The Alan Turing Institute

Understanding the Impacts of Generative AI Use on Children

WP1 Surveys

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In collaboration with Children's Parliament
Supported by the LEGO Group

About the Team

The AI for Public Services team at The Alan Turing Institute is part of the Public Policy Programme. Through a stream of foundational and applied research, we focus on investigating when and where AI can be applied in the public sector in ways that are responsible, responsive, efficient. We collaborate with a range of public sector organisations in the UK to (including the Department for Transport, the Office for National Statistics, and the General Medical Council) to examine the feasibility and impact of AI adoption across various application areas. Our research includes understanding the use and impacts of perceptive, predictive, and generative AI systems in the public sector using surveys.

The team recently published a paper on the use of generative AI in the UK's public sector, and a report exploring doctors' understandings and use of AI systems in their clinical practice.

Citation

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Key findings

This report presents the findings from two surveys which looked to explore the impact of generative AI use on children's learning, development, and overall wellbeing. With a focus on the UK, the first of these surveys was of 780 children aged 8-12, and their parents or carers. The second of these surveys was of 1,001 teachers working in primary or secondary schools with children aged 1-16.

1. Most of the households we surveyed are using generative AI tools, though that distribution is concentrated in England and differs based on household income.
   Our research shows that 55% of households in the UK are using generative AI tools. Within this group, we find significant differences in use based on social grade and region. 61% of parents from social grades A, B, and C1 report that they or others in their household use the technology, whereas 44% from social grades C2, D, and E report the same. We also observe regional differences, with 57% of parents based in England reporting household use of generative AI. These numbers are lower for Wales (50%), Northern Ireland (41.2%) and Scotland (40%). Subsequently, children's awareness around generative AI appeared to be impacted by some of these factors. Of children who reported having heard of the term generative AI, 71% of these live in households that are using the technology. Further, 70% of children who have heard of the term are from social grades A, B, and C1, as opposed to 30% from social grades C2, D, and E.

2. Nearly a quarter of children aged 8-12 report having used generative AI, with the most used tool being ChatGPT.
   22% of children surveyed reported using a generative AI tool, with the vast majority (72%) reporting using it once a month or more. Use of the technology is lowest amongst 8-year-olds at 14%, and highest amongst 12-year-olds at 26%. Interestingly, while reported use steadily increases with age, we see a slight decline in this increase amongst 11-year-olds, before observing an increase once more with 12-year-olds. We find a slight gender difference, with 24% of female children reporting using generative AI compared to 19% of male children. The most popular tool used amongst children is ChatGPT, with 58% who use generative AI reporting using this tool. This is followed by Gemini at 33%, and My AI by Snapchat at 27%. We also find that, amongst children with additional learning needs, the rate of ChatGPT usage is significantly higher than those without additional learning needs, at 78% compared to 53% (respectively). Of those not using generative AI, more than half had not previously heard of the term, with significantly lower levels of awareness among children attending state schools compared to those attending private schools.

3. Children are mainly using generative AI to explore their creativity, find out information or learn about something, and for digital play, though these uses vary within sub-groups.

Children who use generative AI report using it for a variety of different reasons. 43% of children report using the tools for creating fun pictures and to find out information or learn about something, and 40% report using it for entertainment and playing around. Our findings show interesting variations by age, gender, and additional learning needs. Each age group differs in the most highly reported use of generative AI. 8-year-olds mainly use the technology for entertainment, 9-year-olds mainly use it to find out information or learn about something, 10-year-olds mainly use it for creating fun pictures, 11-year-olds mainly use it for entertainment and finding out information or learning about something, and 12-year-olds mainly use it for help with homework or schoolwork. Children with additional learning needs report using generative AI at significantly higher rates for communication and connection, which includes playing with friends (30% vs 19% of children without additional learning needs), getting advice on something personal (39% vs 16%), and chatting and keeping themselves company (37% vs 22%).

4. The majority of children who report using generative AI find the technology exciting, with these numbers increasing if their parents or carers hold optimistic views towards the technology.
   68% of children who use generative AI report finding it exciting, as opposed to just 22% of those who don't use it. We observe similar numbers with regards to fears around the technology - 63% of children who use generative AI report not finding the technology scary or confusing, as opposed to 23% of those who don't use it. Aside from this clear correlation of generative AI use to levels of excitement and optimism, our findings also seem to indicate a significant correlation between children's attitudes towards the technology and their parents' or carers' attitudes towards the technology. Of the children using generative AI who report the highest levels of excitement, 93% had parents who reported feeling positively about their children's use of the technology. Similarly, of the children who reported the lowest levels of fears around the technology, 87% had parents who felt positive about their children's use of the technology.

5. Children who attend private schools are far more likely to report having used generative AI than children who attend state schools. Similarly, teachers working in private schools report higher student usage of generative AI than state schoolteachers.
   52% of children attending private schools report using generative AI, as opposed to 18% of children in state schools. Children attending private school also report more frequent use of the technology, with 72% of these children reporting using generative AI at least a few times per week, compared to 42% of children who attend state schools. We observe similar trends in teachers' awareness of their students' use of the technology; 57% of private schoolteachers report awareness around their students' usage of generative AI for schoolwork, compared to 37% of state schoolteachers.

6. Parents and carers are mostly optimistic about their children's use of generative AI, but many report concerns over their children's access to inappropriate or inaccurate information.

The majority (76%) of parents or carers whose children use generative AI feel positively about their children's use of the technology. Our results show that parents or carers who use the technology themselves report substantially higher rates of positivity around their children's use of the technology compared to parents or carers who don't use the technology, at 84% versus 21%, respectively. Despite these reported levels of optimism amongst those whose children use generative AI, we still find that all parents and carers hold significant concerns around the potential impact that the technology could have on their children's exposure to inappropriate (82% of all parents) or inaccurate information (77% of all parents). Interestingly, we find that parents and carers report the lowest levels of concern around their children's use of generative AI for cheating in school, with less than half (41%) reporting feeling concern over this.

7. Parents, carers, and teachers all report similar levels of concern over the negative impact that generative AI may have on children's critical thinking skills.
   Although parents, carers, and teachers display different areas of concern around the negative impact generative AI may have on children, our report finds these groups share similar levels of concern over the impact the technology may have on children's critical thinking skills. 76% of parents and carers indicated they were concerned their children may be too trusting of the technology and not think critically about the information it provides. 72% of teachers share a similar concern around the negative impact that the technology might have on their students' critical thinking skills.

8. Teachers report that more than half of students who are using generative AI for schoolwork use the tool to submit AI-generated work as their own.
   Of the teachers who reported awareness of their students' use of generative AI for schoolwork, 57% reported these students were using the technology to submit AI-generated work as their own. When broken down by private versus state school, we find that 47% of teachers working in private schools report awareness around this type of use by their students, compared to 60% of teachers in state schools. Taken together, however, these findings stand in relative contrast to the concerns that parents and carers have around the negative impact the technology might have on their children, with the lowest reported levels of concern around the use of generative AI for cheating at school.

9. 3 out of 5 teachers are using generative AI in their work, with the highest reported uses in lesson planning and research.
   66% of teachers report using generative AI in their work, with ChatGPT being the most cited tool being used. Teachers report using the technology for a wide variety of purposes, ranging from student feedback to designing homework assignments. The highest reported use of generative AI amongst teachers is lesson planning and research, with 75% of all teachers who use the technology indicating that they use it for this purpose. Within the population of teachers using the technology, we find differences between use amongst different positions. For example, the majority of special education needs (SEN) teachers (51%) report using the technology to develop

personalised plans for students, whereas only 22% of secondary schoolteachers report the same.

10. Nearly two thirds of teachers who use generative AI are accessing these tools through a personal license.
    71% of teachers who report using generative AI for work report that they access the technology through their own personal license, with only 26% reporting that their schools provide institutional access. Despite these high levels of independent adoption, the majority of these teachers - 64% - report that their schools are aware of their use of the technology for work.

11. The majority of teachers who use generative AI are optimistic about its use in their work, reporting high levels of confidence and trust in the technology. These teachers also report improvements in their performance on various teaching tasks, through the use of generative AI.
    85% of teachers that report using generative AI at work agreed that the technology had increased their productivity, with a further 88% agreeing that they felt confident using the tools they listed. More than half of teachers (61%) also reported trust in the systems they use, and 82% agreed that they felt the technology had a positive impact on their teaching. When asked to assess whether or not the technology had significantly improved the quality of their performance on the activities and tasks they indicated they had used generative AI for, over 75% of teachers agreed that it had.

12. Over 80% of teachers believe that generative AI will support them in their work rather than replace them.
    These activities ranged from assessing student performance to delivering lessons to students. Across all presented activities, over 80% of the teachers who responded indicated they believed the technology would support them in executing the activity rather than replace them altogether. No activity was marked by teachers as having the potential to be replaced by a generative AI application.

13. Teachers are less optimistic about the impact that students' use of generative AI may have - with the exception of its use as a tool to support students with additional learning needs.
    Our survey shows that teachers have mixed feelings around the potential impact of generative AI on students' schoolwork and wellbeing. 64% of all teachers believe that generative AI is a great tool to support students with additional learnings. However, 49% of teachers who are aware of their students' use of the technology for schoolwork indicated they believe the technology has had a negative impact on their students' engagement in classwork, and 48% believe it has made the ideas that students are submitting less diverse. 40% of teachers agreed that generative AI may have a positive impact on the creativity of students' work, with the remaining 60% either disagreeing or feeling neutral. Overall, nearly half (49%) of all teachers report concern around the impact that generative AI may have on students' wellbeing, as well as concern around the technology's impact on students' critical thinking skills.

When it comes to generative AI's impact on student creativity, our survey found mixed results. Of teachers who reported awareness around their students' use of generative AI, 40% agreed with the statement that the technology has had a positive impact on the creativity of these students' work, as opposed to 43% who disagreed. A separate statement, presented to all teachers, sought to elicit their views on the technology's ability to foster creativity. Here, we find that 45% of all teachers agreed with the statement, as opposed to 23% who disagreed. These mixed results indicate that teachers hold opposing views around the technology, expressing hope and simultaneous concern around the technology's impact on student creativity.

Based on these findings, combined with those from WP1 of this research project, we make a range of recommendations for policy-makers and industry, which are set out in our recommendations document.[1]

[1] Project Recommendations can be found here.

Introduction

Recent advances in generative artificial intelligence (AI) are transforming how children interact with technology, particularly in education and creative domains. A growing body of research has explored the impacts of generative AI on users, highlighting both its potential benefits and associated risks (Kosoy et al., 2024; National Literacy Trust, 2024a; Neugnot-Cerioli & Laurenty, 2024). Much of the existing literature has focussed on adults and teens (e.g. Common Sense Media, 2024a; National Literacy Trust, 2024b; National Literacy Trust, 2024b; Common Sense Media, 2024b), leaving significant gaps in our understanding of how younger children, aged 8 – 12, engage with and are affected by these technologies. For example, little is known about how generative AI impacts younger children's learning and emotional development.

While some studies have explored how younger children perceive AI (e.g. Kosoy et al., 2024; Williams, Park & Breazeal, 2019), there is limited research on the impact of generative AI on different dimensions of their well-being. This gap is critical as children have distinct developmental needs and rights, such as those outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations General Assembly, 1989). As generative AI is increasingly embedded in the platforms and tools children use, it is essential to consider their unique needs when designing, developing, and deploying these technologies.

Our research addresses these gaps by conducting foundational survey research investigating the impacts of generative AI on children's well-being, with a specific focus on learning through play and creativity. We conducted two surveys: one of children aged 8-12, and their parents or carers, and the other of teachers working in primary or secondary schools across the UK. Together, these two surveys allowed us to develop a more holistic view of children's generative AI use, both within and outside of the classroom, and how this use impacts children's wellbeing. Each of these surveys therefore aims to explore varying dimensions of generative AI use amongst children. The teachers' survey aimed to explore teachers' thoughts, opinions, and concerns surrounding generative AI in the classroom. The children's survey provided a space for children to self-report on their experiences with the technology and their understandings of it. It also provided an opportunity for parents or carers to express their opinions and perceptions. Surveying both parents or carers and teachers provides critical insights into children's exposure to, and use of, the technology, as they are responsible for children's learning and development – both inside and outside of the classroom.

While studies have found that awareness of AI among children and parents is high, understanding of its functions and limitations is low (National Literacy Trust, 2024b). By building on this evidence base, we aim to produce a nuanced understanding of

how generative AI influences children's agency and well-being, aligning with the UNICEF principles of Responsible Innovation in Technology for Children (RITEC). In this report, we present findings from our surveys, contextualised within existing literature, to offer insights into the degree to which children are exposed to generative AI in their daily lives, and the impact this has on various dimensions of their well-being.

Methodology

The children and parents/carers survey was conducted by YouGov Plc UK on behalf of The Alan Turing Institute (ATI). The survey questions were designed by the research team at the ATI, with feedback provided by project partners from the LEGO Group, as well as the research team at YouGov. The teacher's survey was designed and conducted by the research team at the ATI using the crowdsourcing platform Prolific, which enables access to large participant pools globally. Below, we provide a brief overview of the methodologies used for each of these surveys. For a full demographic breakdown for both surveys, please refer to the Appendix. The full surveys, as well as their associated data and the code used to analyse them, can be found here.

Children and parents'/carers' survey

The overall sample size for this survey was 780 children aged 8 to 12, and their parents or carers. YouGov carried out the sampling for this survey, drawing on a panel of 2.5 million+ individuals across the UK who have opted into taking part in surveys with the platform. Nationally representative quotas (adults aged 18+, living in the UK) were set for the survey, and the fieldwork was undertaken between 12-25th November 2024. Following the completion of the survey, the figures were weighted to ensure they are representative of all UK children aged 8 to 12, by age and gender.

This survey was broken up into two sections. The first of these was aimed at parents or carers, and the second of these was aimed at their child. If a parent or carer had more than one child within the 8-12 age range, they were asked to allow their youngest child to take the survey. Parents or carers were asked to ensure their child understood the aims of the survey, and consent was required from both the parent or carer and the child, separately. In the first section, we asked parents a few demographic questions, followed by background questions around their child's education and use of technology. They were then asked questions around their personal use of generative AI, as well as questions around their awareness of their children's use of the technology. We then asked parents to hand the survey over to their child to fill out the second section. In the second section of the survey, children were asked questions around their awareness and understanding of different generative AI applications, as well as their use of these systems. Both sections were made up of a mix of open-text and multiple-choice questions.

Teacher's survey

The overall sample size for this survey was 1,001 teachers working with young students (ranging from 1-16 years old), based at schools in the UK. The participant pool for this survey was sourced from Prolific, using participant screeners. To take part in the survey, participants had to be located in the UK and had to be registered on Prolific as working as a teacher. The survey itself had additional screeners which asked participants to confirm that they were working as a teacher in a primary or secondary school in the UK.

We placed a quota on our sample (76% female, 24% male) to reflect the gender makeup of the England's teaching workforce, based on the School Workforce Census provided by the UK's Department for Education[2]. However, given the size and demographic composition of the participant pool available to us on Prolific at the time of survey launch (n= 3,283), we were unable to account for any other key demographic features of the teaching workforce. As such, the sample is not a fully representative sample.

The survey was made up a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Teachers were asked questions around their use of generative AI, and their awareness of students' use of the technology. The questions explored their experiences with the technology, as well as their overall attitudes towards its use by both teachers and students in the classroom.

[2] See: https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england

Part 1: Children, carers, and parents' survey

Household use of digital technologies and AI

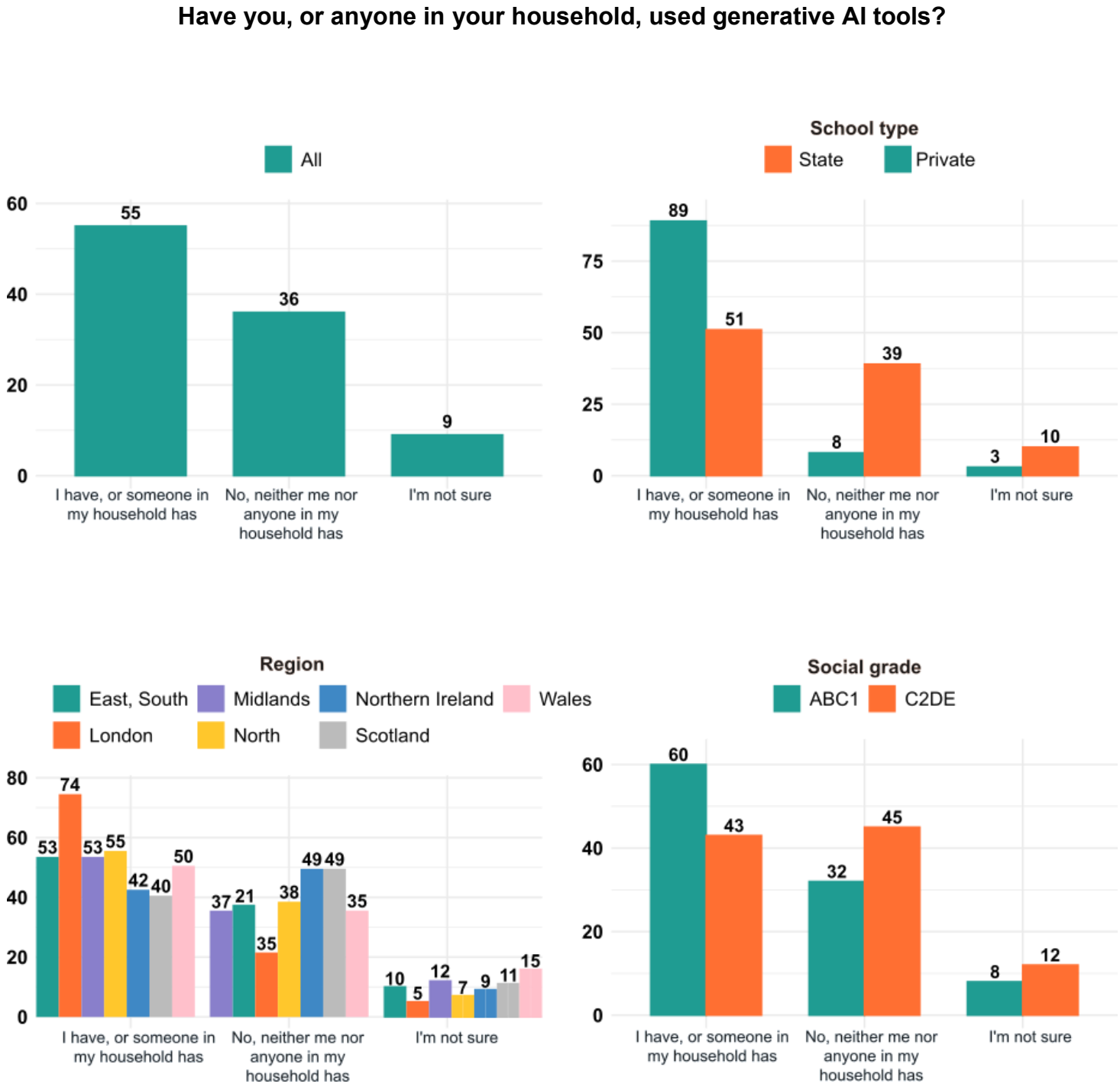
In this section, we give a brief overview of household use of generative AI. We provide a breakdown of key demographic features where we see statistical differences in results and – in later sections of this report – explore how these determinants appear to impact whether a child is likely to engage with or understand generative AI.

In our survey we asked parents and carers about the use of generative AI in their household. We asked these respondents to indicate whether a) they had used generative AI or, b) they hadn't, but someone else in their household had. Taken together, these two categories indicate what we refer to as '*household use of generative AI*'. Of all respondents (n=780), 55% reported household use of generative AI. Amongst these categories, we observed significant differences in the use of generative AI across (i) social grade of the parents or carers, (ii) type of education of the child (private or state school) and (iii) region.

Our findings showed that, while 52% of parents or carers from social grades A, B and C1 report having used generative AI themselves, only 27% of parents from social grades C2, D and E report the same. The differences between the social grades are lower when looking at household use of generative AI. 61% of respondents from the ABC1 social grades indicated household use of generative AI, while 44% of parents from the C2DE social grades indicated the same.

We found stark differences in overall household use of generative AI when comparing groups of parents and carers based on the type of education their child receives. 89% of respondents whose children go to private school indicated overall household use of generative AI, whereas only half (51%) of the respondents whose children attend state school indicated the same. We also observed differences when comparing use of generative AI across regions. More specifically, we found that 57% of respondents living in England indicated household use of generative AI, with the percentage being as high as 74% for those living in London. We found this percentage to be lower in other regions of the UK, with 50% in Wales, 41% in Northern Ireland and 40% in Scotland. Figure 1 explores these statistics in more detail.

Figure 1: Household use of generative AI broken down by school type, region and social grade, shown as % of each respective group for total respondents (n=780).



Children's general awareness of AI

In this section, we briefly present findings that showcase children's general awareness and understandings of AI. We explore the differences in awareness and understanding based on children's age, the type of school they attend, and whether an adult in their life has spoken to them about AI before.

To begin, our survey asked children to use free-text responses to describe what comes to mind when they think of AI. We coded these responses to extract the keywords and the frequency of their occurrence. Our findings showed that the top five most frequently occurring keywords to describe AI were – robots (>25%), computers (~10%), ChatGPT or chatbots (<10%), virtual assistant, and intelligent agent. Interestingly, the sixth most frequently used word to describe AI was 'fake'.

Next, children were asked whether any adult in their lives had explained AI and its workings to them. Altogether, 37% of children indicated that an adult had spoken to them about the technology. Interestingly, here we found that children from the ABC1 social grades were more likely to have reported that an adult spoke to them about AI, compared to those from the C2DE social grade (42% vs 28%, respectively). When asked whether they had specifically heard of the term *generative* AI before, the majority (55%) of all children in the study (n=780) answered 'no', 30% answered 'yes' and the rest indicated that they were unsure (Figure 2). Of those who indicated that they had heard of generative AI, 73% (n=171) were able to pick the correct definition of the technology from the options that were presented to them (Table 1).

We found that, among the 171 children who correctly defined generative AI, 73% had also reported that an adult had spoken to them about AI. In addition, 68% of children who reported having heard of generative AI also reported that an adult had spoken to them about the technology, highlighting the role that parents, carers, teachers, and other adult figures can play in enabling children's awareness and understanding of the technology (Figure 3). Our results also showed that children's awareness around generative AI appeared to be correlated with household usage of the technology. Of children who reported having heard of the term generative AI, 71% of these lived in households that report using the technology.

Which of the following best describes what generative AI is?	n	Freq
Generative AI is a type of technology that, when you give it instructions or ask it a question, can create different types of content like poems, pictures, or songs	171	73%
Generative AI is a computer than can turn things into real life objects, like a super big printer	23	10%
Generative AI is a robot that can pick things up, move around, and build things like toys and sandcastles	19	8%
I'm not sure	21	9%

Table 1: Definitions of generative AI shown to children who reported having heard of it (n=239).

Turning to the different age groups, we found that – unsurprisingly – older children were more likely to have heard about generative AI, with only 15% of 8-year-olds reporting awareness as opposed to 47% of 12-year-olds. These findings were broadly echoed in Work Package 2 of this project, where in-person workshops with children aged 9-11 were held, looking to explore their views on, and experiences with, generative AI. During these workshops, older children expressed greater familiarity with generative AI tools.

Further, our survey results showed that gender did not appear to impact awareness; male and female children reported similar levels of awareness around generative AI. Interestingly, we did observe some regional differences. Children living in London reported higher awareness compared to children from other regions across the UK (Figure 2). Difference in awareness was most prominent across type of education and social grade – 71% of private school students reported an adult having spoken to them about what AI is and 59% reported having heard of it, while this was only at 33% and 27% for state school children.

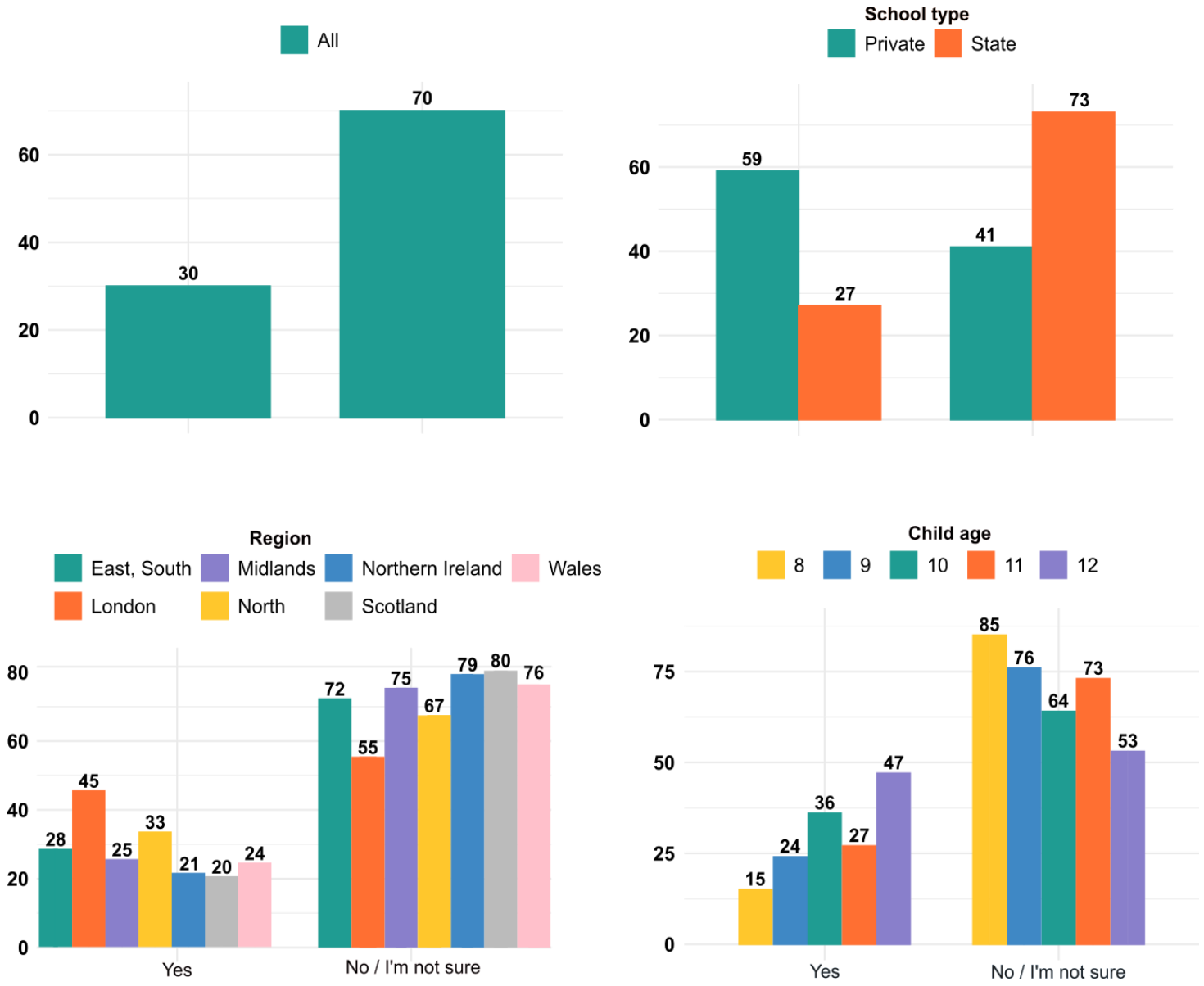
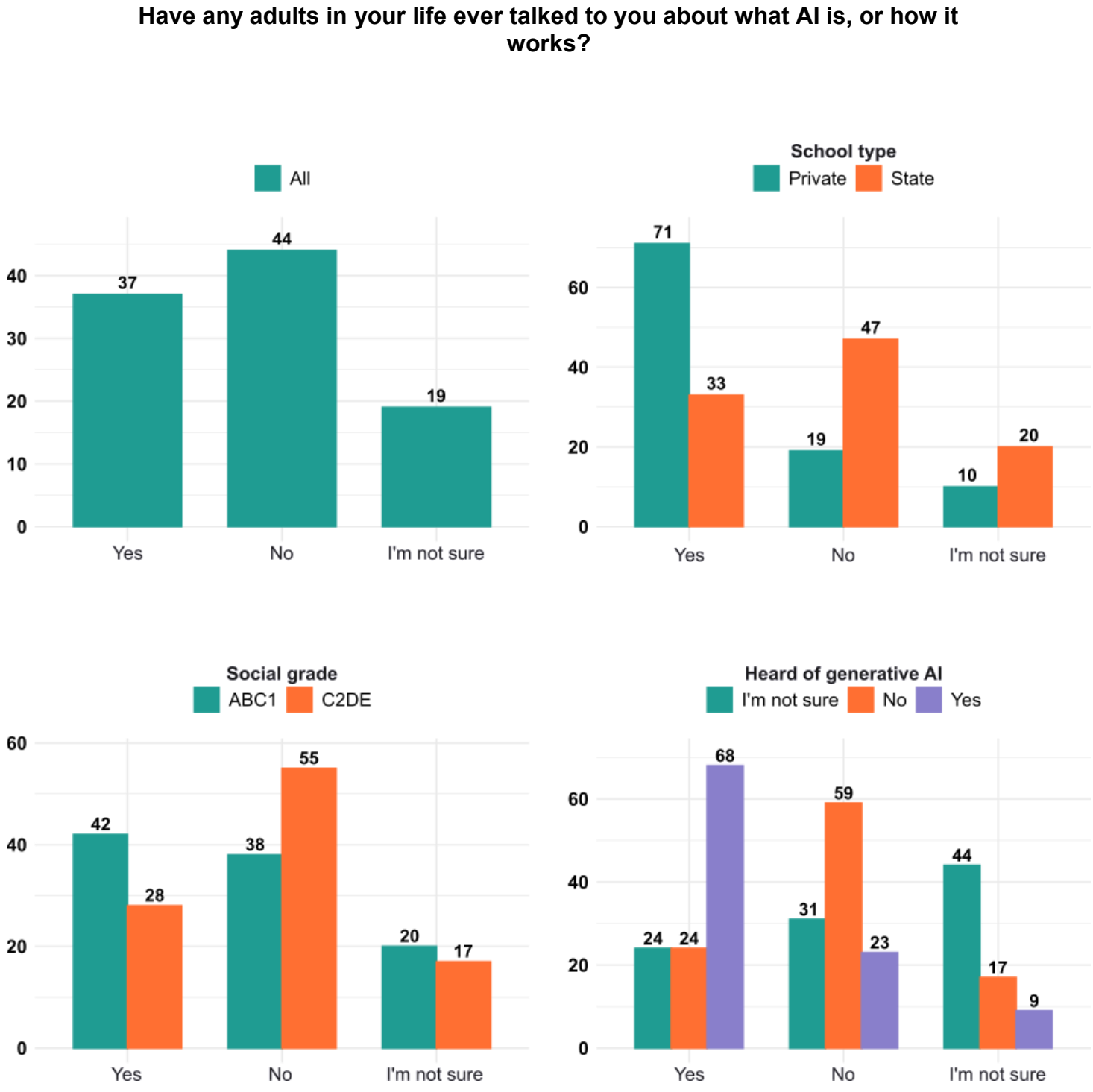


Figure 2: Children’s awareness of AI down by school type, region and child’s age, shown as a % each respective group for total respondents (n=780).

Figure 3: Being spoken to about AI broken down by school type, social grade, and whether the child has heard of generative AI, shown as a % of each respective group for total respondents (n=780).



Children's use of generative AI

In this section, we move on to exploring children's use of generative AI, examining aspects like frequency of use, type of use, and perception, highlighting differences in access and engagement across different demographic factors. This section also explores how children's experiences with generative AI tools aligns with different dimensions of their well-being, such as creativity, autonomy, relationships, and competence.

Our survey found that 22% of all children (n=170) reported using generative AI, with female children reporting using it slightly more than male children at 24% versus 19%, respectively. Use of the technology appears to change with age, with the lowest rates of reported usage amongst 8-year-olds (15%) and the highest rate amongst 12-year-olds (27%). AI usage differs based on the type of education received: 52% of children attending private schools reported using generative AI, significantly higher than the 18% of children in state schools. Regional variations were evident as well, with the highest usage reported in England (24%) and the lowest in Scotland (7%). Within England, London stood out, with 38% of children reporting generative AI use. Social grade also plays a role, with children from the ABC1 social grades having reported using generative AI (25%) significantly more than those from the C2DE social grade (15%) (Table 2).

Variable	Value		Frequency	n 'yes'	Size of group
All	All		22%	170	780
School's type	State		18%	126	680
	Private		52%	40	76
	Home		16%	3	18
Child's gender	Female		24%	86	353
	Male		19%	84	427
Child's age	8 years old		15%	21	135
	9 years old		20%	29	146
	10 years old		26%	47	188
	11 years old		20%	29	147
	12 years old		27%	44	164
Region	England	All	24%	158	661
		London	38%	37	98
		East, South	19%	48	249
		Midlands	18%	22	123

	North	26%	51	191
	Northern Ireland	15%	3	21
	Scotland	7%	4	61
	Wales	14%	5	37
Social grade	ABC1	25%	129	513
	C2DE	15%	41	267

Table 2: Children's use of generative AI (those who answered yes to the question) broken down by school type, child's gender, child's age, region, and social grade.

Parents were generally aware of their children's engagement with generative AI. When asked if they knew whether their child used such tools, parental responses closely aligned with those of their children (22%), showing no significant discrepancies. Among the 69% of children who reported not using generative AI, parents cited a lack of interest as the primary reason – 54% said their child simply had not expressed any desire to use these tools. A further 36% reported that their children were not aware of generative AI, and 31% said they had not given their children permission to use the technology.

Frequency of use: how often are children accessing generative AI tools?

Of children who reported having used generative AI, 72% reported using it once a month or more. Of these, nearly half (48%) use generative AI once a week or more, with 16% engaging daily. Meanwhile, 21% reported only having used it a few times and 5% only once (Figure 4).

Our findings show that the frequency of generative AI usage varies significantly by type of education received and gender. Among children who reported having used generative AI, 72% of those who attend private school reported using it at least a few times per week, compared to 42% of those who attend state school. Similarly, children from the ABC1 social grades are more frequent users (50% using generative AI weekly, and 20% daily) compared to those from the C2DE social grade, where only 42% use it weekly and just 2% daily. Amongst genders, female children reported higher usage compared to male children (Figure 4).

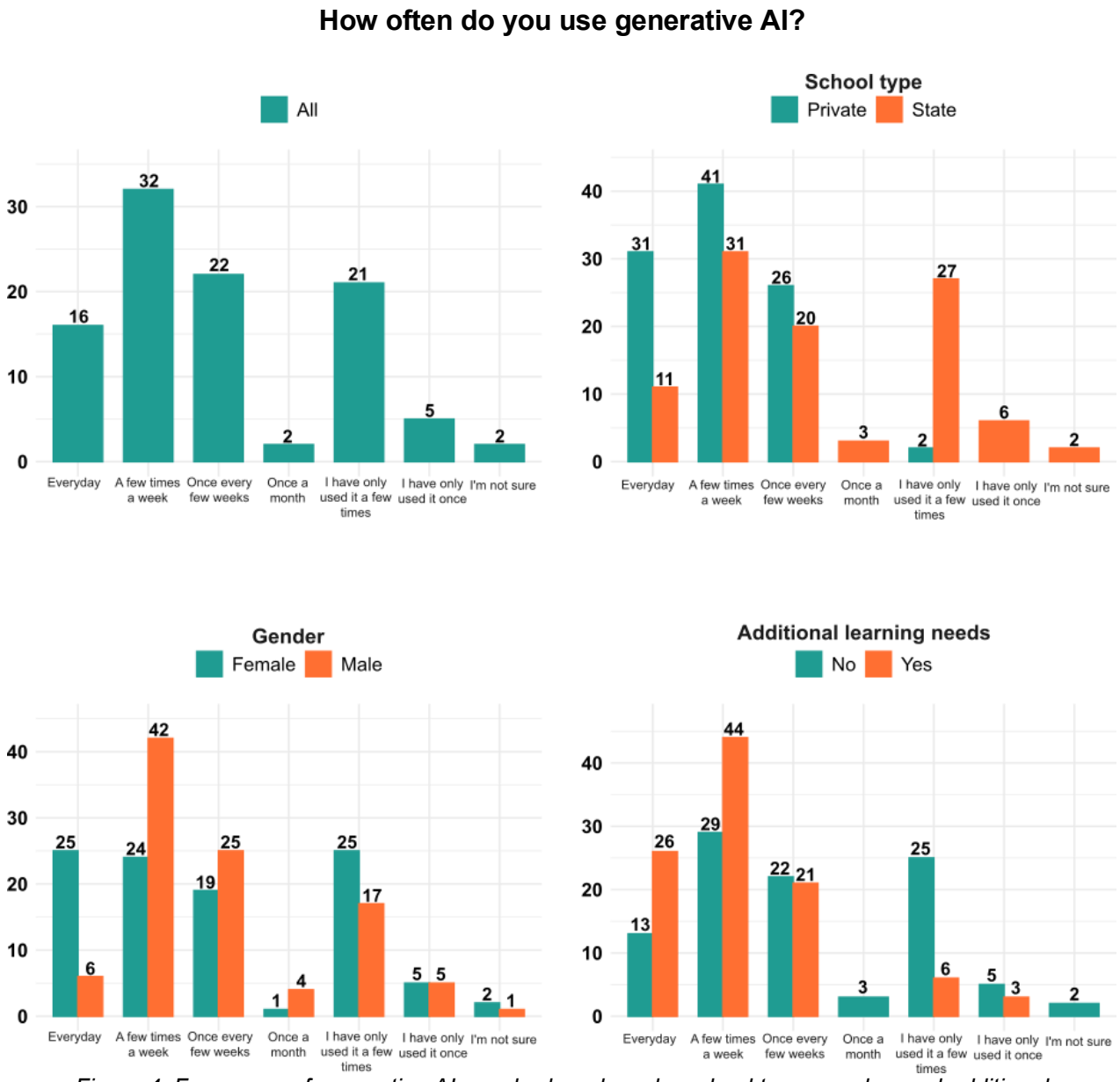


Figure 4: Frequency of generative AI use, broken down by school type, gender, and additional learning needs, shown as a % of children who report using generative AI (n= 170).

Type of use: which systems are children using, and what are they using them for?

Children were first shown a list of popular generative AI tools and were asked to indicate which they used (Figure 5). The most commonly reported generative AI tools that children reported using were ChatGPT, with 58% of children reporting this as their most used tool, followed by Gemini (33%), and My AI SnapChat (27%). Tool usage differed by gender: male children reported higher usage of ChatGPT (73% vs 46% of female children), while female children reported higher usage of Gemini (38% vs 28% of male children) and My AI by SnapChat (32% vs 22% of male children). While overall generative AI usage was comparable for children with and without additional

learning needs, we observed some notable differences in the systems used by these two groups. 78% of children with additional learning needs reported using ChatGPT, compared to 53% of those without. We find similar differences in use of My AI by SnapChat – 44% of children with additional learning needs reported using this tool, compared to 23% of children without additional learning needs.

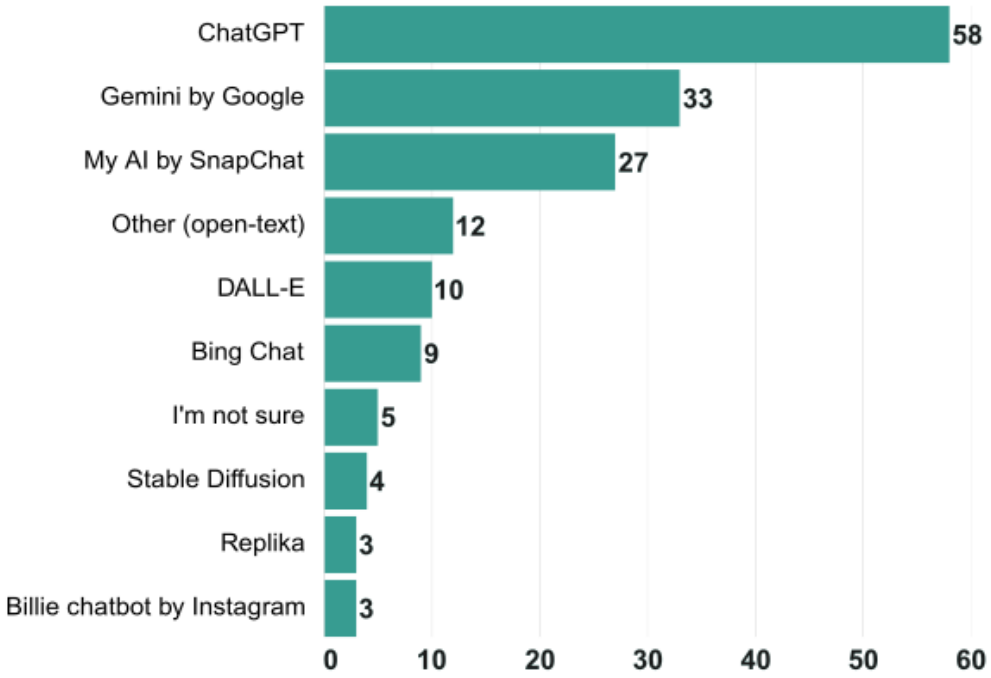


Figure 5: Generative AI systems used most frequently by children, shown as a % of children who report using generative AI (n=170).

Children were then shown a number of activities and were asked to indicate which they were using generative AI for. The majority of children reported using generative AI primarily for "creating fun pictures" (43%), "to find out information or learn about something" (43%), "for entertainment, to play around" (40%), and for help with their homework (37%). We found that activity preferences varied between children based on their age and learning needs. Writing stories was most popular among 10-year-olds (51%), whereas 12-year-olds showed the least interest in this activity (9%). The use of generative AI for information gathering peaked among 9-year-olds (52%), and creating pictures was highest among 10-year-olds (56%). Children with additional learning needs reported using generative AI significantly more than those without for "playing with my friends" (30% vs 19%), "getting advice on something personal" (39% vs 16%), and "chatting and keeping me company" (37% vs 22%). We also found some differences between AI use cases amongst private and state-school children, as shown in Figure 7.

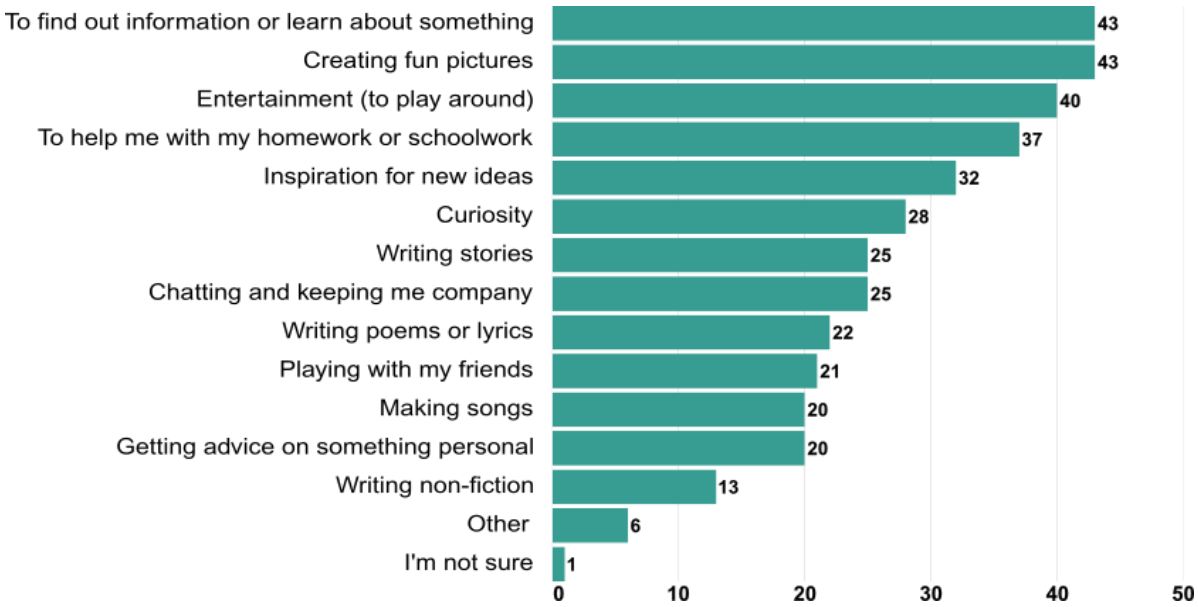
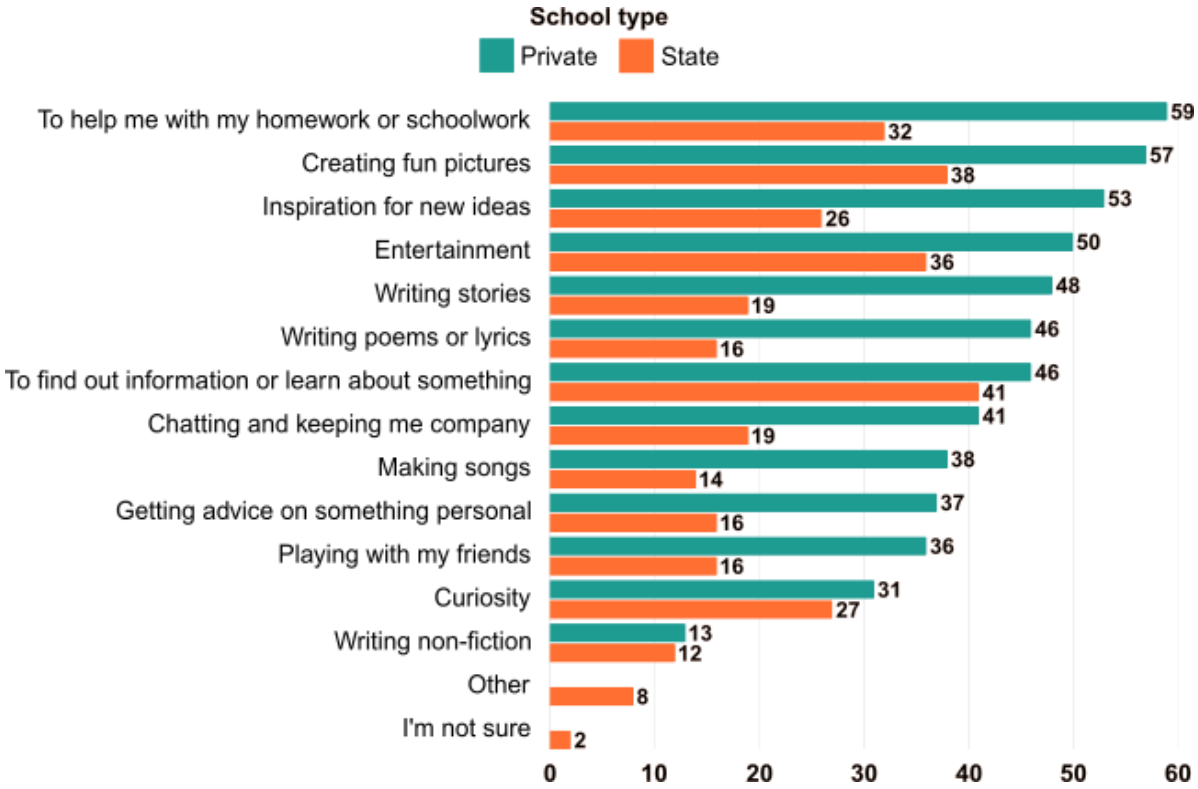


Figure 6: Use cases for generative AI, shown as a % of children who report using generative AI (n = 170).



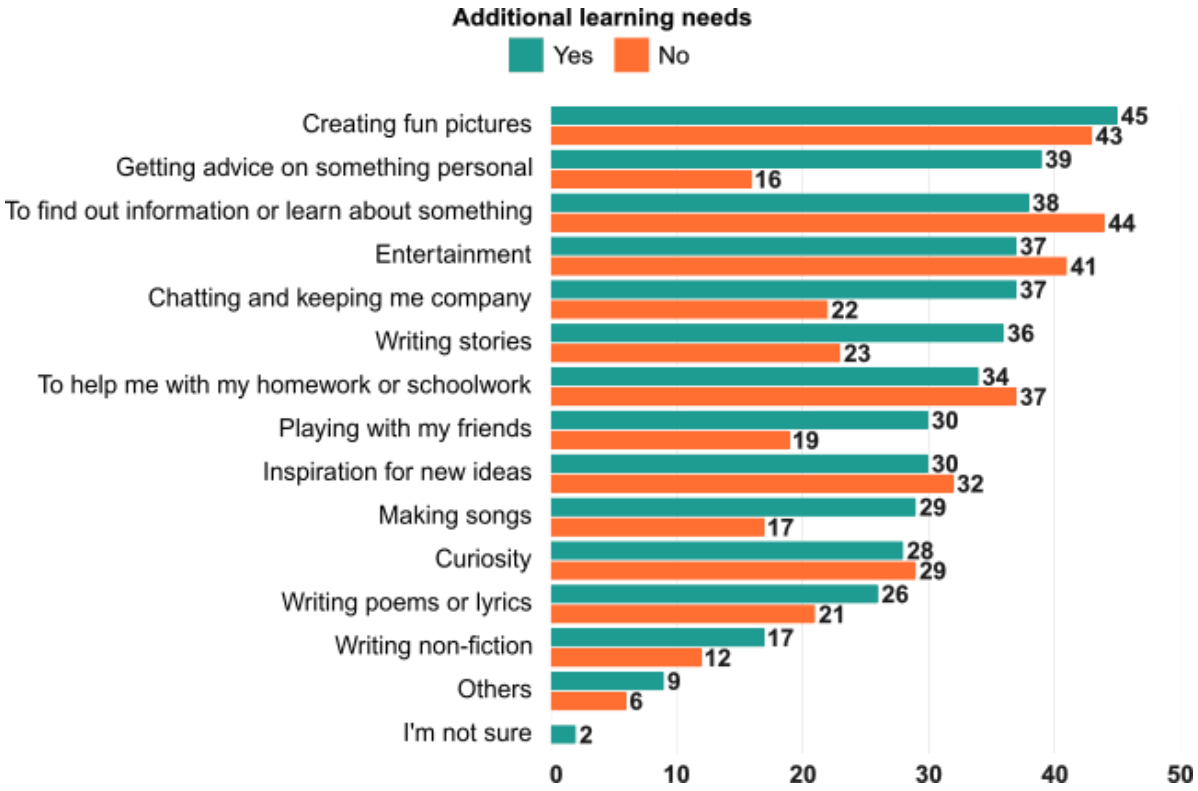


Figure 7: Use cases for generative AI broken down by school type and additional learning needs, shown as a % of children who report using generative AI (n=170).

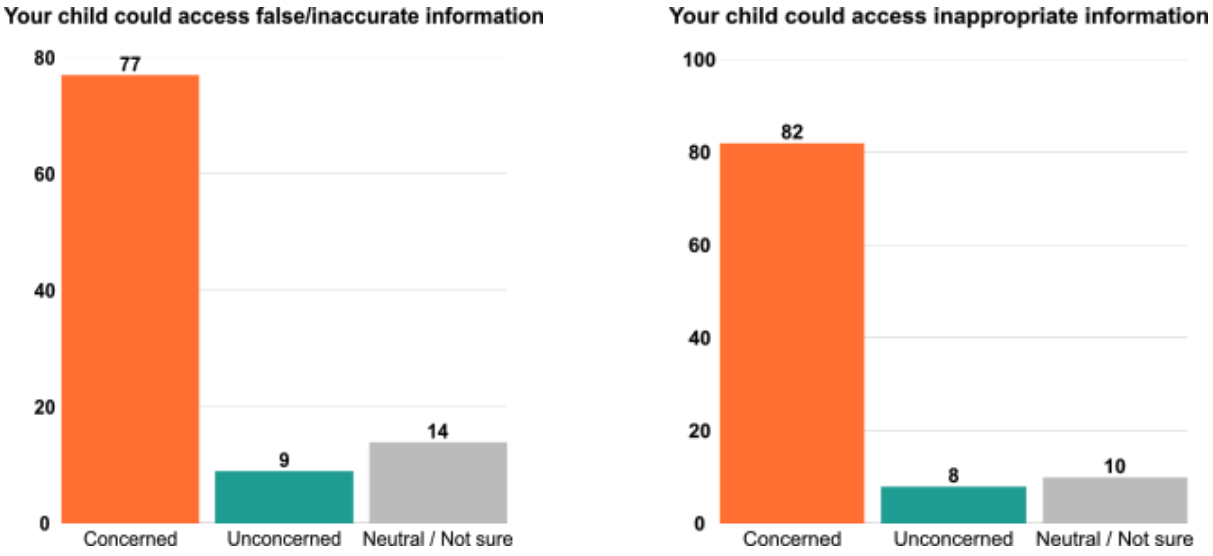
Parents and children’s perceptions of generative AI

This section explores how parents feel about their children's use of generative AI, as well as how children themselves feel about the technology.

Parents’ perceptions

All parent and carers (n=780) were given a set of statements related to their children's use of generative AI and were asked to rank each statement based on their level of concern, ranging from ‘very concerned’ to ‘very unconcerned’ or ‘don’t know’. These statements aimed to capture five key areas of potential concern, ranging from children's potential access to inappropriate information, to children's use of the technology to cheat in school. Our results showed that parents and carers reported the highest levels of concern over the impact that access to generative AI could have on their children's exposure to inappropriate (82%) or inaccurate information (77%). Parents and carers also reported high levels of concern around their children being too trusting of the technology and not thinking critically about the information it provides them (76%) and sharing personal information (73%). We found the lowest levels of concern around children's use of generative AI for cheating in school, with less than half (41%) of all parents and carers reporting feeling concerned over this (Figure 8).

How concerned or unconcerned are you by the following?



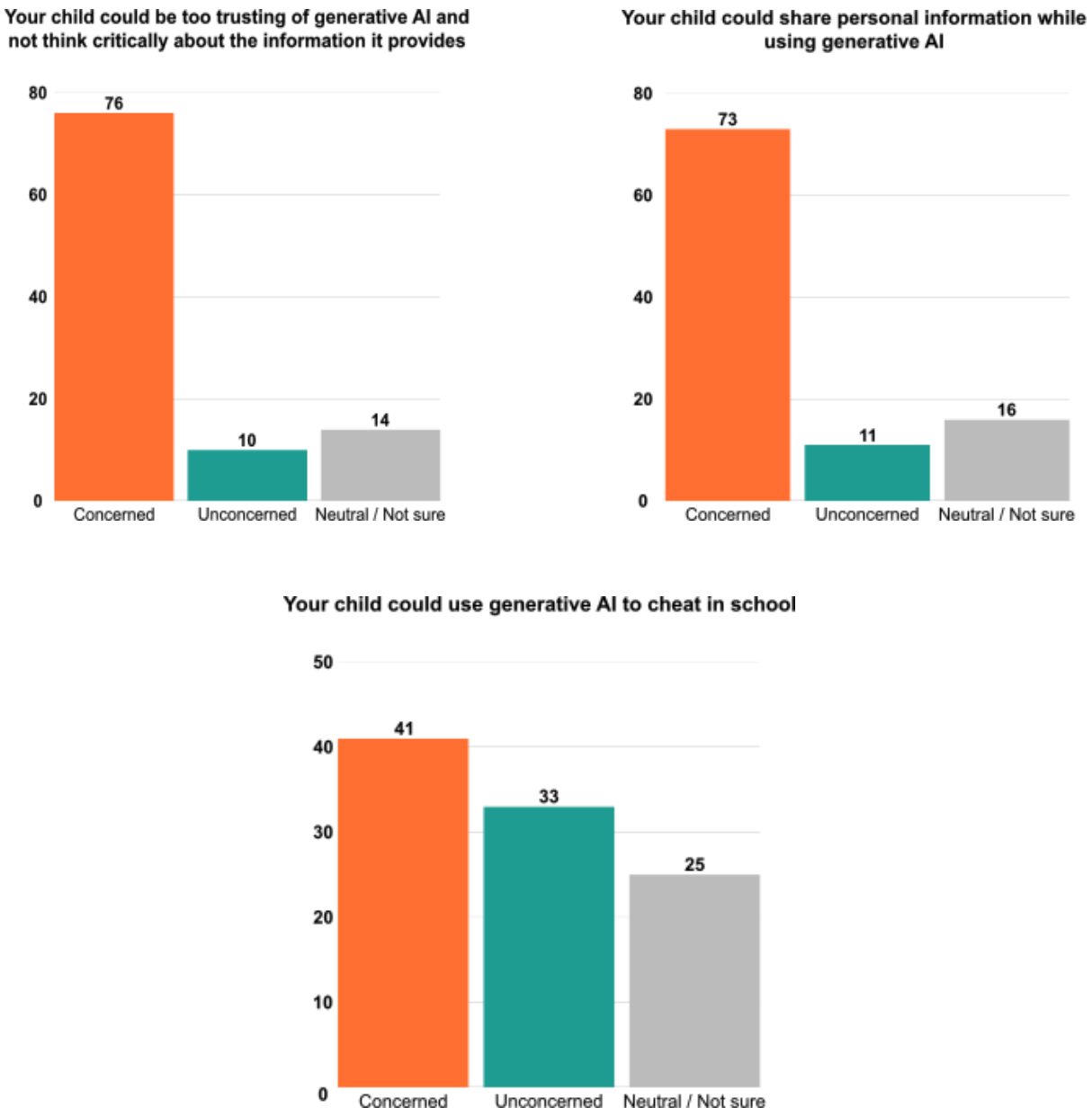
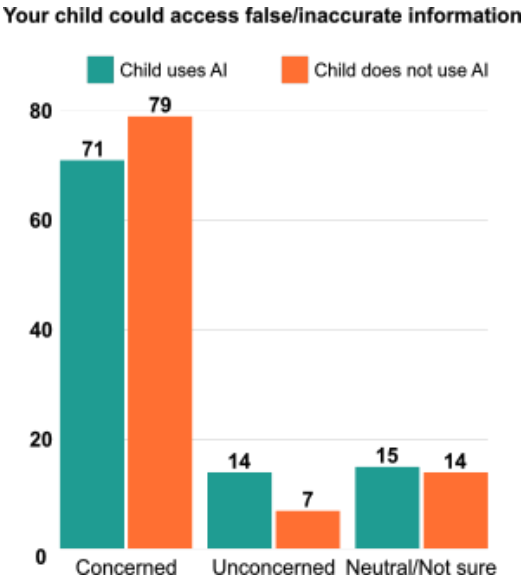
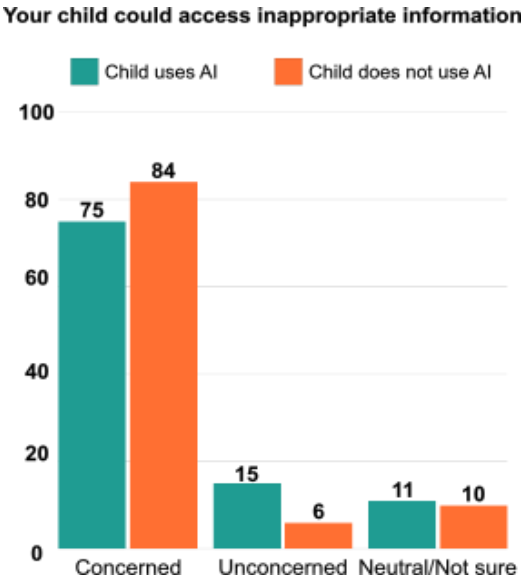


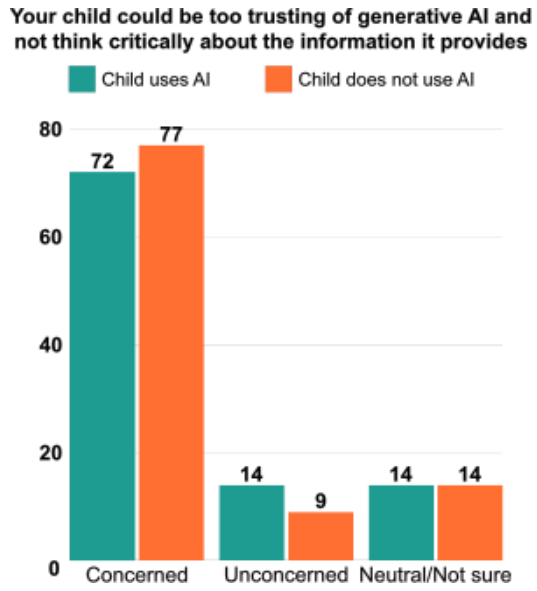
Figure 8: Parents' perceptions around their children's use of AI. 'Concerned' includes the categories 'very concerned' and 'fairly concerned'; 'Unconcerned' includes the categories 'very unconcerned' and 'fairly unconcerned', and 'Neutral/not sure' includes the categories 'neither concerned or unconcerned' and 'Don't know'. Figures shown as % of all parents (n=780).

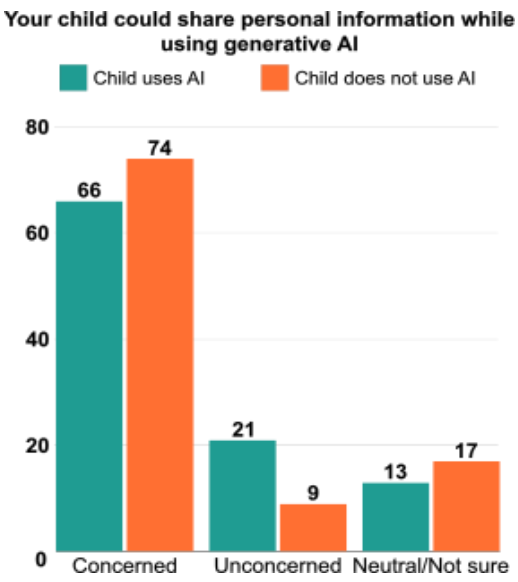
Compared to parents who report that their children are not using generative AI, parents who report that their children are using the technology expressed slightly less concern over their children accessing false or inappropriate information, not being able to think critically, and sharing personal information while using generative AI. However, more than half of these parents (51%) reported concern about their child using the technology to cheat at school, significantly more than those who report that their children are not using the technology (38%) (Figure 9).

How concerned or unconcerned are you by the following?









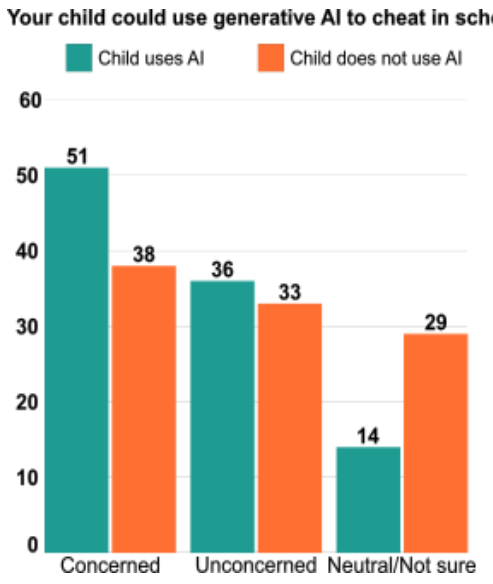


Figure 9: Parents' perceptions around their children use of AI, broken down by whether their child uses generative AI or not, shown as % of each respective group for total respondents (n=780).

Of the parents and carers who reported awareness that their children use generative AI (n=185), we were interested in exploring how they broadly felt about this use, and whether their feelings differed based on whether they themselves made use of the technology or not. We asked these respondents 'to what extent do you feel positively or negatively about your child's use of generative AI?'. The majority reported feeling positively about their child's use (76%), with a small percentage reporting feeling ambivalent (16%) and only 8% reporting feeling negatively. Interestingly, we observe some notable differences in these results based on whether the parent or carer is making use of generative AI themselves. Of those who report using generative AI tools themselves, 84% reported feeling positively about their children's use of the technology, as opposed to just 21% of those who reported not using the technology themselves but being aware that someone else in the household is using it (Figure 10).

To what extent do you feel positively or negatively about your child's use of generative AI?

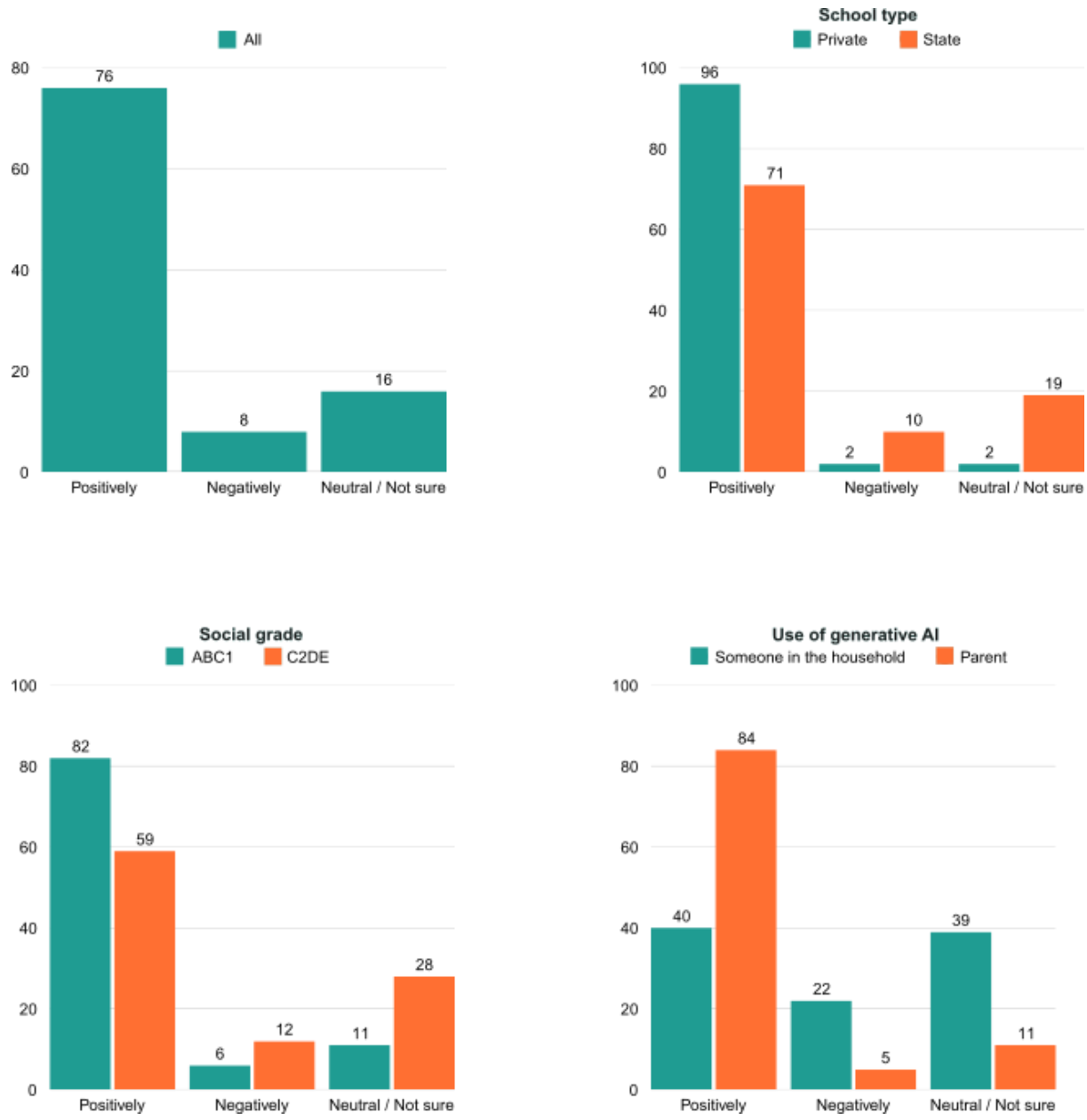


Figure 10: Parents' feelings around their child's use of generative AI for those who reported their children are using the technology, broken down by school type, social grade, and household usage, shown as % of parents with children using generative AI (n = 185).

Children’s perceptions

Next, we explored how children themselves perceive and interact with generative AI tools. Children who indicated they were using generative AI tools (n=170) were shown a series of statements related to their use and were asked to respond to each with “always”, “sometimes”, “never”, or “I’m not sure” (Figure 11). Our findings showed that children with additional learning needs were particularly likely to find generative AI tools helpful for communication, with 53% reporting “always” using it to express something they struggled to communicate on their own, compared to 20% of children without additional learning needs. Private school children reported “always” more frequently than state school students across all measures – from using their selected tool for self-expression (63% vs 15%) to feeling understood by the tool (65% vs 28%) and trusting its output (64% vs 20%) (Figure 12).

We then asked all children (n=780) two questions to elicit both their positive and negative feelings towards generative AI. Firstly, we ask them how exciting they find generative AI. We found that most children either reported finding the technology exciting (34%) or were not sure/neutral how they felt about it (52%). We then asked them how scary or confusing they found it. We observed similar trends: most children either reported finding the technology not scary or confusing (32%) or were unsure/neutral how they felt about it (54%), with only 14% reporting finding it scary or confusing.

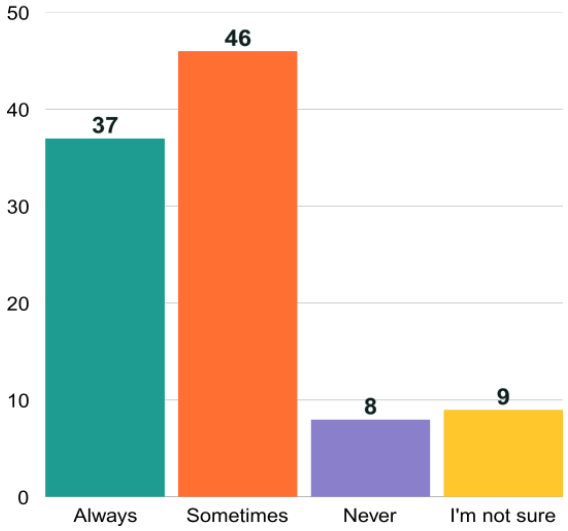
When these results were broken down by those children who have used the technology and those who haven't, we found some striking differences: of all children who reported using generative AI (n=170), the majority reported finding it exciting (68%) and not scary or confusing (63%), as opposed to just 24% and 23% of those who don't use the technology reporting finding it exciting and not scary or confusing, respectively. We also found notable differences between level of excitement and fears about generative AI among private school children versus state school children, with 81% of private school children having reported feeling excited about it as opposed to 29% of state school children. We observe similar differences in whether children find the technology scary, with 68% of children attending private schools reporting not finding generative AI scary, vs just 28% of children attending state schools (Figure 13).

Parents and carers' perceptions of the technology also appeared to be linked to how children feel about the technology; here, we observed a correlation between children's levels of excitement around the technology and their parents and carers' levels of positivity. Where parents felt more positive about their children's use of the technology, children who are using the technology reported feeling higher levels of excitement. Of the child generative AI users who reported feeling high levels of excitement about the technology, 93% had parents who reported feeling positively about their children's use of the technology, and only 2% had parents who felt negatively. Similarly, of child generative AI users who reported lowest levels of fear or confusion around the technology, 87% had parents or carers who felt positively about their children's use of the technology, and only 3% felt negatively. On the other

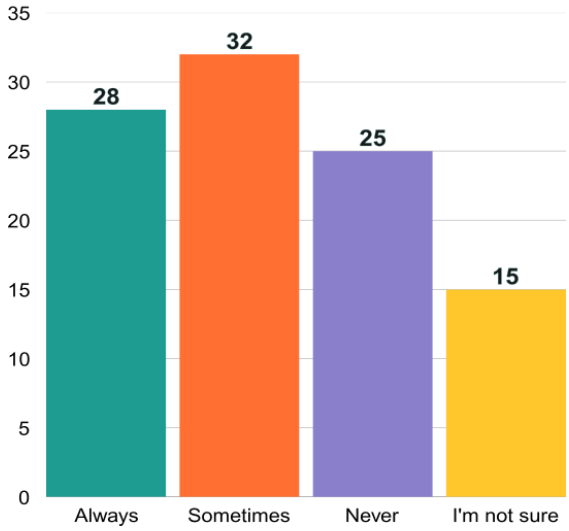
hand, we found more mixed results for those who reported not feeling excited about the technology, and those who reported feeling scared or confused; 67% of those who reported not feeling excited had parents who felt positively and 33% had parents who felt negatively; 61% of those who found it scary and confusing had parents who felt positively and 35% had parents who felt negatively.

Finally, our survey also found a correlation between children's reported levels of fears and excitements around generative AI and whether an adult in their life has spoken to them about AI. Of the children who reported the highest levels of excitement around generative AI, 72% indicated that an adult in their life had spoken to them about what is AI and how it works, as opposed to just 27% for those children who reported the lowest levels of excitement. We observed somewhat similar numbers for children who reported not finding the technology scary or confusing; of children with the lowest reported levels of fear or confusion around generative AI, 65% indicated that an adult in their life had spoken to them about AI. Of those children who reported the highest levels of fear or confusion, 49% had an adult in their life speak to them about AI. These findings underscore the role that adults have in distilling information to children and the impact this could have on their perceptions of - and ultimately interactions with - emergent technologies like generative AI.

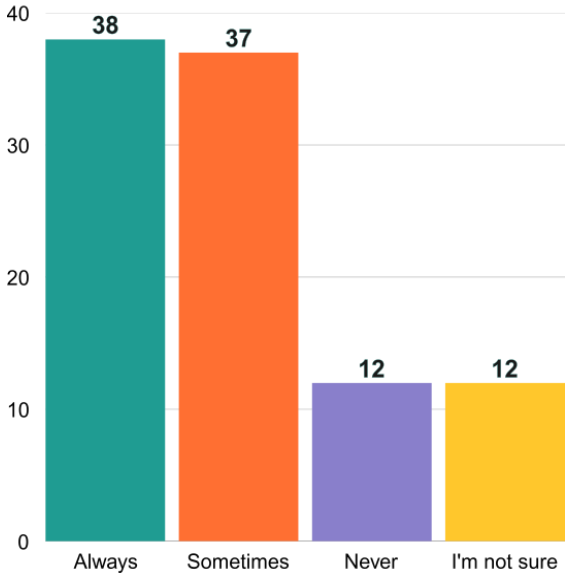
I feel as though the tool understands the things I tell it



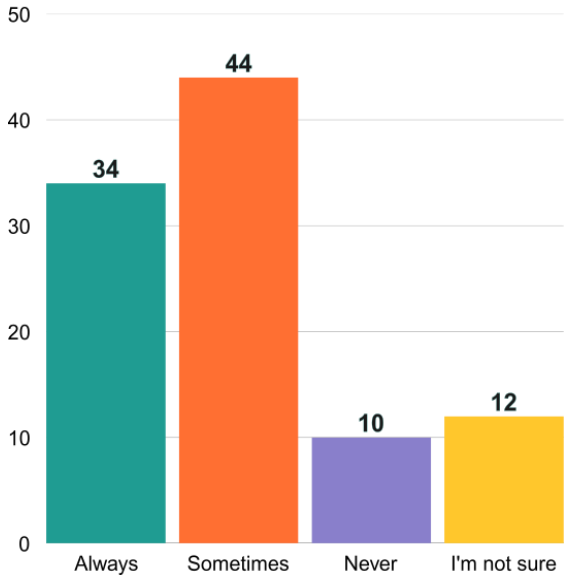
I feel like I can share anything with the tool



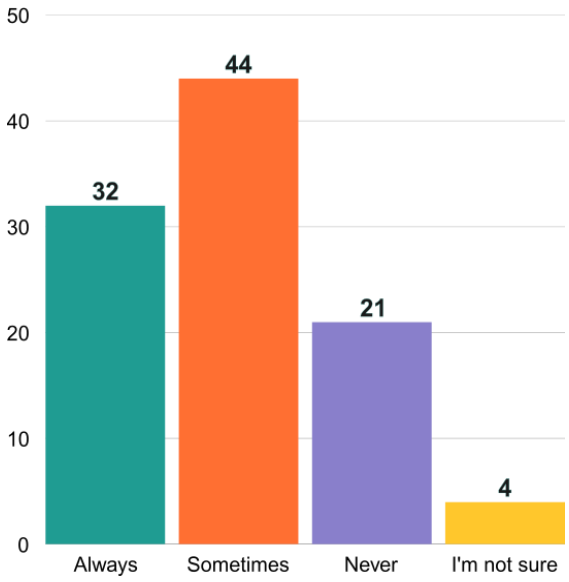
I feel like I understand how the tool works



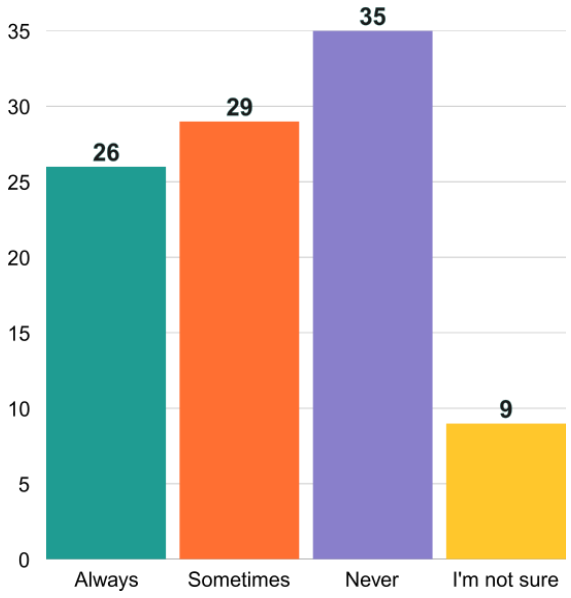
I feel that I can control the kind of things the tool creates for me very well



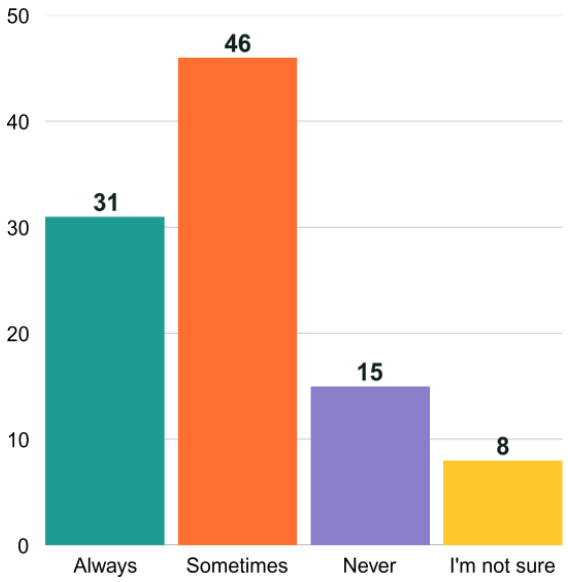
I have used the tool to come up with new ideas



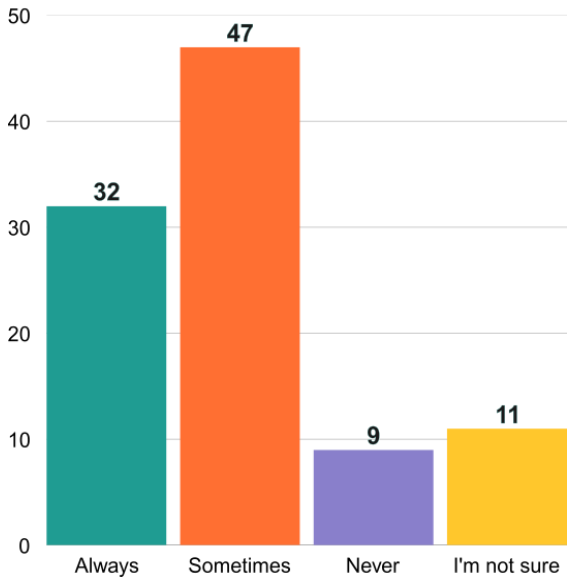
I have used the tool to communicate something I had a hard time communicating on my own



If the tool tells me something, I believe it is always correct



The tool makes me feel more creative



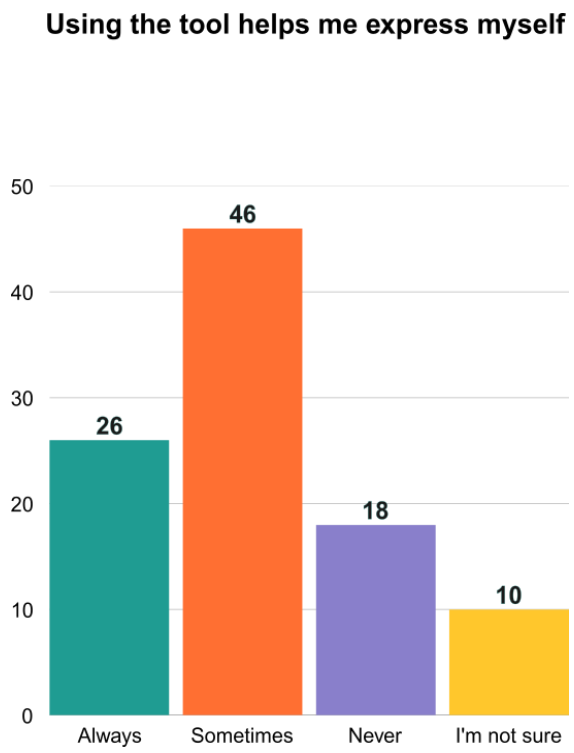
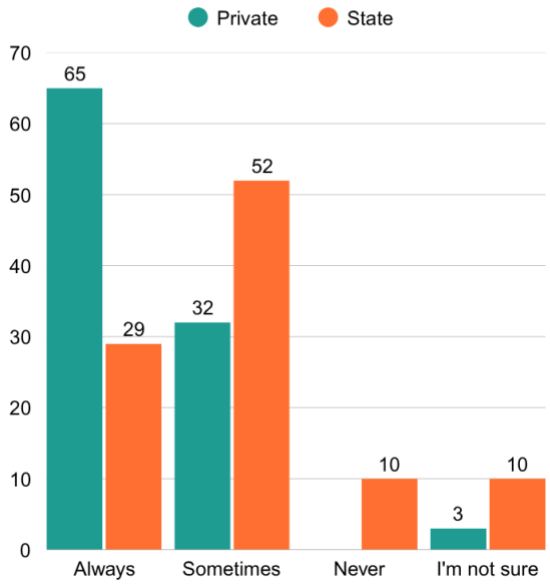
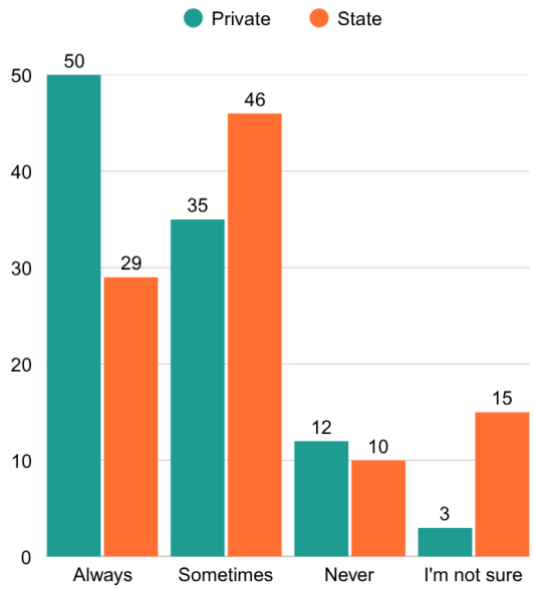


Figure 11: Children's perceptions of generative AI tools, shown as % of children who report using generative AI (n=170).

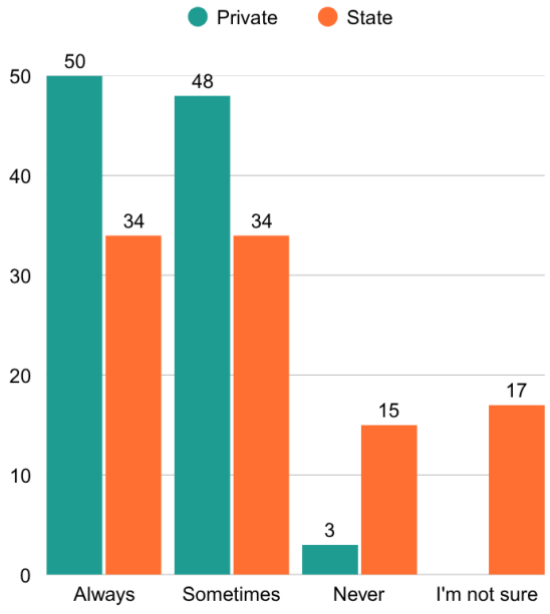
I feel as though the tool understands the things I tell it



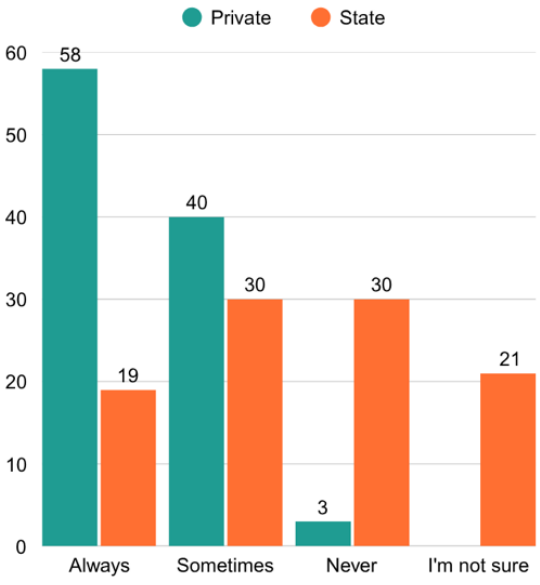
I feel that I can control the kind of things the tool creates for me very well



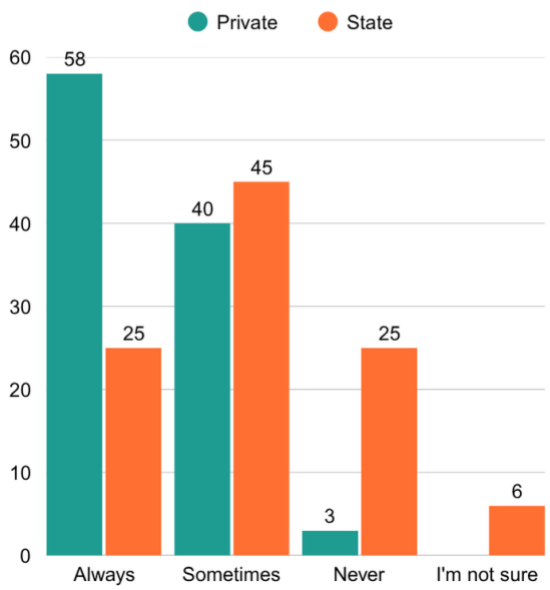
I feel like I understand how the tool works



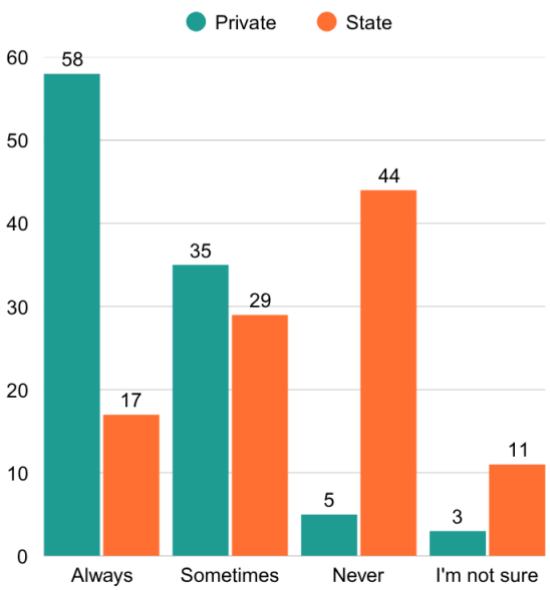
I feel like I can share anything with the tool



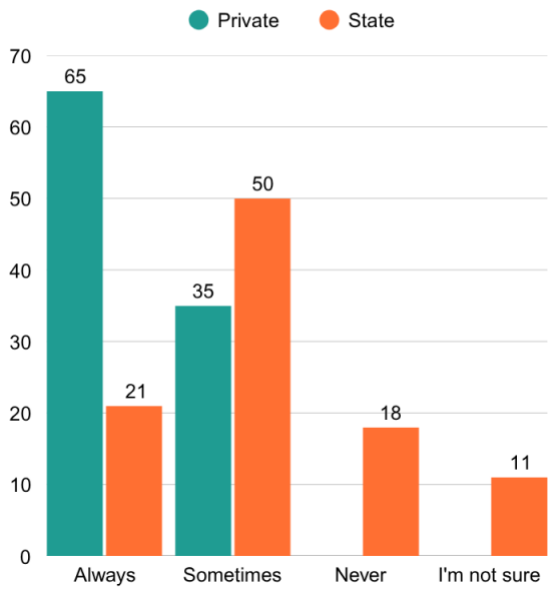
I have used the tool to come up with new ideas



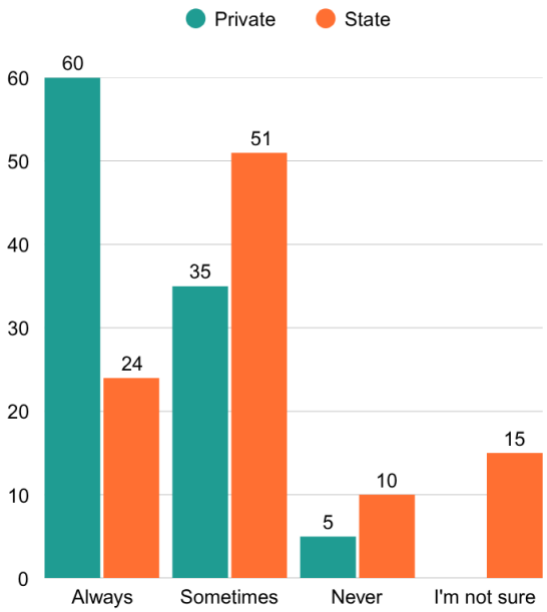
I have used the tool to communicate something I had a hard time communicating on my own



If the tool tells me something, I believe it is always correct



The tool makes me feel more creative



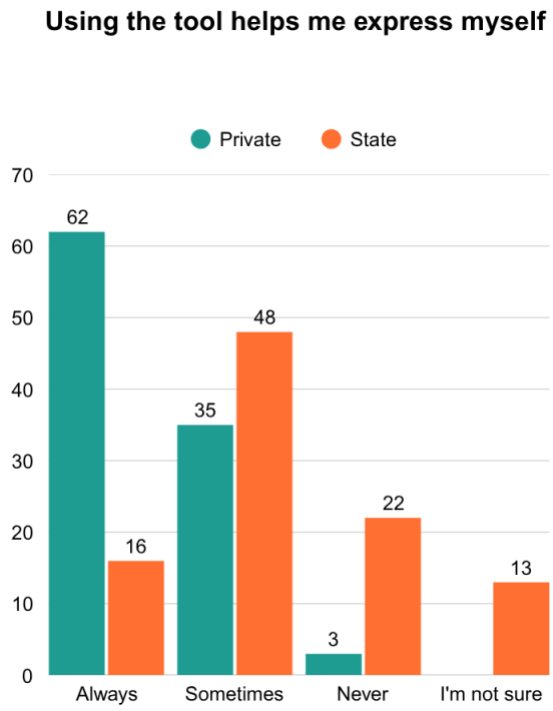
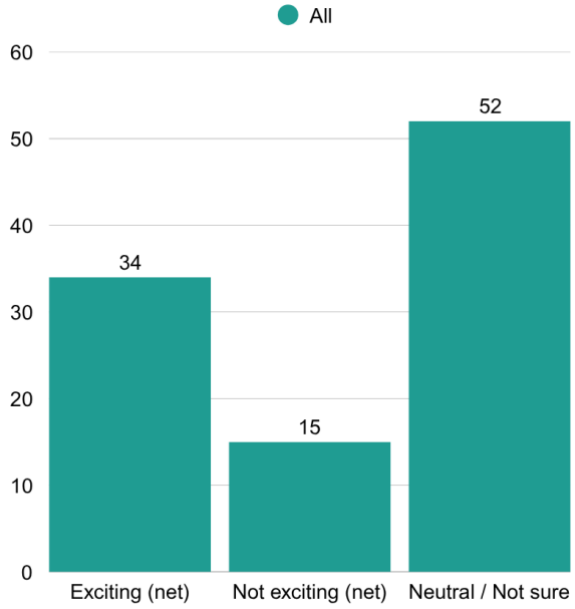
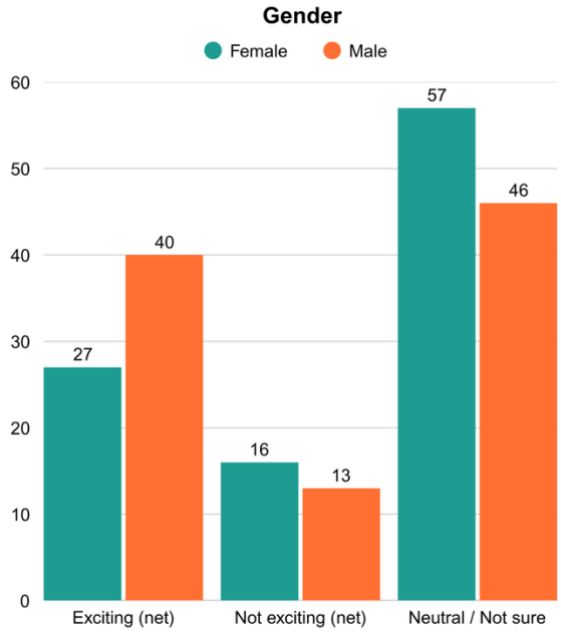
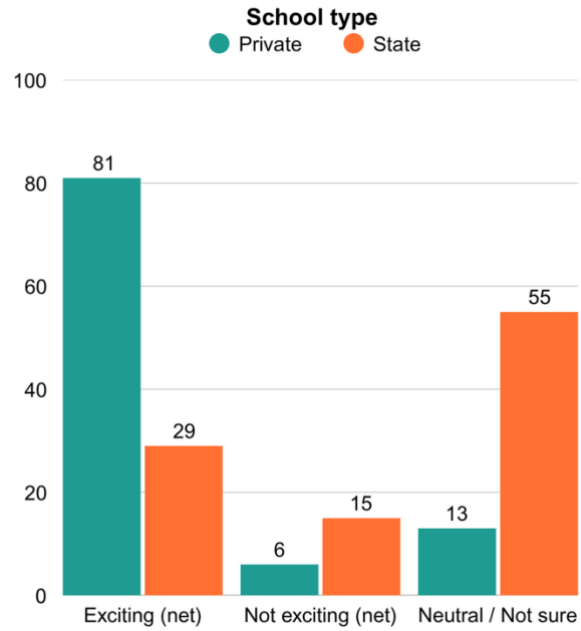


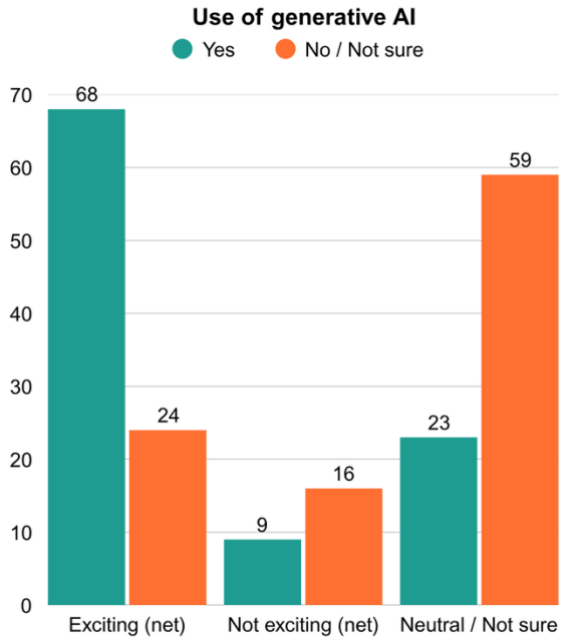
Figure 12: Children's perceptions of generative AI tools, broken down by type of education received, shown as % of children who report using generative AI (n=170).

I find it exciting









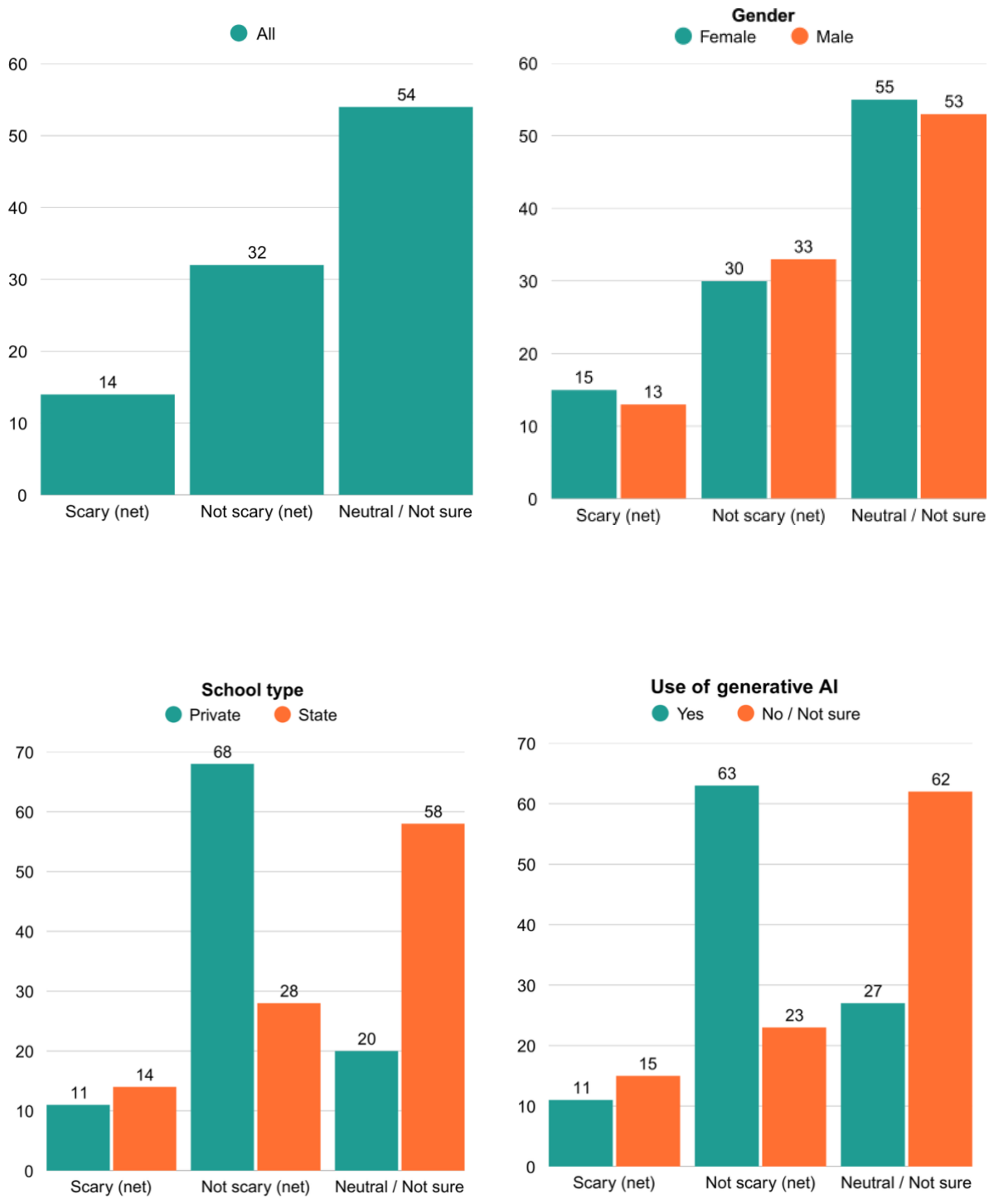


Figure 13: Children's feelings around AI, broken down by school type, gender, and whether the child reports having used generative AI, shown as % of each respective group for total respondents (n=780).

Scenarios: how do children integrate generative AI into schoolwork, play, and learning?

This section explores children's free-text responses to four hypothetical scenario questions which were presented to them. The aim of these questions was to explore how children approached different creative and information gathering activities, and how – if at all – they integrated generative AI tools into them. The four scenarios children were presented with are shown in Table 3 below, along with the themes extracted from their answers to each scenario question.

Our analysis of the free-text responses showed that children mainly rely on the internet and search engines like Google for information gathering activities. In response to Scenario 1, at least three in four children made reference to either the internet, Google, or a digital device for finding the information requested of them by their teachers (> 75%). Non-digital means of seeking out the information, such as asking parents or family members, was the second most referenced method (> 10%). Finding the answer through a book or library (<10%), and using AI-based technologies like ChatGPT or Alexa (< 10%), were notably less prevalent in children's responses.

Scenario	Answer	Frequency (~)
Scenario 1 Imagine your teacher or guardian has given you homework to find out about the longest rivers in the world and the countries they are in. Where would you go to find out?	Google, internet, search engines	>75%
	Asking parents or family members	>10%
	Through a book or library	<10%
	AI-based technologies: e.g. ChatGPT	<10%
Scenario 2 Where do you find out information about your favourite film, book, or game characters?	Google, internet, search engines	>50%
	Social media platforms	>20%
	Asking family members and friends	~15%
	Through a book or library	<10%
	AI-based technologies: e.g. ChatGPT	<10%
Scenario 3: Imagine your teacher or guardian asks you to create a poster to show the information you just learned to the rest of your class. What would you use to create this poster? It can be a real-life poster, or a digital poster on the computer.	Traditional art materials such as paper and pen	>50%
	Digital tools e.g. PowerPoint or Canva	>25%
	Generative AI tools like ChatGPT	<10%
	Asking parents was and family	< 5%
	Collaborative brainstorming and discussing with peers	> 30%

Scenario 4: Imagine that you are playing with your friends, and you want to come up with a brand-new game. How would you start?	Would not know how to start	~ 20%
	Rely on own imagination	<20%
	Using technologies (AI or non-AI based)	<15%

Table 3, Four scenario questions and answers grouped into general themes, % of all children, n = 780

We received similar answers for Scenario 2; more than half of children made reference to either Google or other search engines for finding information about their favourite film, book, or game character, with the remainder either referencing social media platforms (> 20%) or asking family members and friends (~15%). Once again, seeking out the information through accessing books and libraries (<10%) or through the use of generative AI tools like ChatGPT (< 10%) were less prevalent in children's responses to this scenario.

On the other hand, our analysis showed that children mainly turn to non-digital methods for creative or imagination-based activities. In response to Scenario 3, more than half of children made reference to traditional materials such as paper and pen when creating posters for school, and more than one in four mentioned using digital tools such as PowerPoint or Canva. Reference to generative AI tools like ChatGPT was less prevalent in responses this question (< 10%). Asking parents was also not mentioned by many (< 5%). In addition, very few students mentioned combining traditional methods with digital technologies (e.g. PowerPoint and hand design). These findings align with the observed preference that children displayed for traditional art materials over generative AI tools in Work Package 2 of this research project.

Lastly, when children were asked how they would come up with a brand-new game when playing with friends (Scenario 4), more than one third of them mentioned collaborative brainstorming and discussing with peers. A notable number said that they would not know how to start (~20%), and a significant number responded that they would rely on their own imagination or use pen/paper to draw/write their ideas. Using technologies (AI or non-AI based) for inspiration were less prevalent for this question compared to Scenarios 1 and 2 (<15%).

Part 2: Teacher's survey

Awareness and use of generative AI amongst teachers

In this survey of teachers, we were interested in exploring a number of different dimensions related to teachers' awareness and use of generative AI. Alongside measuring the rate of uptake amongst teachers, we also wanted to capture the different variables which were correlated with this use. Our survey of children and their parents or carers found striking regional differences in generative AI use, as well as differences in use amongst private and state school children, and the social grade of their households. In this survey, we wanted to explore the interdependencies of similar characteristics with uptake of generative AI amongst teachers.

Our findings revealed that almost all teachers were aware of generative AI, with only 2% of our sample reporting never having heard of the technology. 66% of teachers reported using generative AI for their work, with 81% of male teachers reporting using the technology compared to 61% of female teachers. This finding aligns with previous survey research on the use of generative AI in the public sector which found a significant gender difference in the usage of the generative AI tool ChatGPT, with male responds more likely to report making use of the technology than female respondents (Bright et al., 2025). Teachers of children aged 0-5 use generative AI significantly less than teachers of other age groups. We did not find significant differences between generative AI use for other demographic groups (Figure 1 and Table 1).

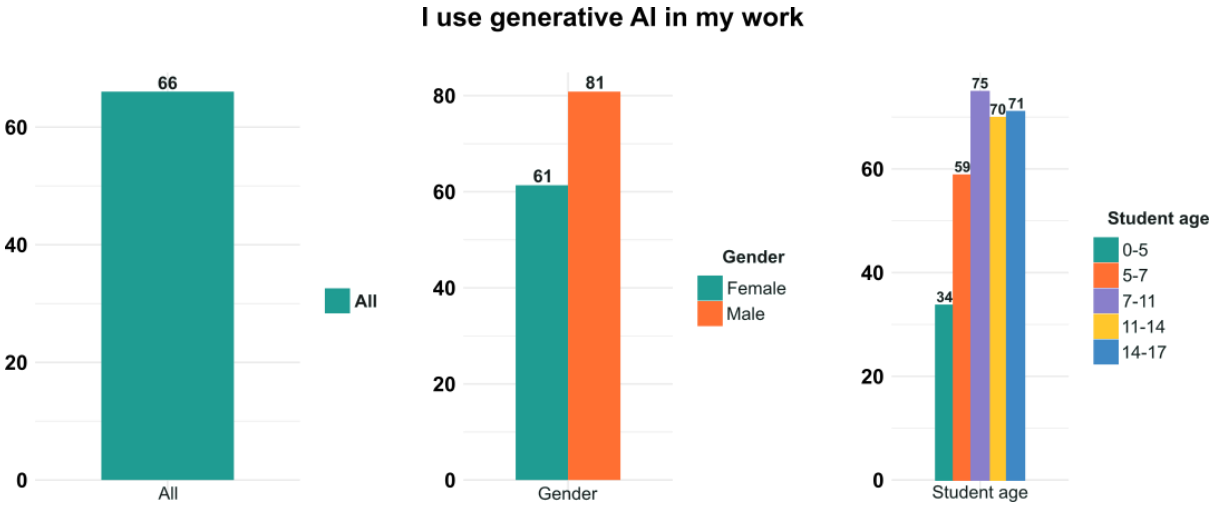


Figure 1: Use of generative AI amongst teachers, broken down by the teacher's gender and the age of their students, shown as % of all teachers (n=1,001).

Teachers were asked to indicate whether they used multiple generative AI systems at work, and which systems these were. ChatGPT was the most frequently used system, with 77% of teachers who report using AI in our sample indicating they use it as their sole system, or – for those making use of multiple systems – as their most frequently used system. The second and third most used systems were CoPilot and Gemini, at 9% and 8% respectively (Table 2).

Question	Choice	n	Freq
Generative AI use	I use generative AI in my work	661	66%
	I use generative AI in my personal time outside of work	643	64%
	I am aware of colleagues using generative AI in their work	707	71%
Does your school have internet access?	My school has internet access for both students and staff	873	87%
	My school has internet access for staff only	120	12%
	My school has internet access for students only	5	0
	No, there is no internet access available	2	0
How are you accessing the system for work?	Through a personal account that is not affiliated with my school	467	71%
	My school provides access to it through an institutional license	171	26%
	Other	23	3%
Is your school aware that you are using generative AI for work (if using it through a personal account)?	Yes	300	64%
	No	132	28%
	Prefer not to say	35	7%

Table 1: Questions regarding teachers' generative AI use and options chosen by respondents, shown as numbers and % of respondent pool for each question.

We also asked teachers to indicate how they accessed these systems. Most teachers (71%) who use AI in their work reported that they were accessing the tools through a personal license, with only 26% reporting that their schools provided institutional access. The high rates of usage on personal accounts showcases that there is a strong appetite for the technology amongst schoolteachers, with generative AI used by teachers independently of their school's administrative adoption. In other words, teachers are not waiting for their schools to adopt the technology to make use of it themselves. Despite the high levels of apparent independent adoption, the majority (64%) of teachers report that their schools are aware of their use of the technology for work (Table 1).

System	n	Freq	n most often or sole system	Freq most often or sole
ChatGPT	611	92%	509	77%
CoPilot	180	27%	57	9%
Gemini	140	21%	30	8%
Other	116	18%	54	11%

Claude	33	5%	7	1%
Deep Seek	30	5%	3	1%
Dall-E	34	5%	0	0%
Perplexity	18	3%	1	0%
Midjourney	11	2%	0	0%

Table 2: Types of generative AI systems used by teachers who report using the technology (n=661). The left-hand column indicates overall use for these systems shown as numbers and %, whereas the right-hand column captures the degree to which the system was chosen as either the sole or most frequently used system by the respondent, shown as numbers and %.

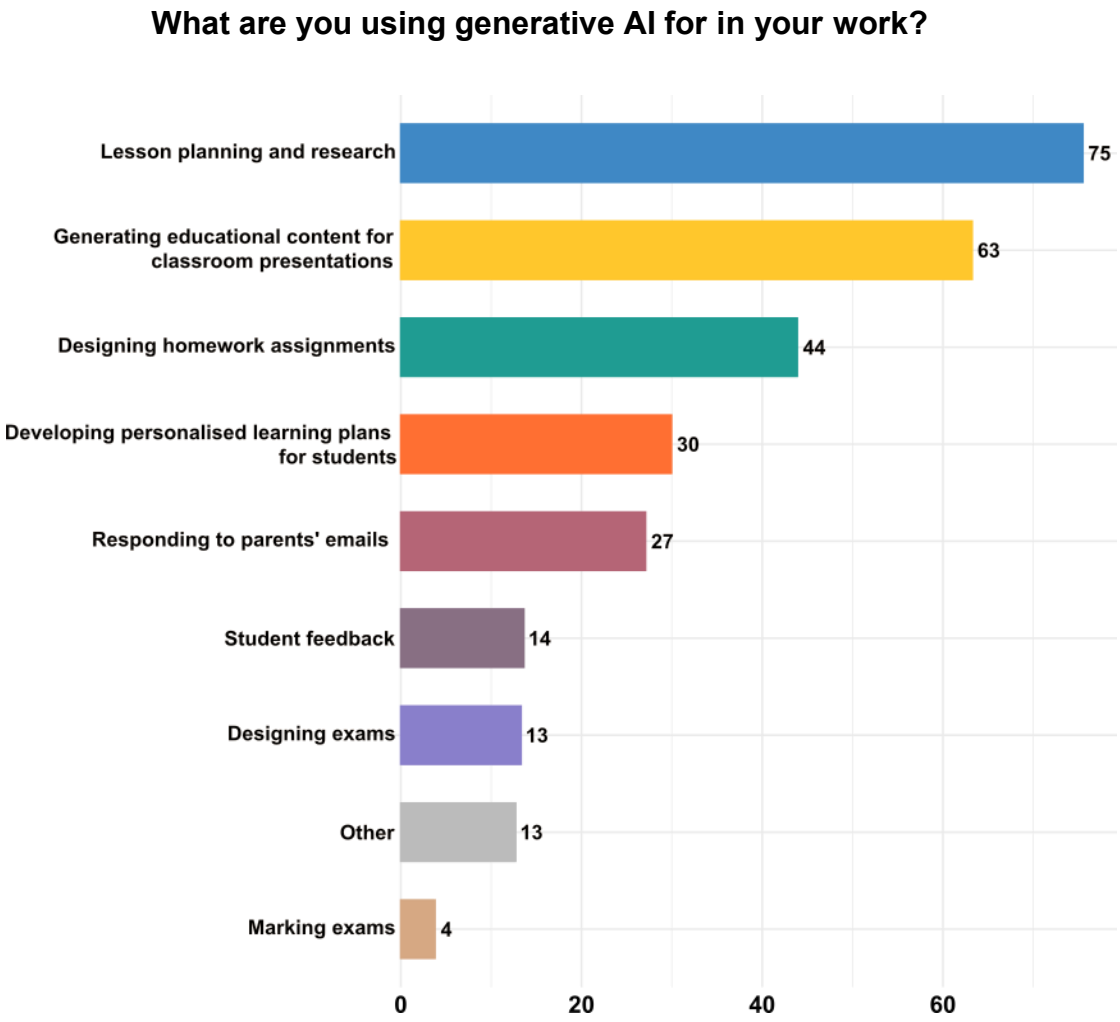


Figure 2: Use cases for generative AI, shown as % of teachers who report using the technology (n=661).

Finally, we were interested in exploring how teachers are making use of the technology. 'Lesson planning and research' was the most cited use case, with 75% of teachers who use generative AI reporting using the technology for this task. This was followed by 'generating educational content for classroom presentations' (63%), 'designing homework assignments' (44%) and 'developing personalised learning plans for students' (30%). Only 4% of teachers reported using generative AI for marking exams (Figure 2). We observed differences between use across teaching

positions. 51% of special education needs (SEN) and 48% of teaching assistants reported using the technology to develop personalised learning plans for students, compared to just 22% of secondary schoolteachers and 28% of primary schoolteachers.

Impact of generative AI use on teachers' work

In this section, we present key findings on questions around the impact that teachers perceive generative AI has had on their work These questions were only asked of the teachers from our sample who indicated they used generative AI at work (n=661). We began by eliciting teachers' views around the specific system they had indicated as using (or, in the case of teachers using multiple systems, the system indicated as used most frequently). We presented teachers with four statements and asked them to indicate their agreement for each on a scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. More than 80% of teachers agreed that they felt confident using their chosen system (88%), that the system increased their productivity (86%), and that it had a positive impact on their teaching (83%). We observed notably lower levels of agreement around trust, with 61% of all teachers agreeing that they trusted the outputs of their chosen system (Figure 2).

When these results are broken down further by demographic variables, we find that male teachers are more confident in their use of generative AI than female teachers (95% vs 85%, respectively), report higher increase to their productivity (93% vs 84% for female teachers), and higher levels of positive impacts to their teaching (88% vs 80% for female teachers). Age also appears to play a role in perceptions around impact. Our findings showed that, when compared to those under 30, teachers aged 60 and above reported lower levels of increase to their productivity (67% vs 90% of teachers under 30).

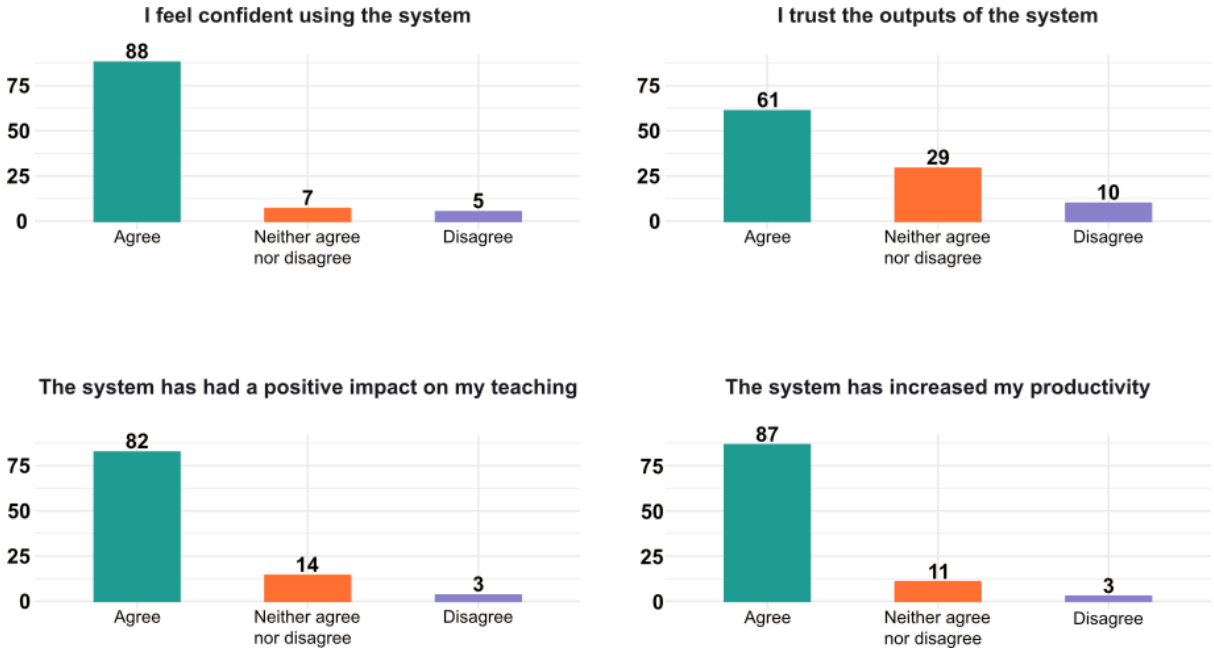


Figure 3: Statements regarding teachers' interaction with generative AI, shown as % of those who report using generative AI (n=661).

Next, we explored the specific tasks and activities that teachers indicated they were using generative AI for. Here, we wanted to explore the extent to which using generative AI for these activities improved the quality of their performance. Teachers were only shown the tasks and activities they had indicated they were using generative AI for and were asked to rank the extent to which using the technology had 'significantly improved the quality' of their performance, on a sliding scale. Across all chosen tasks and activities, teachers consistently indicated high levels of agreement that generative AI had improved their performance, with over 75% of all teachers agreeing their chosen generative AI system had improved their performance on the given task or activity.

General attitudes towards generative AI use in teaching

In this section, we present findings from questions that were posited to all teachers in the survey - both generative AI and non-generative AI users (n=1,001). In this portion of the survey, we provided all teachers with a set of six statements related to teachers' engagement with generative AI and asked them to rank each on a scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' or 'don't know'. Altogether, teachers were largely optimistic about the use of generative AI in education and the impact that it would have on their profession, and were confident in their ability to discern AI-generated content from student content. 76% of all teachers agreed that generative AI could reduce the amount of time teachers are currently working overtime. Regarding concerns around job security, 70% of all teachers reported that they are not worried about their job security in the era of generative AI. 70% agreed that generative AI could help them enhance the skills they currently have, and 64% indicated they believed they would be able to tell if a student submitted AI-generated work. Interestingly, only 34% of teachers agreed that generative AI could make the process of marking student work fairer. Here, we observed some noteworthy gender differences: male teachers were more likely than female teachers to agree that generative AI should be more widely used in the classroom by teachers (67% vs 52%, respectively), and were more likely to agree that generative AI can make the process of marking student work fairer (42% vs 27% of female teachers) (Figure 3).

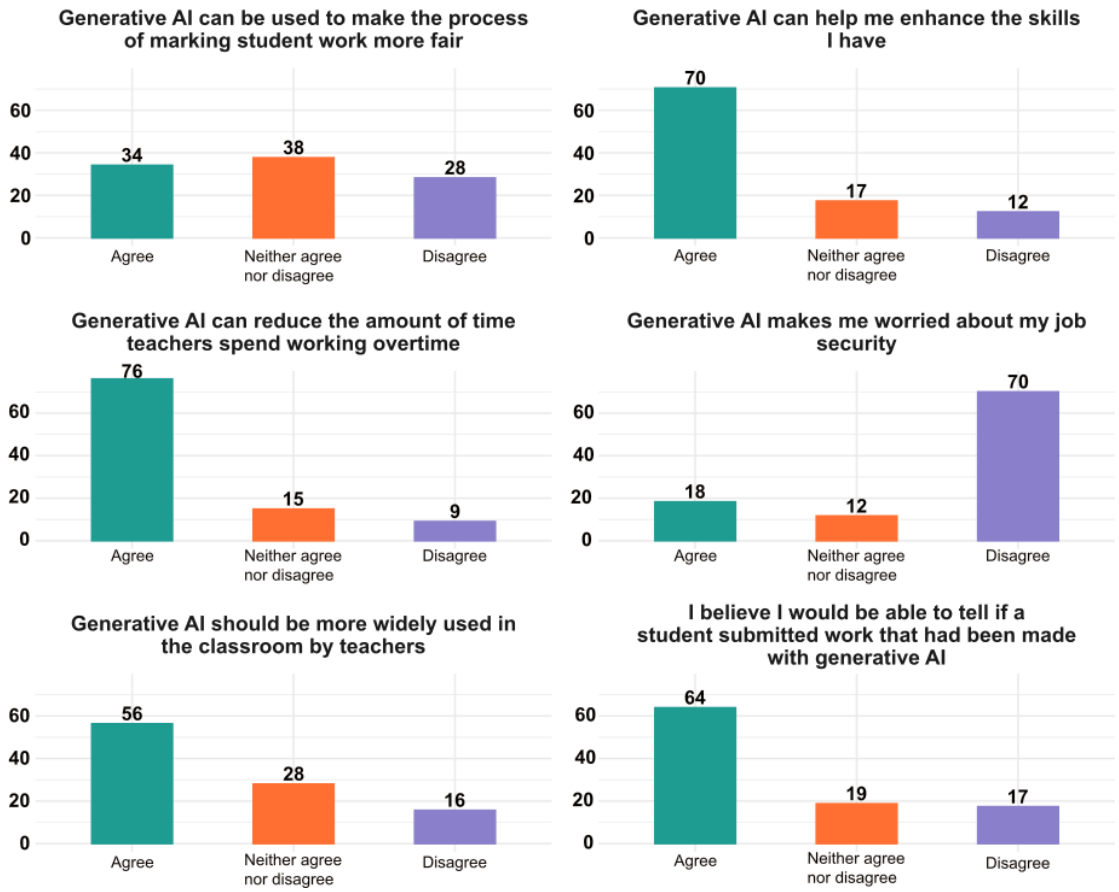


Figure 4: General attitudes of teachers towards using generative AI for teaching, shown as % of each respective group for total respondents (n = 1001.)

We observed some interesting differences when our results were broken down by generative AI users vs non-generative AI users. Of the teachers who reported using generative AI, 85% believed the technology can reduce the amount of overtime work, as opposed to just 52% of those teachers who aren't using generative AI. We observed similar striking differences across other statements; 81% of generative AI users believed the technology can enhance the skills they have, as opposed to 44% of non-generative AI users. 67% of teachers who use generative AI believed that the technology should be more widely used in the classroom by teachers as opposed to just 31% of non-generative AI users. Teachers who make use of the technology also reported higher rates of confidence in their ability to identify whether a piece of work is AI-generated or student generated, as opposed to teachers who aren't using the technology (68% vs 59%, respectively). We did not observe significant differences between levels of concern around job security for AI versus non-AI users when taking all demographics of respondents into account (Figure 4).

These findings are important, as they reveal how attitudes and perceptions around generative AI differ quite significantly based on whether an individual has made use of the technology themselves or not. They tie into findings from the children and parents/carers' survey, which showed that those who use generative AI hold more positive views towards the technology than those who don't.

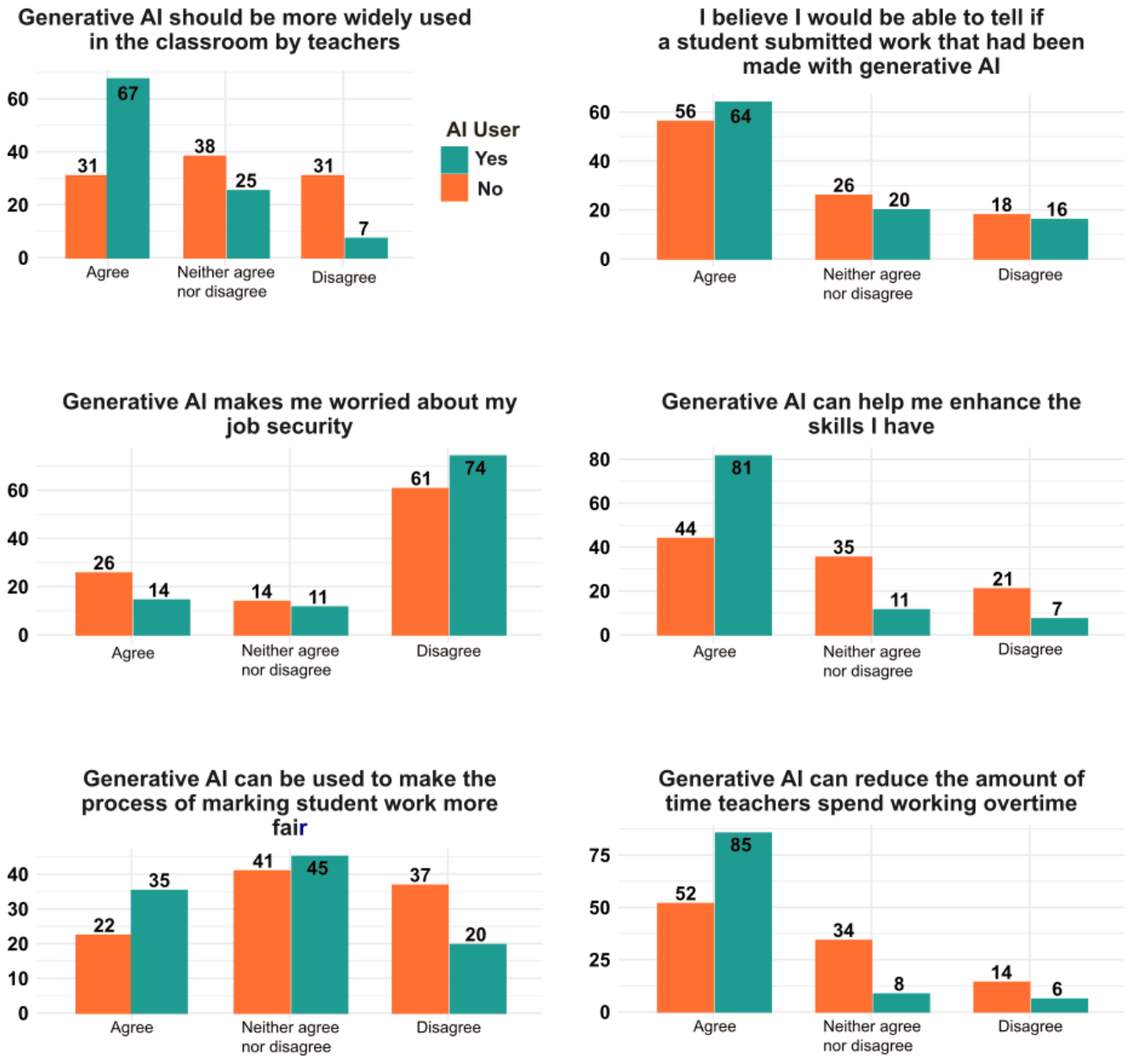


Figure 5: General attitudes of teachers towards using generative AI for teaching, broken down by whether the teacher is using AI for work or not, shown as % of each respective group for total respondents (n=1,001).

In another question, we provided all teachers with eight teaching-related activities and tasks, ranging from 'assessing student performance' and 'guiding students on academic and personal development' to 'preparing lesson plans' and 'delivering lessons to students'. We asked teachers to indicate whether they believed generative AI 'has the potential to support teachers in performing the task by executing one or more aspects of the task, or to replace teachers in performing the task by fully executing all aspects of the task' as shown in Table 3. Our findings revealed that over 80% of teachers who answered these statements believed that generative AI will support them in performing the task rather than replace them.

Teaching activities and tasks shown to teachers using AI
Preparing lesson plans
Delivering lessons to students
Developing educational content to meet the needs of different learners
Assessing student performance
Maintaining a positive learning environment
Guiding students on academic and personal development
Engaging with parents, other teachers, and school administrators to support student learning
Keeping up to date with subject knowledge and teaching methods

Table 3: Tasks shown to teachers to ask them if they think generative AI will support them in performing the task or replace them.

Teachers were then given a set of adjectives to describe how they feel when it comes to the use of AI for work, and were asked to choose however many adjectives they felt best captured their general attitude towards AI adoption. More than half of all teachers (51%) selected 'Curious', followed by 48% selecting 'Cautious'. A further 41% of all teachers selected 'Optimistic' (Figure 5). Here, we once again observed some striking differences in responses given by generative AI versus non-generative AI users. When compared to teachers who aren't using generative AI, teachers who use the technology reported higher levels of optimism (55% vs 14% of non-generative AI users), lower levels of uncertainty (14% vs 44% of non-generative AI users), lower levels of scepticism (14% vs 43% of non-generative AI users), and lower levels of concern (31% vs 11% of non-generative AI users. These findings once again reify the view that interaction with generative AI increases the likelihood that individuals will hold more positive views towards the technology (Figure 6).

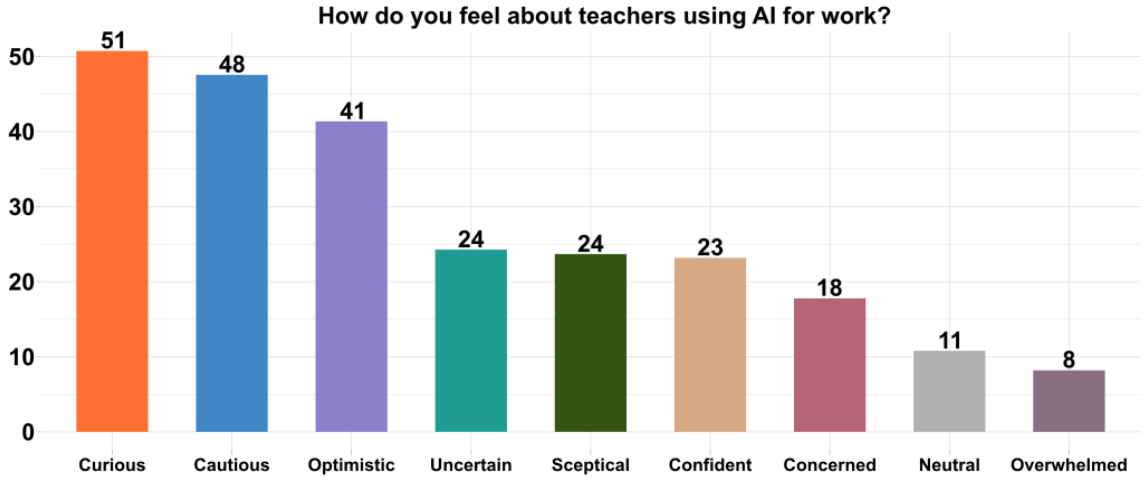


Figure 6: Adjectives assigned to how respondents feel about teachers' use of AI for work, shown as % of all teachers (n = 1001).

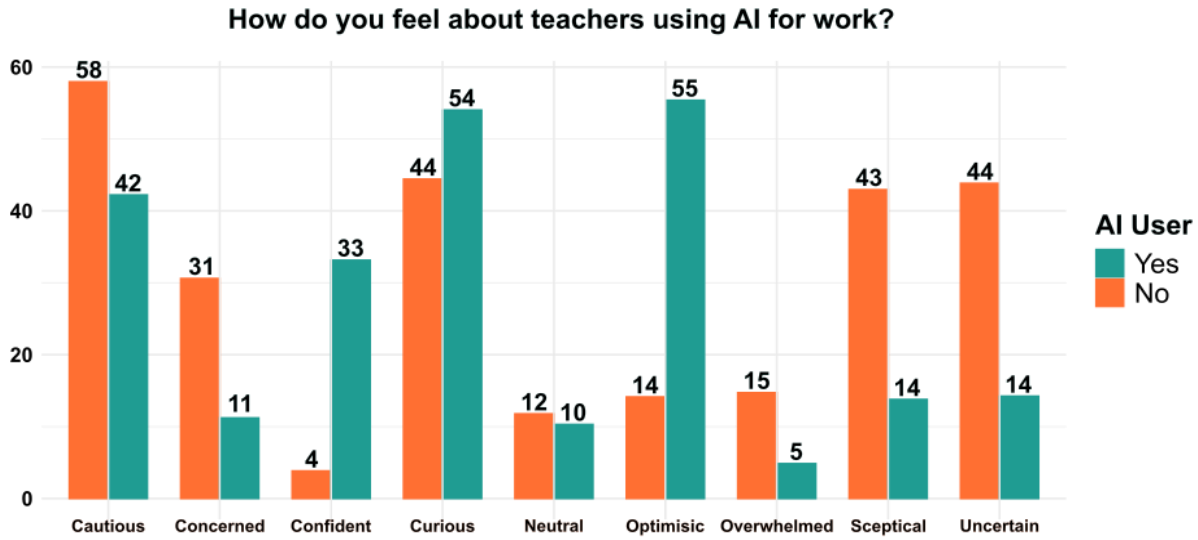


Figure 7: Adjectives assigned to how respondents feel about teachers' use of AI for work, broken down by whether the respondent uses AI or not, shown as % of each respective group for total respondents (n=1,001).

Finally, we asked teachers whether their schools provided any kind of policy or guidance on the use of AI in a school setting - whether for teachers or for students. Altogether, only 26% of teachers indicated that their school had policy or guidance for either staff, students, or both. Interestingly, that number almost doubles when broken down by private schools, with 45% of private schoolteachers indicating that their schools have policy or guidance available for staff, students, or both. This difference is striking when directly compared to state schools, where 23% of teachers indicated the same. When asked if they felt the policy or guidance was sufficient, 63% of private schoolteachers agreed that it was, whereas 50% of state schoolteachers agreed to the same.

Awareness around students' use of generative AI

Aside from exploring teachers' own experiences with, and attitudes towards, generative AI in their work, we were also interested in exploring how they viewed students' engagement with the technology. Similarly to our survey of children and their parents or carers, assessing children's adoption of the technology from the perspective of the adults in their life provides us with the ability to more holistically capture its impact on their wellbeing. Whereas the children and parent/carer survey explored children's use of the technology more broadly, the teacher's survey has allowed us to hone in on children's generative AI use within the boundaries of learning and education, as they relate to the classroom.

In our survey, we asked teachers to indicate whether they were aware of their students making use of generative AI for schoolwork. If they did, teachers were then asked a set of follow-up questions related to their students' use and the perceived impact teachers felt it has had on their work and wellbeing. Alongside these questions, a set of statements related to students' use of generative AI was shown to all teachers in our sample, regardless of whether they were aware of their students using generative AI or not. Our findings showed that, whilst teachers are largely optimistic about their own use of generative AI, they do not generally share the same enthusiasm for children's use of the technology in school.

Altogether, 40% of teachers reported that they were aware of their students using generative AI for schoolwork. These numbers were higher in private schools, where 57% of private schoolteachers reported awareness of students' use as opposed to 37% of state schoolteachers. These numbers broadly align with our children and parents/carers' survey, where we found that 52% of private school students were making use of generative AI. Of the age groups teachers taught, we observed the highest rates of reported usage amongst older students, with 70% of teachers teaching 14–16-year-olds reporting awareness of usage, compared to 21% of teachers teaching 7–11-year-olds. Whilst this survey has a wider student age group than our children and parents/carers' survey, we are still able to observe similar age-related usage trends across both surveys. Art and Design, Design and Technology, and Music teachers reported the lowest awareness of students' generative AI usage, at 18%, 17%, and 16% respectively. English teachers, on the other hand, reported the highest rates of awareness at 28%, followed by Science at 26% and Ancient and Modern Foreign Languages at 25% (Table 4).

I am aware of students using generative AI for schoolwork

Variable	Value	n	Frequency
All	All	397	40%
Student's age	0-5	13	14%
	5-7	26	14%
	7-11	53	21%
	11-14	96	55%

	14-16	209	70%
School's type	State	310	37%
	Private	68	57%
	Others	19	45%
Teacher's use	Yes	292	44%
	No	105	31%
Subject area	English	146	28%
	Maths	111	24%
	Science	108	26%
	History	72	21%
	Computing	70	22%
	Art & design	59	18%
	Geography	58	18%
	Physical education	52	18%
	Design & technology	49	17%
	Music	43	16%
	Ancient & modern language	38	25%
	Others	28	33%

Table 4: Teachers reporting students use of the technology broken down by student's age, school type, teacher's own generative AI use, and subject area taught.

When asked what their students were using generative AI for, the majority of teachers indicated their students were using it for either 'research at home' (68%) or 'developing ideas to help them get started on an assignment' (51%). Importantly, more than half of teachers (57%) indicated that their students were using generative AI for writing and submitting AI-generated work as their own (Figure 7) . Interestingly, there were some differences between use cases of students in private versus state schools as reported by teachers: nearly 60% of teachers in state schools reported students write and submit AI-generated work as their own, while this was at 47% for private schools. In addition, 43% of teachers in private schools reported that students use generative AI for research during class time versus just 23% of teachers in state schools (Figure 8). Teachers were also asked whether they assign work to students which asks them to use generative AI, of which only 18% reported that they do.

These findings are significant, as they raise important questions around plagiarism and academic misconduct. This is especially true when considered alongside previous findings where teachers report high levels of confidence in their ability to identify AI-generated content, as well as the general lack of clear guidance or policy on generative AI use for students.

You have said that you are aware of students using generative AI for their schoolwork. What specifically are they using it for?

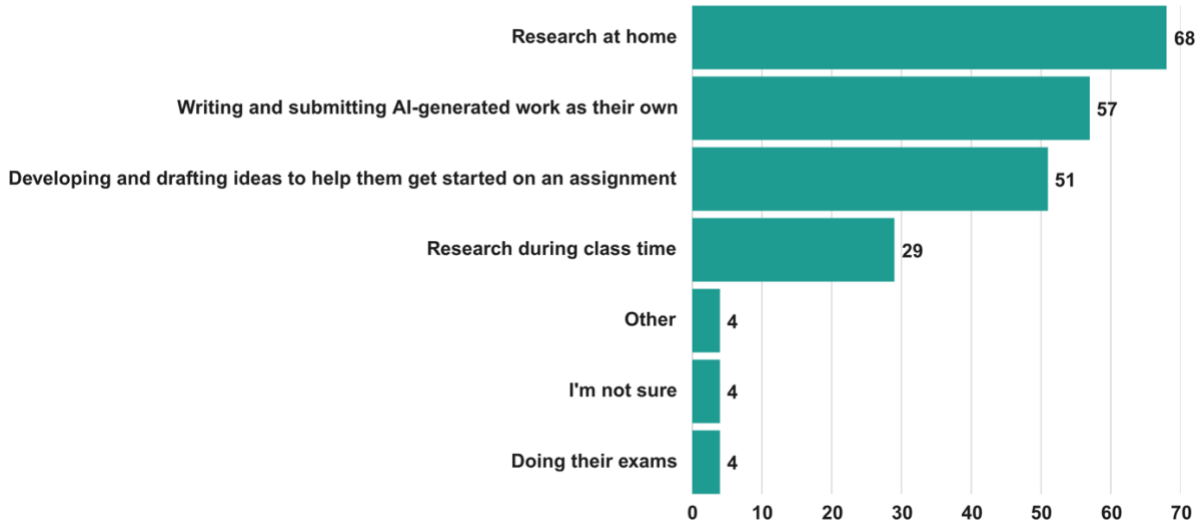


Figure 8: Students' use cases of generative AI as reported by teachers, shown as % of teachers who report they are aware of their students using AI (n = 397).

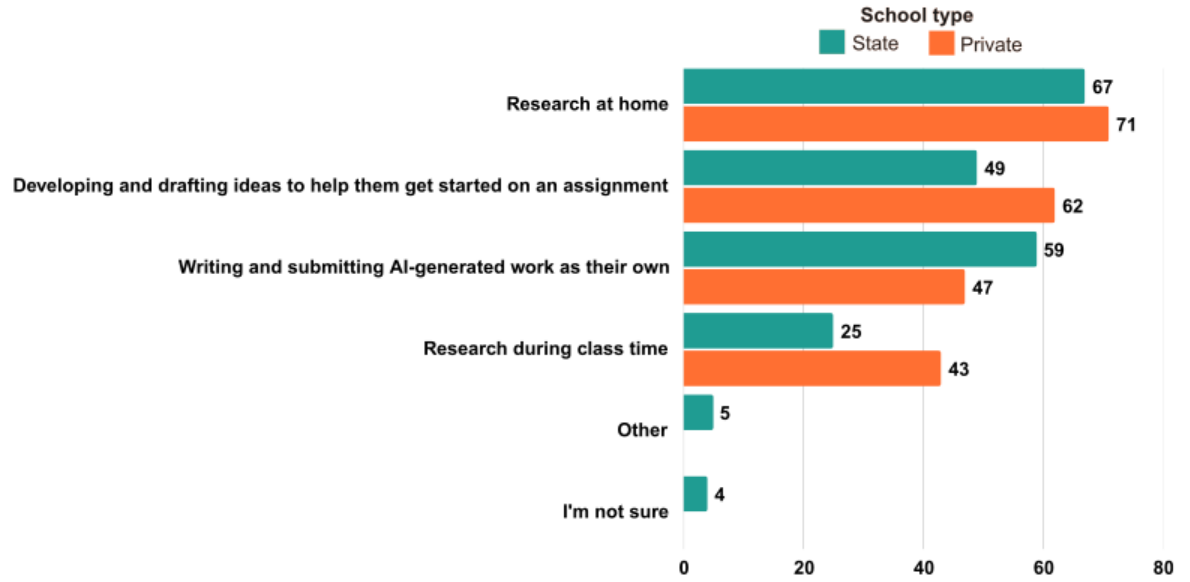


Figure 9: Students' use cases of generative AI as reported by teachers, broken down by school type, shown as % of each respective group for total respondents (n=397).

Views around students' use of generative AI

We also explored different dimensions of impact that generative AI use may have on students' work. Teachers who reported awareness around their students' use of generative AI were asked whether they believed the technology had impacted the type of work their students are producing for school, or their engagement in the classroom; 61% believed it had. These teachers were then shown a set of three statements related to generative AI's impact on key dimensions related to students' creativity, engagement, and diversity of ideas, and asked to rank each of these three statements on a scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' or 'don't know'.

49% indicated they believe the technology has had a negative impact on the student's engagement in classwork, and 48% believe that AI has made the ideas students are submitting less diverse. A further 43% disagreed that generative AI has had a positive impact on the creativity of students' work. These findings paint a picture of lack of general optimism around the positive impacts that generative AI could have on children's learning and development in school (Figure 9). However, when explored through different subgroups, we find some interesting variations.

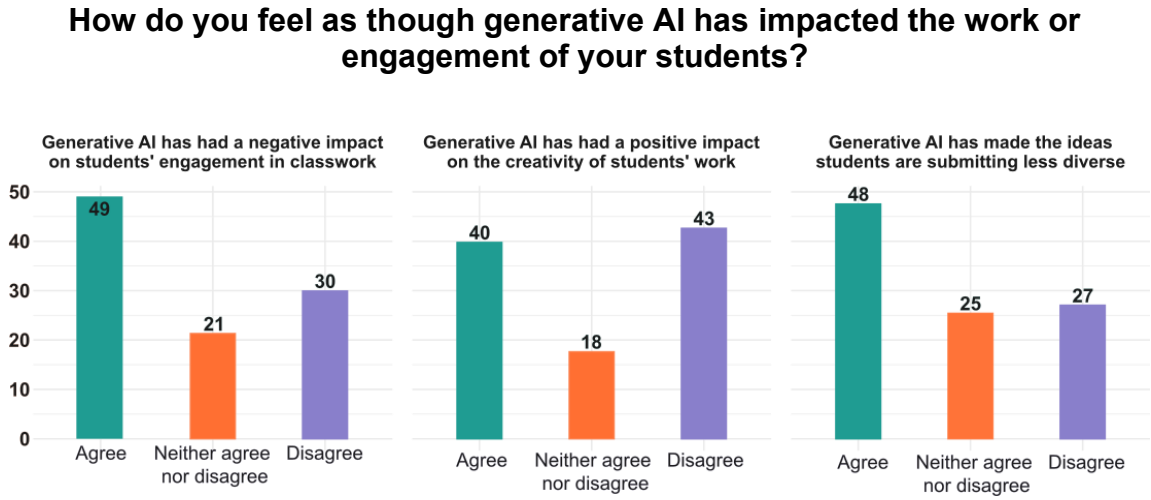


Figure 10: Teachers' feelings about the impact of generative AI on students, shown as % of teachers who reported they believed the technology has impacted students work (n = 244).

Teachers who use generative AI in their own work were more likely to agree that generative AI has had a positive impact on the creativity of students, as opposed to teachers who do not use the technology (45% vs 17%, respectively). They also were less likely to agree that generative AI has had a negative impact on students' engagement (44% vs 62% of non-generative AI users). These findings tie into previous findings which indicate that users of generative AI are more likely to feel positively about the technology and its impact than non-users are (igure 10).

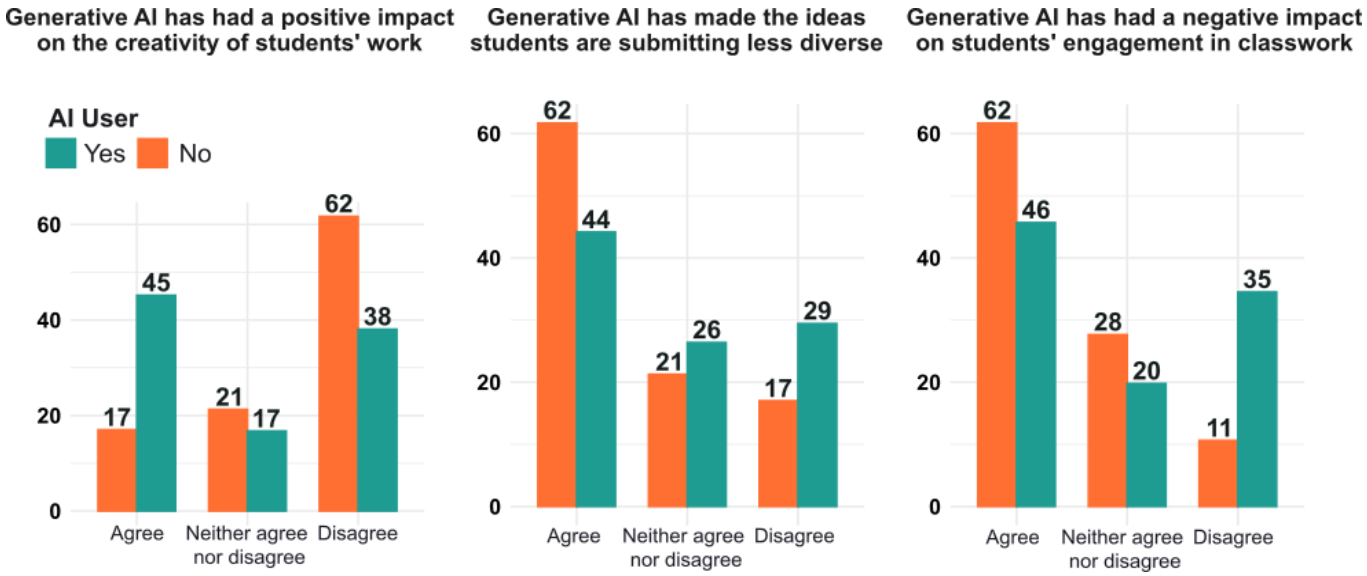


Figure 11: Teachers feelings about the impact of generative AI on students, broken down by whether the teacher is using AI or not, shown as % of each respective group for total respondents (n=1,001).

We also observed key differences in how private schoolteachers viewed the impact of the technology as opposed to state schoolteachers; private schoolteachers were less likely to agree that generative AI has made the ideas students are submitting less diverse (36% vs 50% of state schoolteachers).

Finally, we explored teachers' general views on students' engagement with generative AI. We presented all teachers in our sample with five statements related to students' engagement with the technology and asked them to rank each on a scale from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' or 'don't know'. We find that 64% of all teachers agreed that generative AI is a great tool to support students with additional learning needs. In the workshops undertaken in Work Package 2, children themselves suggested they would like to see generative AI tools being used to support those with additional learning needs.

72% of all teachers reported concern around the negative impact generative AI may have on students' critical thinking skills, a number which closely aligns with concerns raised in the children and parents/carers survey, where 76% of parents or carers expressed similar concerns. Overall, nearly half of all teachers (49%) are concerned about the impact that generative AI may have on children's wellbeing. A further 44% of teachers indicated they are worried that generative AI might limit the level of engagement that teachers have with students (Figure 11).

General views on students' engagement with generative AI

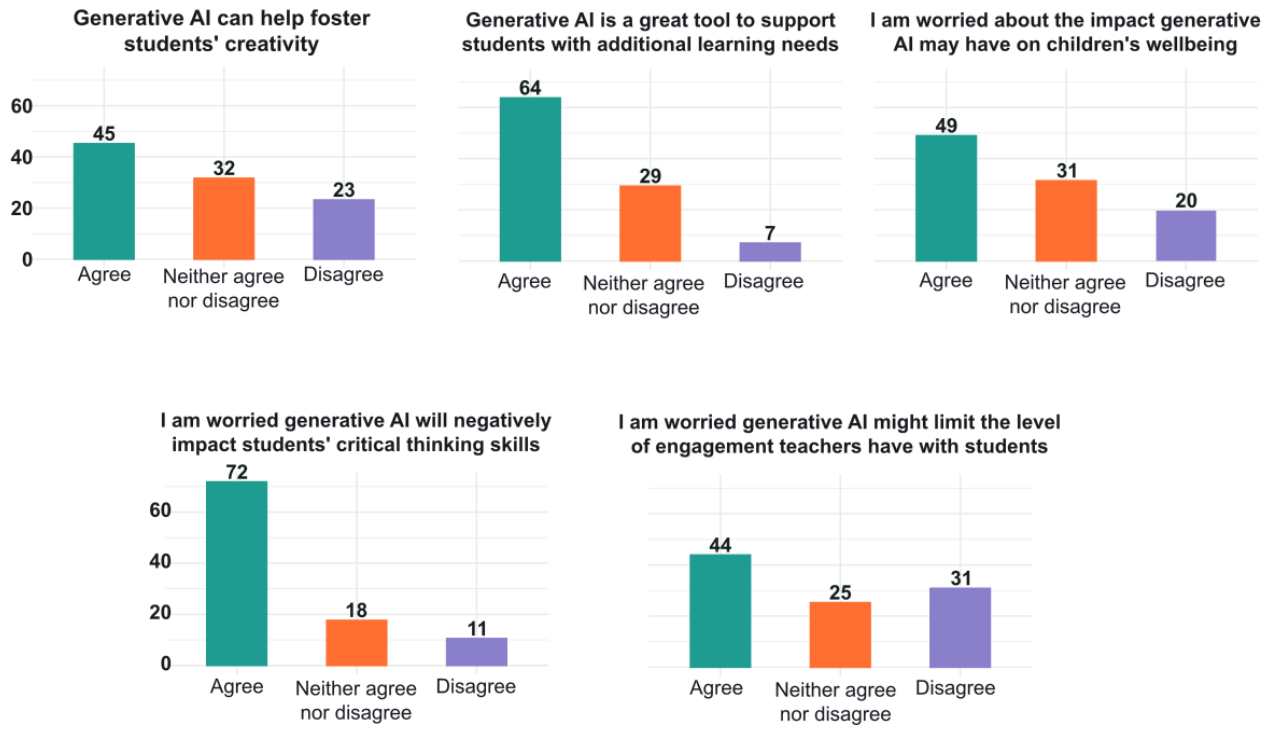


Figure 12: Teachers' general views on students' engagement with generative AI, shown as % of all respondents (n=1,001).

Here, we once again, find variations in these responses when explored through different subgroups. Teachers who reported using generative AI were more optimistic on students' engagement with it. They were less likely to report they are worried that generative AI will negatively impact students' critical thinking skills (65% vs 81% for non-AI users), that it will limit the level of engagement teachers have with students (34% vs 61% for non-AI users) and that it negatively impacts students' wellbeing (40% vs 62%). They were also more likely to agree that generative AI can help foster students' creativity (50% vs 29% for non-AI users), and that it is a great tool to support students with additional needs (70% vs 39%). In addition, male teachers were more likely to agree that generative can help foster students' creativity compared to female teachers (54% vs 40%).

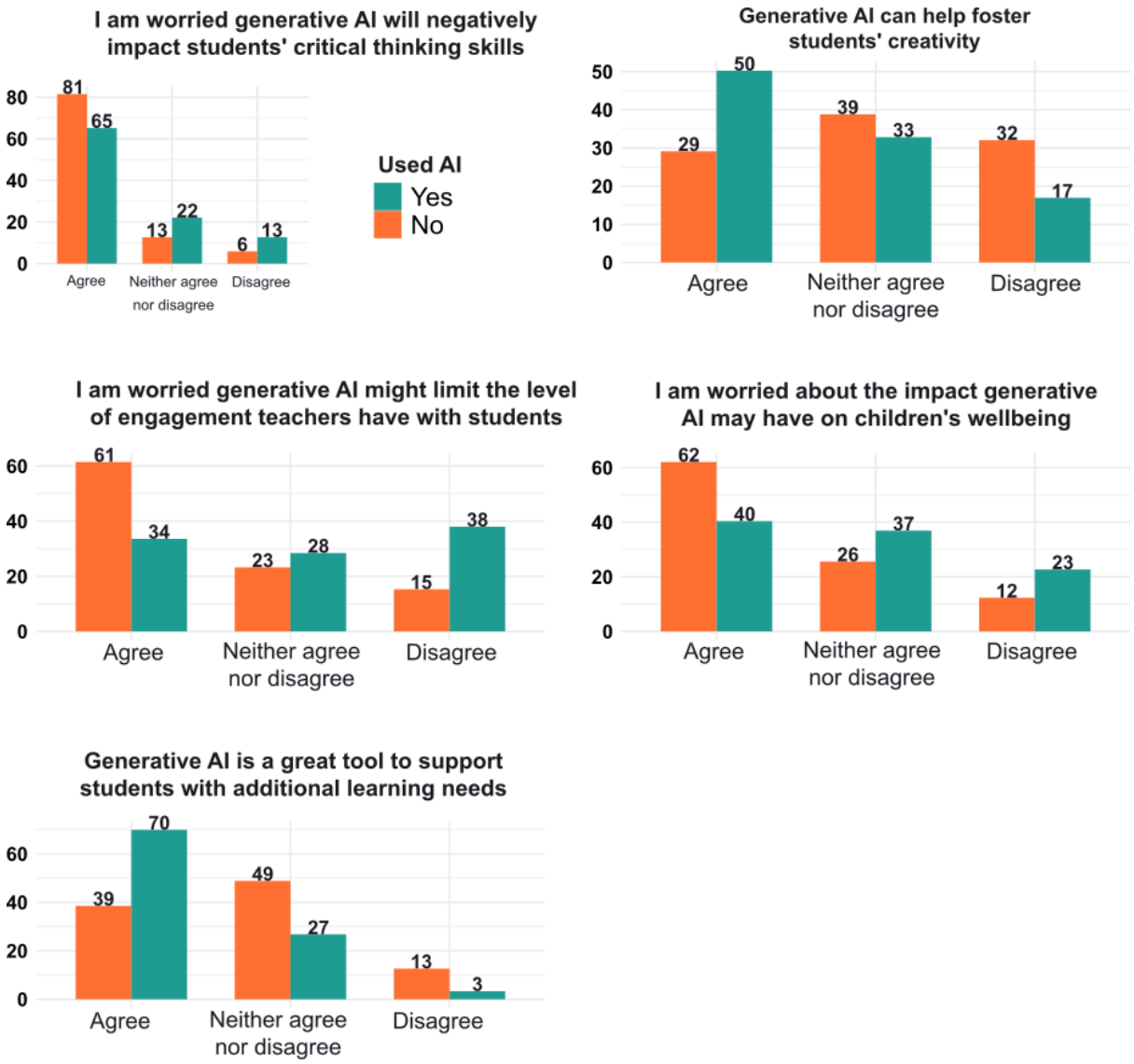


Figure 13: Teachers' general views on students' engagement with generative AI, broken down by whether the teacher has used generative AI or not, shown as % of each respective group for total respondents (n=1,001).

Hopes and concerns around children's use of generative AI

This final section explores the key themes that emerged from two open-ended questions that were asked of teachers. Rather than being prescriptive, the open-ended nature of these questions allowed teachers to reflect - in a speculative way - on their hopes and concerns around children's use of generative AI. The first of these questions, 'What is your greatest hope for how AI can benefit children?' aimed to capture the areas where teachers may feel optimistic about the technology, with the intention of identifying either unexplored opportunity areas, or allowing for further exploration of areas of use which have already been identified as having a positive impact on children's wellbeing. The second of these questions, 'What is your biggest concern about children using AI', allowed for the opposite: an exploration of fears, whether observed or hypothetical, around the technology.

Around one third of teachers responded that they are hopeful about AI's ability to enhance students' creativity. One third mentioned AI's ability to support independent learning, and one in five mentioned AI's ability to provide students with easier access to Information. On the other hand, two main themes emerged around concerns: over-reliance on AI - referenced by more than half of teachers – and loss of critical thinking – referenced by nearly half of teachers. These concerns are consistent with findings highlighted elsewhere in this report, and have also been highlighted in the literature as possible drawbacks to generative AI use among students (Bastani et al., 2024).

Nearly one in four teachers reported that they believe the use of AI by students and their subsequent reliance on these systems might reduce engagement in the classroom. Nearly one in five reported that AI might lead to stifled imagination and loss of creativity in students – an insight which is consistent with the findings echoed elsewhere in this survey. Further, around one in six teachers mentioned concerns about plagiarism and academic integrity in schoolwork, and the same ratio mentioned concerns around students' exposure to inaccurate information through AI. Similar concerns about exposure to misinformation were also highlighted by parents and carers in their survey.

Question	Theme	n (~)	Freq(~)
What is your greatest hope for how AI can benefit children?	Enhancing Creativity and Engagement	312	30%
	Support for Independent Learning	266	25%
	Improved Access to Information	206	20%
	Creative Teaching Strategies	160	15%
	Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs	151	15%
	Personalised Learning	129	15%
	Reducing Teacher Workload	106	10%
	Over-Reliance on AI	551	55%

What is your biggest concern about children using AI?	Loss of Critical Thinking Skills	471	50%
	Reduced Learning Engagement	250	25%
	Loss of Creativity	194	20%
	Plagiarism and Academic Integrity	168	15%
	Inaccuracy and Misinformation	161	15%
	Exposure to Inappropriate Content	82	<10%

Table 5: Themes found in free-text responses to questions. The percentages are approximate and rounded to 5% values.

Conclusion

Our research highlights the growing role of generative AI in children's daily lives and in the classroom. Generative AI is increasingly embedded in children's digital experiences, though its use remains largely guided by traditional search engines such as Google. Our survey explored the varying impacts of generative AI on children by asking: how do children feel about generative AI? How do parents and carers whose children use generative AI perceive their use? What concerns do they have? Our findings reveal that many children express optimism about AI's role in education and creative play. However, their enthusiasm is notably higher among those whose parents have a positive view of AI, suggesting that parental attitudes may shape children's confidence and engagement with these tools, raising questions about the role of informed guidance in AI interactions. At the same time, uncertainty around AI, concerns about misinformation, and variations in engagement highlight the need for responsible AI integration.

The RITEC framework, which considers dimensions of children's well-being such as creativity, autonomy, relationships, competence, and safety and security, provides a useful lens for interpreting our findings. Generative AI appears to foster creativity amongst children, with strong engagement in creative activities such as writing stories and generating fun pictures – particularly among 10-year-olds, 56% of whom use it for creating fun pictures and 51% for writing stories. Autonomy is reflected in children's varied use of generative AI for learning and communicating with their peers, though access disparities (e.g. between private and state school children) may impact equitable autonomy and inclusion. The increased use of generative AI for communication and companionship by children with additional learning needs aligns with the relationships dimensions by fostering social connections. The use of generative AI for schoolwork, particularly among male children, relates to competence, promoting educational support and building confidence. However, autonomy and safety concerns are evident when considering that 37% of children with additional learning needs use generative AI for "chatting and keeping me company", highlighting the need to ensure safe and supportive digital interactions.

For teachers, we investigated generative AI adoption by exploring regional differences in uptake, the differences between private and state schoolteachers, subject-specific variations in AI use, and the key determinants or deterrents of AI adoption. Our findings show that while teachers recognise AI's potential to enhance learning - particularly in lesson planning and personalised education – concerns persist around reliability, critical thinking, and academic integrity. Some teachers are already integrating AI into their work, yet they highlight a lack of clear policies and training, emphasising the need for structured guidance to help them navigate these tools effectively and responsibly. Further questions remain, such as whether

differences in AI use between private and state schoolteachers are due to disparities in institutional support or resource availability. Additionally, could AI be providing much-needed support for teachers working with students who have additional learning needs?

As generative AI continues to evolve, it is crucial to address these gaps in understanding and practice. Training and policies, informed by the RITEC framework, are essential for equipping both educators and students to engage with AI safely, responsibly, and effectively in education.

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Appendix

Demographics

Demographic Information of children in the sample

Variable	Value	n	Freq	Weighted Frequency
All	**All**	780	100%	100%
Gender	Female	353	45%	49%
	Male	427	55%	51%
Age	8	135	17%	19%
	9	146	19%	20%
	10	188	24%	20%
	11	147	19%	21%
	12	164	21%	21%
Type of school	State schools	680	87%	88%
	Private school	76	10%	9%
	Home	18	2%	2%
	Other	6	1%	1%
Social Grade	AB	282	36%	36%
	C1	231	30%	29%
	C2	145	19%	19%
	DE	122	16%	16%
Regions	East, South	249	32%	32%
	London	98	13%	12%
	Midlands	123	16%	16%
	North	191	24%	24%
	Northern Ireland	21	3%	3%
	Scotland	61	8%	8%
	Wales	37	5%	5%
Learning needs	Yes	164	21%	21%

Demographic information of teachers in the sample

Variable	Value		n	Freq
All	**All**		1001	100%
Teachers' Gender	Female		753	75%
	Male		240	24%
	Non-binary		7	1%
	Prefer not to say		1	0%
Teachers' Age	Under 30		172	17%
	30-34		192	19%
	35-39		181	18%
	40-44		152	15%
	45-49		116	12%
	50-59		156	16%
	60 years and over		32	3%
Type of school	State schools		839	84%
	Private school		120	12%
	Other (please specify)		42	4%
Children age-range	Early years (0-5 years old)		95	9%
	Key Stage 1 (5-7 years old)		182	18%
	Key Stage 2 (7-11 years old)		251	25%
	Key Stage 3 (11-14 years old)		176	18%
	Key Stage 4 (14-16 years old)		297	30%
Job's title	Teaching assistant		172	17%
	Primary school teacher		341	34%
	Secondary school teacher		357	36%
	Special education needs		122	12%
	Headteacher		18	2%
	Other		93	9%
Geo information	England	London	115	11%
		East of England	90	9%
		Midlands	174	17%
		North East & Yorkshire	113	11%
		North West	111	11%
	Northern Ireland		21	2%
	Scotland		98	10%
	South East		162	16%
	South West		74	7%

	Wales	40	4%
	Prefer not to say	3	0%
Working with additional needs	Yes	886	89%
	No	102	10%
	Prefer not to say	13	1%
Teacher's years of experience	Less than 5 years	189	19%
	5-10 years	249	25%
	10-15 years	207	21%
	15-20 years	156	16%
	More than 20 years	200	20%
Subject area	English	527	53%
	Maths	464	46%
	Science	415	41%
	Design and technology	284	28%
	History	351	35%
	Geography	324	32%
	Art and design	331	33%
	Music	269	27%
	Physical education	288	29%
	Computing	313	31%
	Ancient and modern foreign languages	153	15%
	Other	172	17%