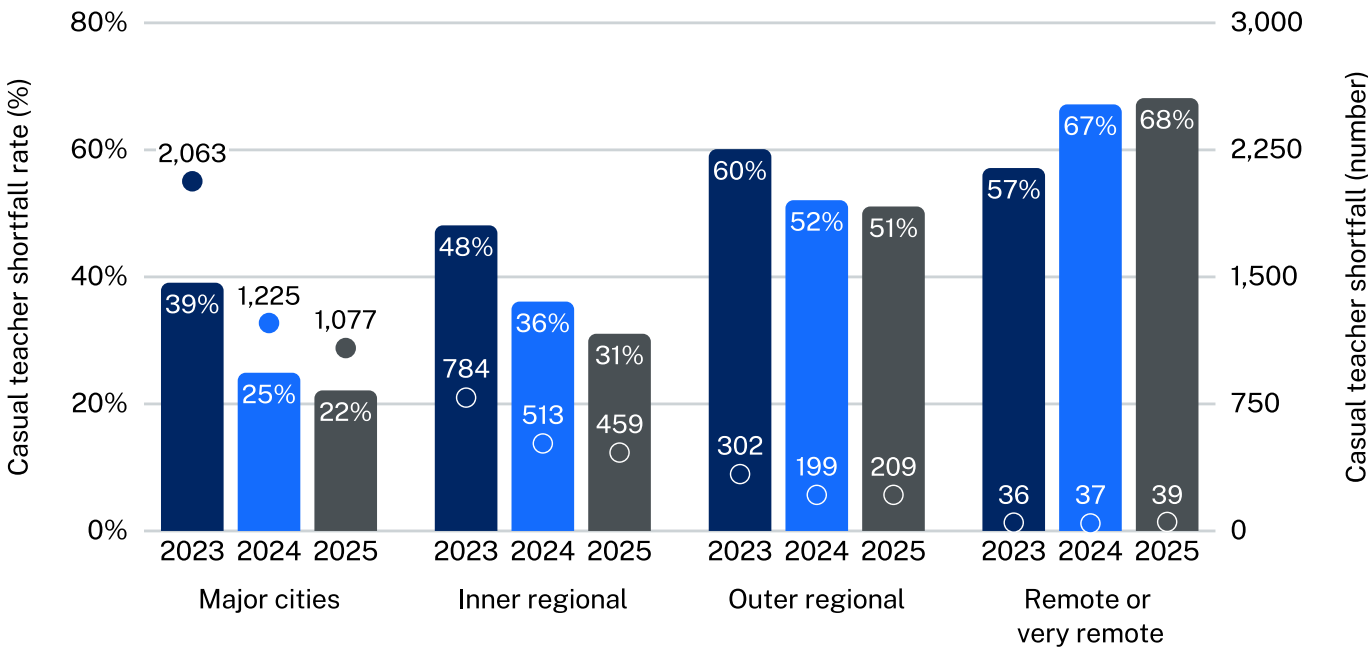
Note: In this figure, the circles represent the number of casual teachers short, and the bars represent the casual teacher shortfall as a percentage.

Shortfalls by school location

Casual teacher shortfalls were reported across all areas of NSW, with 78% of schools unable to engage enough casual teachers to cover all absent colleagues on at least one day during the survey window.

Findings from the 2025 survey indicate that shortfall rates continued to improve across most areas of NSW, except in remote and very remote areas, which remained the hardest areas to engage casual teachers. Schools in major cities and inner regional areas recorded the largest improvements (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Casual teacher shortfall by remoteness, 2023 to 2025



Note: In this figure, the circles represent the number of casual teachers short, and the bars represent the casual teacher shortfall as a percentage.

Figures 3 and 4 and Table 1 provide further detail on the changes in the teacher shortfall rate since 2023 across NSW, using the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) 2021 – Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4). They confirm the improvements in casual teacher shortfall rate in all areas of NSW, with the 2025 rates lower than those observed in 2023, except in the Far West and Orana region. Sydney – Blacktown recorded the largest improvement within Greater Sydney, with the 2025 rate improving by 25 pp compared with 2023, whereas Coffs Harbour – Grafton showed the highest improvement in Regional NSW, with the 2025 rate showing an improvement of 27 pp over 2023.

Figure 3: Changes to the casual teacher shortfall rate across the Greater Sydney region, between 2023 and 2025

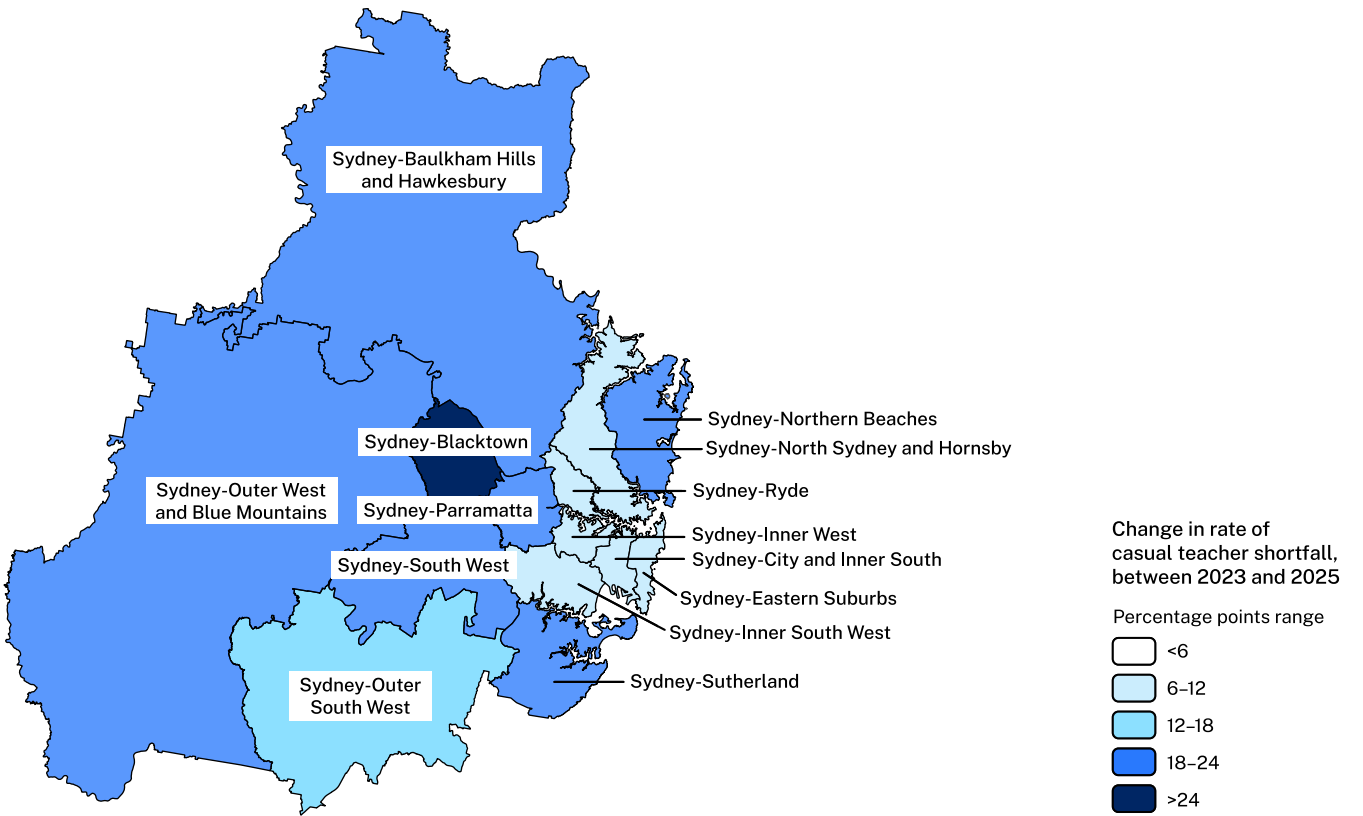
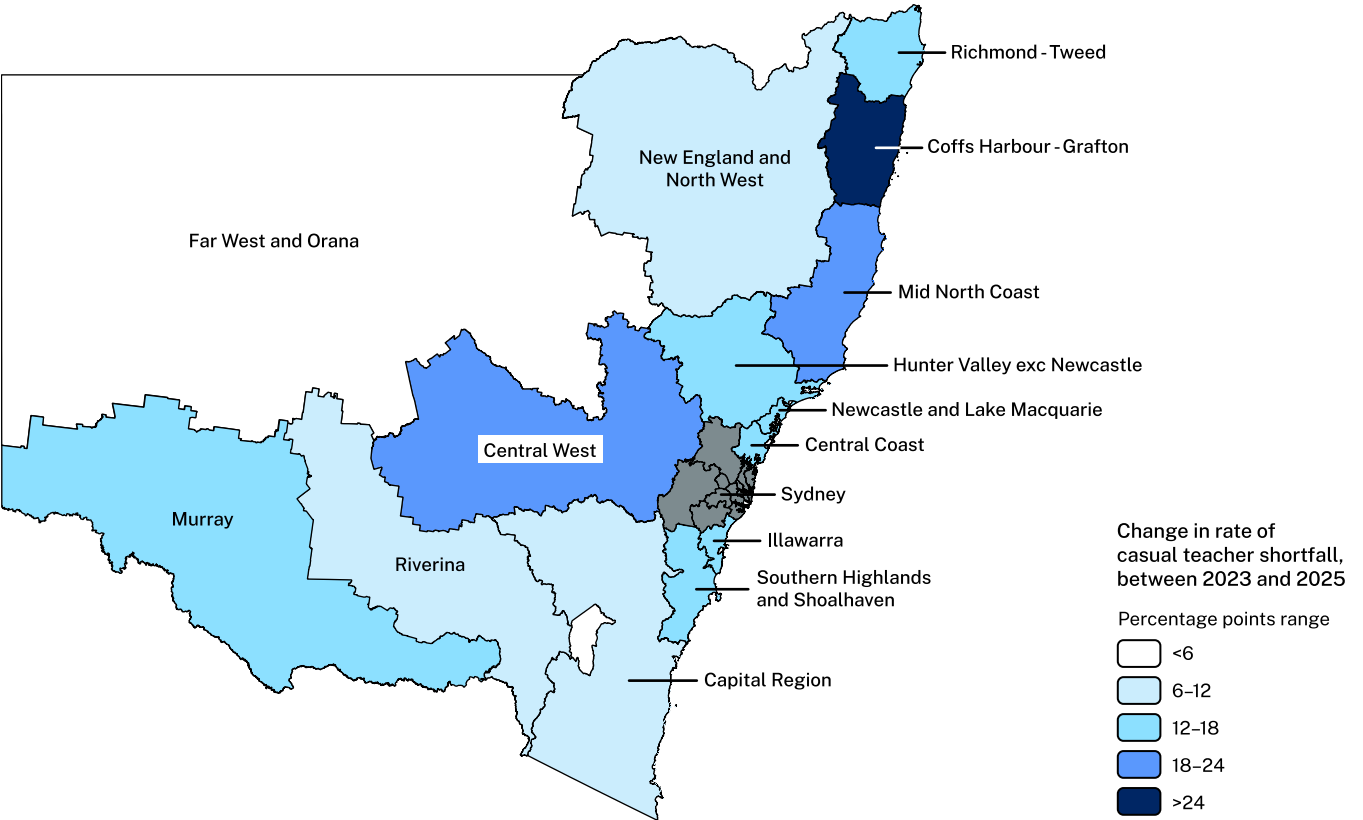


Figure 4: Changes to the casual teacher shortfall rate across Regional NSW, between 2023 and 2025



Note: The information displayed in these maps is also presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Change in casual teacher shortfall rate by Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4) region

SA4 2021	Rate of casual teacher shortfall (%)			Change in casual teacher shortfall rate (2023 less 2025)	
	2023	2024	2025	pp	pp range
Capital Region	55	48	44	11	6-12
Central Coast	29	14	16	13	12-18
Central West	52	41	33	19	18-24
Coffs Harbour – Grafton	43	27	16	27	>24
Far West and Orana	63	64	65	-2	<6
Hunter Valley exc Newcastle	41	26	28	13	12-18
Illawarra	29	15	15	14	12-18
Mid North Coast	47	32	25	22	18-24
Murray	60	48	43	17	12-18
New England and North West	65	53	55	10	6-12
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	24	10	10	14	12-18
Richmond – Tweed	29	19	16	13	12-18
Riverina	60	52	52	8	6-12
Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	35	31	20	15	12-18
Sydney – Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury	43	28	23	20	18-24
Sydney – Blacktown	63	44	38	25	>24
Sydney – City and Inner South	26	17	16	10	6-12
Sydney – Eastern Suburbs	17	6	5	12	12-18
Sydney – Inner South West	37	24	26	11	6-12
Sydney – Inner West	22	12	12	10	6-12
Sydney – North Sydney and Hornsby	26	16	18	8	6-12
Sydney – Northern Beaches	26	7	4	22	18-24
Sydney – Outer South West	57	46	41	16	12-18
Sydney – Outer West and Blue Mountains	46	38	25	21	18-24
Sydney – Parramatta	51	32	27	24	18-24
Sydney – Ryde	24	16	15	9	6-12
Sydney – South West	46	31	26	20	18-24
Sydney – Sutherland	37	23	16	21	18-24
All schools	42	29	26	16	12-18

Impact on lessons

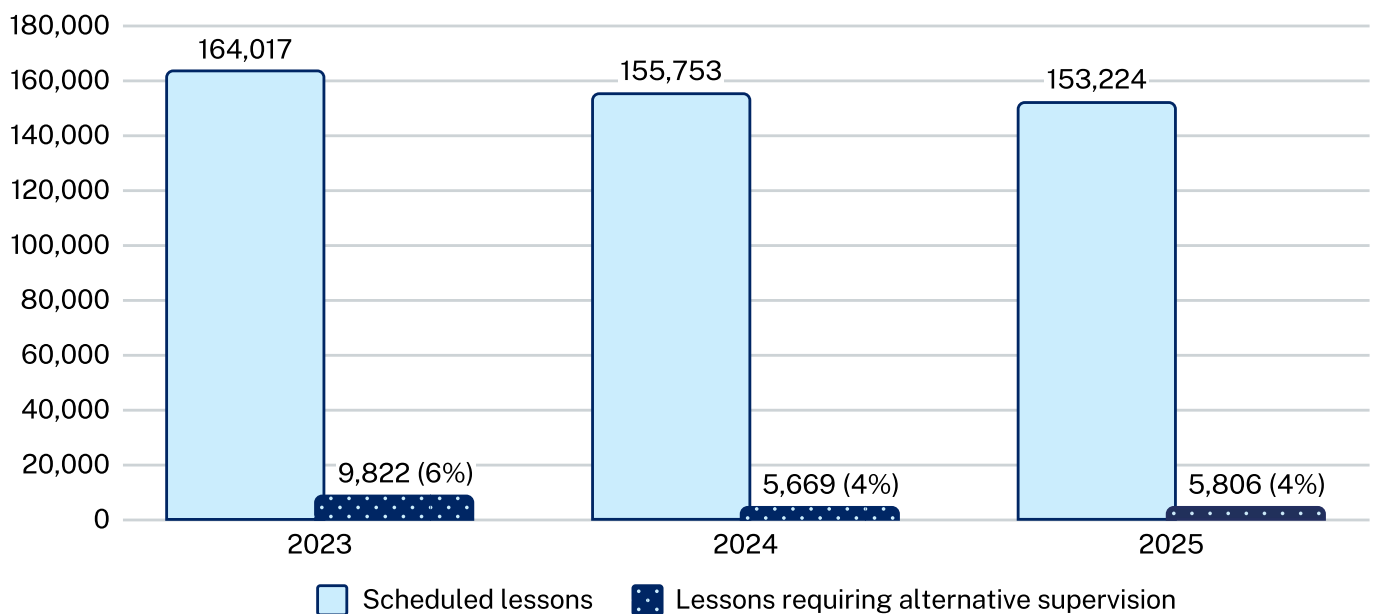
The number of lessons requiring alternative supervision arrangements as a result of casual teacher shortfall has declined since 2023.

In 2023, an estimated average of 9,822 lessons out of 164,017 scheduled lessons each day did not go ahead as timetabled and required alternative arrangements, representing 6% – or 1 in 17 – of all lessons scheduled.

By 2024, this average decreased to 5,669 lessons out of 155,753 scheduled lessons each day, representing approximately 4% – or 1 in 25 – of all lessons scheduled.

In 2025, the average number of lessons that required alternative supervision each day remained relatively stable at 5,806 lessons out of 153,224 scheduled lessons, also representing around 4% – or 1 in 25 – of all lessons scheduled (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Estimated number of lessons per day requiring alternative supervision, 2023 to 2025



Use of alternative supervision arrangements

Schools were asked to record how many lessons required alternative supervision arrangements, and what forms of arrangements were used to meet duty-of-care requirements. The latest results show that schools continued to use similar approaches to covering shortfalls as in previous years.

When comparing the instances and forms of alternative supervision arrangements used (Figures 6 and 7), conclusions include:

- Primary schools and SSPs were most likely to use merged or collapsed classes. In 2024 and 2025, primary schools used merged or collapsed classes for 41% of lessons requiring alternative supervision, compared to 40% in 2023. For SSPs this was 44% in 2023, 41% in 2024 and 32% in 2025.
- Secondary schools were most likely to reallocate teachers to supervise classes in their non-teaching periods. In 2025, secondary schools used this type of supervision for 34% of lessons requiring alternative supervision arrangements, compared to 28% in 2023 and 29% in 2024.
- Primary schools used minimal supervision for less than 1% of lessons needing alternative supervision arrangements between 2023 and 2025. Secondary schools' use of minimal supervision decreased by 11 percentage points, from 28% in 2023 to 17% in 2025.

Figure 6: Instances of alternative supervision arrangements (%), primary and infants schools, 2023 to 2025

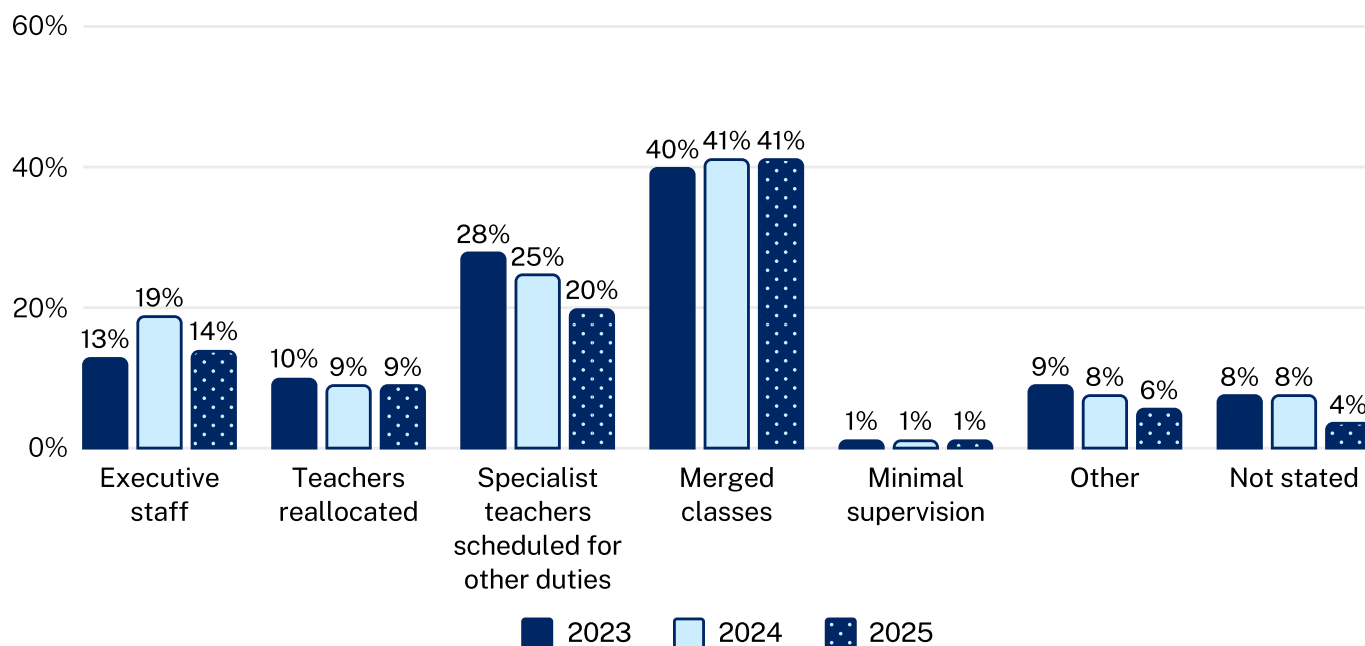
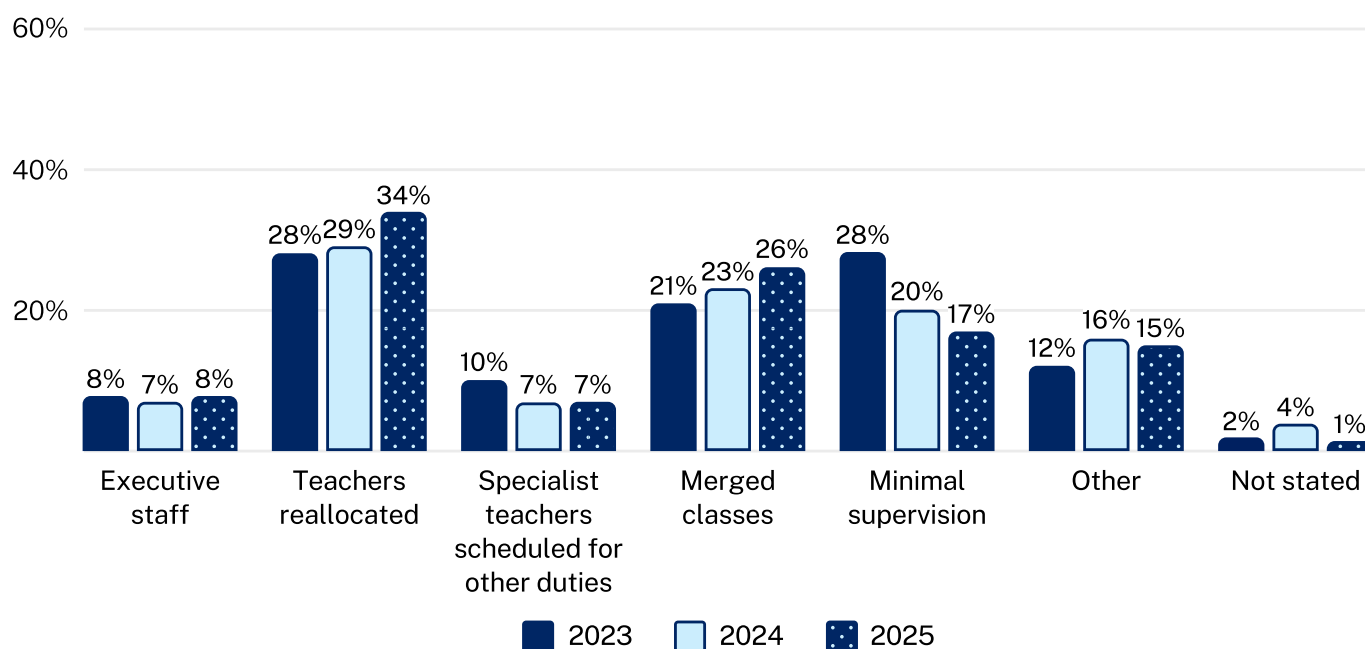


Figure 7: Instances of alternative supervision arrangements (%), secondary schools, 2023 to 2025



Further information

Survey method

- **2,173** public schools were in scope for the 2025 survey, compared with 2,174 in 2024 and 2,173 in 2023.¹
- The survey was conducted over 15 days, with schools being asked to provide information on each school day. The survey was conducted over a similar time frame to previous years, from 13 August to 2 September 2025.
- Schools could opt into the survey and were encouraged to participate every day.
- Schools advised of variations to routine throughout the survey period that impacted their casual teacher needs. Secondary schools were more likely to be impacted by changes to routine with HSC trials.
- **97%** of schools attempted the survey on at least one day during the survey window, compared with **97% in 2024** and **88% in 2023**. Due to operational issues and workload, not all schools could submit every day.
- **87%** of all schools submitted complete data for 5 days or more and were included in the estimation process, compared with **85%** in 2024 and 76% in 2023. This provided a **representative sample** of school staffing numbers and lessons across the survey window.
- Because not every school could take part in the survey, survey results were adjusted (or weighted) so they better reflect all schools – including by level of schooling, size and location. **This means the figures (or estimates) represent the average daily activity across all 2,173 schools.**
- Since some schools did not respond, there is some uncertainty in the estimates. However, the methods used to adjust the data help measure and reduce this uncertainty. For 2025, the results are considered precise enough to be reported with a high level of confidence.
- Data processing of survey results included a comparison with existing data sources to ensure survey validity.

¹ Excludes environmental education centres and schools with short-term temporary student populations, such as hospital schools.

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