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January 2025

A comparison of earnings for teachers with those for other graduate professions

A report for NASUWT

IDR

Pay Data | Intelligent Decisions

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1. Overview

1.1. Background and what the report covers

Over the last decade and beyond, we have monitored the broader employment context for the teaching profession, focusing particularly on issues relating to pay, recruitment and retention and some of the challenges faced every day by classroom teachers. During this period, a number of common themes have emerged and our latest findings show that in many respects, teaching professionals continue to operate in a similar context to the last decade or so (except for the pandemic period). This may seem a surprise, especially in pay terms, because in each of the last three years, teachers have received pay increases above the whole economy median. Despite this, the comparatively large pay increases in 2022, 2023 and 2024 followed many years when teachers' salary uplifts trailed those found across the whole economy.

Inflation has been one impetus for the recent larger-than-normal pay increases but they follow a long period in which pay has been held back in both nominal and therefore real terms. On top of this, there also appears to be a growing recognition of the importance of the teaching profession given the experience during the pandemic when millions of UK parents had to take on home-schooling responsibilities themselves. The conclusions of recent School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) reports have helped support arguments in favour of higher pay rises have been. These conclusions have aligned with many of our own findings, which show significant gaps between the earnings of teachers and those received by other comparable graduate professions. Both our own and the STRB's findings also highlight concerns more generally relating to workload, recruitment, retention, missed training targets and growing vacancy rates.

While the focus of this report is on pay and the relativities between the earnings of teachers and those for other graduate jobs, we also examine the situation regarding some of these other factors. Our findings here indicate that these also present challenges. For instance, teaching recruitment targets continue to be missed, retention problems endure, and vacancy rates are increasing.

This is the broad backdrop to our latest report for the NASUWT. This latest version follows on from a series of reports going back almost a decade. Our earlier reports covered the UK, but the last few versions have focused specifically on England.

As in previous reports, we draw on pay data from the latest ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) for school teachers and a basket of selected comparator professional occupations. More specifically, the report focuses on basic and gross weekly and gross annual full-time earnings in England from ASHE for 11 non-teaching occupations. This allows an examination of how these groups' earnings compare to those for school teachers – both secondary teachers and those in primary schools.

1.2. Changes to ONS data in 2024

In the past, our studies referred to comparative earnings for teachers and other professionals stretching back to 2008 but a change to the ONS methodology in 2024 means that it now advises against making cross-year comparisons, except between 2023 and 2024. Even before the latest change, however, cross-year differences based on ONS figures had been subject to several caveats which we always outlined in detail. As a result, this year, as in the past, our conclusions are weighted more towards the latest year's findings meaning the overall design of this report and its conclusions have not changed significantly. Moreover, we have made some additions to our report with some new analyses included.

It is worth reflecting on the latest ONS changes that prompted it to advise those using its official figures not to make pre-2023 comparisons. Revisions are common when it comes to ONS data, but the latest one is significant because it was accompanied by guidance advising users against cross-year comparisons. This was because the latest changes were more substantial than those made in previous years.

A key factor behind the latest ONS change was that since the pandemic there has been some divergence between the figures estimated from the ASHE survey and the ONS's other sources of earnings data. ASHE, however, uniquely provides information on earnings for particular occupational categories, not available in these other sources. As a result, the ONS has reviewed its methods and processes underpinning the ASHE survey to improve the overall quality of its estimates for the two latest years, 2023 and 2024. The changes are focused on the treatment of higher earners across professions, which directly affects the jobs we examine.

The ONS provides an indication of the magnitude of the latest changes, with the 2023 provisional median hourly pay for full-time employees rising from £17.40 to £17.52 for the

revised 2023 amount. Similarly, the 2023 revised annual median earnings figure for full-time employees is now estimated to be £35,004, up from £34,963 based on the provisional 2023 amount. Given that the changes made by the ONS are focused on high earners, the effect on the professional occupations we examine is likely to be larger.

1.3. Changes to the report this year

Due to the changes to ONS methodology and the associated guidance, we have made some changes to this year's analysis, including omitting any cross-year increase analysis of earnings except between 2023 and 2024. In recent years, our reports charted movements in various measures of earnings going back as far as 2008. This analysis provided a way of plotting how the earnings of teachers and other professions changed over a longer period. But because the samples used from year to year were unmatched its usefulness was always rather limited. Because of this, it was included in our previous reports as background information but never played a significant role in our conclusions.

This year, however, we wanted to continue to include some measure of how teachers' earnings had changed relative to other graduate jobs over the longer term, and so we have continued to present one of the charts that featured in all our previous reports. This is our analysis of earnings rankings across three specific years stretching back to 2008. The reasoning for this is that it does not involve cross-year increases, but instead allows comparisons of teachers' relative positions in the pay table *within* individual years.

While the ONS' methodology may have changed across years, because the rankings focus on the three years in isolation, they provide a valid assessment of teachers' relative positions in each of those years.

General ASHE data caveats

Even before the latest ONS changes, the main weakness of the ASHE data is that the information collected each year is not based on matched samples. As a result, the sample for a particular professional category in one year may differ somewhat from that in the previous year. Linked to this is the fact that, for some occupations, sample sizes can be relatively small, which can result in large fluctuations in aggregate data across years. In some cases, this can even lead to falls in aggregate earnings levels which might not accurately represent what is really happening within a particular profession. In more extreme cases,

sample sizes for certain professions are so small that the ONS has omitted the findings because the data collected is not considered to be reliable, statistically speaking.

Within the non-teaching categories on which we focus, two stand out – chemical and physical scientists – because the number of these roles is relatively low in the ASHE sample for England. While median and average data is shown for both jobs in almost every year of the analysis, the sample size limitations are reflected in the fact that quartile and high and low percentile figures are absent. More broadly, some other professions, such as some of the scientific jobs, are excluded from our analysis of the highest percentiles for the same reason.

A further complication is that the ONS redefines its occupational categories every ten years or so, reflecting the fact that jobs are not static entities. This also affects comparisons between years. For instance, the last two sets of changes to its Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) took place in 2010 and 2020, although the 2020 alterations only came into force in the 2022 data release from the ONS. Because of this, some job definitions or titles can differ from year to year. Full details of all the changes made in the latest classification (SOC 2020) are outlined in our 2022 report.

Differences in weekly and annual earnings

In our last report on England (in 2022), we added some additional comparative analysis, based on annual gross earnings, to supplement the weekly earnings findings. For weekly data, the ONS includes both basic and gross earnings, but it only collects annual information on gross earnings. The main difference between the annual and weekly data is that the former is collected at the end of the year and only includes those individuals that have been in post for the full 12 months. By contrast, the weekly data is collected in April and includes all employees in post at that time which means that the sample sizes are typically larger.

Another important difference between the weekly and annual figures is that because the ASHE data on weekly amounts is normally collected in April each year, it does not provide adequate coverage of bonuses. This is because the bonus season in most sectors runs from December to March. As a result, any earnings differentials based on weekly figures may overstate the relative position of the two teaching groups (because they do not generally receive bonuses that other groups may routinely receive) and at the same time understate the earnings lead for many of the comparator groups. In contrast, because the annual data covers the full 12 months, notwithstanding the smaller sample sizes, this additional data may

lessen the drawbacks of the weekly data to some extent (especially in respect of bonuses) and provide an extra dimension to the analysis.

1.4. ASHE non-teaching job categories

Throughout the report, we focus on 11 graduate occupations that are considered good comparators for both primary and secondary teachers. They represent some of the largest professional occupational groups found in England and include:

- Chemical scientists
- Biochemists and biomedical scientists
- Physical scientists
- Engineering professionals
- Information technology and telecommunications professionals
- Medical practitioners
- Pharmacists
- Legal professionals
- Chartered and certified accountants
- Management consultants and business analysts
- Chartered surveyors.

A few years ago, this list only included 10 professional categories, but a few years ago we made a further change to our analysis to recognise the growth of one occupational area within the UK economy. This was information technology and telecommunications which has continued to be a major growth area in the labour market. The pandemic accelerated the trend for online operations to become more important for organisations of all sorts, including schools, and in many areas this pattern has endured.

1.5. Structure of the report

This chapter provides an overview of the report, a summary of the findings and our overall conclusions. It is followed by Chapter 2 which provides a brief context for the research, drawing on many of the other official statistics that relate to the teaching profession including some of the findings from the latest School Teachers' Review Body report. Chapter 3 takes a closer look at the annual pay awards for school teachers in England and examines how they compare with whole-economy pay reviews since 2008.

Following this, Chapter 4 gives an overview of the graduate labour market in England and analyses results from the IDR 2024 graduate recruitment and salary survey. This includes an

investigation into how salaries for graduates compare with those for school teachers at various stages of their careers.

Chapter 5 presents the main part of our analysis, focussing specifically on the ASHE data. Here we review the median and average earnings differentials between school teachers and other comparator graduate professions (for both weekly and annual earnings). We also look more broadly across the wider earnings distribution by also examining quartile and decile statistics. Most of our findings focus on the latest year but we also conduct cross-year comparisons between 2023 and 2024, the two years covered by the ONS's new methodology, as well a range of historical comparisons of the rankings of teachers versus other professional groups. Finally, Appendix 1 sets out our methodology and some of the guidance associated with the use of ASHE data.

1.6. Recent pay deals

Table 1 below takes the headline pay reviews for teachers over the last decade or so and contrasts them with rises more generally in the economy. Where teaching increases were lower than those found more generally in the whole economy, the table is shaded red and where they are higher, the colour is black.

Table 1 illustrates that teachers' pay rises mostly lagged those found in the whole economy for the first decade or so of the period shown. The only exception was in the years 2009 and 2010 when the headline teaching rises were higher than those measured by the whole economy median recorded by IDR.

Table 1: Summary of English teachers' pay awards relative whole economy increases between 2008 and 2024

Year	Teacher pay rises relative to whole economy awards	Details	Teacher headline rises	Whole economy rises (median)
2008	**Lower**	Teacher rises trail those found in the economy	2.45%	3.70%
2009 to 2010	**Higher**	2.3% rises in both years ahead of the whole economy median	2.3% 2.3%	1.8% 2%
2011 to 2012	**Lower**	Pay freeze in both years	0%	2% 2%
2013 to 2018	**Lower**	Headline 1% increase trail those found in the economy	1% 1% 1% 1% 1% 2%	2% 2.5% 2.2% 1.78% 2% 2.5%
2019 to 2020	**Higher**	Teacher rises were higher than the whole economy	2.75% 3.1%	2.5% 2%
2021	**Lower**	Pay freeze	0.00%	2%
2022 to 2024	**Higher**	Teacher rises were higher than the whole economy	5% 6.5% 5.5%	4% 5% 4%

Source: IDR

In contrast, 2019 and 2020 represented a brief period when teachers' pay awards were higher on average than those elsewhere, but any improvement was short-lived when in 2021, a pay pause became a pay freeze for many public servants including teachers. The situation subsequently improved, in the latest period 2022 to 2024, when teacher pay awards were higher than the median for the whole economy. Despite the comparatively greater pay increases in this latter part of the period, for the period as a whole teachers' pay rises trailed those found in the wider economy. As a result, teachers' pay has not recovered in real terms to pre-2009 levels, as evidenced by the STRB, when it estimated that teachers' median gross earnings in 2022/23 were 17.9% below their level in 2010/11 in real terms. This compared to a corresponding fall for the whole economy of 3.9% across the same period.

1.7. Pay rankings

When teachers are asked about their job satisfaction levels, the 2024 Department of Education Report, 'Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders', demonstrated that two issues

commonly emerge. One is workload and the other is pay. This section focuses on pay, and specifically on the pay rankings of teachers based on the ONS's latest ASHE survey. In particular, we examine the relative position of teachers compared to those of the 11 non-teaching professions in our comparator group, based on the official data and using various statistics.

Table 2 below, for example, gives an overview of how teachers are positioned relative to non-teaching professions as measured by median gross weekly earnings in three separate years stretching back to 2008. It illustrates that using this statistic, secondary teachers were ranked just below the middle while primary teachers were near the bottom in all three years.

*Table 2: Ranking of median gross weekly earnings levels of graduate professions in England 2008, 2015 and 2024**

Group	2008 rank	2015 rank	2024 rank
Secondary education teachers	9 out of 12	9 out of 12	9 out of 13
Primary education teachers	11 out of 12	11 out of 12	12 out of 13

Source: ASHE

*No data was available for one non-teaching profession in 2008 and 2015.

Median statistics are helpful because they register the middle value within a distribution and so represent 'typical' earnings. In contrast, averages are more strongly influenced by very high or low values and so are more useful when considering the whole distribution. For this reason, we conducted a similar analysis using average rather than median gross weekly earnings with the table below illustrating that the corresponding rankings tended to be lower in most cases. In 2008 and 2015, for instance, secondary teachers fell from ninth to tenth position while in 2024 the corresponding fall was from ninth to eleventh. For primary teachers, rankings also fell in 2008 and 2015, from eleventh to last position, while in 2024 the decline was from twelfth to thirteenth place.

*Table 3: Ranking of average gross earnings levels of graduate professions in England 2008, 2015 and 2024**

Group	2008 rank	2015 rank	2024 rank
Secondary education teachers	10 out of 12	10 out of 12	11 out of 13
Primary education teachers	12 out of 12	12 out of 12	13 out of 13

Source: ASHE

*No data was available for one non-teaching profession in 2008 and 2015.

Why did the relative position of teachers drop when measured according to averages? The most probable reason is that for most professional and managerial groups, there are a significant proportion of senior employees with higher pay levels and greater access to different types of variable pay. This means that for these groups, average earnings amounts can be significantly higher than the corresponding medians. For teachers, however, this is not the case as earnings are distributed more 'normally', meaning that the average and median figures do not differ to the same extent.

This year, both teaching groups' average gross earnings figures were marginally higher than the equivalent median levels, but in both cases by only around 2.5%. These differences were significantly smaller than those for almost every one of the non-teaching professions, the only exception being pharmacists where the average was actually 2.4% lower than the equivalent median. In contrast, for the ten non-teaching groups where averages were greater than the equivalent medians, the differences were larger, ranging from 3.4% for physical scientists to 31.6% for legal professionals. Overall, the average of all the differences in median and average gross earnings for each of the 11 non-teaching professions was 8%, significantly more than either of the equivalent teaching figures of around 2.5%. This helps explain how, even though teachers' average earnings were higher than their corresponding medians, their rankings relative to other professional groups were in fact lower when measured by averages than when measured by median earnings.

1.8. Magnitude of pay gaps

Such rankings presented in the two tables above are a useful method of understanding how the positions of both teaching groups differed from those of other graduate professions based on gross weekly earnings across the period. Despite this, the previous tables only

indicate ranking positions and do not shed light on the magnitude of the differentials that exist.

Table 4 below addresses this by demonstrating the size of gross weekly earnings differentials for each of the comparator jobs versus teachers in 2024. To provide greater clarity, it is colour-coded so that where teachers' earnings are lower, they are shaded blue and where they are higher, red. For 2024, the table is almost completely blue – nearly 90% – and, in many cases, the differentials are significant, especially when the average amounts are considered.

Table 4: Median and average gross weekly earnings differentials of 11 graduate professions versus teachers in England 2024

Description	Average gross weekly pay £pa	Differential with secondary school teachers %	Differential with primary school teachers %	Median gross weekly pay £pa	Differential with secondary school teachers %	Differential with primary school teachers %
Secondary education teachers	917.7			894.8		
Primary education teachers	849.5			829.2		
Medical practitioners	1,459.1	59.0	71.8	1,298.8	45.1	56.6
Legal professionals	1,171.6	27.7	37.9	890.6	-0.5	7.4
Information technologists	1,148.3	25.1	35.2	1,072.7	19.9	29.4
Chartered and certified accountants	1,087.0	18.4	28.0	1,011.3	13.0	22.0
Management consultants and business analysts	1,078.3	17.5	26.9	996.6	11.4	20.2
Physical scientists	1,037.0	13.0	22.1	1,002.8	12.1	20.9
Engineering professionals	1,000.5	9.0	17.8	935.9	4.6	12.9
Biochemists and biomedical scientists	985.2	7.4	16.0	917.7	2.6	10.7
Pharmacists	928.4	1.2	9.3	950.8	6.3	14.7
Chartered surveyors	923.0	0.6	8.7	859.3	-4.0	3.6
Chemical scientists	877.5	-4.4	3.3	800.4	-10.5	-3.5

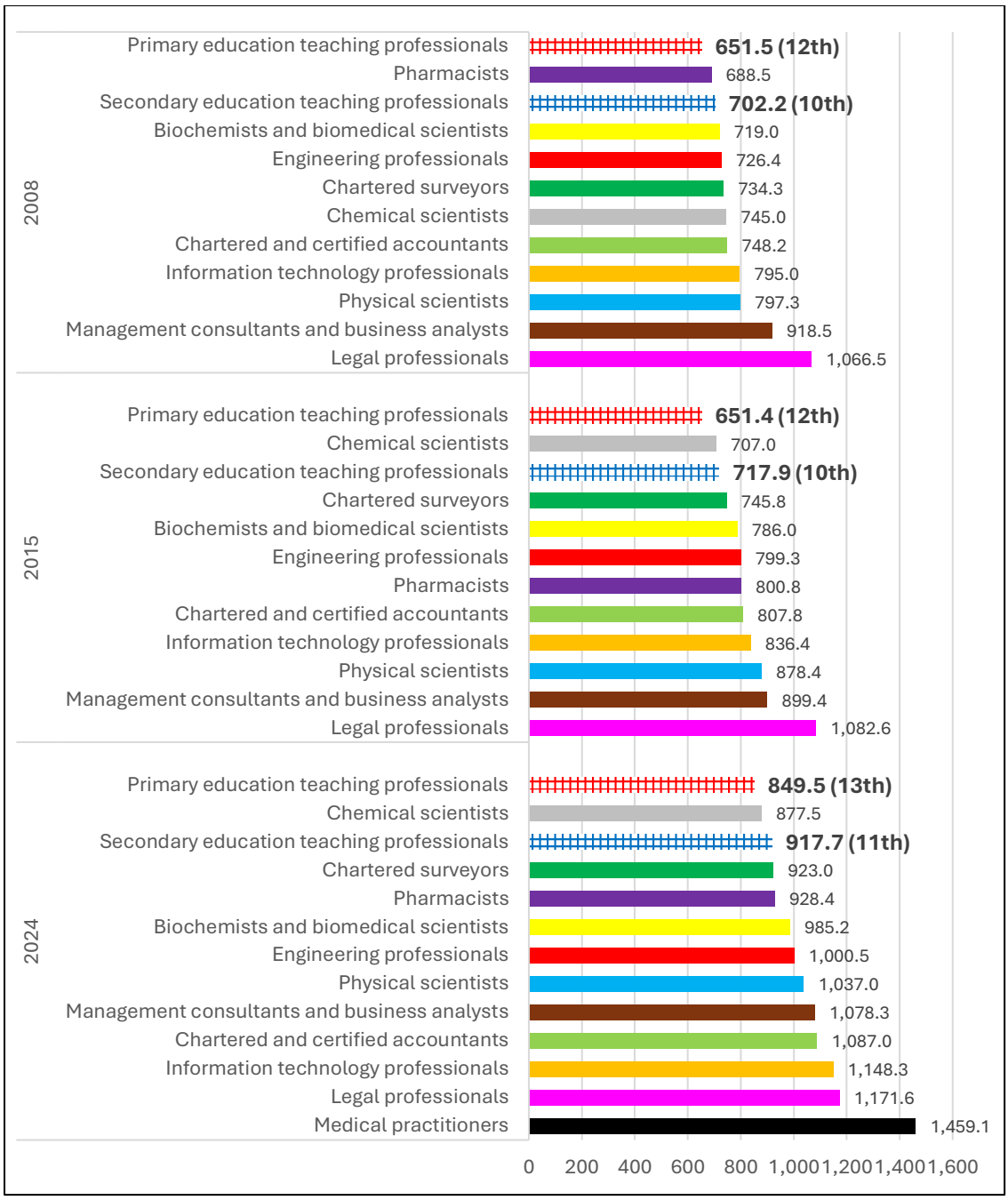
Source: ASHE

For instance, for the median figures, only three professional groups showed earnings figures below the secondary teacher equivalent. These were legal professionals, chartered surveyors and chemical scientists, and chemical scientists also trailed secondary teachers when the average figures were compared as well. In these cases, the differentials ranged between just -0.5% for legal professionals and a wider gap of -10.5% for chemical scientists. The figure for chartered surveyors was in between the two at -4.0%.

When the averages were contrasted, the secondary teacher figure was only greater than that for one of the other professional groups, again, chemical scientists, where the gap was lower than for the median at -4.4%. By contrast, for primary teachers, both median and average gross weekly earnings trailed the corresponding amounts for all the non-teaching professions with the sole exception of the median for chemical scientists where the corresponding primary school figure was 3.5% higher.

Where the gross weekly earnings levels of the non-teaching professions were larger than those of either of the teaching groups, in many cases the differentials were substantially larger. For instance, when compared to primary teachers, the average earnings leads ranged from 3.3% for chemical scientists up to 71.8% for the medical practitioner group. When measured by the median amounts, the equivalent range was 3.6% to 56.6% (for the same groups). Taken in aggregate, the average of all the average gross weekly earnings figures for the non-teaching groups was 17.9% greater than the corresponding secondary teacher amount and 27.4% higher than the equivalent primary school figure. When medians are examined, the differentials are narrower at 11% and 19.8% respectively. To understand these differentials more clearly, a graphical representation of the average data, along with the equivalent figures for 2008, 2015 and 2024, is presented in Figure 1 below.

*Figure 1: Comparison of average gross weekly earnings of all comparator graduate professions in England including school teachers: 2008, 2015 and 2024**



Source: ASHE

*Based on 10 non-teaching professions in 2008 and 2015 and 11 in 2024.

A notable aspect of the chart is that medical practitioners' average gross weekly earnings far exceed those for the other groups in 2024. Another is that the lead of legal professionals has narrowed somewhat in the last year while the position of IT professionals has improved throughout.

In the 2024 pay league, these two professions were followed by five others, in this order – information technology professionals, chartered accountants, management consultants, physical scientists and engineers. What set this group of seven professions apart from the rest is that they each showed average gross weekly earnings exceeding £1,000. IT professionals' relative position improved in 2024 while most of the other occupational categories were in similar positions within the earnings tables in 2008 and 2015.

By contrast, secondary teachers were placed 11th out of 13 in 2024 at£917.70 per week, while were their primary school colleagues were at the foot of the table in the same year with an average of £849.50.

Annual earnings differentials

As mentioned above, the ONS's annual figures provide a better representation of the total earnings received by UK employees because they capture bonus payments better than the weekly statistics. This is why we have also examined the relative positions of the different professions using annual earnings figures. Table 5 below demonstrates the size of annual earnings differentials for each of the comparator jobs versus teachers in 2024. As in the earlier table, it is colour-coded so that where teachers' earnings are lower, they are shaded blue and where they are higher, red. For 2024, as with weekly earnings, the table is almost entirely blue – just over 90%. In addition, in many cases, the differentials are again significant, especially when the average amounts are considered.

The only instances in which teachers' figures are higher are for the comparisons with chemical scientists and chartered surveyors. Both the average and median secondary teacher figures were greater than the corresponding chemical scientist amounts by 3.5% and 8.3% respectively. By contrast, the chemical scientist median amount was almost identical to that for primary teachers at around £41,400. Meanwhile for chartered surveyors, the median figure stood at £43,793 which was 3% above the £41,409 primary school amount.

Table 5: Median and average gross annual earnings differentials of 11 graduate professions versus teachers in England 2024

Description	Average gross annual pay £pa	Differential with secondary school teachers %	Differential with primary school teachers %	Median gross annual pay £pa	Differential with secondary school teachers %	Differential with primary school teachers %
Secondary education teachers	44,973			45,142		
Primary education teachers	41,658			41,409		
Medical Practitioners	77,946	73.3	87.1	63,706	41.1	53.8
Information Technologists	62,960	40.0	51.1	54,900	21.6	32.6
Legal professionals	61,961	37.8	48.7	47,209	4.6	14.0
Chartered and certified accountants	57,233	27.3	37.4	51,241	13.5	23.7
Management consultants and business analysts	56,308	25.2	35.2	51,556	14.2	24.5
Engineering professionals	52,386	16.5	25.8	49,246	9.1	18.9
Biochemists and biomedical scientists	50,689	12.7	21.7	46,128	2.2	11.4
Chartered surveyors	49,371	9.8	18.5	43,793	-3.0	5.8
Pharmacists	48,943	8.8	17.5	50,272	11.4	21.4
Chemical scientists	43,415	-3.5	4.2	41,404	-8.3	0.0
Physical scientists	No data			58,432	29.4	41.1

Source: ASHE

Apart from this small number of instances where teachers are ahead, the table is dominated by blue cells in which teaching annual earnings figures trail those of the other professional groups. In many of these cases, the differentials are large. For instance, half of the differentials in the table are greater than 20% and nearly three-quarters are over 10% greater. In aggregate, the average of all the average gross annual earnings figures for the non-teaching groups was 24.8% greater than the corresponding secondary teacher amount and 34.7% higher than the equivalent primary school figure. When medians are examined, the differentials are smaller at 10.6 and 20.6% respectively.

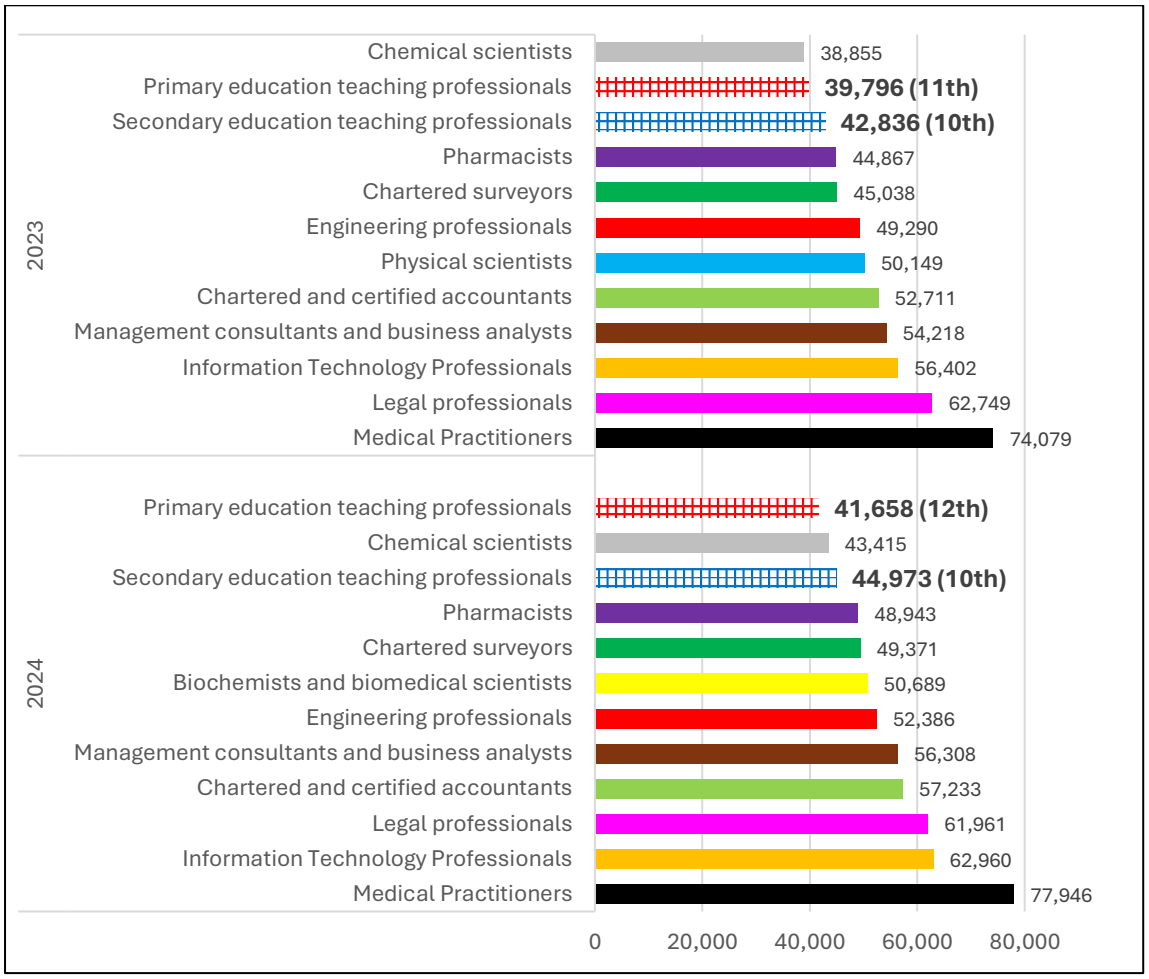
Figure 2 below provides a visual representation of these figures and adds 2023 to focus on the two latest years, in which the ONS's new methodology applies. The graph shows that,

when measured by average levels, along with chemical scientists, the two teaching groups were placed in the bottom three positions.

In contrast, seven professional groups are showing at the upper end of the earnings distribution, with average annual earnings over £50,000. At the top are medical practitioners with a figure of £77,946, while the lowest amount in this group is £50,689, for biochemists. Other occupations in this group include information technologists, legal professionals, management consultants, accountants and engineers. By comparison, secondary and primary teachers were placed tenth and 11th respectively in 2023 and tenth and 12th respectively in 2024.

A separate ranking analysis based on median annual earnings is presented in Chapter 5 and this shows that teachers are marginally better placed than when measured by averages.

*Figure 2: Comparison of average annual earnings of all comparator graduate professions in England including school teachers: 2023 and 2024**



Source: ASHE *Based on 10 non-teaching professions in both years.

1.9. England compared to Wales and Scotland

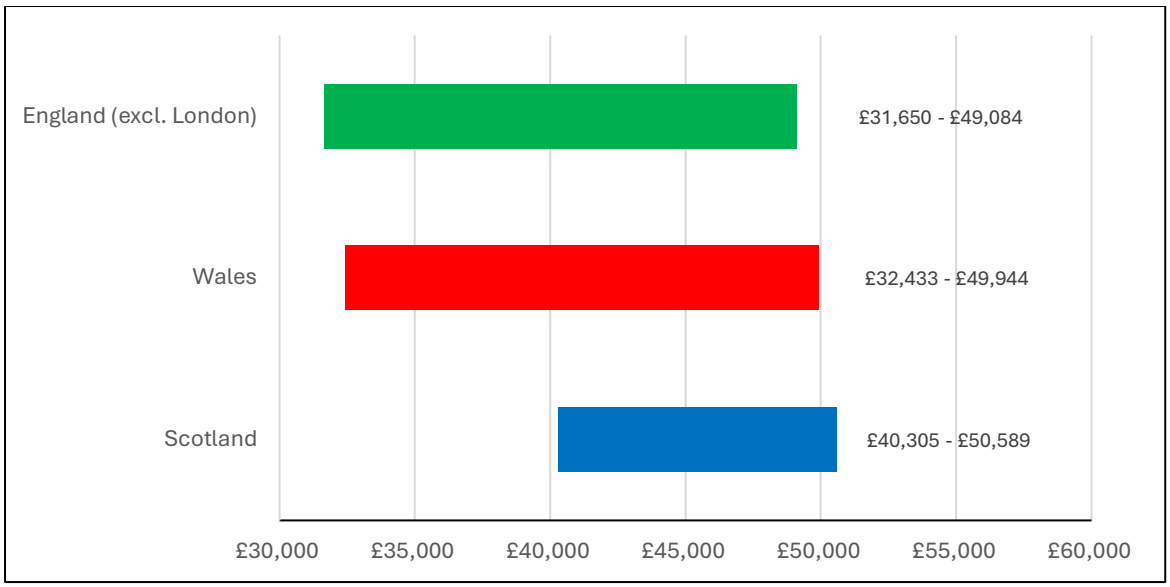
As in previous years, we have taken a broader perspective by examining how the earnings of teachers in England, Scotland and Wales compared to those for other professions. For a few years now, there have been different teacher pay ranges in England, Scotland and Wales, when prior to 2019, England and Wales were together subject to the same STRB recommendations. (Pay in Scotland continued to be set by traditional negotiations after these were replaced by the review body in England and Wales in 1991.) Following the establishment of the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body, the ranges for England and Wales started to deviate but they did not differ a great deal. Now that sufficient time has passed, however, it is useful to examine the extent to which they now diverge.

The analysis recognises that pay differences and other factors may encourage job mobility across the different locations. Moreover, from a solely geographical perspective, for some graduates in England, certain locations in Scotland and Wales may be easier to reach than major employment hubs in parts of England and so may provide viable career opportunities.

Comparisons of the pay ranges are not straightforward because some of the job titles differ across the three countries. For example, for qualified teachers in England and Wales we have used the respective main and upper pay ranges for each country (in England - national, that is, excluding London), while for Scotland we use what is termed the *Main Grade*.

Figure 3 below presents the effective minimum and maximum points from these ranges, and illustrates that for qualified teachers, the maximum is lowest in England with Wales next and Scotland highest.

*Figure 3: Qualified teacher minimum and maximum pay scales in England (excl. London), Scotland and Wales 2024/25**



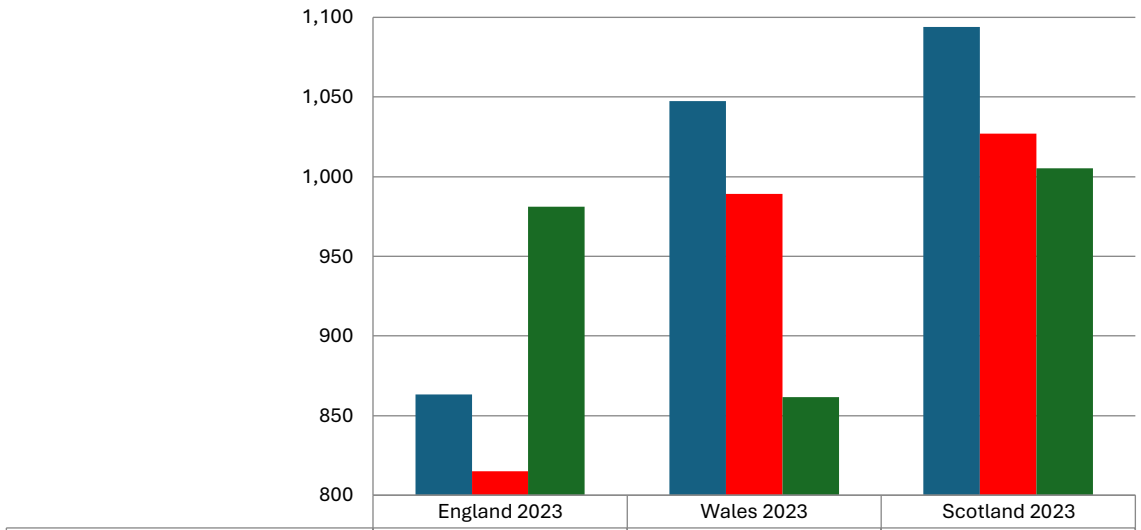
Source: NASUWT

*England – Main Pay Range M1 to Upper Pay Range U3; Wales – Main Pay Range M2 to Upper Pay Range U3; Scotland – Main grade points 1 to 5.

ONS weekly cross-country earnings comparisons

The chart below shows average gross weekly earnings for secondary and primary teachers in each of England, Scotland and Wales in comparison to the average of ten non-teaching professions in all three countries in 2023 – chemical scientists, biochemists and biochemical scientists, engineering professionals, medical practitioners, pharmacists, legal professionals, chartered surveyors, IT professionals, chartered accountants and management consultants (data for physical scientists was unavailable across all the three countries). We focus on the 2023 data because while the 2024 data is available for England, the 2024 figures for Wales and Scotland have not yet been published by the ONS.

*Figure 4: Average gross weekly earnings of teachers and combined selection of professional groups in the UK 2023**



	England 2023	Wales 2023	Scotland 2023
Secondary education teaching professionals	863.3	1,047.5	1,094.1
Primary education teaching professionals	815.2	989.1	1,026.9
Average of non-teaching professions	981.1	861.5	1,005.4

Source: ASHE

*Non-teaching occupational data are based on the same ten jobs in all countries.

As the chart above illustrates, both the secondary and primary figures in Scotland and Wales were higher than those found in England in 2023. For secondary teachers, average gross weekly earnings in Scotland in 2023 was £1,094.10 while in Wales the figure was £1,047.50. By contrast, the figure relating to 2023 in England trailed these by some way at £863.30 per week. A similar picture was apparent for primary teachers where the respective amounts were £1,026.90, £989.10 and £815.20 per week with the England figure again trailing.

As the chart above also shows, for Scotland and Wales, the non-teaching combined figures are lower than the corresponding teaching group levels. For Scotland, all three amounts in 2023 were quite close with the range of differences stretching up to around £90 per week. There was a similar pattern in Wales, but the non-teaching amount trailed those for the two teaching professions by a greater amount than in Scotland. Here the secondary teacher average gross weekly earnings were £1,047.50 while in primary schools the figure was £989.10. This compared to £861.50 per week for the non-teaching professions' combined figure.

For England, the opposite pattern was apparent in 2023 with both figures for the two teaching groups trailing the comparator group combined level. In England in 2023, for example, the non-teaching amount was £981.10 per week, compared to £863.30 for secondary teachers and £815.20 for their primary colleagues.

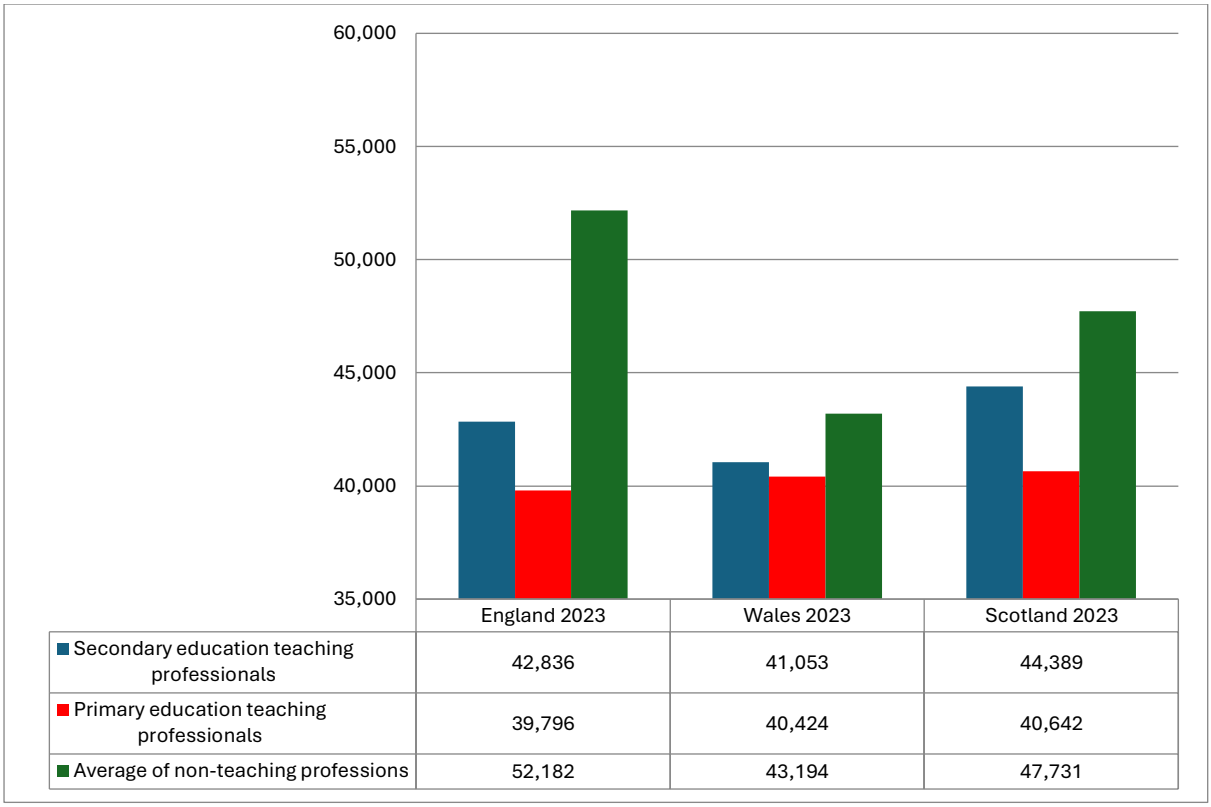
ONS annual cross-country earnings comparisons

We also carried out a similar analysis, based on average gross annual earnings, which portrayed a slightly different pattern from the one demonstrated by the weekly data across the three countries in 2023. Based on the annual statistics, all the non-teaching amounts were greater than the corresponding teaching figures. This is probably because the annual amounts are more likely to include incentive and other additional payments than the weekly sums as outlined above. Because such additional payments do not apply to any great extent for teachers, this has the effect of inflating the non-teaching annual amounts to a greater extent.

Comparing the teaching figures across the three countries, as the chart below shows, the English secondary teaching amount for 2023 was about £1,500 lower than the Scottish figure. By contrast, the 2023 English figure was some way ahead of the corresponding amount for Wales, by almost £1,800. For primary teachers, the Scottish and Welsh 2023 average annual earnings figures were very similar and between £400 and £600 higher the corresponding level found in England in 2023

A comparison with the non-teaching combined annual earnings figures across the three countries illustrates that 2023 English levels for these groups were significantly higher than those for teachers at £52,182. This compares to £47,731 in Scotland and £43,194 in Wales, but again these figures are based on the latest data available from 2023, the previous year. Another point to note is that the data in the graph is based on seven non-teaching professions as data was not available for the three scientific jobs or for medical practitioners across all the three countries in 2023.

*Figure 5: Average gross annual earnings of teachers and combined selection of professional groups in the UK 2023**



	England 2023	Wales 2023	Scotland 2023
Secondary education teaching professionals	42,836	41,053	44,389
Primary education teaching professionals	39,796	40,424	40,642
Average of non-teaching professions	52,182	43,194	47,731

Source: ASHE

*Non-teaching occupational data are based on the same seven jobs in all countries.

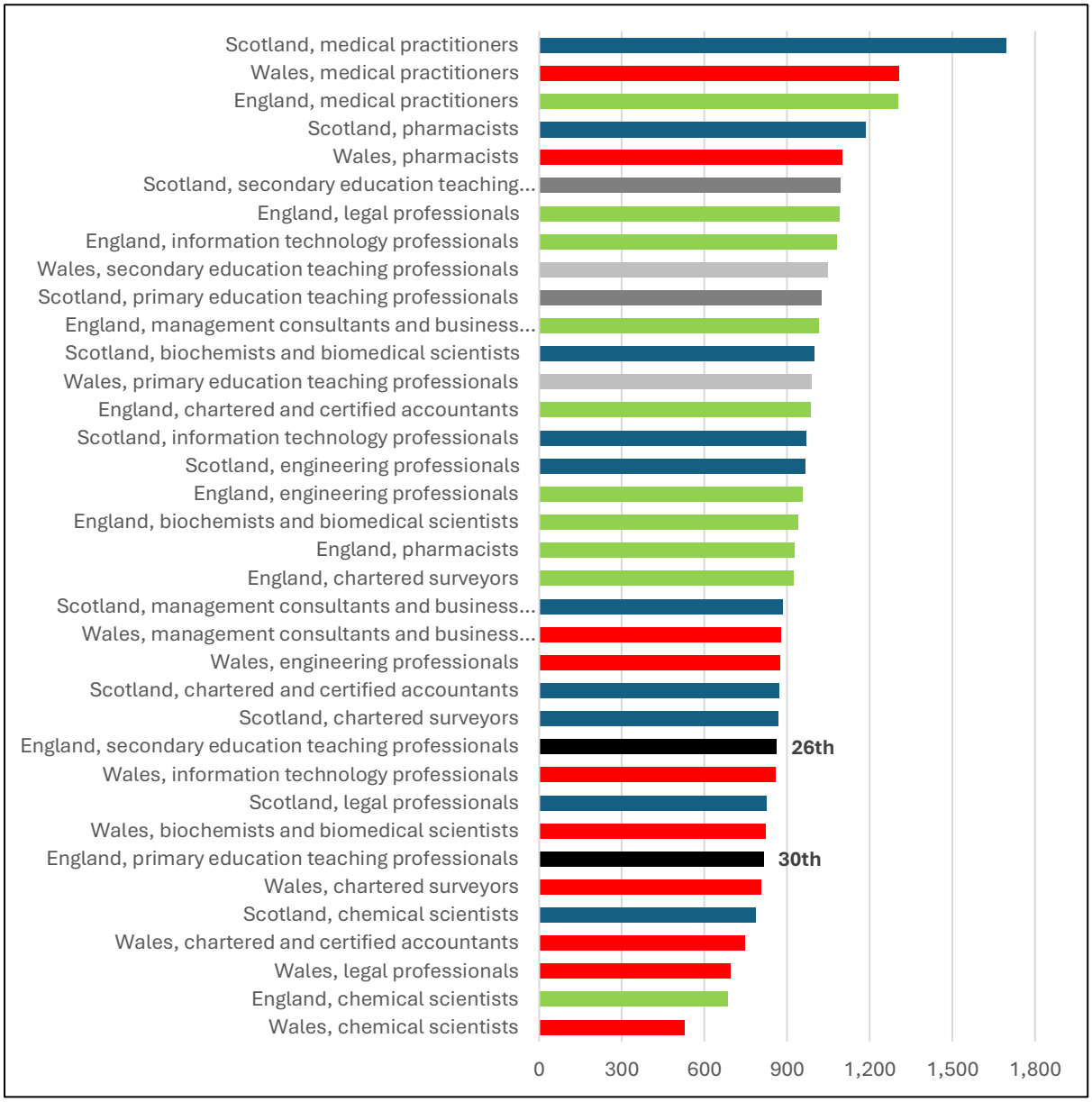
1.10. All teaching and non-teaching professions in England, Wales and Scotland

When aggregating the non-teaching jobs into one figure, as we have done above, this amount may be overly influenced by the inclusion of very high- or low-paying occupations. In addition, each workforce varies in terms of age or seniority profiles with older and more senior employees likely to be earning larger sums. Therefore, the results need to be considered with these factors in mind.

Another way of looking at the cross-country comparisons is to conduct a more detailed analysis by contrasting the earnings data of each of the featured professions in all three countries. Where data is available, we have compared average gross weekly earnings for each of the non-teaching professions in England, Scotland and Wales, plus the two teaching groups in each country. Unfortunately, because of timing issues, the data for all three countries is based on 2023 figures, the latest year for which information for all three nations is available.

Figure 6 below provides a comprehensive picture of the results showing the average gross weekly earnings for 36 professions across England, Scotland and Wales including both teaching groups. Figures for teachers in England are shaded in black (with their rankings also shown) so that they stand out while teachers in Scotland and Wales are represented by grey bars. All other non-teaching jobs are colour-coded by country with jobs in Wales shown in red, those in Scotland in blue and non-teaching occupations in England in green.

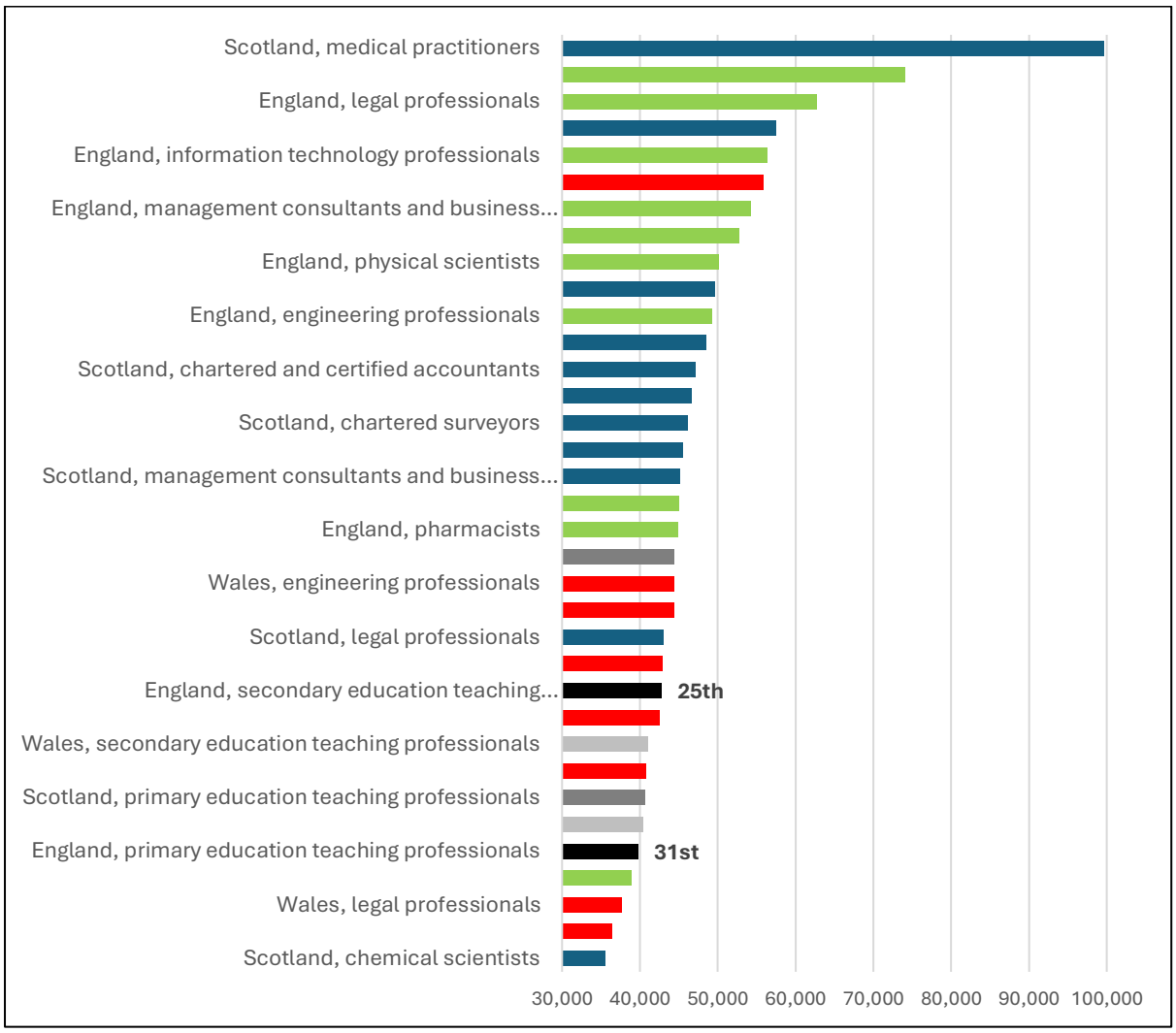
*Figure 6: Average gross weekly earnings of teachers and selection of professional groups in the UK 2023**



Source: ASHE *Figures based on 36 occupational groups in Wales, England and Scotland. Data for all three countries is for 2023.

One of the clearest trends apparent from the chart above is that very few of the non-teaching professions based in England are located towards the bottom end of the pay table. In fact, only three feature in the bottom half of the table and even then, two are very close to the middle rankings while chemical scientists are the only relatively low-earning non-teaching profession in England. The other seven are placed in the top half while both teaching groups in England are in the lower half of the chart. More specifically, the English secondary school figure was positioned 26th out of 36 while the primary amount was in 30th position, the lowest of all the teaching figures and only higher than a handful of lower-paid non-teaching professions in Scotland and Wales as well as English chemical scientists.

*Figure 7: Average gross annual earnings of teachers and selection of professional groups in the UK 2023**



Source: ASHE

*Figures based on 35 occupational groups in Wales, England and Scotland. Data for all three countries is for 2023.

The chart above shows the corresponding data for average gross annual earnings and illustrates a similar pattern in respect of the two English teaching jobs. The 35 jobs in total are ranked and both English teaching groups are placed in the bottom half of the table with secondary teachers in 25th while their primary teaching colleagues are in 31st position.

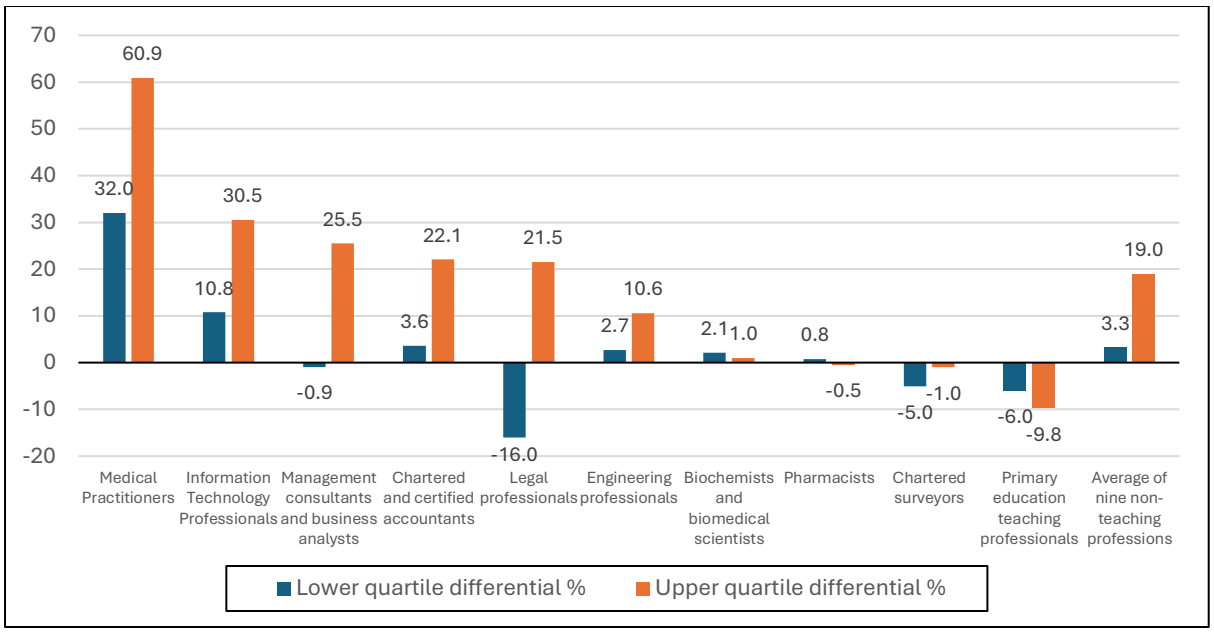
The data for all three countries again relates to 2023, the latest year where information for all nations was available. In comparison to the corresponding graph based on average gross weekly earnings the English teacher rankings do not change a great deal. For examples, when measured by average gross earnings, the English secondary teacher ranking stood at 26th out of 36 jobs while primary teachers were placed 30th. When measured according to annual amounts the positions were 25th and 31st respectively although this was based on 35 jobs.

As in previous reports, the focus of much of our research is to examine the relative attractiveness of careers in the teaching profession and other non-teaching jobs within England in terms of pay relativities but also to highlight the alternative vocational paths available to graduates outside England. As the charts above demonstrate, many of these other options could lead to a job outside teaching and/or outside of England as many of these routes offer higher rewards, whether measured by weekly or annual earnings. Overall, however, non-teaching roles, particularly those in England rather than Wales or Scotland, tend to offer the highest remuneration potential for well-qualified professionals.

1.11. Analysis of quartiles

Most of the focus of our findings so far has been on median and average statistics which tend to be representative of the middle portions of pay ranges. To understand some of the trends affecting those positioned higher-up or lower-down the earnings distribution, Chapter 5 includes an examination of lower and upper quartile gross weekly earnings figures from ASHE. One of the findings from Chapter 5 is presented in Figure 9 below. This shows the quartile levels of gross weekly earnings for nine non-teaching professional groups versus secondary teachers in 2024. In addition, for completeness, we include the differentials between secondary and primary teachers as well as making a comparison with the average for all nine non-teaching groups where data was disclosed.

*Figure 8: Comparison of lower and upper quartile gross weekly earnings for nine non-teaching professions with secondary school teachers in 2024**



Source: ASHE

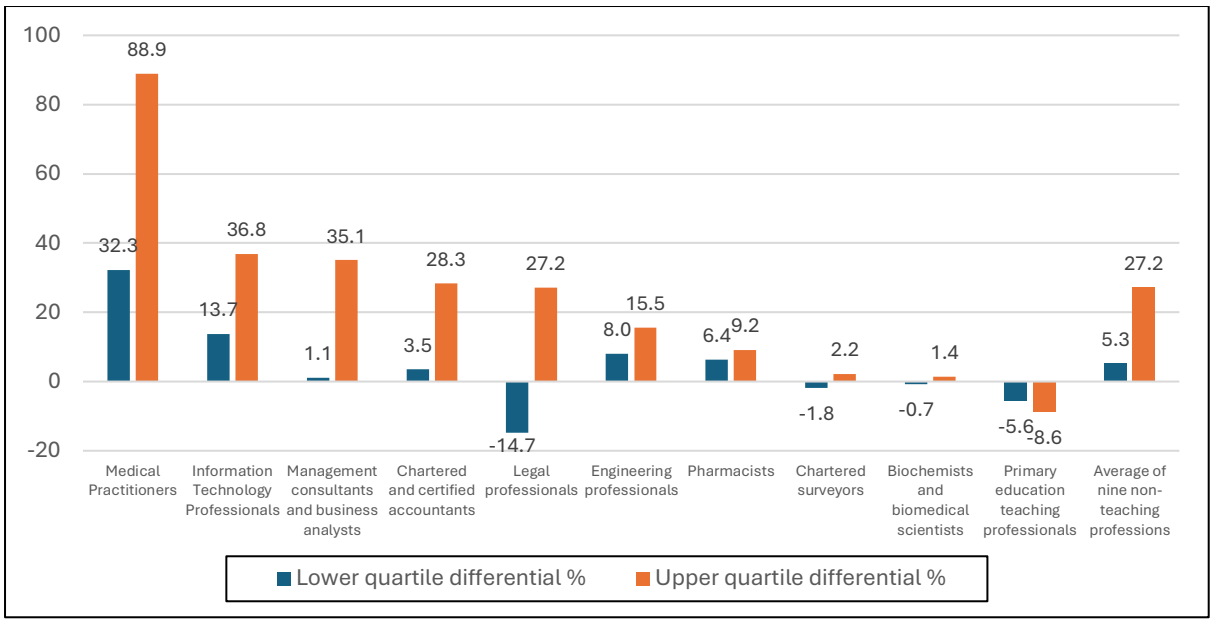
*Based on nine non-teaching professions.

For each comparison, there are two bars, with the left one representing the lower quartile differential and the right, the upper quartile equivalent. The two bars on the far right represent combined quartile figures for all nine non-teaching jobs together and show that the secondary teachers' lower quartile amount trailed this amount by 3.3%. By contrast, at more senior levels, the upper quartile differential was 19%, again in favour of the non-teaching occupations.

Another notable aspect of the chart is that each of the non-teaching professions' individual quartile figures are mostly higher than that for secondary teachers, and therefore the equivalent primary teacher figure(s) too. The position of primary teachers' quartile levels relative to secondary teachers is shown on the right side of the graph demonstrating a shortfall of 6% at the lower quartile and 9.8% at the upper quartile.

We also carried out a similar quartile analysis using annual gross earnings figures as shown in the chart below (figure 10). The results are similar to those for the analysis based on gross weekly earnings but the differentials in favour of the non-teaching professions are slightly larger than those in the previous chart.

Figure 9: Comparison of lower and upper quartile gross annual earnings for nine non-teaching professions with secondary school teachers in 2024



Source: ASHE

*Based on nine non-teaching professions.

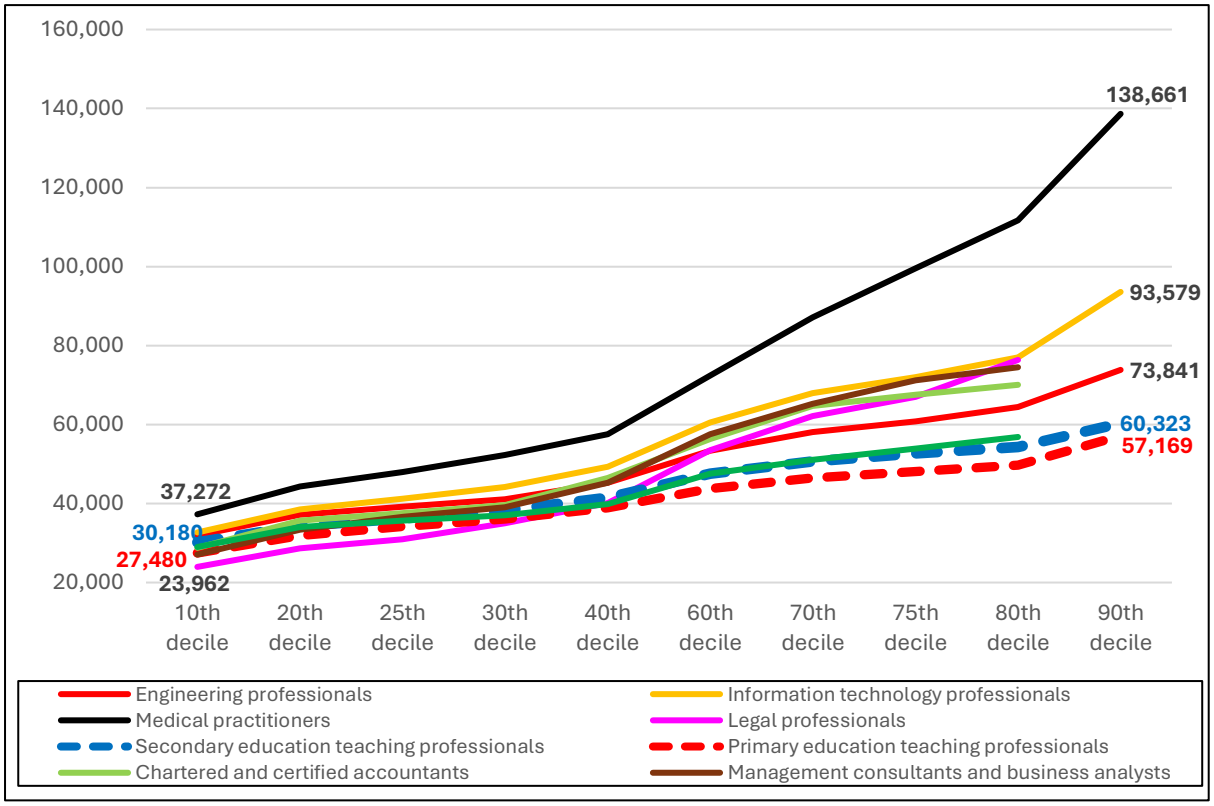
Overall, the two bars on the right of the chart (showing the average for the nine non-teaching professions) indicate that at the lower quartile level, the secondary teachers' amount trailed the average of the nine non-teaching jobs by 5.3%. By contrast, at more senior levels the upper quartile differential was larger at 27.2%, again in favour of the non-teaching occupations. As the chart also shows, the equivalent primary school figures are lower than those of their secondary school colleagues meaning they trail the non-teaching professions by an even greater degree when measured using quartile levels.

1.12. Analysis of higher- and lower-earning professional groups

Beyond medians, averages and quartiles, ASHE also includes statistics showing earnings at different points of the distribution for each professional group. For example, it also publishes decile and quartile figures at set intervals throughout the whole pay distribution. As is clear from the chart, data for all the professions is not disclosed for all the decile levels due to sample limitations. Using this information, we have extended the analysis to include these specific points. Our full findings are presented in Chapter 5 and as we point out there, an analysis of the upper and lower ends of the pay range is of particular interest because the STRB has expressed a wish to more closely review the pay arrangements for school teachers

that take on additional management and leadership responsibilities, and entry-level pay has been a focus for a number of years too.

*Figure 10: Lower to upper decile annual earnings levels for all comparator graduate professions in England including school teachers: 2024**



Source: ASHE

*Based on seven non-teaching professions.

To begin with, a summary of our findings relating to annual earnings is shown in Figure 11 above which plots all the 2024 decile and quartile values for jobs where information was available. In Chapter 5, we also examine the same data relating to gross weekly earnings but because the pattern is very similar it is not summarised in this section. To make the chart clearer, the data for the two teaching professions is represented by thicker, dotted lines that are coloured blue in the case of secondary teachers and red for primary teachers. It is clear from the chart that primary and secondary teachers' gross weekly earnings levels are bunched together with a number of other professions around the mid-point for lower decile levels although the primary teacher group is towards the bottom of this sub-group. By contrast, both groups drop to the bottom of the comparisons at the higher decile points.

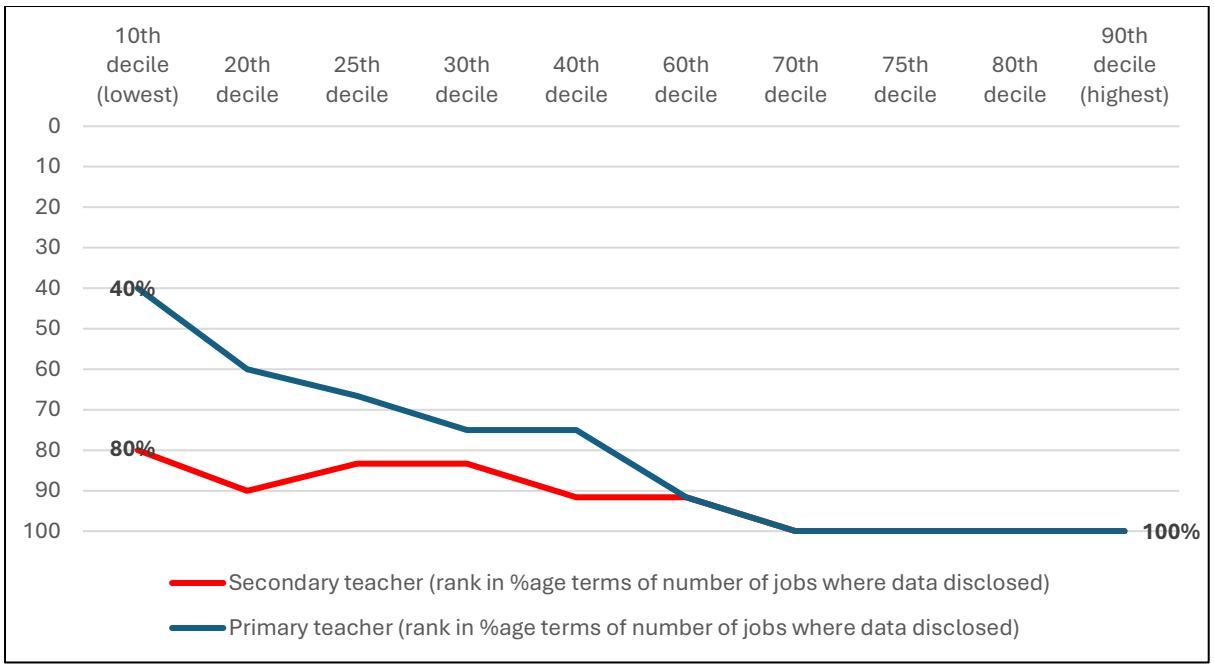
The data from the chart above can be presented in a different way whereby the teachers' relative positions at each statistical point can be represented as a percentage that summarises their ranking relative to the total number of occupational groups whose earnings are being compared.

For example, at the 10th decile level, where primary teachers are placed eighth out of 10 jobs, the percentage displayed is 80%, while they are ninth out of 10 jobs at the 20th decile position, giving a corresponding value of 90%. Therefore, anything under 50% in Figure 12 places teachers in the top half of the rankings and anything above 50% puts them in the bottom half of the pay rankings. A value of 100% means the teaching group has the lowest value of any of the earnings levels for the non-teaching professions for which data is disclosed at that statistical point.

For both the secondary and primary teacher comparisons, we have omitted the other teaching group, so, in each case, the differences for each are only with the non-teaching occupations. By presenting the data in this way it is easier to appreciate how the relative placings of the two teaching groups drops as we move higher up the respective earnings distributions, through the deciles.

The chart shows that, as pay levels of for all the occupations got larger, the overall trends for both teacher rankings is downwards although the primary teacher amounts were lower across the whole distribution. For example, primary teachers start with a lower decile position of 80% which places them in the bottom half of the rankings. From here, there is a gradual decline before falling to 100% for the four highest pay levels in the chart meaning primary teachers are the lowest paid at the 70th, 75th, 80th and 90th deciles.

*Figure 11: Primary and secondary teacher positions for quartile and decile pay levels versus selected non-teaching professions as measured by annual earnings in 2024**



Source: ASHE

*Based on seven non-teaching professions.

Turning to secondary teachers, the pattern was similar, but the group's relative position at the lower end of the earnings distribution was better than that of their colleagues in primary schools. For instance, secondary teachers are fourth out of 10 jobs (40%) when 10th decile earnings are examined and are placed in the bottom half of the rankings at all the other eight points presented. As demonstrated, at the upper end of the distribution on the right side of the chart, secondary teachers are also the lowest-earnings, on average, when compared to the non-teaching professions for which data is disclosed.

1.13. Key findings

School teachers' earnings

- Basic pay increases for the teaching profession in England largely trail those found in the whole economy in a majority of the past 17 years. In particular, the median whole economy uplift was higher than the corresponding teacher headline rate in nine of those years and lower in seven of them, while in 2017 the two were equal
- Using data from the ONS' annual ASHE survey, earnings for teachers in England continue to compare unfavourably with those for other graduate occupations,

especially when comparisons are made according to gross (rather than merely basic) earnings

- While gaps between the earnings of both teaching groups and those of other graduate professions are significant at average and median levels, the differentials are even wider at upper quartile and the highest decile levels
- Even at the lower quartile positions of the earnings distributions, secondary and primary teachers were still not well-placed, with their gross weekly earnings showing at seventh and tenth positions when ranked against those for nine other non-teaching professions in 2024
- When measured by median basic weekly earnings, primary school teachers were ranked twelfth out of thirteen comparable graduate professions while secondary teachers were positioned eighth
- In terms of average basic weekly earnings in the same year, against the same 11 non-teaching professions, the relative positions worsened, with secondary teachers falling to ninth while primary teachers dropped to bottom place
- Using a different measure, gross weekly earnings, which includes additional elements of pay over and above basic salary, teachers showed in similar positions towards the lower end of the pay rankings, positioned ninth and twelfth place based on median comparisons with 11 non-teaching professions
- Teachers were again more poorly placed when averages were used, with secondary teachers positioned in eleventh place while primary teachers' average gross weekly earnings fell to the bottom, in thirteenth position
- Average gross weekly earnings leads for many of the non-teaching groups were substantial with a combined non-teaching figure exceeding the equivalent secondary teacher level by 17.9% and the primary school one by 27.4%
- When measured by annual gross earnings, which more accurately captures the impact of bonus payments as well as basic earnings, the two teaching groups are also placed at the lower end of the pay table when compared to the same 11 non-teaching professions. Here, the combined non-teaching average annual amount was 24.8% higher than the corresponding secondary school level and 34.7% greater than the primary school figure

- Outside of London, the pay ranges in Wales and Scotland are slightly more generous than the rest of England
- An analysis of secondary and primary teachers' earnings versus the average gross weekly earnings for the full range of 36 non-teaching and teaching professionals in England, Scotland and Wales covered by this research showed that neither of the English teaching groups featured in the top half of the ranking
- Out of 36 professional occupations, primary teachers in England were placed 30th while secondary teachers were positioned at 26th
- A similar analysis of average gross annual earnings resulted in primary teachers being placed 25th and secondary teachers positioned 31st out of 35 professional occupations where data was disclosed
- An analysis of comparable annual gross earnings figures at the upper end of the earnings distribution, at the 70th, 80th and 90th percentiles as well as the upper quartile, shows that the primary teaching group is placed bottom when compared with non-teaching gross annual earnings levels in each case. At these higher earnings levels, secondary teachers were positioned slightly better but still tended to be placed at the lower end of the pay rankings. For example, at the 80th percentile, for example, secondary teachers were positioned ninth out of 11 jobs, while at the 90th percentile, they stood at fifth out of six professions with only primary teachers in a lower ranking
- The relative earnings positions for more experienced teachers may support the STRB's findings in respect of the difficulties schools are experiencing when it comes to retaining experienced teachers.

Teacher retention

- The leaving rate for teachers has been around 10% for over a decade except for the pandemic period when it fell to just below 8%
- There was a hope that the lower turnover levels seen during the pandemic might have endured but the latest STRB report found that the rate has risen once more to 9.7%, which the review body describes as "concerning"

- Leaving rates are typically higher in secondary schools and in subjects such as STEM and modern languages while they were also higher in academies than in local-authority controlled schools
- A survey in 2023 by the Department of Education found that more than a third (up from a quarter in 2022) of teachers and leaders reported that they were considering leaving the state school sector in the next 12 months for reasons other than retirement
- Data from SchoolDash showed that the cumulative number of vacancies for 2023/24 is running close to the exceptionally high levels seen in the previous year
- Teacher vacancies have increased by 20% to just over 2,800 in November 2023 on the previous year, and has more than doubled in the last three years
- Temporarily filled posts also increased from around 2,100 to just under 3,700 over the three years to November 2023.

Teacher recruitment

- Recruitment appears to have worsened post-pandemic with the overall numbers enrolling on Initial Teacher Training (ITT) decreasing significantly since 2021 although there has been a slight recovery in the last couple of years for secondary entrants but levels are still way below pre-pandemic levels
- On top of this, recruitment targets were missed for both primary and secondary schools with only 88% and 62% of the respective goals achieved for 2025
- In addition, several key subjects had teacher intakes that were substantially below the required number of trainees
- Between 2010 and 2024, the number of primary teachers increased by just over 11.4% while secondary teacher headcount fell by 0.5%
- In the latest year, however, the number of secondary teachers increased by 0.7% while primary and nursery numbers dropped by 1.3%.

Pupil numbers

- Between 2008 and 2024 the number of primary school pupils increased by over 525,000 and the numbers of those attending secondary schools rose by over 375,000, increases of 12.8% and 11.4% respectively

- In the latest year, the pattern was different, however, with nearly 40,000 more children in secondary schools when compared to the previous year while over 32,800 fewer pupils attended primary school
- The Department of Education regularly analyses pupil data to make projections. In its latest report, from 2024, it stated that the peak in the secondary school population is expected to be in 2026 and 2027, before decreasing by the end of the current projection period in 2028
- In contrast, pupil numbers peaked in primary schools in 2019 with numbers declining since then and they are expected to continue to do so over the coming decade due to a lower number of births since 2013.

Pupil-teacher ratios

- The pupil-teacher ratio in secondary schools has increased over the last decade whereas the equivalent statistic in primary schools remained relatively unchanged over the same period
- In secondary schools, the number of pupils per teacher in England stood at 16.8 in 2024 while the corresponding proportion in primary and nursery schools was 20.8.
- Put into a wider perspective, corresponding figures based on the latest EU data covering 26 countries showed at 11.6 and 13.3 respectively.
- Placing the English figures into a wider perspective, the latest EU figures for 2022 show that the average pupil to teacher ratio across all the 26 EU countries measured stood at 11.6 in lower secondary and 11.2 in upper secondary schools, substantially lower than the 16.8 found in England. For primary schools, the average across the EU was 13.3 in 2022 while the highest was 18.5, in Romania. By contrast, the latest English figure was significantly larger than both, at 20.8.

Hours worked and job satisfaction

- A Department of Education survey of the working lives of teachers from September 2024 showed that teaching leaders' reported full-time working hours averaging 58.2 a week while teachers reported 52.4 hours a week on average during term time. This compares to a UK full-time average across the whole economy of 36.8 hours
- In respect of levels of satisfaction with pay, 69% of the whole sample of teachers said they were not satisfied with their salary levels in 2023

- By contrast, the responses to questions regarding satisfaction with their current jobs and classroom teaching were much more positive with 81% reporting that they were satisfied with their current jobs some or all the time. Similarly, 95% responded that this was the case for their experience of teaching in the classroom.
- On the other hand, teachers' views on whether they are valued by society and the Government were largely negative as were their responses to questions relating to their own anxiety levels and stress levels.
- Just over one-third of teachers and leaders (36%) indicated that they were considering leaving the state school sector in the next 12 months, for reasons other than retirement, with the most reported factors influencing teachers' responses including workload (94%), dissatisfaction with pay (63%), dealing with parents or carers (41%) and personal reasons (25%).

2. Earnings for English school teachers in context

Our last report, published two years ago, was written at a time when the UK economy had just emerged from the pandemic and was facing historically high inflationary pressures that resulted from rises in energy costs and supply chain disruptions. Since 2022, the situation has changed significantly with the pandemic firmly behind us, and substantially lower rates of inflation, but the cost of living remains an issue for many.

Despite this, many of the problems affecting the teaching profession that we have reported on in previous reports persist. For instance, when surveyed, teachers often mention workload and pay as areas that are of most concern to them, and many of the metrics used to determine the health of the profession have deteriorated in recent years.

In this section, we look at a range of non-pay issues that provide some context to the later discussion of earnings trends. There are many sources of data available in this area and each year, the School Teachers Review Body (STRB) provides a useful outline of the overall situation. Also in this section, we draw on some of this evidence as well as information from other sources to provide a comprehensive picture of the current environment facing teachers. This includes areas such as:

- The latest pay award
- STRB summary findings
- Vacancies
- Teacher numbers
- Split between standard, leadership and head teaching roles
- Pupil numbers
- Teacher training intake
- Teacher-pupil ratios
- Hours worked
- Satisfaction levels and career intentions.

2.1. Latest pay awards

Since our last report in 2022, the two annual pay awards for teachers have been higher than most of those awarded over the last decade or so, but they did follow a period of notably high inflation. In 2023, a 6.5% rise was applied to all pay ranges and advisory points. In addition, there were higher increases to the bottom of the Main Pay Range so that the minimum starting salary increased to £30,000 outside London. The latest award, in 2024, saw a 5.5% across-the-board uplift for all teachers. Inflation had come down by then, but the previous

lengthy period of pay restraint had held earnings down in real terms and they have still not recovered (see STRB findings below).

2.2. STRB summary findings

The latest School Teachers Review Body (STRB) report is the thirty-fourth in the series and its 5.5% increase recommendation was designed to address the structural deterioration in the pay of teachers relative to that for comparable professions. It added that the changes are designed to improve levels of recruitment and retention while representing "taxpayer value for money."

The deterioration is evidenced by the finding that teachers' median gross earnings in 2022/23 were 17.9% below their level in 2010/11 in real terms. By contrast, in real terms median gross earnings for the whole economy were just 3.9% below their 2010/11 level. Therefore, while many UK employees experienced real-terms falls in earnings over the period, teachers have been more significantly affected by the deterioration, with a 14-percentage point deficit.

Teachers pay versus the wider economy

More specifically, in terms of current pay levels, for the first time, the STRB commissioned remuneration consultants to benchmark teaching pay levels against the wider market. Comparisons were made between the current teaching pay range and four regions that included inner London, outer London, all of England excluding London, and the London Fringe. Four teaching bands were analysed including 'Early career teacher (M1-M2)', 'Qualified teacher having completed ECT (M3-M6)', '5 years experienced teacher (M5-6/U1-3)' and 'Upper pay range roles'. The findings were as follows:

- The minimum starting salary for teachers is between the lower quartile and median for comparable roles
- The position is less competitive for teachers towards the upper end of the Main Pay Range (MPR) with teachers employed on points M5-6 currently positioned below the lower quartile for roles identified as comparable
- Salary levels for teachers on the Upper Pay Range (UPR) are better positioned, located between the lower quartile and median pay level for comparators

- Within primary schools, the comparative salary position of leadership roles is generally below the lower quartile base salary data in all regions, while pay for roles in secondary schools is better aligned to the relevant data.

The STRB went on to illustrate how the three main teaching pay ranges compare to the distribution of economy-wide annual gross earnings for professional occupations over the period 2010-11 to 2022-23. This suggested that the relative competitiveness of teachers' earnings was lower in 2022/23 compared to 2010/11. The overall downward trend resulted mainly from the fall in the real-terms value of teachers' median earnings throughout the early 2010s, which was followed by some improvement between 2018/19 and 2020/21.

As mentioned above, the STRB estimated that teachers' median gross earnings in 2022/23 were 17.9% below their level in 2010/11 in real terms whereas median gross earnings for the whole economy were 3.9% below their 2010/11 level. By contrast, median gross earnings for the non-teaching professional occupations were 12.7% below their 2010/11 level, in real terms.

Not surprisingly, the overall effect of this has been detrimental to the teaching profession though the STRB stated that the impact has not been uniform across different teaching areas. For example, external earnings opportunities for teachers of certain subjects are more plentiful than for others. The STRB states that this has caused major problems with recruitment to several secondary subjects such as physics, modern languages and design & technology. This has been intensified by relatively poor retention rates for these and other subjects. In fact, in many subjects, such as computing, modern languages, information and communications technology and physics, teaching is conducted by high proportions of teachers without a relevant post-A-Level qualification in the subjects they teach. Such issues are also more common in disadvantaged locations, thereby exacerbating the challenges that pupils from these areas already face.

The STRB extended its analysis to examine differences in the relative position of teachers' earnings by age. This demonstrated that the widest differentials with other non-teaching professional occupations were for those at the start of their careers. The report also focused on graduate starting salaries, referencing various studies and examining how non-teaching graduate starting salaries compared to those found in teaching. At the median, non-teaching initial rates were in the range of £32,000 to £33,500 in 2023. This exceeded the teaching

starting rates in England and the London fringe that stood at £30,000 and £31,350 respectively at the same time. In contrast, teacher starting rates were slightly higher for inner and outer London where they stood at £36,745 and £34,514 respectively.

More generally, in addition to pay, some of the other points made by the STRB included:

- Teacher recruitment targets continue to be missed across all secondary subjects with all but three subjects falling short in this respect. The trend in both primary and secondary recruitment is worsening
- The proportion of hours taught by teachers without a post-A-Level subject qualification is considerable for some subjects. The situation has remained relatively stable over recent years but problems are most acute in the most disadvantaged schools
- The teacher leaving rate, at 9.7%, has returned to pre-pandemic levels which the STRB describes as "concerning"
- A 2023 survey by the Department of Education found that more than a third (up from of a quarter in 2022) of teachers and leaders reported that they were considering leaving the state school sector in the next 12 months for reasons other than retirement
- Data from SchoolDash showed that the cumulative number of vacancies for 2023/24 is running close to the exceptionally high levels seen in the previous year.

2.3. Teacher vacancies

Aside from the STRB findings, the latest data from the ONS shows that teacher vacancies have increased by 20%. from a little above 2,300 in November 2022to just over 2,800 in November 2023. But the figure has more than doubled in the last three years from around 1,100 in November 2020. The number of temporarily filled posts also increased: from around 2,100 to just under 3,700 over three years.

When the vacancy data is split by secondary and nursery and primary schools it shows that most job openings for classroom teachers are in the secondary sector. For example, in 2023/24 there were 1,850 vacancies in local authority secondary schools and academies, and 719 found in similar nursery and primary schools. These figures represented increases of 23.2% and 19.8% respectively on the previous year.

An analysis of how these total vacancies translate into vacancy rates illustrates a clear pattern with higher proportion of vacancies found in academies than in local-authority maintained schools. For instance, classroom teacher vacancy rates in primary and secondary academies were 0.5% and 0.9% respectively, while the respective figures for their counterparts in the local authority managed sector were 0.2% and 0.5%. Overall, across all state-funded schools, which also includes special schools and pupil referral units, the total vacancy rate stood at 0.6%.

Turning to more senior roles, there was less variation for all leadership roles where the vacancy rate for every type of school has been within the range 0.2% to 0.3% since 2010/11. Similarly, the equivalent range for headteachers across the same period was between 0.1% and 0.2% while it was between 0.2% and 0.4% for 'other leadership' posts. While all these ranges are quite narrow, the top end amounts tended to be found in the second half of the period with lower levels tending to be found in the period 2010 to 2015 demonstrating a slight worsening.

2.4. Teacher numbers

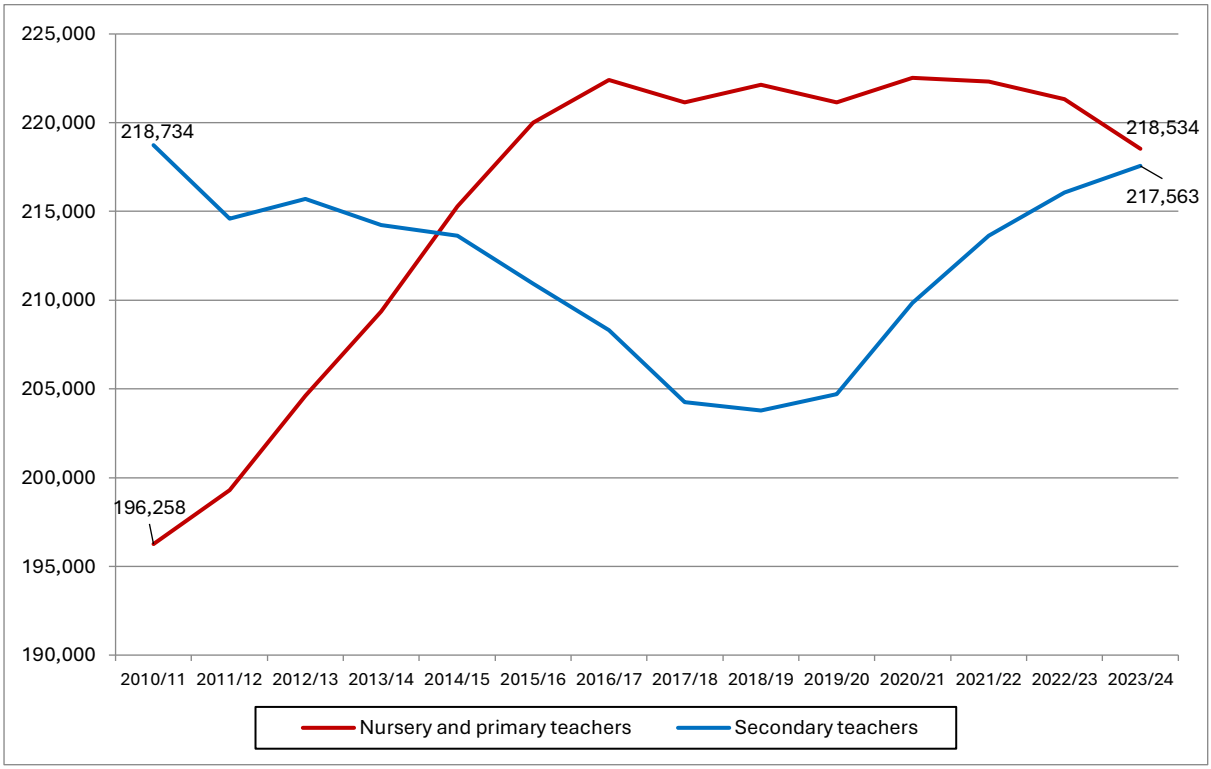
The ONS also records extensive data on teacher numbers and some of the main findings are presented in the charts that follow. The ONS outlines the latest available information on the number of teachers employed in both secondary and primary and nursery schools since 2010/11. It illustrates that there have been some large fluctuations over the last decade or so, with an overall upward trend for primary teachers, whereas the figures for secondary schools start and end at very similar levels.

More specifically, the chart illustrates that the pattern was more complex between these points with the number of full-time equivalent teachers in English nursery and primary teachers increasing steadily between 2010/11 and 2016/17. This represented a rise in the number of such teachers of around 26,000 over the period. Following this, primary teacher numbers levelled out at just over 220,000 before falling to around 218,534 in the latest year. Nevertheless, over the whole period between 2010 and 2021 the number of primary teachers rose by 11.4%.

The pattern for secondary teachers was almost the mirror image of the nursery and primary trend as the chart below demonstrates. Since 2010, the number of secondary teachers fell

from just below 219,000 to a low point of 203,782 in 2018/19. In 2019/20, the trend changed direction with numbers rising to a peak of 217,563 in the latest year. Overall, this represented a small fall of 0.5% over the whole period since 2010/11.

Figure 12: Number of full-time equivalent teachers in England 2010 to 2024



Source: 'School workforce in England 2023: June 2024', ONS

2.5. Changes in composition of teaching roles

As well as publishing data on the number of teachers working in secondary and primary schools, the ONS also discloses data on the share of different types of teacher found within the overall numbers. By examining this data, it is possible to determine how the proportion of senior to non-senior roles has changed over the last decade or so.

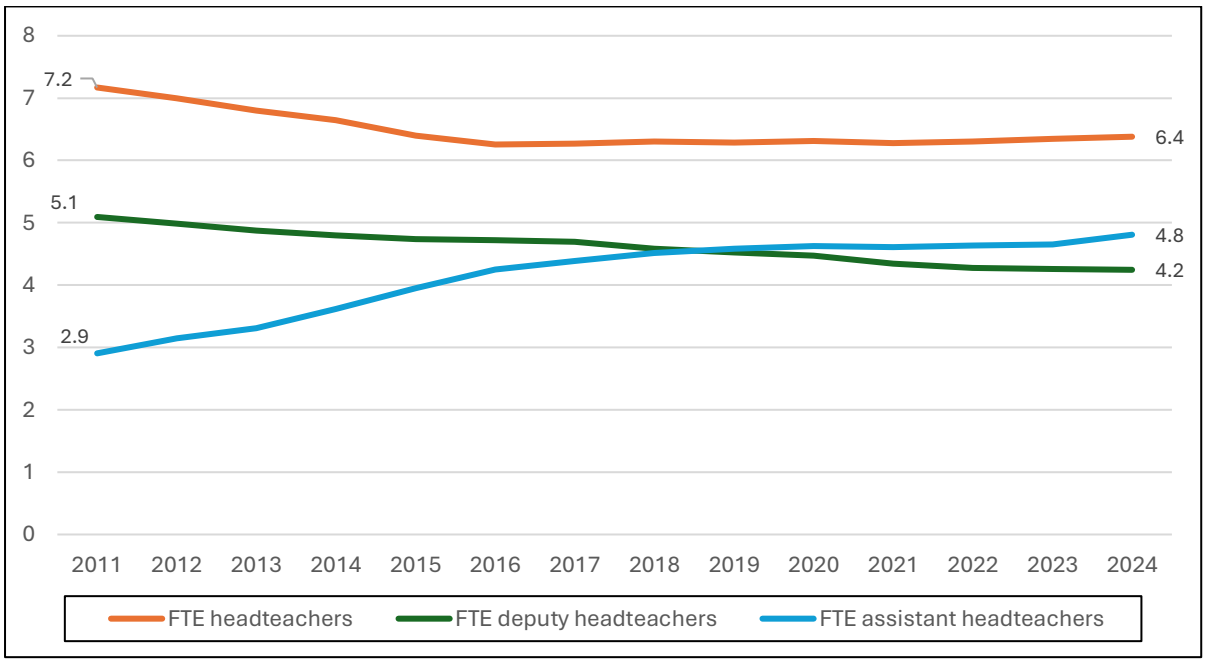
The two charts below present this information for the period 2011 to 2024, drawing on data for six main teaching roles in secondary and nursery and primary schools: headteachers; deputy heads; assistant headteachers; other leadership roles; classroom teachers; and those without qualified teacher status in both secondary and nursery and primary schools. In the case of primary schools, over this period, there appears to be a slight fall in the proportion of the most senior staff, heads and deputy headteachers, whereas there appears to be a corresponding rise in less senior roles such as assistant headteachers and leadership

roles. By contrast, in secondary schools, the proportion of classroom teachers has fallen slightly in place of more leadership teachers and assistant headteachers.

Figure 14 shows the position in primary and nursery schools, highlighting the three most senior roles where the most significant changes occurred. The chart shows that the proportions of headteachers and deputy headteachers have fallen over the period while the proportion of assistant headteachers rose. More specifically, the proportion of full-time equivalent assistant headteachers rose from 2.9% of all teachers in 2011 up to 4.8% in 2024. At the same time, the proportion of headteachers fell from 7.2% to 6.4% while the corresponding figures for deputy headteachers showed a decrease from 5.1% to 4.2%.

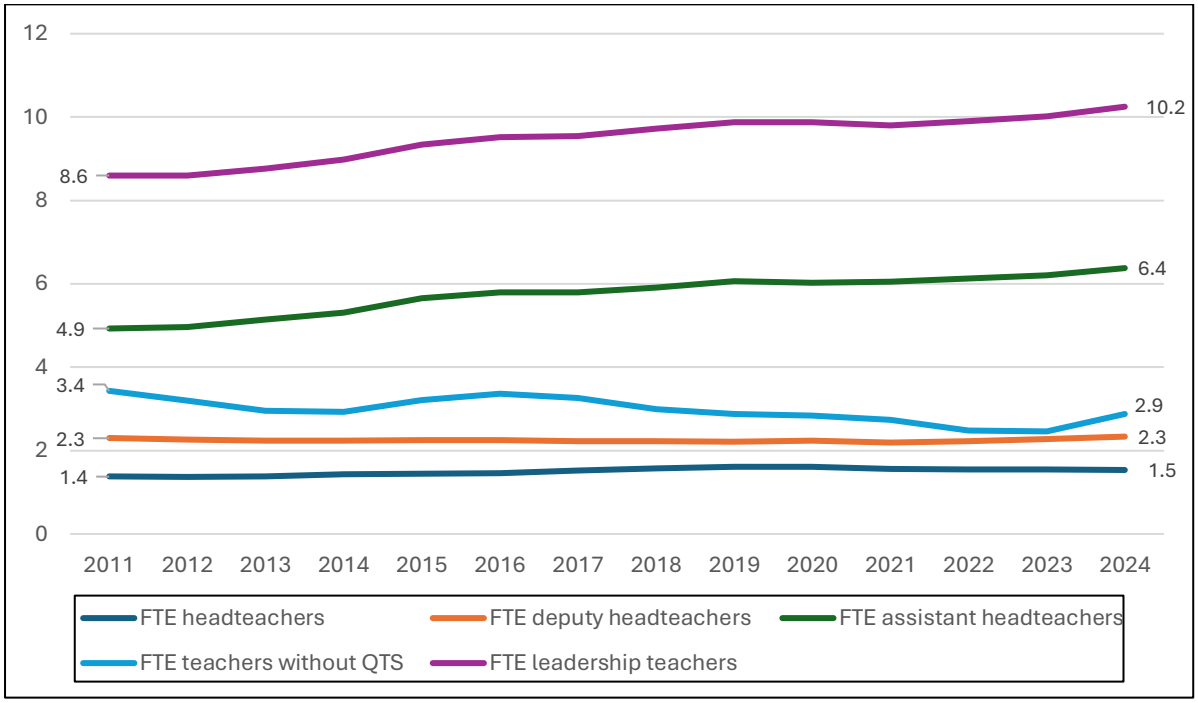
Assistant headteachers play an important role in school management structures, liaising between heads of departments or faculties and deputy heads, with the latter representing the first rung of senior leadership. The rise in the proportion of assistant heads, at the same time as the proportions of more senior roles have fallen, indicates something of a shift from the most senior roles to one that is a little more junior in primary schools. But why this might be talking place is a broader question.

Figure 13: Share of managerial roles in nursery and primary schools 2011 to 2024



Source: 'School workforce in England 2023: June 2024', Office for National Statistics

Figure 14: Share of managerial roles in secondary schools 2011 to 2024



Source: 'School workforce in England 2023: June 2024', Office for National Statistics

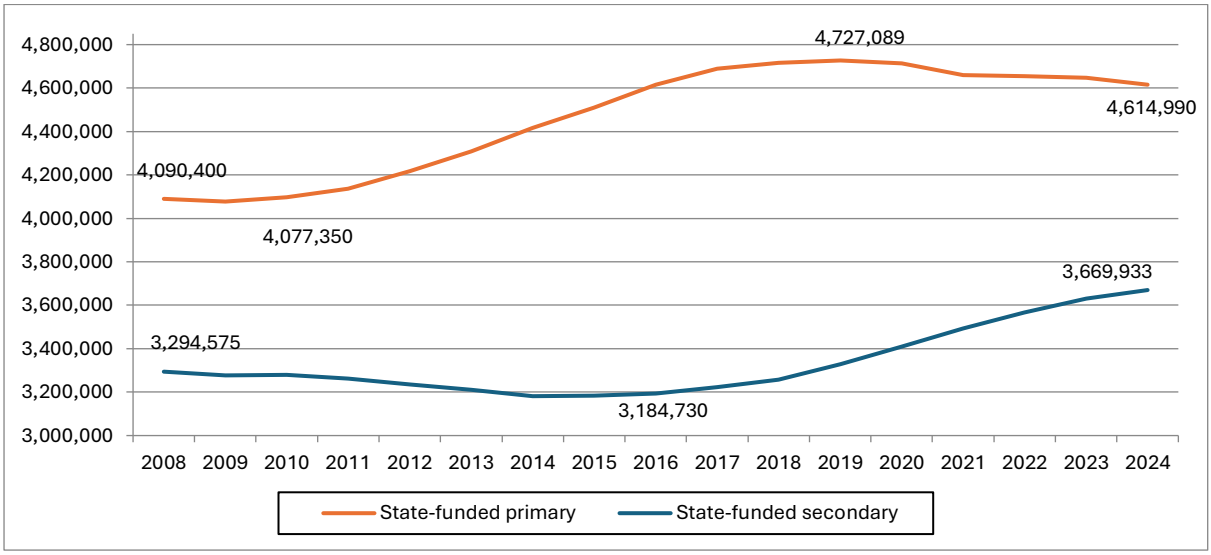
The above chart presents similar information for secondary schools, illustrating a slightly different pattern with no significant change in the proportion of heads and deputies but again a notable rise in the proportions of assistant headteachers, and also leadership teachers. Here, the share of teaching professionals represented by headteachers and deputy headteachers was stable throughout the period while that for teachers without qualified teaching status fell slightly. By contrast, unlike in primary schools, there was a rise in the proportions of both assistant headteachers and teachers with leadership responsibilities. These rises appear to be offset by a fall in the proportion of classroom teachers, with the latter decreasing from a 79.4% share to 76.6%. The corresponding increase over the period for leadership teachers was from 8.6% of the total in 2011 up to 10.2% in 2024. The equivalent rise for assistant headteachers was from 4.9% up to 6.4% over the same period.

2.6. Pupil numbers

The data for the number of primary school teachers shown in the earlier chart exhibited an upward trend which partially mirrors the trend in pupil numbers in the same schools as shown in the figure 16 below. In both cases, the charts show an increase in most years and while there was a small decrease in the last few years the overall trend is rising. The patterns for secondary schools in terms of teacher and pupil numbers are similar. In these cases, the

figures show a fall followed by a rise although the pupil numbers started an upward trend from 2015 whereas the uptick in secondary teacher numbers came later, from 2019.

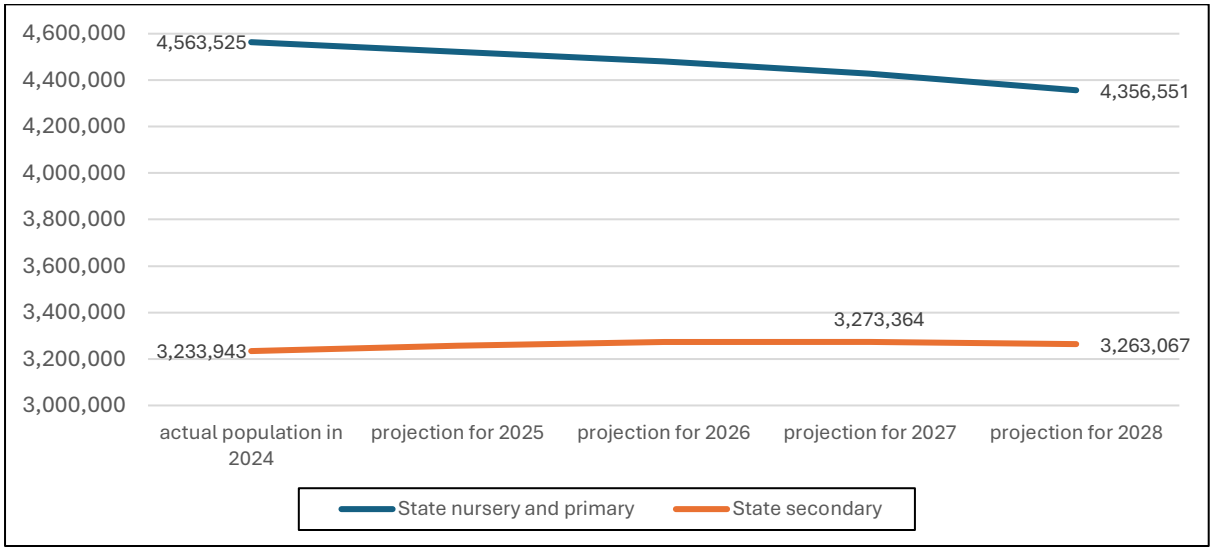
Figure 15: Number of pupils in England 2008 to 2024



Source: Schools, pupils and their characteristics: September 2024, Office for National Statistics

The Department of Education regularly analyses pupil data to make projections of pupil numbers for the future. In its latest report, from 2024, it stated that the pupil population attending primary and nursery schools peaked in 2019 and the figures have been gradually falling since then. This is primarily due to continued reductions in birth numbers since 2013, although there was a larger drop in the primary school population in 2021 which may have been connected to the pandemic. By contrast, the peak in the secondary school population is estimated to take place in 2026 and 2027, before the numbers start decreasing by the end of the projection period in 2028.

Figure 16: OME pupil projections in state secondary and nursery & primary schools 2024 to 2028

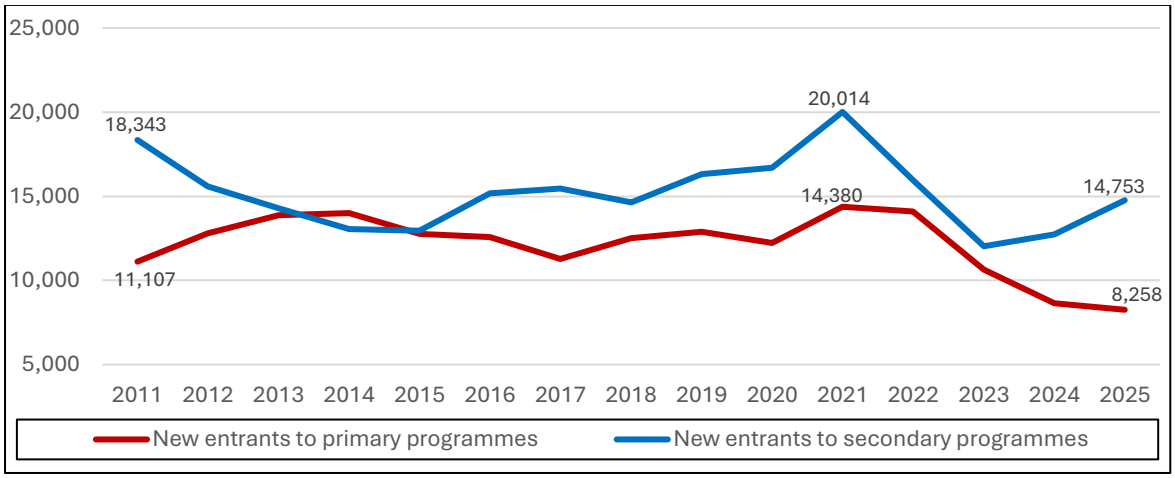


Source: National pupil projections, Department of Education.

2.7. Teaching entrants

In many of our previous reports we have highlighted how recruiting into the teaching profession has posed many challenges in recent years. For example, many of the historic teacher recruitment targets have been missed. The chart below displays information on the number of new teachers entering the profession in the last decade or so via postgraduate routes. For primary teachers, the numbers of new entrants to teaching programmes increased during the first few years after 2011 before falling slightly and then rebounding to a peak in 2021. This was followed by decreases in the last few years, representing an overall fall of around 3,000 primary entrants compared to 2011.

*Figure 17: Postgraduate initial teacher training entrants in England 2010 to 2025**



Source: Initial teacher training: trainee number census - 2010 to 2025, Department for Education *Provisional including forecast registrations in 2024/25.

For secondary school training entrants, the trend was slightly different, starting the period in 2011 with 18,343 individuals. This fell until 2015 when there was a slight recovery with numbers peaking at just over 20,000 in 2021. This decreased again to just over 12,000 in 2023 before rising to a little under 15,000 in the latest year as the chart demonstrates.

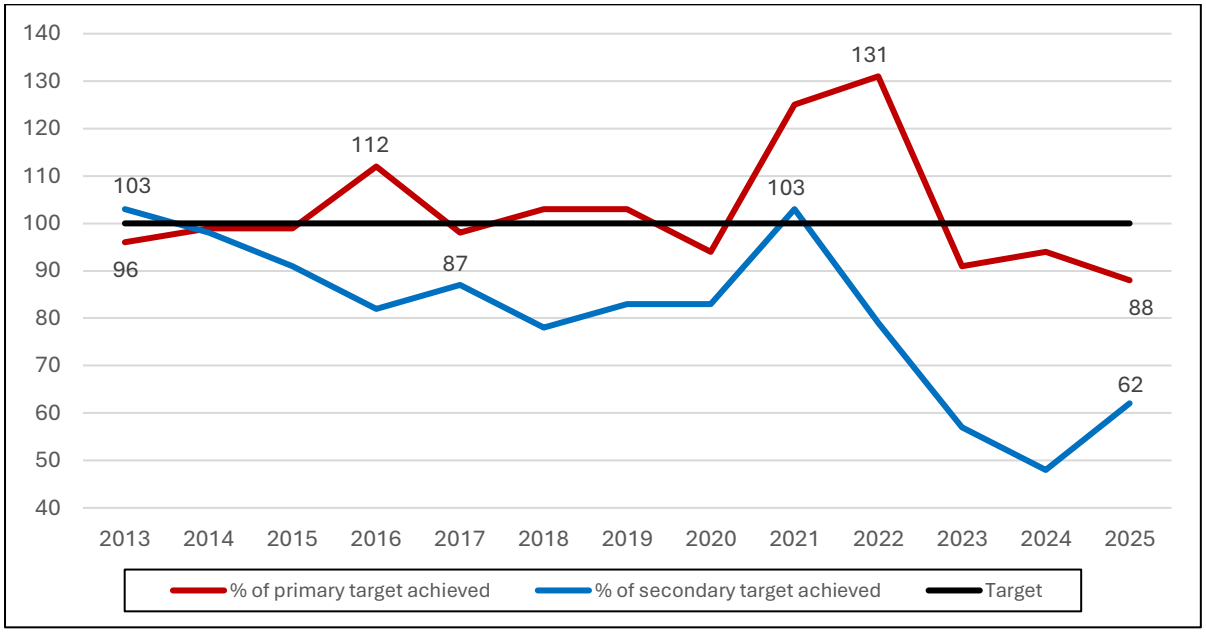
Until 2018, similar statistics were reported for the number of undergraduate training entrants but they were not split by type of school. Since 2019/20, data has been disclosed separately for the two types of schools. The statistics illustrate that the numbers are small compared to those qualifying via postgraduate routes. In addition, the number of teachers entering the profession via undergraduate training mainly do so in primary schools. For instance, in 2024/25, nearly 4,500 undergraduates entered via a primary programme while just 237 did so by studying a secondary school subject. There were some variations in the last few years, with 4,882 undergraduate entrants in 2019/20, and the numbers then rising to a peak of just over 6,000 in 2021/22 before falling back to 4,735 in 2024/25.

Teacher training target figures only tell us half the story because we do not know to what extent they have been achieved. To fill this gap, the chart below shows the extent to which such targets have been achieved over the last few years. It illustrates that many of these targets for both primary and secondary schools have been missed in recent years with the situation worse for those schools teaching older children.

Since 2012/13, the target for secondary teachers has only been achieved twice, in both cases by just 3%. In many of these years, the shortfall stood at around 10% but has worsened in the last four years when the targets were missed by between 21% and 52% with a shortfall of 38% in the latest year.

The pattern for nursery and primary teachers is different, with more successful outcomes. For example, targets were exceeded in five of the 13 years in focus. Most notable among these were 2021 and 2022 when the targets were surpassed by 25% and 31% respectively. More recently, however, primary school targets have been missed with the deficit in the last three years standing at 9% in 2023, 6% in 2024 and 12% in the latest year.

*Figure 18: Percentage of English recruitment target levels met 2012 to 2025**



Source: Initial teacher training: trainee number census - 2010 to 2025, Department for Education

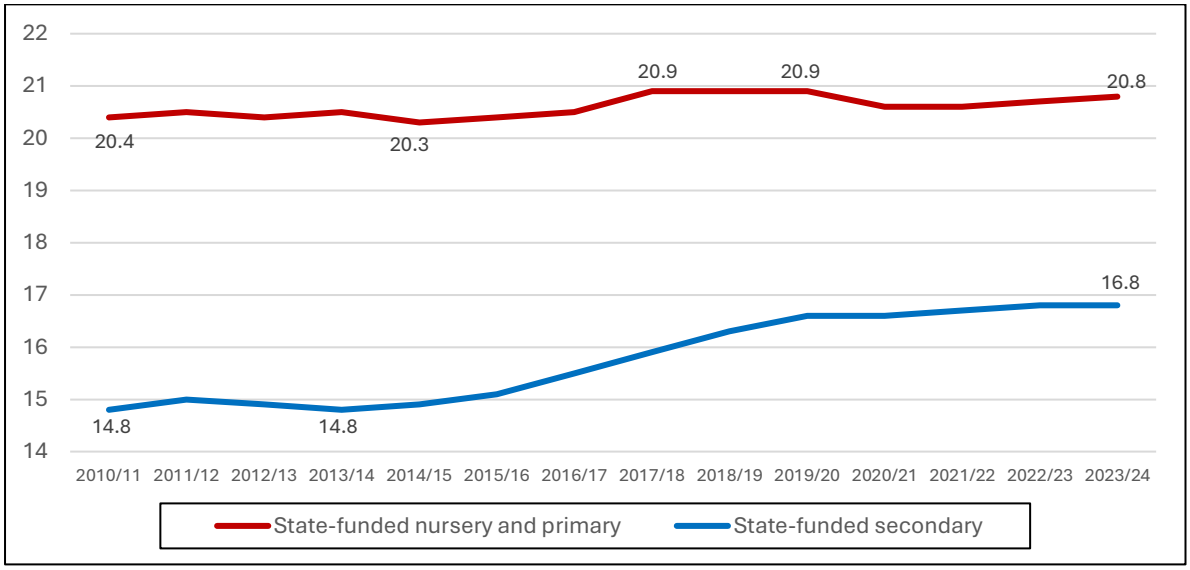
*Provisional including forecast registrations in 2024/25

2.8. Data on the number of pupils per teacher

Examining the numbers of pupils and teachers in isolation is of limited use. It is more useful to combine the two to calculate the ratio of pupils per teacher. The pupil-teacher ratio is widely considered a good indicator of educational quality, with quality in roughly inverse proportion to the size of the ratio (the smaller the ratio, the greater the quality) and the latest trends are illustrated in the chart below. The chart shows that the trend over the entire period is upward, but most of the rise came in the middle period (give years) with the years since 2019/20 showing a levelling off, albeit at higher levels than at the start of the period between 2014 and 2017 followed by a slight dip in 2019 before a gradual rise to the near peak level the latest year.

Placing the English figures into a wider perspective, the latest EU figures for 2022 show that the average pupil to teacher ratio across all the 26 EU countries measured stood at 11.6 in lower secondary and 11.2 in upper secondary schools, substantially lower than the 16.8 found in England. For primary schools, the average across the EU was 13.3 in 2022 while the highest was 18.5, in Romania. By contrast, the latest English figure was significantly larger than both, at 20.8.

Figure 19: Pupils per teacher in England 2010 to 2024



Source: School workforce in England, June 2024

2.9. Hours worked by teachers in term time

Rising pupil-teacher ratios have an impact on teaching workloads, something which has become a growing concern. The UK Government carries out an annual survey focusing on the working lives of teachers which includes questions on workload, attitudes to work and future career intentions. The latest data is from September 2024. The survey asked leaders and teachers to estimate their total working hours for their most recent term-time working week. It showed that leaders' average reported full-time working hours were 58.2 while teachers reported 52.4 hours on average during term time. This compares to a UK full-time average of 36.8 hours based on ASHE data although other professional groups are also likely to be higher than the UK average too.

2.10. Satisfaction levels and career intentions

The Department of Education's report on 'Working lives of teachers and leaders' report, from September 2024, also posed questions about pay and career intentions. Some 69% of respondents said they were dissatisfied with salary levels in 2023. In addition, two-thirds disagreed with the statement, "At this stage in my career, teaching offers me a good salary compared to other careers I could follow if I leave". The survey asked numerous related questions, and all the replies exhibited similarly negative responses.

By contrast, the responses to questions regarding satisfaction with their current jobs and classroom teaching were much more positive. For example, in 2023, 81% said they were

satisfied with their current jobs some or all the time. Similarly, 95% responded that this was the case for their experience teaching in the classroom. On the other hand, teachers' views on whether they are valued by society and the Government were largely negative as were their responses to questions relating to their own anxiety and stress levels.

These attitudes may in turn be prompting some teachers to consider pursuing other career options. For example, just over one-third of teachers and leaders (36%) indicated that they were considering leaving the state school sector in the next 12 months, for reasons other than retirement. This represents an increase from 25% in 2022 with the most reported factor in their considerations being workload (94%). Other factors reported as important considerations in 2023 included dissatisfaction with pay (63%), dealing with parents or carers (41%) and personal reasons (25%).

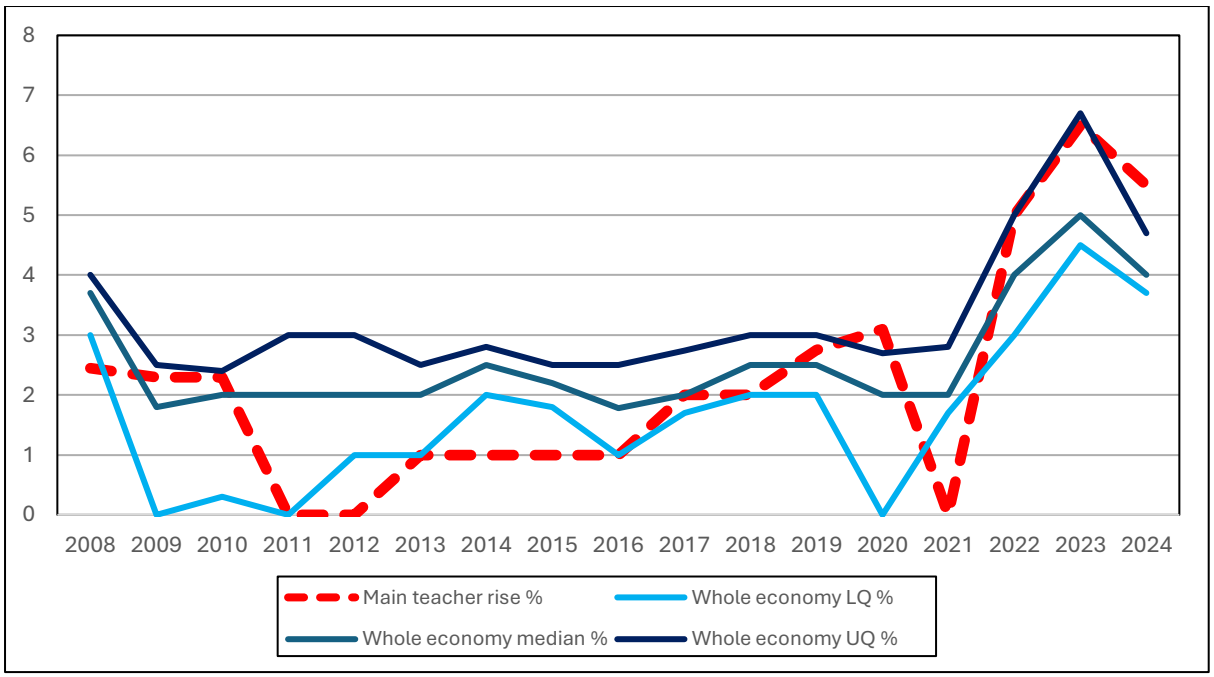
3. School teachers' pay awards compared with the wider economy

In all our previous reports we have reflected on the pattern of teaching pay awards since 2008 and in this section, we carry out a similar analysis. This includes a comparison with basic pay increases across the whole economy over the same period as measured by the lower quartile, median and upper quartiles based on IDR monitoring. In a few cases, teaching pay rises have been differentiated according to separate groups which are described in more detail in the table below. The chart below summarises the overall findings since 2008, with the teaching figures based on the headline teacher pay awards in each year.

The chart shows that basic pay increases for the teaching profession in England, as represented by the red dotted line, largely trail those found in the whole economy in a majority of the past 17 years. In particular, the median whole economy uplift was higher than the corresponding teacher headline rate in nine of those years and lower in seven of them, while in 2017 the two were equal.

Where teachers' rises were higher, many of these instances occurred during times of recession such as in 2009 and 2010 and more recently, during and following the pandemic, in 2019, 2020 and 2022 (albeit with a pay freeze in 2021). The chart shows that teacher rises were also higher than the median whole economy figures in 2023 and 2024.

Figure 20: School teachers' pay awards (England) compared with those in the wider economy, 2008 to 2024



Source: IDR

Moving through the period, the 2008 award was behind those found elsewhere at 2.45% compared with an economy-wide median of 3.7%. In 2009 and 2010, teachers received pay awards under a previously negotiated long-term deal, so their increases were 2.3%, ahead of the median pay awards for the whole economy that stood at 1.8% (2009) and 2% (2010).

By contrast, in most other years the whole economy median rise exceeded the equivalent teaching uplift. For instance, the median whole economy figure was 2% in each of 2011, 2012 and 2013, and 2.5% in 2014, while the figure for 2015 was 2.2%. By contrast, teachers received no general increase in either 2011 or 2012, and just 1% in each of 2013 and 2014. In 2015, the headline increase was again 1% with a 2% increase to the maximum of the pay range.

In 2016, 2017 and 2018, the median whole economy figures stood at 1.78%, 2% and 2.5% respectively. Over the same period, pay increases for teachers were applied to pay ranges rather than across the board, and appraisal-related pay was introduced, so not all teachers were guaranteed to receive a rise. Statutory range minima and maxima were increased by 1% in 2016, 2% in 2017 and 3.5% in 2018.

In 2017 and 2018, the uplifts to the upper pay range were lower than the increases on the main range. For instance, pay points on the upper pay range were increased by 1% in 2017 and 2% in 2018. By contrast, the main range saw rises of 2% and 3.5% respectively. Moreover, in 2018, the increase to the leadership pay range was even lower at 1.5%. As a result, just 43% of teachers received 3.5% that year, with a majority receiving lower increases, either 2% or 1.5%.

In 2019 and 2020, teachers were awarded relatively better pay rises following the prolonged period of pay restraint during the austerity years. The earlier rise was a straightforward across-the-board increase of 2.75% although the starting rate for newly-qualified teachers was uplifted by 5%. In contrast, the 2020 award represented a pay bill increase of 3.1% but included a range of other measures. Most notable was the 5.5% uplift to the starting rate for new teachers, representing the first step in the then Government's commitment to ensure that the entry-level salary would be £30,000 by 2023. Other recommended points on the main pay range were uplifted by amounts between 2.75% and 4.95% with the highest rises applied to lower levels. In addition, all points on the upper pay range were increased by 2.75%. The two teaching headline figures of 2.75% and 3.1% in 2019 and 2020 compared favourably to the whole economy medians of 2.5% and 2% respectively.

In 2021, the pay review process was impacted by a (short-lived) pay freeze policy which meant that pay growth was paused for most teachers in England. The only exception was for some lower-paid unqualified teachers (those on less than £24,000 nationally) who received a consolidated rise of £250. In the same year, the whole economy median pay rise was 2%.

In 2022, teacher pay scales were uplifted by 5%, with higher rises for some parts of the main pay range, while the equivalent whole economy median was 4%. One of the areas to which higher rises were applied was teacher starting salaries. The target of £30,000 by September 2023 was achieved as part of the 1 September 2023 teaching award when an increase of 7.1% was applied to the starting salary. Further to this, an overall 6.5% increase was applied to all pay ranges and advisory points outside London, with slight variations around this in respect of the London pay ranges. This compared to a median uplift of 5% for the whole economy while in the latest year, 2024, all teaching pay ranges rose by 5.5%, which exceeded the whole economy median of 4% by 1.5 percentage points.

3.1 Measuring pay awards

General salary increases for teachers approved by Government ministers from 2008 onwards are detailed in Table 6 below. Increases exclude other elements of earnings which might have affected overall pay bills. In most of the 17 years covered, all teachers received the headline salary rise and were also entitled to incremental pay progression based on time in post and experience. Since 2014, most schools continued to apply the awarded increase to all pay points, but not all teachers have received progression in addition to the basic rise.

The table also shows the lower quartile, median and upper quartile figures for pay settlements generally. These cover the three-month period ending September as an appropriate point for comparison with the school teachers' pay review. The percentage figures used in the table measure the headline increases in basic pay levels, excluding bonuses or lump sum payments.

Table 6: School teachers' pay awards (England) compared with those in the wider economy, 2008 to 2024

	School teachers England		**Pay settlements – whole economy (WE)**			**Variation teachers' rise & median (WE)**
	% general award		**Lower quartile %**	**Median %**	**Upper quartile %**	**% point difference**
2008	General salary increase of 2.45%	Q3	3.0	3.7	4.0	-1.25
2009	General salary increase of 2.3%	Q3	0.0	1.8	2.5	+0.5
2010	General salary increase of 2.3%	Q3	0.3	2.0	2.4	+0.3
2011	No general salary increase	Q3	0.0	2.0	3.0	-2.0
2012	No general salary increase	Q3	1.0	2.0	3.0	-2.0
2013	General salary increase of 1%	Q3	1.0	2.0	2.5	-1.0
2014	1% increase in range minima, maxima and reference points	Q3	2.0	2.5	2.8	-1.5
2015	1% uplift to the minima of all pay ranges and allowances, 2% uplift to the maxima of the main range	Q3	1.8	2.2	2.5	-1.2

	School teachers England		Pay settlements – whole economy (WE)			Variation teachers' rise & median (WE)
	% general award		Lower quartile %	Median %	Upper quartile %	% point difference
2016	1% increase to the statutory minima and maxima of all pay ranges and allowances in the national pay framework from September 2016, including allowances. Schools have discretion over how to apply the increase unless teacher is on the minimum pay-point	Q3	1.0	1.78	2.5	-0.78
2017	2% uplift to the minimum and maximum of the main pay range; a 1% uplift to the minima and maxima of the upper pay range, the unqualified teacher pay range and the leading practitioner pay range. Schools have discretion over how to apply the increase unless teacher is on the minimum pay-point but must be within the overall 1% public sector pay cap	Q3	1.7	2.0	2.74	-1.0
2018	Recommended 3.5% to the minimum and maximum of the unqualified pay range and main pay range; 2% to the minimum and maximum of the upper pay range, leading practitioner pay range and all allowances; 1.5% to the min and max of the leadership pay ranges. Greatest proportion of staff received 2%.	Q3	2.0	2.5	3.0	-0.5
2019	2.75% uplift to all allowance and pay ranges	Q3	2.0	2.5	3.0	+0.25
2020	3.1% increase to pay bill: 2.75% increase with 5.5% on min of main pay range (resulting in pay bill rise of 3.1%)	Q3	0.0	2.0	2.7	+1.1
2021	Pay freeze in England. Pay was paused in 2021/22 due to public sector pay restraint. Excludes circa 6,000 staff whose full-time equivalent basic earnings are less than £24,000 (nationally, higher limit for London and fringe) who received a consolidated award of £250	Q3	1.7	2.0	2.8	-2.0

	School teachers England		Pay settlements – whole economy (WE)			Variation teachers' rise & median (WE)
	% general award		Lower quartile %	Median %	Upper quartile %	% point difference
2022	A 5% increase to all pay and allowance ranges and advisory points, with higher increases to some parts of the Main Pay Range as a step towards achieving a minimum starting salary of £30,000 by September 2023	Q3	3.0	4.0	5.0	+1.0
2023	6.5% increase to all pay ranges and advisory points, with higher increases to parts of the Main Pay Range to reach a minimum starting salary of £30,000 outside London, with slight variations to the London pay ranges.	Q3	4.5	5.0	6.7	+1.5
2024	5.5% increase to all pay ranges	Q3	3.7	4.0	4.7	+1.5

Source: IDR

4. Graduates' and teachers' basic salaries compared

4.1 Summary of main findings

The analysis in this section compares current salaries for school teachers on the main pay scale for England with aggregate statistics based on our most recent survey of salaries for graduates in 88 mostly larger private sector organisations (together employing over 750,000 staff). The survey was conducted in February 2024 and therefore covers companies' 2023/24 graduate intakes.

The analysis below utilises data for graduate starting salaries, and also the salaries paid on completion of graduate programmes. This section also makes use of our findings on pay for graduates that have been in post for each of three and five years and compares these to the equivalent teacher pay points. This allows a comparative assessment of progression pay.

The main findings are as follows:

- Teachers' starting salaries were the same as those for graduates, at the time of the research
- Teachers' pay at the equivalent point (M3) is behind that for graduates who have just completed their in-house graduate training programmes
- Teachers' pay at the three-year progression point (M4) is barely ahead of the equivalent for graduate hires
- Teachers' pay at the five-year progression point (M6) is just behind the equivalent for graduate hires.

These findings are based on a comparison of our graduate survey data with teacher salaries that took effect from 1 September 2023. This is because the survey was conducted in February 2024, mid-way through the year following the teachers' due date, and we feel this is the appropriate point of comparison. However, we have also included the 2024 figures for completeness.

4.2 Starting salaries

The median starting salary for graduates in 2023/24, showing at £30,000, is the same as the starting salary for teachers in England that took effect on 1 September 2023.

Table 7 Teachers' pay point M1 vs median starting salary for graduates

	Teachers' pay point M1 £pa	IDR median starting salary £pa	Difference £pa
2023/24	30,000	30,000	0
2024/25	31,650	30,000	1,650

4.3 Pay on completion of graduate training programmes

IDR has also collected evidence on the pay that graduates can expect to receive once they have completed their training. Graduate training schemes typically last for two years and this suggests that a comparison with the salary for teachers on M3 of the main pay range is appropriate. The results from our survey indicate that on immediate completion of training, graduates' pay is ahead of the equivalent pay point for teachers. The median graduate salary on completion of training at organisations is £36,000 – some £2,186 above the teachers' pay point M3 of £33,814, effective from 1 September 2023. (The comparison with 2024 salaries indicates teachers' pay is still slightly behind, but by much less than for 2023.)

Table 8 Teachers' pay point M3 vs median completion salary for graduates

	Teachers' pay point M3 £pa	IDR median completion salary £pa	Difference £pa
2023/24	33,814	36,000	-2,186
2024/25	35,674	36,000	-326

4.4 Pay on progression

A comparison with graduate salaries at three and five years after completion of training programmes indicates that graduates' pay is also ahead of that for teachers at these points. Our study examined the average 2023/24 salaries for graduates recruited three and five years ago to measure the extent of progression for graduates. Those recruited three years prior to the study, in 2021, are referred to as 'three-yearlings', while those recruited five years earlier, in 2019, are referred to as 'five-yearlings'. Our analysis shows that three-yearlings were earning £36,000 a year at the median in early 2024 (*which happens to be the same as the median completion salary) – just £51 less than the equivalent teachers' pay point (M4, which in 2023/24 was paid at £36,051). (The comparison with 2024 salaries indicates that teachers' pay pulled further ahead.)

Table 9 Teachers' pay point M4 vs median 3-yearling salary for graduates

	Teachers' pay point M4 £pa	IDR median 3-yearling salary £pa	Difference £pa
2023/24	36,051	36,000	51
2024/25	38,034	36,000	2,034

Meanwhile five-yearlings typically earned £41,835 in early 2024, according to the survey. This is comparable with teachers' pay point M6, which is where most teachers should be after five years in the role. The comparison shows that teachers' pay at point M6 (£41,333) is £302 below the typical amount for 'five-yearling' graduates. (With the 2024 comparison, the relativity is reversed, with teachers' pay ahead of that of graduates at this point in their careers.)

Table 10 Teachers' pay point M6 vs median 5-yearling salary for graduates

	Teachers' pay point M6 £pa	IDR median 5-yearling salary £pa	Difference £pa
2023/24	41,333	41,635	-302
2024/25	43,607	41,635	1,972

5. ASHE earnings analysis

In this section, using official data from the ONS's Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), we compare the earnings of school teachers in England with those for a basket of other comparator graduate occupations. In the past, our analysis has covered multiple years stretching back over a decade but a recent improvement to the ONS's methodology prompted it to advise those using the official figures not to make such historical comparisons with data for years prior to 2023 as its changes were not backdated beyond this.

Revisions to ONS data are not unusual but the ONS's changes in 2024 were more significant than most of those made in previous years and this has implications for our analysis. One of the reasons for the changes is that since the pandemic there has been some divergence between the figures estimated from the ASHE survey and the ONS's other sources of earnings data. These other sources, notably the Average Weekly Earnings, are timelier with more frequent estimates. ASHE, however, uniquely provides very granular information, especially in respect of earnings for particular occupations, not available in other sources.

The ONS has reviewed its methods and processes underpinning the ASHE survey to improve the overall quality of its estimates for the two latest years, 2023 and 2024, without backdating changes any further. In addition, the changes are focused on the treatment of high earners across professions which directly affects the jobs we examine. In some ways, however, this is nothing new as we have always highlighted the issues involved in making cross-year increase analysis using ASHE data even prior to the latest revisions, and we heavily caveated these sections in our previous reports.

5.1. ASHE data caveats

For instance, the information collected by ASHE each year is not based on matched data so the sample for a profession in one year may differ somewhat from another. Linked to this, for some occupations, sample sizes can be relatively small which can result in large fluctuations in aggregate data across years. In some cases, it can even mean the omission of data for certain professions because the ONS has deemed the data collected as not reliable, statistically speaking, due to limited sample sizes.

A final complication is that the ONS redefines its occupational categories every ten years or so, reflecting the fact that jobs are not static entities. This further affects comparisons

between years. For instance, the last two changes to its Standard Occupational Codes (SOC) took place in 2010 and 2020 although the latest alterations only came into force in the 2022 data release from the ONS. Because of this, some job definitions or titles can be different from year to year. Full details of all the changes made in the latest classification (SOC 2020) are outlined in our 2022 report.

The ONS provides an idea of the magnitude of the latest change to its methodology, with 2023 provisional median hourly pay for full-time employees rising from £17.40 to £17.52 and annual median earnings for full-time employees now estimated to be £35,004, up from £34,963. Given that the changes are focused on high earners, the effect on the professional occupations we examine is likely to be larger.

5.2. Changes to this report

Based on the latest ONS guidance outlined above, we have made some changes to this year's analysis and are not undertaking any cross-year analysis of increases in earnings. Part of our research, however, will continue to include some analysis of earnings rankings across three specific years. The reason for this is that it does not involve cross-year increases, instead making comparisons of where teachers are positioned in the earnings league table *within* individual years.

Admittedly, the overall data analysis methodology across separate years may differ, but the methodology used in each individual year will have been the same for all jobs. Therefore, each of the three rankings by year remains a valid indication of teachers' relative position.

In this section of the analysis, we focus on the years 2008, 2015 and 2024. This allows us to examine how teachers' earnings have changed relative to those for other professions without carrying out any cross-year increase analysis. We start at 2008 because it marked the start of the global economic crisis while 2024 is of obvious interest as it is the latest year for which data is available, and 2015 is near the middle of this period.

The changes we have made this year mean that the ONS modifications do not significantly affect our results because we always caveated any cross-year comparisons while, in all our reports, our conclusions have always been more heavily weighted on the data from the latest year. For a full explanation of the factors to bear in mind when interpreting the data see Appendix 1.

5.3. ASHE data reliability levels

Sample size variability can be an issue when using ASHE data, and so the table below provides an indication of the reliability of the figures for each of the chosen job groups in 2024. The ONS sets four levels of reliability for all its data, as follows:

- Precise
- Reasonably precise
- Estimates acceptable
- Unreliable or no data.

As the table illustrates, all the average basic and gross pay figures for England are judged to be 'precise' apart from those relating to three scientific groups, chemical scientists, physical scientists and biochemists and biomedical scientists which are deemed to be 'reasonably precise'.

Table 11 Assessment of reliability of English earnings data 2024

Job group	2024 average basic pay figure	Level of precision	2024 average gross earnings figure	Level of precision
	£pw		£pw	
Engineering professionals	965.5	Precise	1,000.5	Precise
Information technology professionals	1,132.3	Precise	1,148.3	Precise
Medical practitioners	1,330.8	Precise	1459.1	Precise
Legal professionals	1,153.1	Precise	1,171.6	Precise
Chemical scientists	851.5	Reasonably precise	877.5	Reasonably precise
Biochemists and biomedical scientists	970.0	Reasonably precise	985.2	Reasonably precise
Physical scientists	1,006.6	Reasonably precise	1,037.0	Reasonably precise
Pharmacists	912.1	Precise	928.4	Precise
Secondary education teaching professionals	912.4	Precise	917.7	Precise
Primary education teaching professionals	846.2	Precise	849.5	Precise
Chartered and certified accountants	1074.5	Precise	1,087.0	Precise
Management consultants and business analysts	1067.5	Precise	1,078.3	Precise
Chartered surveyors	903.7	Precise	923.0	Precise

Source: ASHE

The reason that some of the statistics are not considered 100% 'precise' is because the sample sizes on which they are based are not as substantial as those for the other professions. In addition, sample requirements for averages and medians differ, meaning that the average figures for some professions do not meet the sample size thresholds to be judged as 'precise'. Despite this, where the ONS regarded figures to be sufficiently accurate to be reported, we have included them in our analysis.

5.4. Overview

Data from ASHE provides information regarding the amounts, distribution and make-up of earnings and hours worked by employees in all industries and occupations. In addition, the annual ASHE datasets enable earnings for occupations to be analysed based on the basis of four-digit occupational codes, where relevant, and by region and/or country, which permits the ONS to produce figures for England only.

Table 12 Comparator graduate occupations in ASHE and SOC codes

ASHE main occupational groups	Occupational groups used in analysis	SOC Codes	No. of jobs in England*
Science, research, engineering and technology professionals	Chemical scientists	2111	13,000
	Biochemists and biomedical scientists	2113	27,000
	Physical scientists	2114	10,000
	Engineering professionals	212	392,000
	Information technology and telecommunications professionals	213	856,000
Health professionals	Medical practitioners	221	216,000
	Pharmacists	2251	32,000
Business, research and administrative professionals	Legal professionals	241	163,000
	Chartered and certified accountants	2421	61,000
	Management consultants and business analysts	2431	210,000
Architects, town planners and surveying professionals	Chartered surveyors	2454	58,000
Teaching and educational professionals	Secondary education teaching professionals	2313	340,000
	Primary education teaching professionals	2314	289,000

Source: ASHE

As in all our reports, for the purposes of our analysis, we have used weekly earnings figures from ASHE for 11 non-teaching graduate occupations as listed in Table 8 above. These are taken from the Standard Occupational Classification major group '2' and are considered reasonable comparators with school teaching. In addition, all are 'professional' roles, with employers competing for potential staff from a single pool of graduates. Almost all the occupations appeared in our previous research reports for the NASUWT apart from the information technology group which was added for the first time in 2020.

Another point to note is that ASHE does not provide sample counts so the 'number of jobs' column above is an estimate based on information taken from another ONS study – the Labour Force Survey – and should be considered indicative only.

5.5. Basic earnings of comparator graduate professions relative to teachers

In the next section, we outline the variations in the differentials between median and average earnings for both groups of teachers and a group of comparator graduate occupations over two time periods. Initially we look solely at the years 2023 and 2024 because this is the period where the new ONS methodology has been applied. Next, we turn to the years 2008, 2015 and 2024 to provide more of a historical context. In each case, we also record the relative rankings of both teaching groups by the following statistics:

- Median and average basic weekly earnings
- Median and average gross weekly earnings
- Median and average gross annual earnings.

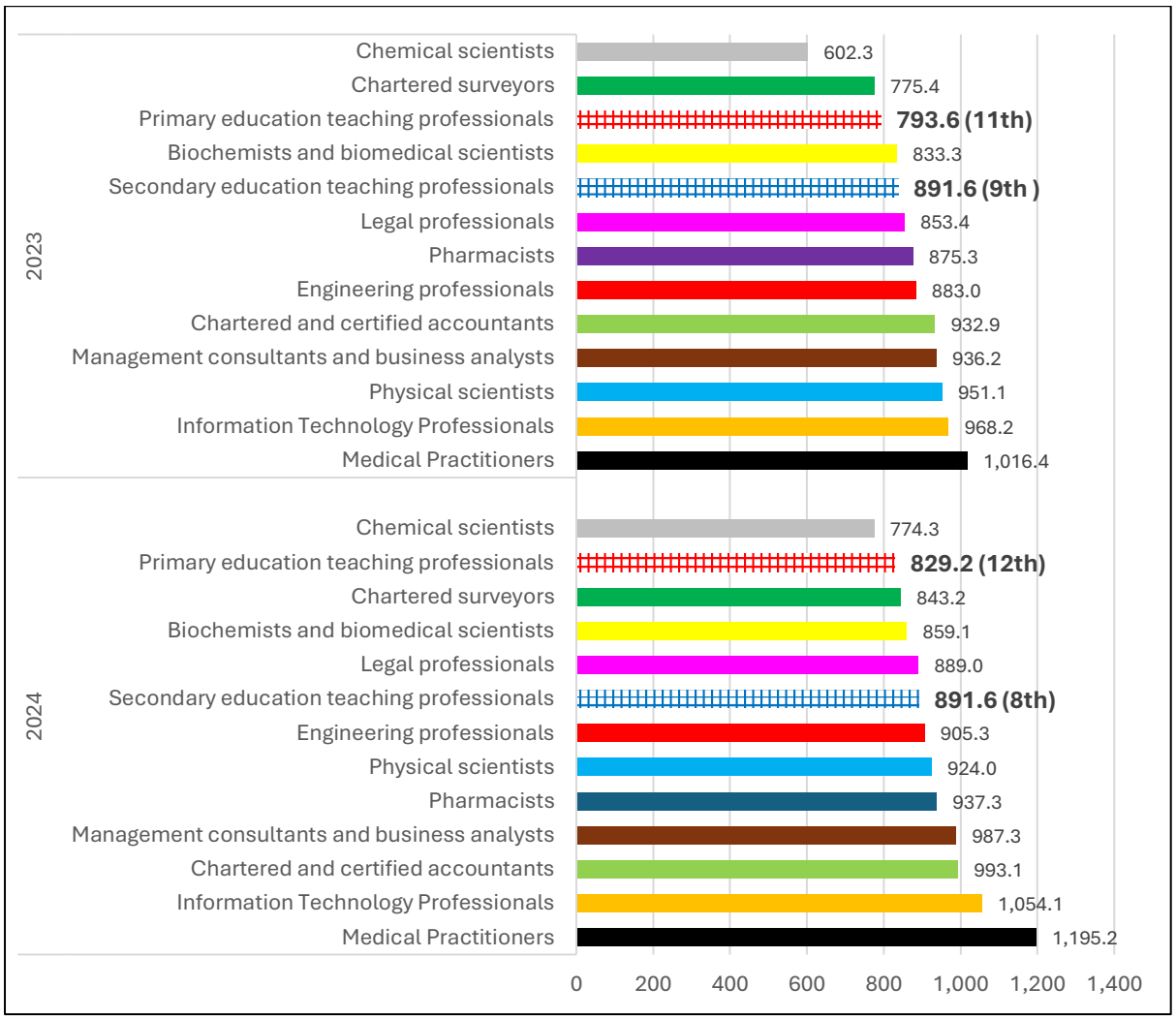
Teachers' earnings are predominantly made up of basic salary but for other professions, additional elements can account for a significant proportion of earnings. Examples include occupations such as NHS medical practitioners that are eligible for clinical excellence awards in certain instances. For this reason, the section also examines median and average *gross* earnings comparisons for the selected graduate occupations. On top of basic earnings, the gross statistics include other additional elements of remuneration.

Figure 21 below presents median basic earnings figures for the two latest years, 2023 and 2024, for all 13 of the graduate occupations we examined. To make things clearer, the two graph bars for the teaching professions are shaded with a crossed pattern and labelled with their ranking positions so they stand out from the other non-teaching occupations.

It shows that in both years, secondary teachers were placed just below the middle whereas primary teachers were close to the bottom. In 2024, for instance, median basic weekly earnings ranged from £774.30 for chemical scientists up to £1,195.20 for medical practitioners. Secondary teachers were positioned in eighth place with an amount worth £891.60 while the primary figure was £829.20 putting it in 12th out of the 13 jobs.

Not surprisingly, the pattern is very similar in 2023 with the same occupations taking up the top and bottom spots while the two teaching groups changed position slightly. In this case, primary teachers were positioned 11th out of 13 while their secondary school colleagues were ninth highest.

Figure 21: Comparison of median basic earnings of all comparator graduate professions in England including school teachers: 2023 to 2024

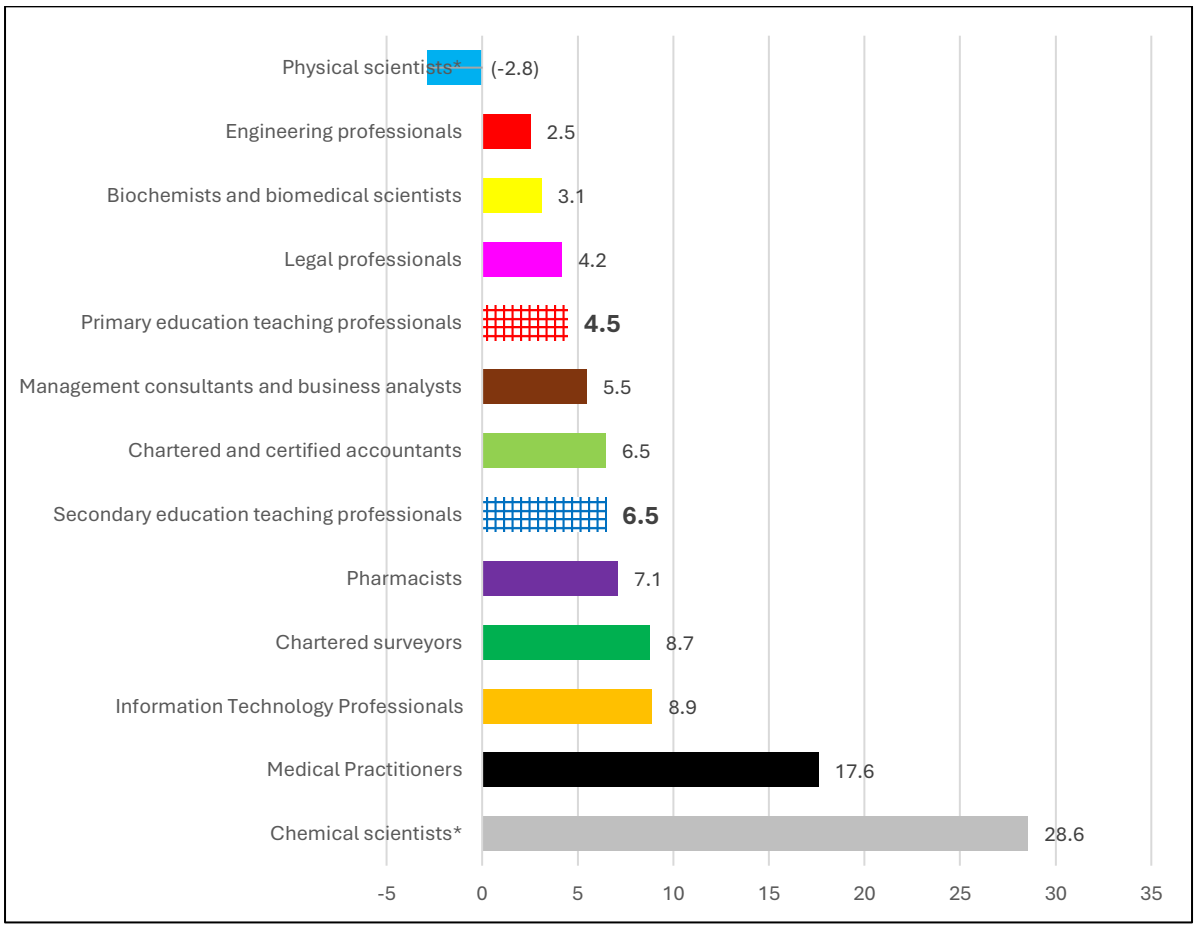


Source: ASHE

*Based on 11 non-teaching professions in 2023 and 2024.

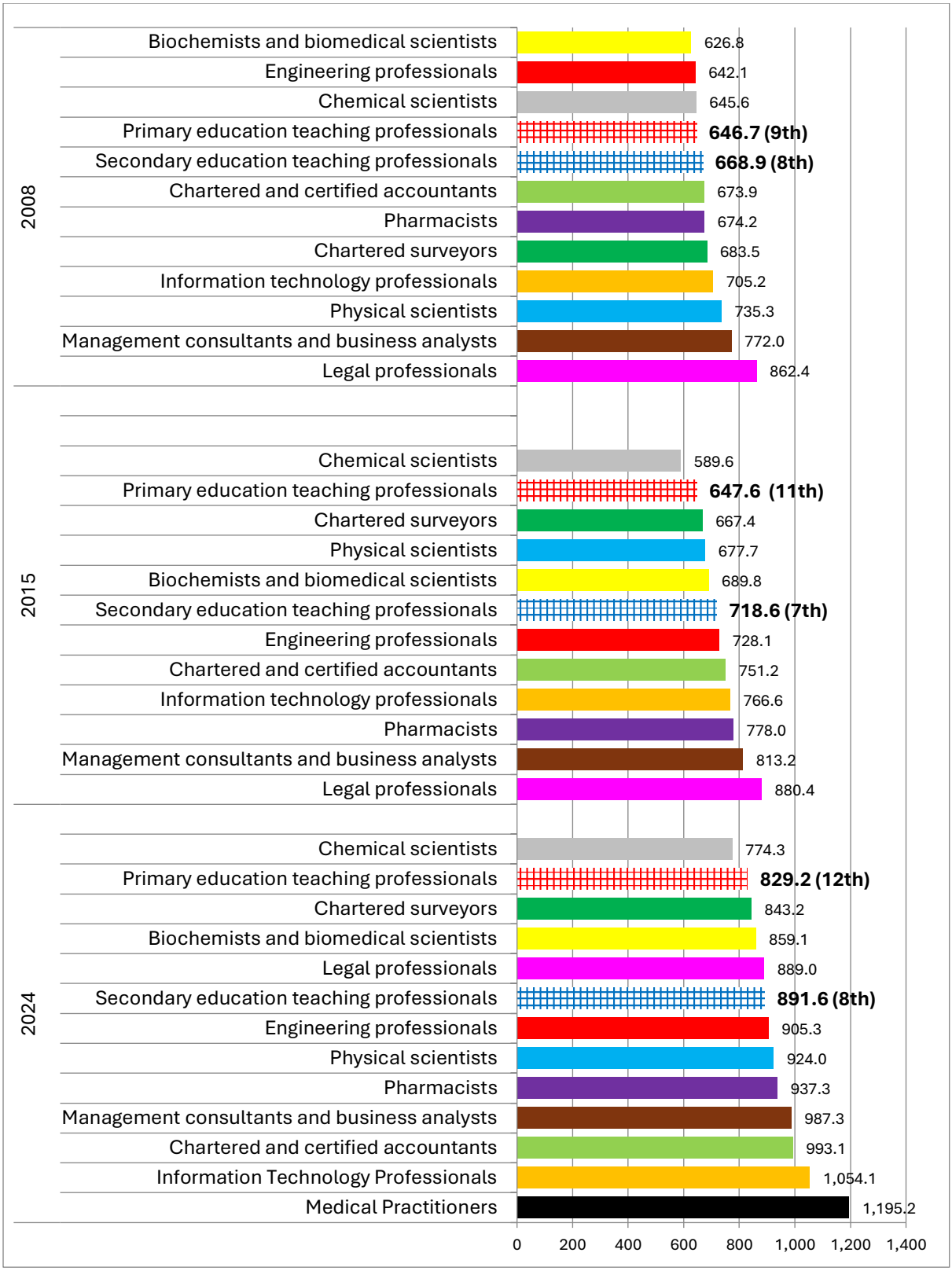
Figure 22 below uses that same data to chart the change in the amounts for each job over the two years. It shows that in 2023, as we reported above, the teachers' pay award involved a 6.5% across-the-board rise. This may have influenced the increase in earnings for secondary teachers shown below. This was much less the case for primary teachers, however, with our analysis showing a 4.5% rise in earnings across the two years for this group of teachers. This is probably a result of one of the problems we referred to earlier which is that often the ONS samples are not matched from year to year. In the case of primary teachers, the 2024 sample probably included a greater proportion of more junior staff on lower salaries than in the prior year, and this pulled down the aggregate figure compared to 2023. This is also reflected in some of the other figures where there are either very large or very small rises as in the cases of physical and chemical scientists. This again likely reflects the fact that the sample sizes for these two professional groups are smaller than for most of the other groups.

Figure 22: Percentage change in median basic earnings of all comparator graduate professions in England including school teachers: 2023 to 2024



Source: ASHE *Based on 11 non-teaching professions in 2023 and 2024.

Figure 23: Comparison of median basic earnings of all comparator graduate professions in England including school teachers: 2008, 2015 and 2024



Source: ASHE

*Based on 10 non-teaching professions in 2008 and 2015 and 11 in 2024.

Historical ranking analysis

Apart from the latest two years, the ONS warns against cross-year analysis so rather than calculate rises across years, we have examined earnings rankings in distinct periods. This bypasses such methodological problems and is another way to gain an insight into how teachers' relative positions have changed in prior years. In this case, we focus on three years: 2008, 2015 and 2024. Figure 23 above provides details of the median basic earnings rankings for these three years for all the professions in England, including both teaching groups. Again, secondary teachers are slightly higher paid than their colleagues who teach younger children in all three years with the gap wider in the two later years.

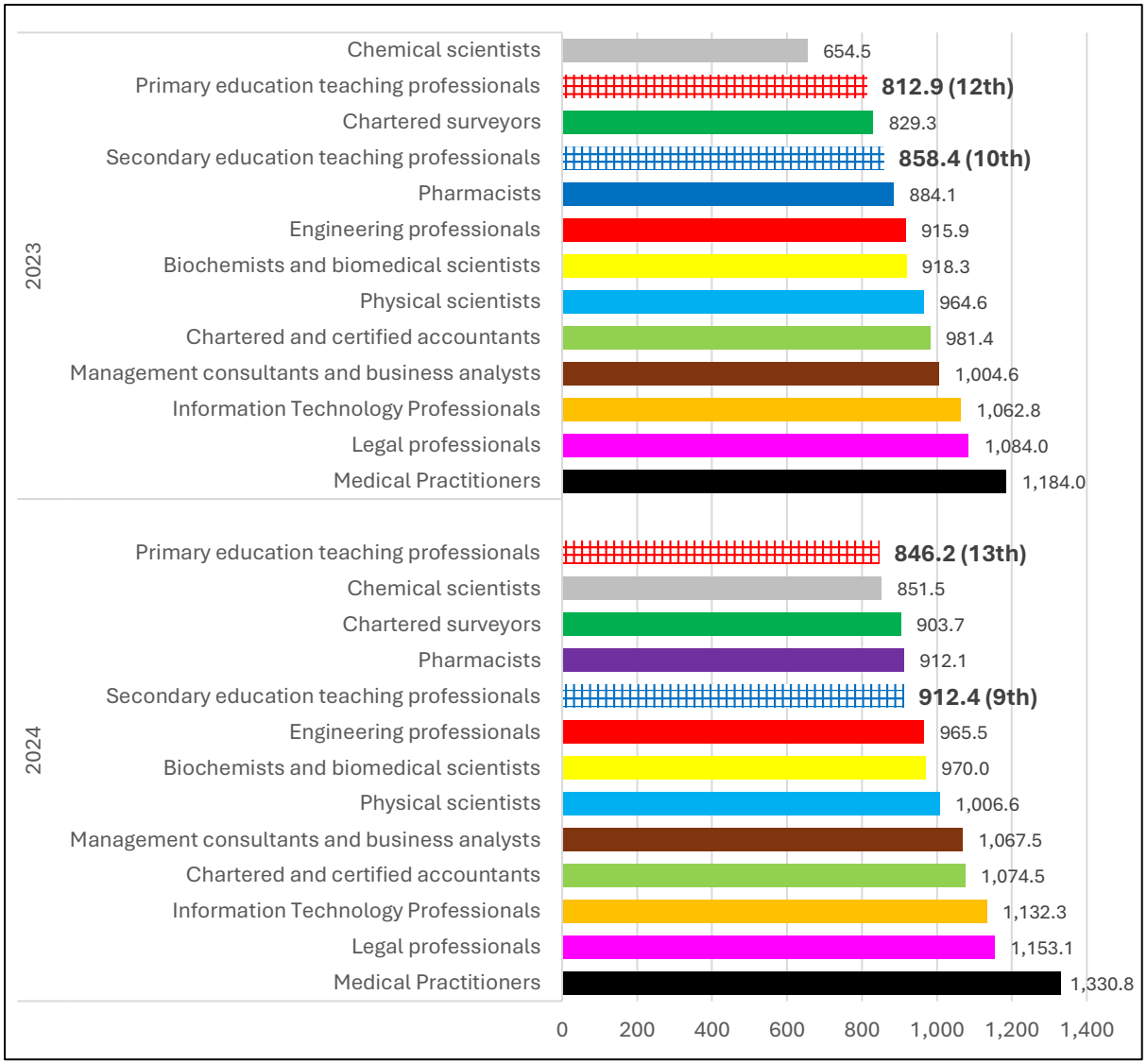
As Figure 23 above illustrates, in terms of median basic earnings, the secondary and primary teaching professions in England were positioned eight and twelfth in 2024, seventh and eleventh in 2015 and eighth and ninth back in 2008. It should be noted though that the two earlier years did not include the highly-paid medical practitioner group. Despite this, what is clear when measuring median basic earnings is that both teaching groups were consistently placed in the bottom half of the pay tables in all three years.

Median figures can be very useful because they are not heavily influenced by outliers at the very top and bottom end of the distribution. On the other hand, because they only represent typical values, they can sometimes mask the complete picture found across the whole range of earnings. This is particularly relevant for teachers where, in the past, concerns have been expressed about pay at more experienced and senior levels where, by definition, pay tends to be higher.

By contrast, averages take greater account of the whole distribution of earnings, including both the highest and the lowest figures. Therefore, to gain a fuller picture, Figure 24 below provides comparative details based on average as opposed to median basic weekly earnings for the professional groups examined. The difference between median and average figures is highlighted by the fact that the overall distribution in Figure 25 is broader than that for median earnings in all three years. For example, whereas Figure 24 showed that the highest median earnings for a non-teaching job in 2024 is just over £400 higher than the figure for primary teachers, the highest equivalent average figure shown in Figure 25 is nearly £500 greater.

Another consequence of using average instead of median figures is that the ranking of teaching groups in 2023 and 2024 were both slightly lower as the chart below demonstrates. For instance, the position for primary teachers fell from twelve to thirteenth place in 2024 while secondary teachers dropped from eighth to ninth position. In monetary terms, the 2024 average basic weekly earnings for primary teachers were £846.20 while the secondary figure was £912.40. As the figure below shows, this compared to the lowest non-teaching weekly average amount of £851.50 for chemical scientists, up to £1,330.80 for medical practitioners, the highest. The chart also shows that six of the 11 non-teaching professions had figures of over £1,000 per week.

Figure 24: Comparison of average basic earnings of all comparator graduate professions including school teachers in England: 2023 and 2024

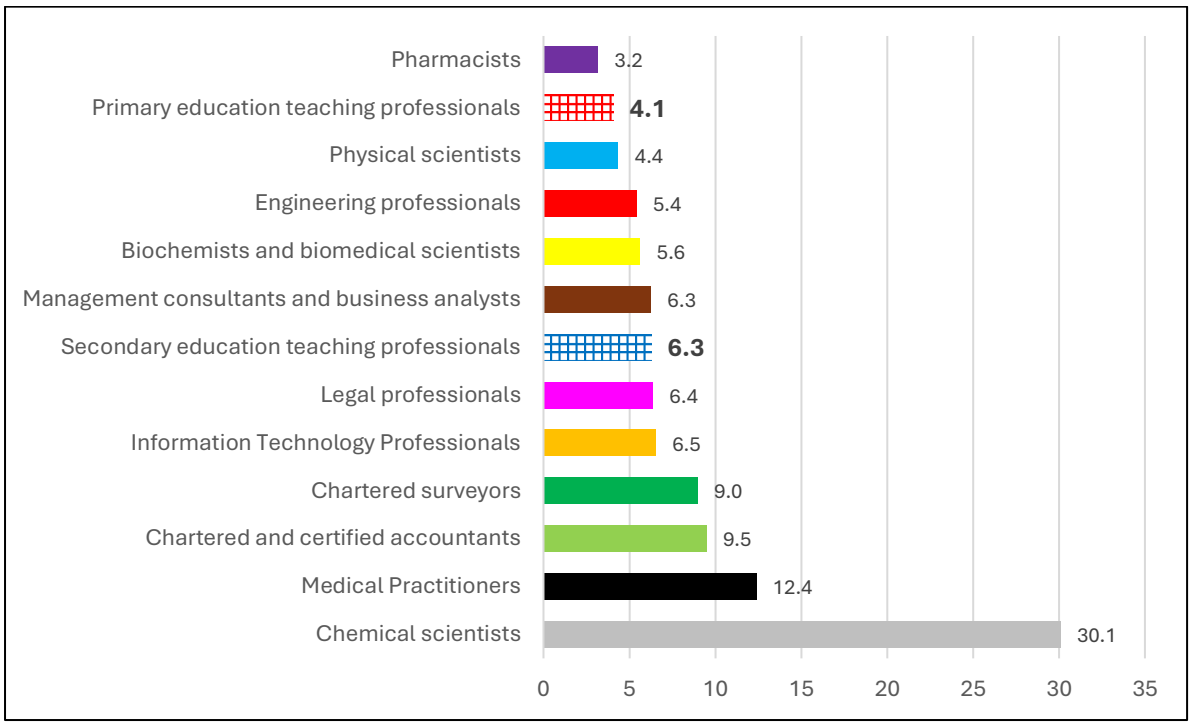


Source: ASHE *Based on 11 non-teaching professions in 2023 and 2024.

Figure 25 below uses that same data to chart the change in the amounts for each occupational category over the two years. As outlined above, despite the 2023 teacher pay agreement of 6.5%, the changes in average basic weekly earnings were lower. For instance, the 2024 average values were 4.1% higher for primary teachers and 6.3% higher for secondary teachers than the previous year's figures in each case. Again, this probably reflects that the two years' statistics are based on unmatched samples including different sets of individual teachers.

Turning to the non-teaching groups again illustrated a wide range of movements in average weekly basic earnings. For example, the chemical scientist 2024 average was over 30% higher than the previous year's. It is not clear, but, as for the two teaching groups, such large rises are probably more likely the result of sample changes rather than actual salary rises of this magnitude. Professional groups with changes in averages that were more comparable to the two teacher groups included engineers, the other two scientific groups and management consultants. These ranged from 4.4% up to 6.3% while occupations showing higher rises included legal and IT professionals, chartered surveyors, accountants and medical specialists.

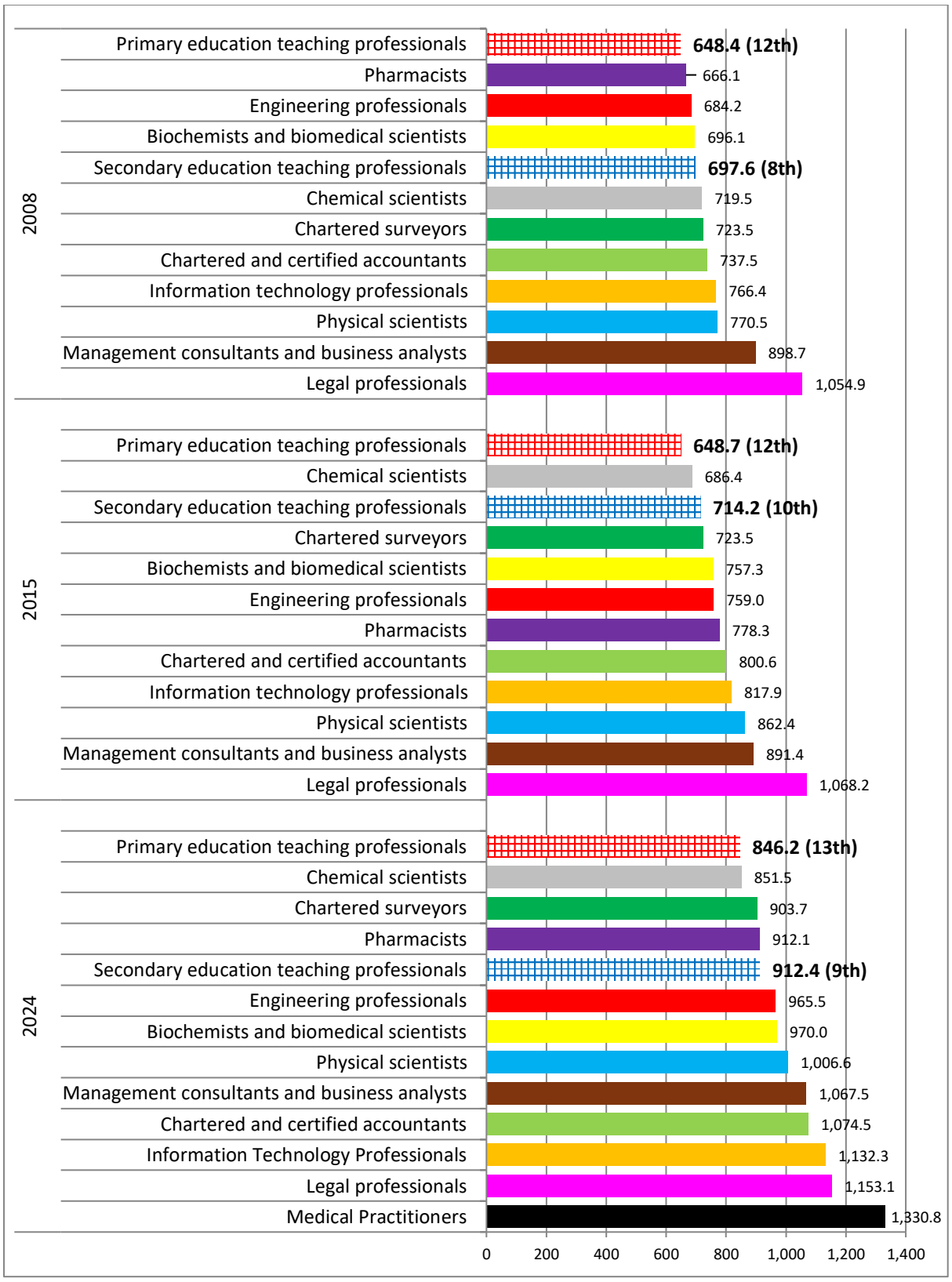
Figure 25: Percentage change in average basic earnings of all comparator graduate professions in England including school teachers: 2023 to 2024



Source: ASHE

*Based on 11 non-teaching professions in 2023 and 2024.

*Figure 26: Comparison of average basic earnings of all comparator graduate professions including school teachers in England: 2008, 2015 and 2024**



Source: ASHE *Based on 10 non-teaching professions in 2008 and 2015 and 11 in 2024.

As with the median basic earnings analysis, to understand how the rankings of teachers' average basic earnings have changed over a longer period we have also examined the situation in the same three years. The results are presented in Figure 26 above, which again shows that secondary teachers earned slightly more, on average, than their primary colleagues in all three years with the monetary gap wider in the two later years.

Also from Figure 26, it is clear that, in terms of average basic earnings, the secondary and primary teaching professions in England were positioned ninth and thirteenth in 2024, tenth and twelfth in 2015 and eighth and twelfth back in 2008. Again, the highly-paid medical practitioner group did not appear in 2008 and 2015 due to sample limitations, thereby boosting the teaching rankings in those years by one place. Just as for the median analysis, it is again clear that when measuring average basic earnings, both teaching groups were consistently placed in the bottom half of the pay tables in all three years.

Unlike both the teaching groups, differences between the median and average basic earnings figures for the non-teaching professions were, overall, more substantial. Examining a traditionally high-paid profession, legal professionals, for example, the average basic earnings amount was 29.7% higher than the corresponding median.

For nine of the other ten non-teaching groups, averages were between 2.1% and 15.8% higher than the equivalent median amounts. The only exception was pharmacists where the average was lower than the corresponding median. For instance, in 2024, pharmacists' median basic earnings stood at £937.30. per week which was 2.7% higher than the average of £912.10.

The fact that average basic earnings for the non-teaching professions were, in some cases, much higher than the corresponding medians is because either:

- there are a greater proportion of higher-paid staff in the non-teaching sectors;
- the pay levels of more experienced/senior staff in non-teaching professions are significantly higher than median amounts while the pay levels of less senior and therefore relatively lower-paid individuals are only marginally lower than median values;
- or both are true.

Returning to teachers, as we have pointed out in previous years, because the median earnings statistics are very similar to the average figures, the statements above are not necessarily true for this profession. Where averages and medians are very similar it usually means that the earnings distribution is relatively symmetrical, with similar proportions of higher- and lower-paid staff. By contrast, many of the other professions have a greater proportion of staff with pay levels at the higher end of their distributions which is evident from our analysis of quartile and decile levels of earnings that we present later in the report.

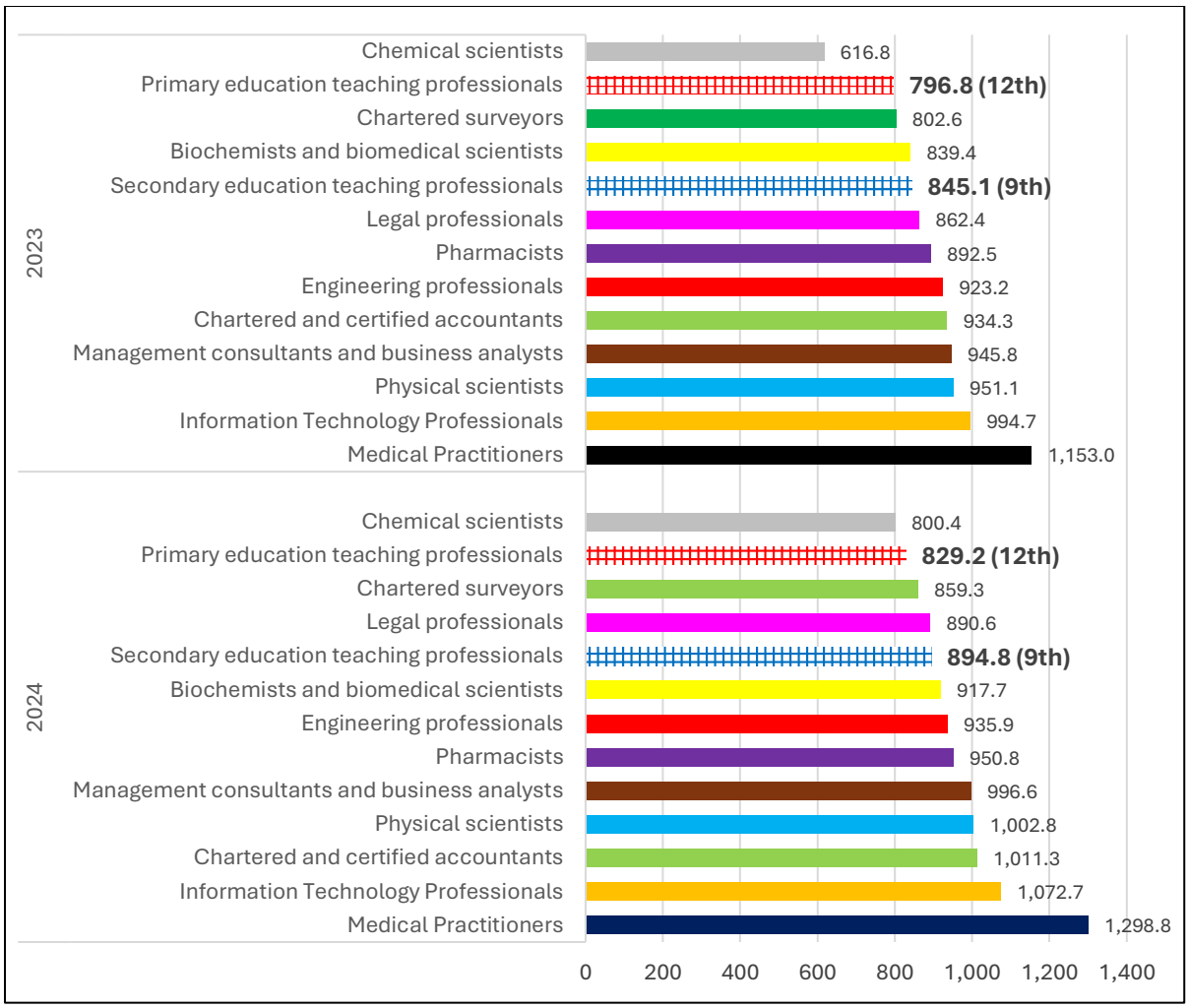
Whatever the actual distributions, as we have found in previous years, in terms of median basic earnings, teachers are relatively low-paid compared to most of the other professions and when measured by average amounts, in most instances, their position worsens in relative terms.

5.6. Gross earnings of comparator graduate professions relative to teachers

As noted above, incentive pay and other amounts additional to basic pay, such as extra allowances or bonuses, do not play an important part in teachers' earnings. By contrast, those employed in other sectors can receive significant amounts from these other sources of remuneration. Unfortunately, response rates from the ASHE survey in terms of incentive payments are not extensive and even when examining data for the whole of the UK rather than England, figures are only disclosed for four professions for 2024. Despite this, where data is disclosed, it illustrates that the sums involved can be significant. The largest median value, for example, stood at £3,833 and related to IT specialists while the corresponding sum for management consultants was £3,690. The other two professions for which data was available were legal professionals and engineers where the equivalent figures were £1,924 and £2,293 respectively. Some of the other professions are likely to also receive such additional payments but data was not disclosed because the sample sizes were too small.

Figure 27 below presents the median gross earnings findings for 2024 and 2023 illustrating that once additional elements of remuneration are incorporated, the ranking order places both teaching groups in either the same or a slightly lower position when compared to the corresponding charts using median basic earnings. As a result, the two teaching groups remain near the bottom of the earnings rankings.

*Figure 27: Comparison of median gross earnings of all comparator graduate professions including school teachers in England: 2023 and 2024**

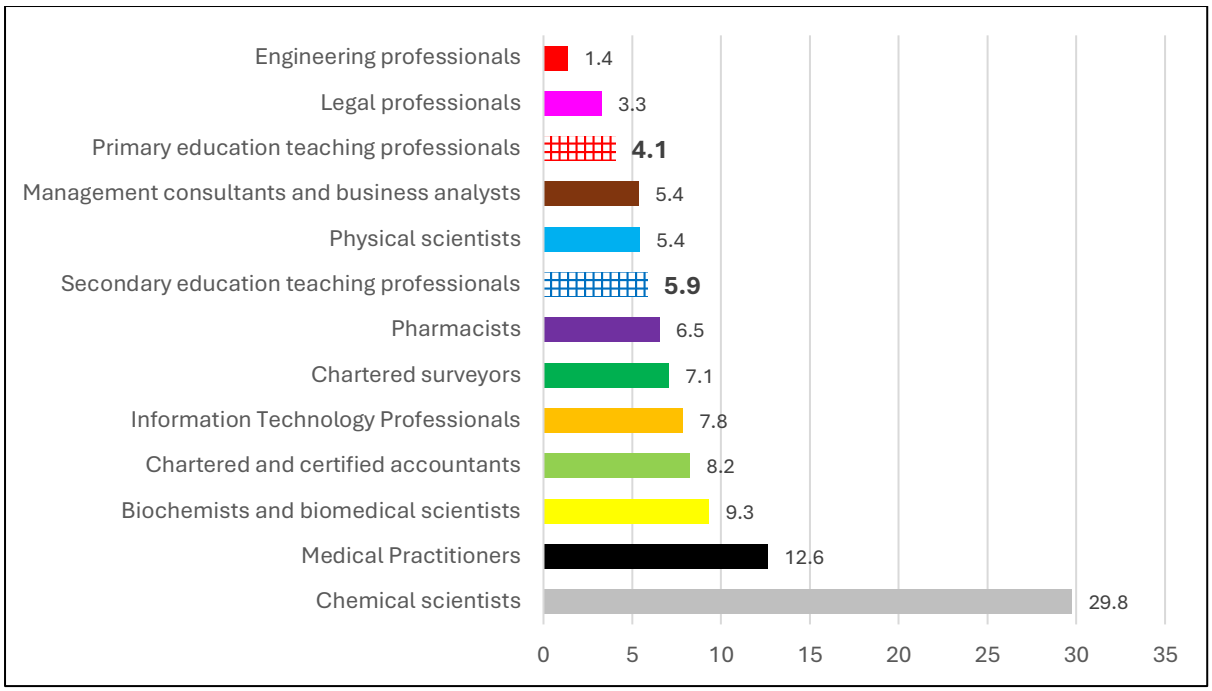


Source: ASHE

*Based on 11 non-teaching professions in 2023 and 2024.

Figure 28 below uses the same data to chart the change in the earnings amounts for each occupational category over the two years. The changes in median gross weekly earnings for primary and secondary teachers between 2023 and 2024 show at 4.1% and 5.9% respectively. For the non-teaching groups, there was quite a range of movements in median gross weekly earnings. For example, the chemical scientist figure was nearly 30% although, as mentioned earlier this is probably more likely the result of a sample change rather than significantly large salary rises. This is probably also true to some extent for all the professional groups. Despite this, some of those with changes in median values that were more comparable to the two teacher groups included management consultants, physical scientists and pharmacists as the chart also demonstrates.

Figure 28: Percentage change in median gross earnings of all comparator graduate professions in England including school teachers: 2023 to 2024



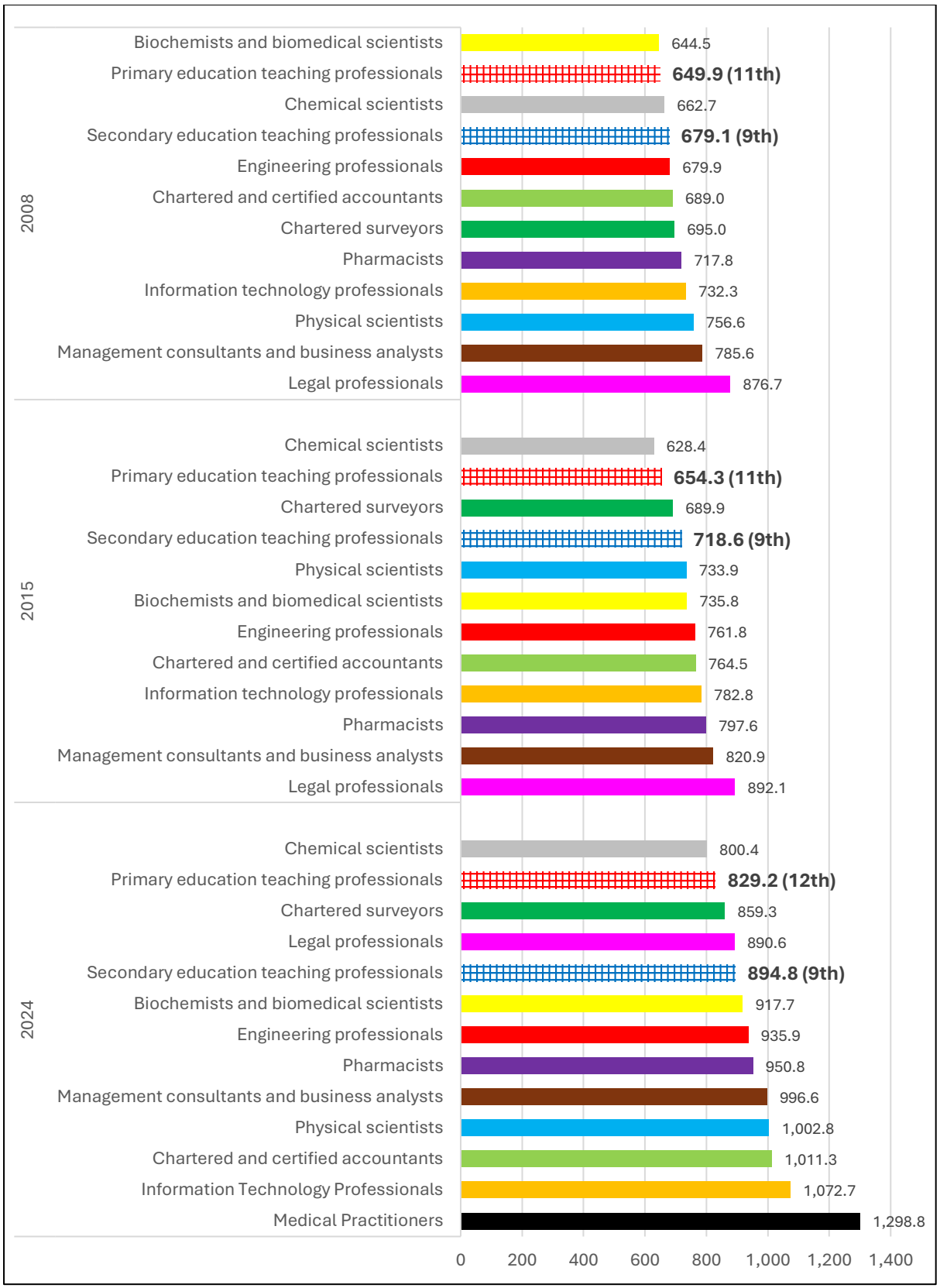
Source: ASHE *Based on 11 non-teaching professions in 2023 and 2024.

Historical ranking analysis

As with the median basic weekly earnings analysis, we have again examined how the median gross weekly earnings rankings of the two teaching professions have changed over a longer period in England. Using the same three years, 2008, 2015 and 2024, the chart below illustrates the pattern. It shows that the two teaching groups tend to be positioned towards the lower end of the rankings in all three years.

The chart also shows that throughout the period, secondary teachers tend to be slightly higher-paid than their colleagues who teach younger children. with the gap slightly wider in the two later years. In terms of median basic earnings, the secondary and primary teaching professions in England were positioned ninth and twelfth in 2024 and ninth and eleventh in both 2008 and 2015. As before, however, for the two earlier years the relatively highly-paid medical practitioner group does not feature, thereby bolstering both teaching groups' positions by one place. In 2024, the full range of median gross weekly earnings stretched from £800.40 to £1,298.80 with primary teachers positioned closer to the bottom of the range at £829.20. The secondary teacher amount was three places above this at £894.80 per week.

Figure 29: Comparison of median gross earnings of all comparator graduate professions in England including school teachers: 2008, 2015 and 2024

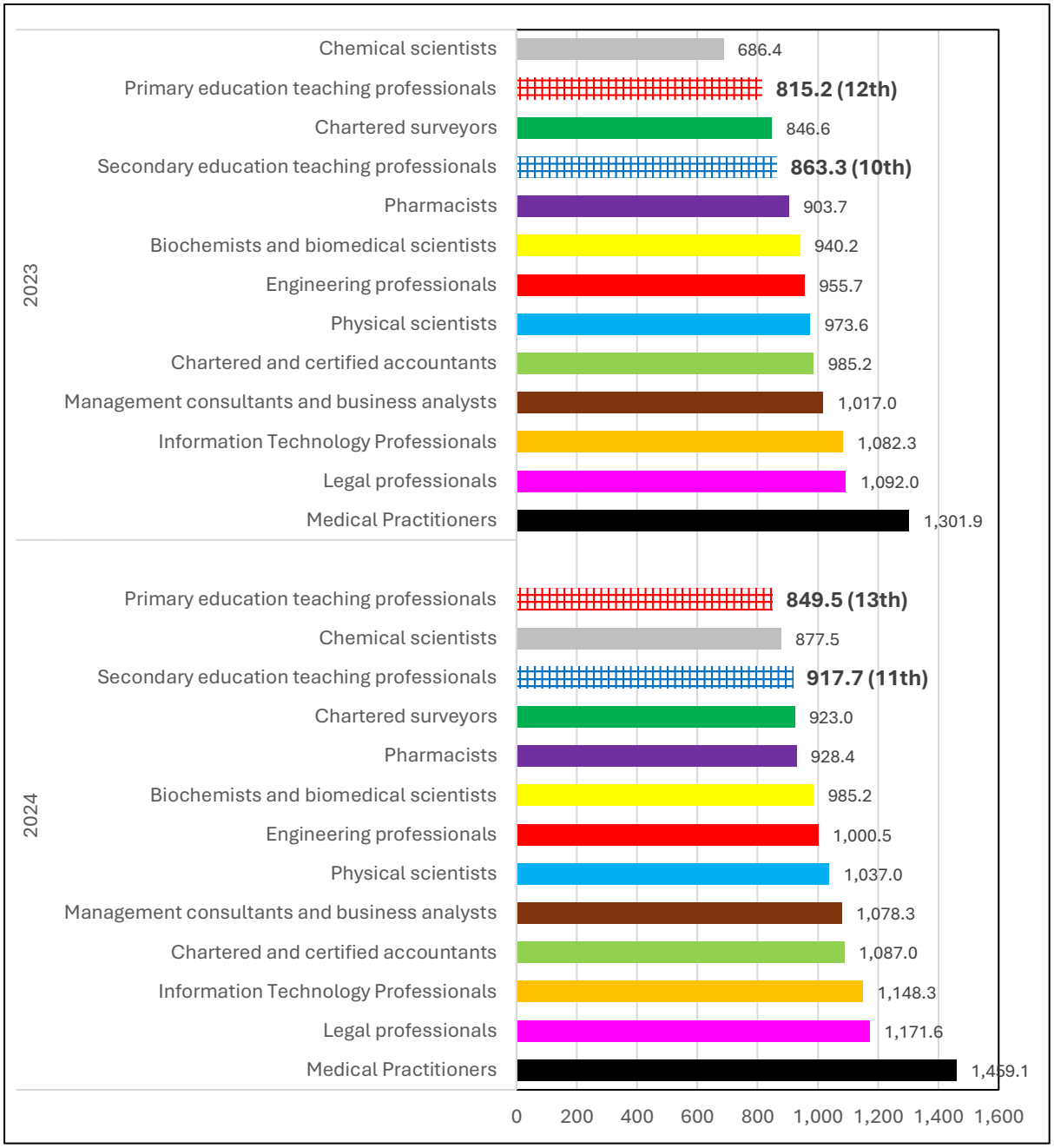


Source: ASHE

*Based on 10 non-teaching professions in 2008 and 2015 and 11 in 2024.

Figure 30 below presents corresponding information for 2024 and 2023, but this time based on average rather than median gross weekly earnings. It illustrates that both teaching groups are again placed low down in the rankings. Compared to the corresponding picture based on median gross weekly earnings, all the positions are either unchanged or slightly lower. As with the earlier charts, there was only a slight variation across the two years with secondary teachers placed eleventh and bottom in 2024 and tenth and twelfth in 2023.

*Figure 30: Comparison of average gross weekly earnings of all comparator graduate professions including school teachers in England: 2023 and 2024**

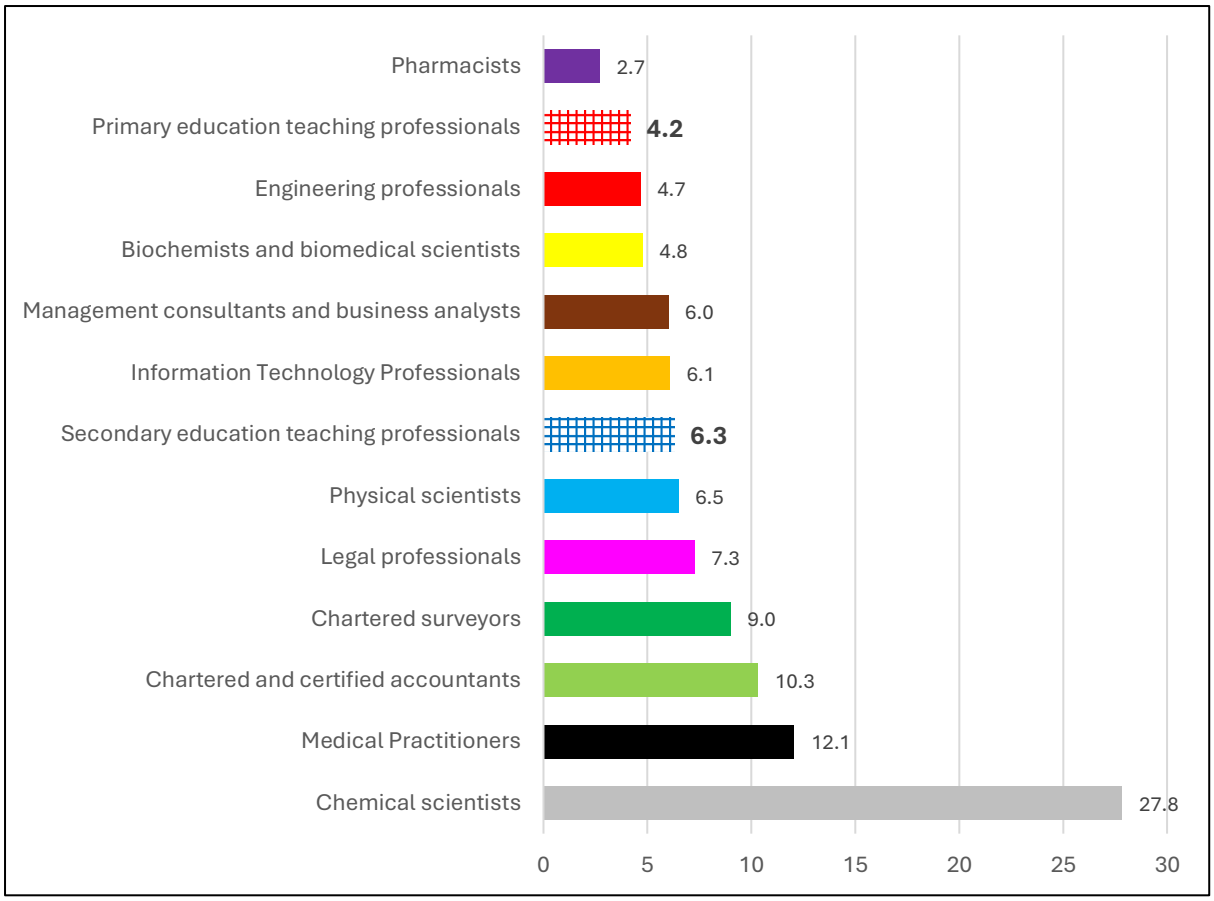


Source: ASHE

A comparison of the amounts in the chart above makes it possible to discover how the averages have changed across the two years and the findings are presented in Figure 31 below. The two years are based on unmatched samples which can mean there are some anomalous results. This again appears to be the case with the chemical scientist group where the average gross weekly earnings figure rose by 27.8% between 2023 and 2024.

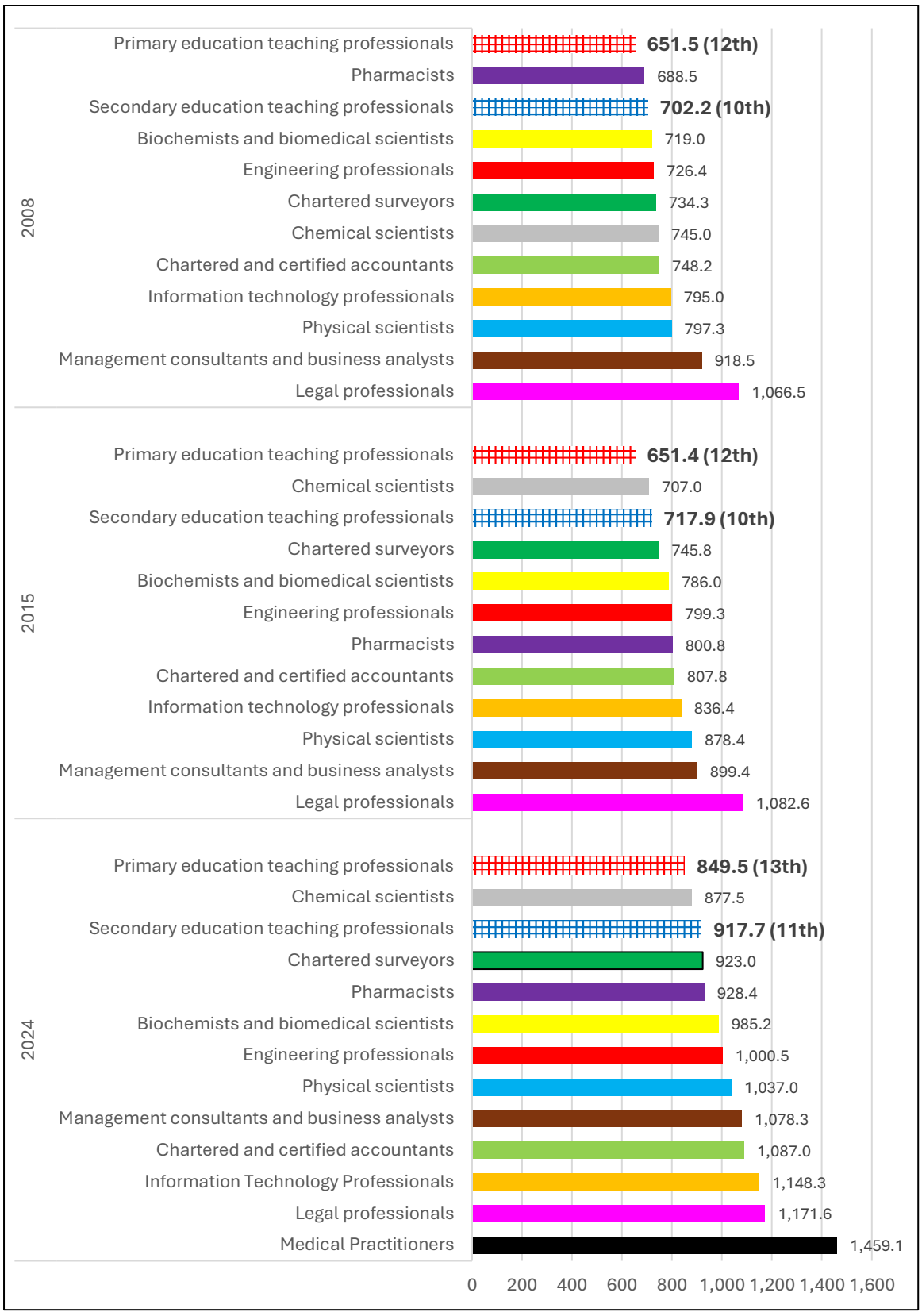
For the two teaching groups, the average figures increased by 4.2% for primary teachers and 6.3% for their secondary colleagues. Excluding the chemical scientist group, changes in the averages for non-teaching groups ranged from 2.7% for pharmacists up to 12.1% for medical practitioners. Five of the non-teaching groups showed figures that were similar to those for the two teaching groups with changes in averages over the two years of between 4.7% and 6.5%. This group included engineers, biologists, management consultants, IT professionals and physical scientists. Among those showing greater increases were legal professionals, chartered surveyors and accountants.

Figure 31: Percentage change in average gross weekly earnings of all comparator graduate professions in England including school teachers: 2023 to 2024



Source: ASHE

Figure 32: Comparison of average gross weekly earnings of all comparator graduate professions in England including school teachers: 2008, 2015 and 2024



Source: ASHE

*Based on 10 non-teaching professions in 2008 and 2015 and 11 in 2024.

As with the other earnings statistics presented earlier, Figure 32 above provides a more long-term picture of how average gross weekly earnings for both secondary and primary teachers were positioned relative to those for the other professional groups. It illustrates that the relative position of both the teaching groups was consistent in every year. For instance, secondary teachers were placed eleventh while those working in primary schools were at the bottom of the ranking in 2024. The positions in 2008 and 2015 were each tenth and twelfth but there was no data in either year for the high-paying medical practitioner group. If there had been data for this profession, then the teacher placings would have been equal in all three years at the lower end of the rankings.

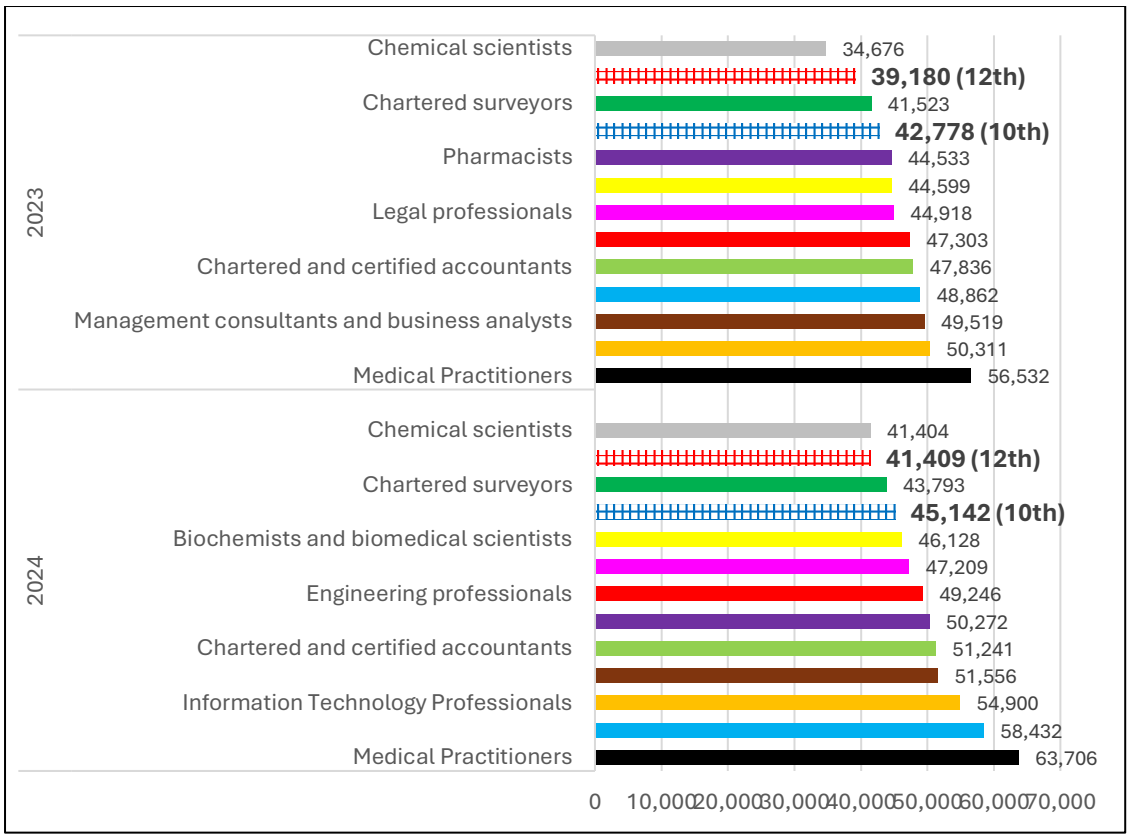
In 2024, the full range of average gross weekly earnings stretched from £849.50 to £1,459.10, a difference of just over £600 per week. This compares to the equivalent differential of just under £500 per week when measured by basic earnings, demonstrating how the additional payments included in gross earnings cause the distribution to widen. Across this range, the primary teacher amount represented the bottom figure while secondary teachers' average gross weekly earnings were just under £70 higher at £917.70 per week.

5.7. Comparisons based on annual gross earnings levels

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the main difference between the annual and weekly data is that the former is collected at the end of the year and only includes those individuals that have been in post for the full 12 months. By contrast, the weekly data is collected in April and includes anyone in post at that time which means that the sample sizes are typically larger. A more important difference though is that annual amounts provide more adequate coverage of bonus practice because these payments are awarded in the later months of the year.

Because of their lack of coverage of bonus data, any earnings differentials based on weekly figures may overstate the relative position of the two teaching groups (because they do not include bonuses that other groups may receive) and at the same time understate the earnings lead for many of the comparator groups. Notwithstanding the smaller sample sizes, this is why examining the full 12 months that feature in the annual data is important and also presents an extra dimension to the analysis.

*Figure 33: Comparison of median annual earnings of all comparator graduate professions including school teachers in England: 2023 and 2024**



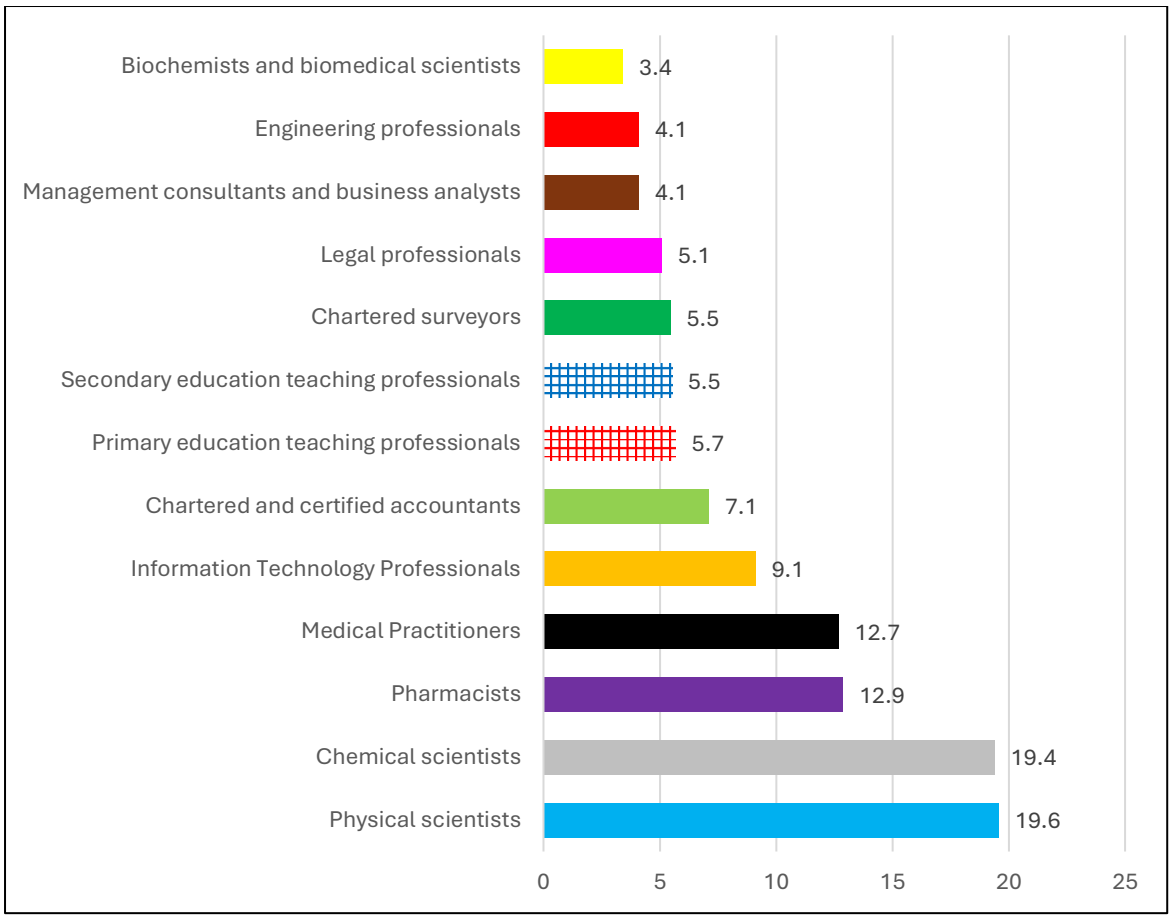
Source: ASHE

*Based on 11 non-teaching professions in 2023 and 2024.

Figure 33 above presents a comparison of average annual earnings for all the professional groups in the latest two years. In both 2023 and 2024 the two teaching groups were placed tenth and twelfth with the secondary school figures higher in both cases. In 2024, the range of median annual earnings stretched from £41,404 to £63,706. The primary amount was £41,409 while the corresponding secondary figure stood at £45,142, both near the bottom of this range.

Contrasting the 2023 medians with those found for 2024 demonstrates the differences in the earnings figures across the two years as illustrated in Figure 34 below. Again, the two years are based on unmatched samples, so the same caveats mentioned above need to be borne in mind. This is particularly apparent from the two figures for chemical scientists and physical scientists that are both just under 20%. For the two teaching groups, the sample sizes are larger which is reflected in the changes across the two years of 5.7% for primary teachers and 5.5% for secondary professionals.

Figure 34: Percentage change in median annual earnings of all comparator graduate professions in England including school teachers: 2023 to 2024



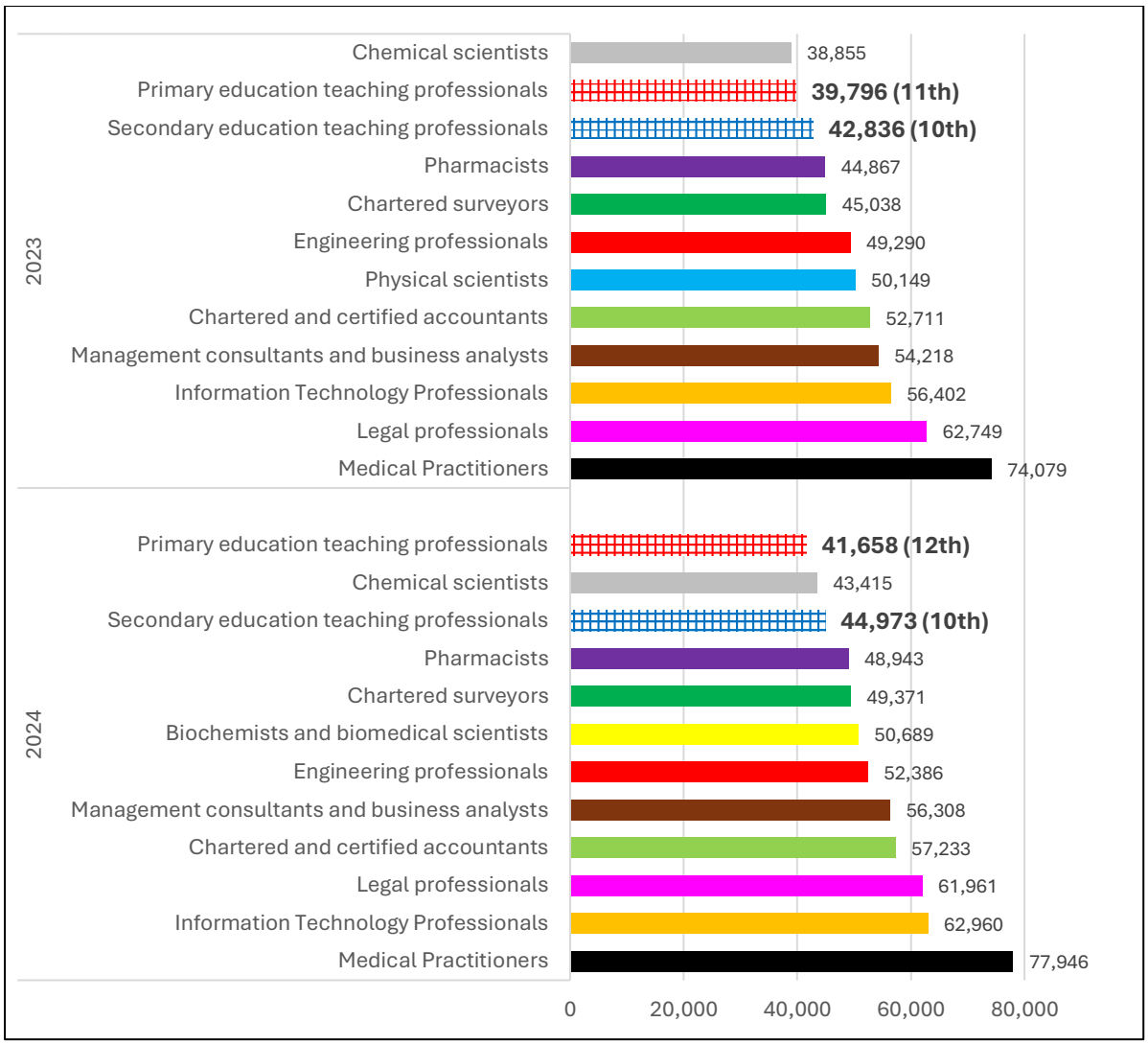
Source: ASHE

*Based on 11 non-teaching professions in 2023 and 2024

For all the weekly earnings statistics we supplemented the analysis with a historical analysis by examining the years 2008 and 2015 as well as the latest year. Unfortunately, this is not possible for the annual earnings levels because we only started this analysis in 2022.

Next, therefore, we turn to the average annual earnings levels for all 13 professional groups for 2023 and 2024, which illustrates that both teaching groups were ranked towards the bottom. In both years data was only available for 12 jobs and the best placed position was tenth. This was the ranking for secondary teachers in 2024 where the average amount was £44,973. The equivalent amount for primary teachers stood at £41,658 in 2024, placing it at the foot of the pay table. To put these amounts in context, the whole range stretched to a high of £77,946 while seven professions had average annual earnings of over £50,000 as the chart also demonstrates.

Figure 35: Comparison of average annual earnings of all comparator graduate professions in England including school teachers: 2023 and 2024

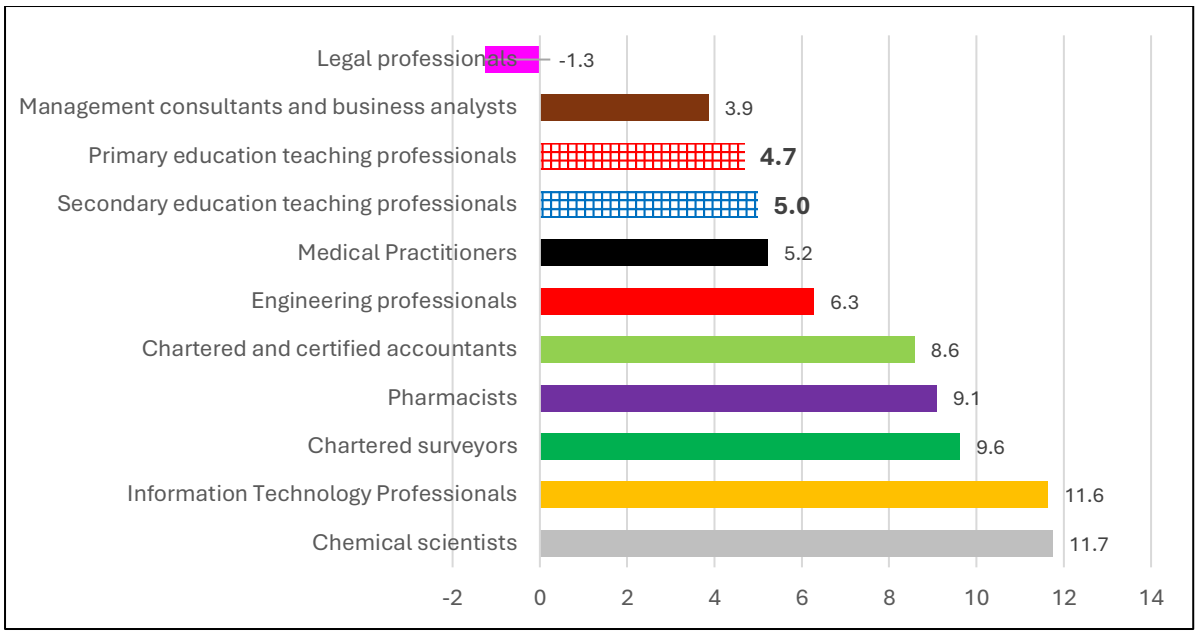


Source: ASHE

*Based on 10 non-teaching professions in 2023 and 2024.

Taking the same figures and examining how they have changed across the two years shows some large movements as illustrated in the chart below. As outlined earlier, the figures do not represent actual pay rises but instead movements in average figures across the two years and so are influenced by changes in sample sizes. This explains some of the high amounts found in the chart as well as the negative change associated with the legal group. For teachers, whose categories do not suffer some of the sample limitations connected with certain other professions, the increases look to be more accurate representations of the true picture. For example, the primary school teacher 2024 movement was 4.7% while the corresponding secondary teacher was slightly higher at 5%.

Figure 36: Percentage change in average annual earnings of all comparator graduate professions in England including school teachers: 2023 to 2024



Source: ASHE

*Based on 11 non-teaching professions in 2023 and 2024.

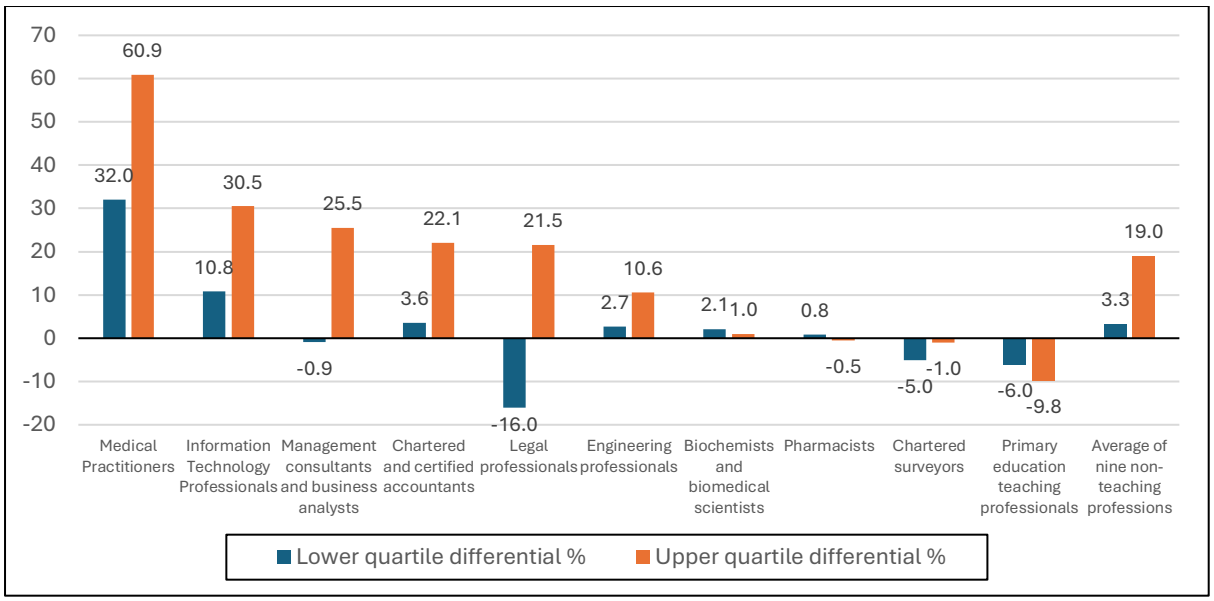
5.8. Quartile analysis by profession

All the analysis up to now in this section has focused on median and average gross weekly earnings statistics but to understand fully the whole picture and the relative positions for all 13 occupations it is necessary to explore all the points on the various distributions. To start with, we examine the lower and upper quartile figures, shedding further light on teachers' earnings relative to those for other professionals.

Figure 37 below presents the picture for lower and upper quartile gross weekly earnings in 2024 by displaying the scale of the differentials that exist between nine non-teaching professions and the equivalent secondary teacher figures. In addition, for completeness, we include the differentials between secondary and primary teachers as well as making a comparison with the average for all nine non-teaching jobs.

In all cases, there are two bars with the left one representing the lower quartile differential and the right, the upper quartile equivalent. Overall, the two bars on the far right indicate that at the lower quartile level, the secondary teachers' amount trailed the average of the nine non-teaching jobs by 3.3% while at more senior levels the upper quartile differential was much wider 19%, again in favour of the non-teaching occupations.

Figure 37: Comparison of lower and upper quartile gross weekly earnings for nine non-teaching professions with secondary school teachers in 2024



Source: ASHE

As the chart also shows, the equivalent primary school figures are lower than those of their secondary school colleagues meaning they trail the non-teaching professions' combined figures by an even greater degree.

Examining each of the non-teaching professions individually, the chart also shows that the secondary school teacher lower quartile figure was smaller than the equivalent figures for six of the comparator professions and higher for three. Where non-teaching lower quartiles were higher, differentials ranged between 0.8% for pharmacists and 32% for medical specialists. By contrast, the secondary teacher lower quartile was higher than the equivalent statistics for management consultants, chartered surveyors and legal professionals with shortfalls for these non-teaching groups ranging from 0.9% to 16%.

The graph above also demonstrates that the pattern for upper quartile differentials was slightly different, with the teaching group trailing seven of the nine non-teaching professions, in some cases by significant levels. By contrast, only two professions had smaller upper quartile figures than secondary teachers. These were pharmacists and chartered surveyors although in both cases the differentials were only 0.5% and 1% respectively. On the other hand, an analysis of the corresponding upper quartile gross weekly earnings levels where the non-teaching amounts were higher shows that the differentials were mainly larger,

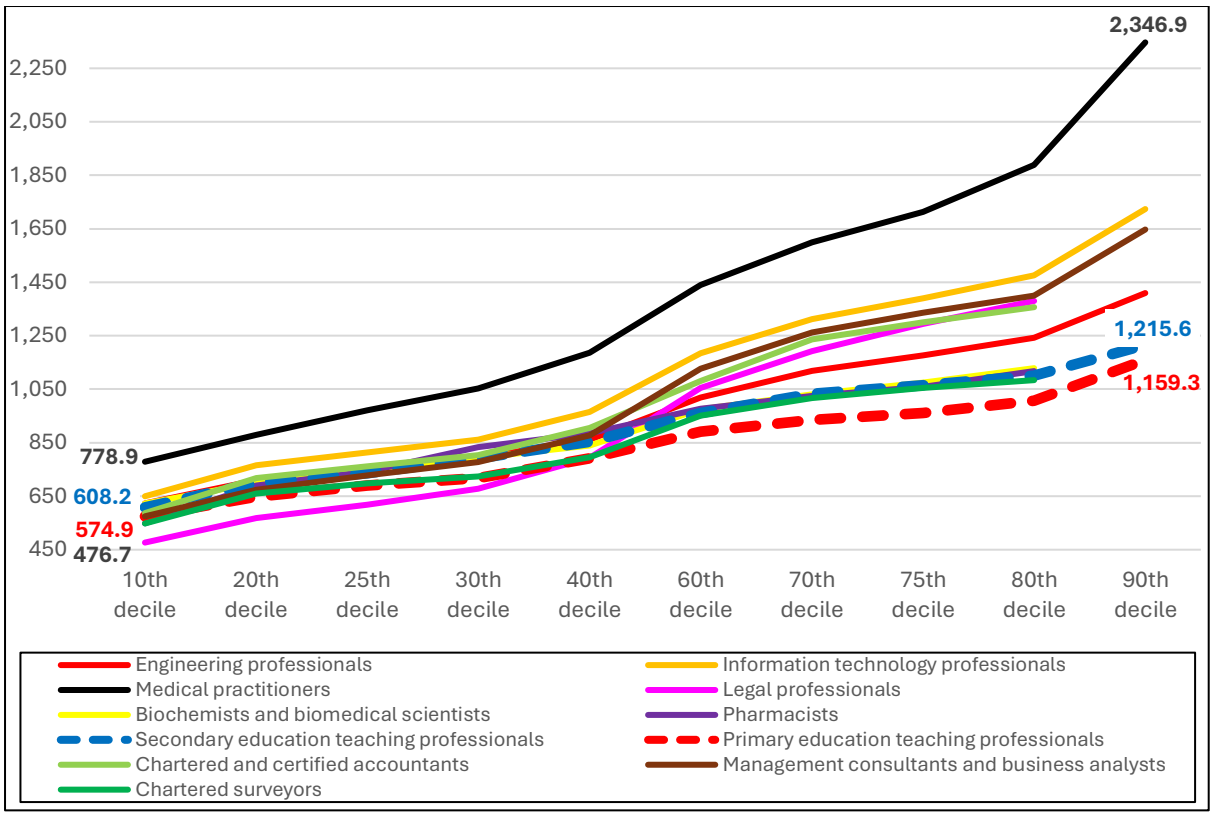
stretching from just 1% for biochemists and biomedical scientists up to 90.9% for medical practitioners.

5.9. Gross weekly earnings analysis of the whole distribution

An examination of quartiles provided a further dimension to the analysis but for an even more granular approach, where data is disclosed, we look at the more detailed interval data also collected by the ONS. This includes both the quartile and decile statistical points. This is particularly relevant because in recent years, the STRB has expressed a wish to more closely review the pay arrangements for school teachers who are taking on additional management and leadership responsibilities. Our findings are summarised in Figure 38 below and to make the pattern clearer, the data for the two teaching professions is represented by thicker, dotted lines and are coloured blue/red. In some cases, data is not disclosed for every job at every statistical point as the chart also demonstrates.

It is clear from the chart that at the lower levels of all the distributions, as might be expected, the differentials between teachers and the other professions are significantly smaller than at the upper end. For example, the lowest tenth decile gross weekly figure related to legal professionals and stood at £476.70 while the highest corresponding tenth decile amount was the medical practitioner figure at £778.90 per week, a difference of 63.2%. By contrast, the difference between the highest and lowest upper decile levels was 102.4% with the lowest figure standing at £1,159.30 per week and the highest, £2,346.90.

*Figure 38: Lower to upper decile gross weekly earnings levels for all comparator graduate professions in England including school teachers: 2024**



Source: ASHE

*Based on comparisons with nine non-teaching professions.

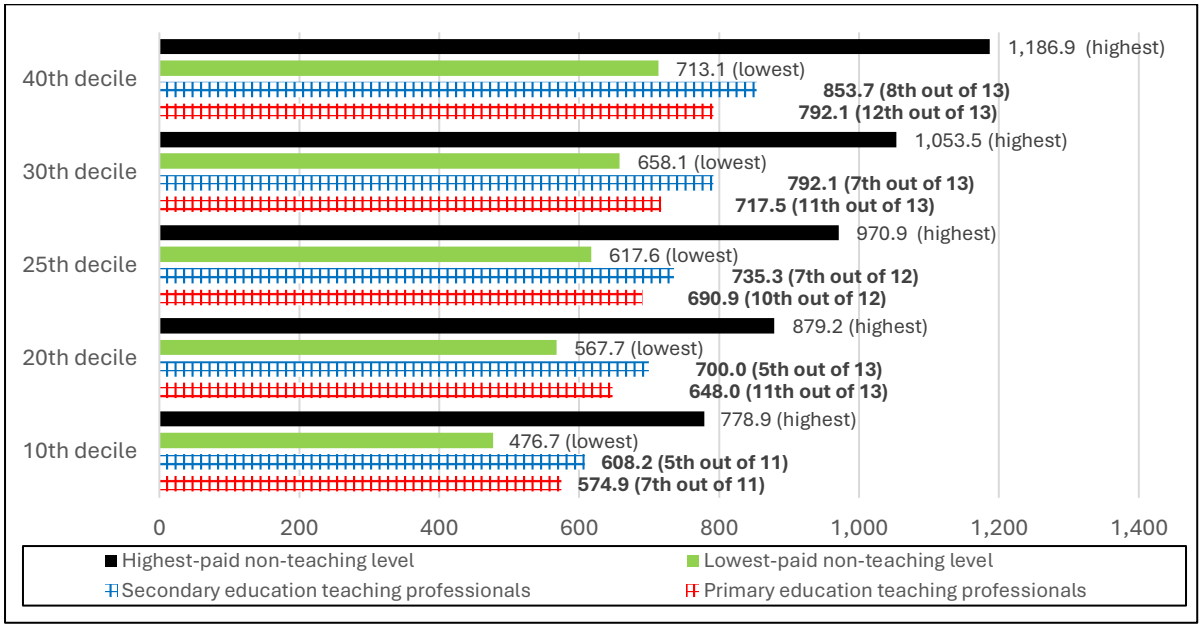
As Figure 38 above also demonstrates, the primary and secondary teacher gross weekly amounts were positioned towards the lower end of comparisons at the higher decile levels. In contrast, for the lower end of the distribution on the left-hand side of the graph, both primary and secondary teachers were positioned around the midpoint along with a group of six other professions.

The chart above provides a useful overall presentation of how teachers' gross weekly earnings compare to those for the other professions. To supplement this, using the same data we have analysed the precise differentials at each decile point to understand exactly how the teaching groups compare to the non-teaching occupations. We start by looking at the bottom half of the pay distributions as illustrated in Figure 39 below.

It demonstrates that the positions of both teaching groups tend to drop down the rankings as we move higher up the pay distribution. Another point to make about the chart is that data was not disclosed for all the jobs with just 11 data points for the tenth decile level at the bottom of the distribution. Taking primary teachers first, in 2024 these were ranked seventh

out of the 11 professions where data was available. This fell to twelfth out of 13 professions at the 40th decile. For secondary teachers the corresponding placings were fifth and eighth respectively as the chart also shows.

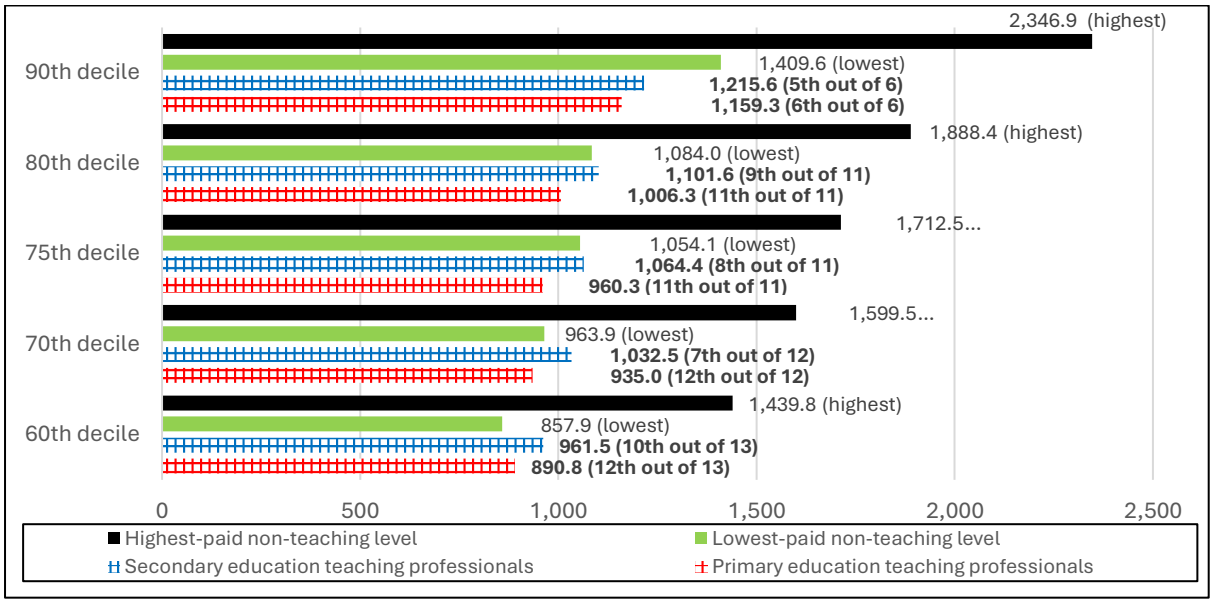
*Figure 39: Position of both teaching groups when measured by gross weekly earnings at lower pay levels in 2024**



Source: ASHE

*Not all non-teaching professions had data disclosed for every statistical point.

Figure 40: Position of both teaching groups when measured by gross weekly earnings at higher pay levels in 2024



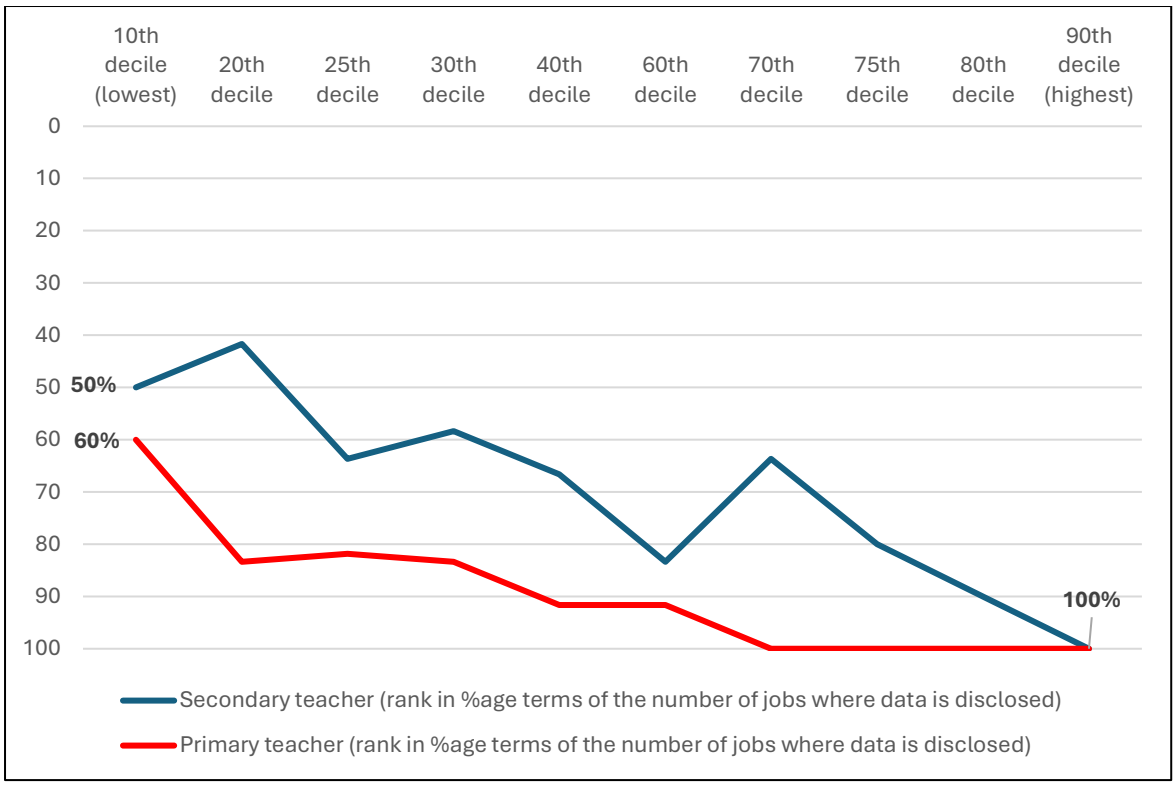
Source: ASHE

*Not all non-teaching professions had data disclosed for every statistical point.

Moving to the upper ends of the respective distributions the pattern is quite different with both teaching groups placed at the lower end of the rankings throughout as Figure 40 above shows. For instance, at the 60th decile primary and secondary teachers were positioned in twelfth and thirteenth positions out of 13 jobs. Moving up the distribution, the number of jobs for which data was available declined but primary teachers were positioned in last place in all cases. For secondary teachers, the picture was slightly more positive but, in all cases, they were ranked very close to the bottom. For example, at the 70th decile this group was placed seventh out of 12 jobs, falling to eighth out of 11 at the upper quartile pay level. The position fell further to ninth out of 11 at the 80th decile before moving to fifth out of six for the very highest levels of gross earnings.

The data from the two charts above can be presented in a different way whereby the teachers' relative positions at each statistical point can be represented as a percentage that summarises their ranking relative to the total number of occupational groups whose earnings are being compared. For example, at the 10th decile level, where primary teachers are placed sixth out of 10 jobs (excluding secondary teachers), the percentage displayed is 60% while at the 90th decile they are fifth out of five jobs and so have a corresponding value of 100%. Therefore, anything under 50% in Figure 41 places teachers in the top half of the rankings and anything above 50% puts them in the bottom half of the pay rankings.

Figure 41: Primary and secondary teacher positions for quartile and decile pay levels versus selected non-teaching professions as measured by gross weekly earnings in 2024



Source: ASHE

By presenting the data in this way it is easier to appreciate how the relative placings of the two teaching groups changes as we move higher up the respective pay ranges through the deciles.

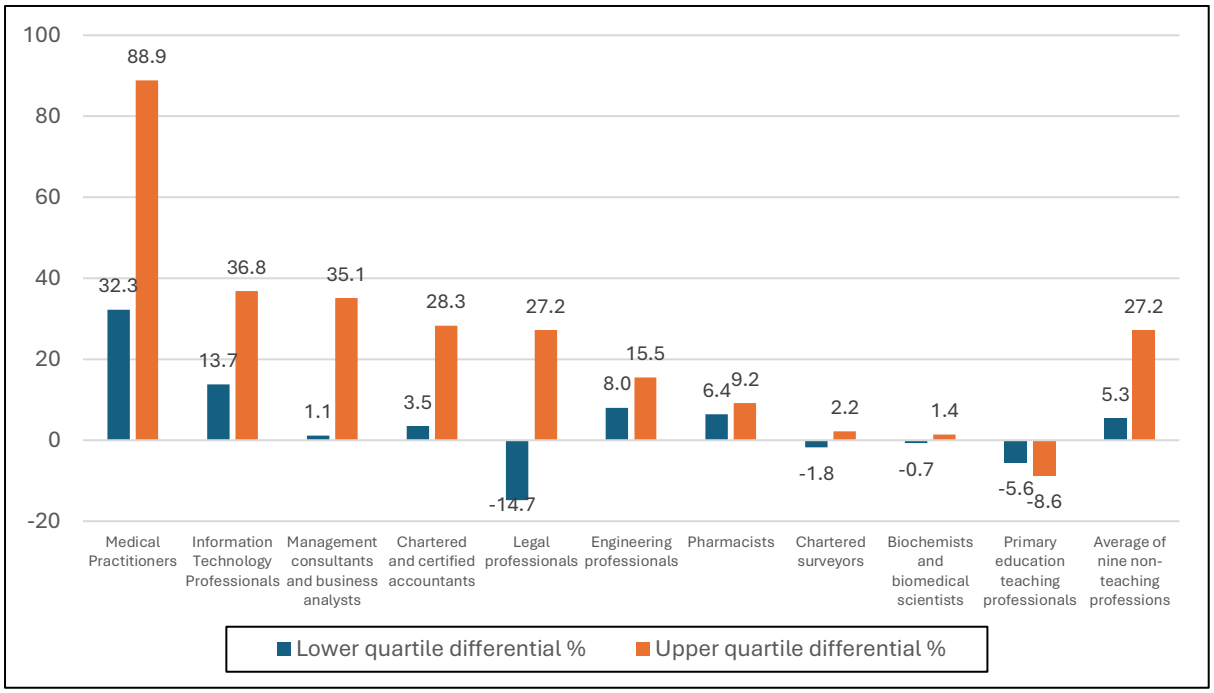
The chart shows that there is an overall trend downwards as earnings amounts increase. For example, primary teachers start with a lower decile position of 60% which places them in the bottom half of the rankings. From here, there is a gradual decline to 100% for the four highest points in the chart meaning primary teachers are the lowest paid at the 70th, 75th, 80th and 90th deciles. For secondary teachers, the trend is not as straightforward but still involves a gradual decline. For instance, this group is placed at the halfway point when 10th decile earnings are examined and is placed in the bottom half of the rankings for seven of the nine other points. The only exception was at the 20th decile when the position moved slightly above halfway within the rankings. As a result, even at the lower end of the earnings distributions, both teaching groups tend to fall below halfway, and the placings worsen as earnings amounts rise.

5.10. Analysis of annual gross earnings whole pay distribution

Because of the differences between how weekly and annual earnings are collected mentioned above we extended our quartile and decile analysis to the annual earnings. Figure 42 below presents the corresponding findings for lower and upper quartile annual earnings in 2024 and shows the scale of the differentials that exist between the nine non-teaching professions and the equivalent secondary teacher figures. In addition, for completeness, we have again included the differentials between secondary and primary teachers as well as making a comparison with the average for all nine non-teaching jobs.

In all cases, there are two bars with the left-hand one representing the lower quartile differential and the right, the upper quartile equivalent. The two bars on the far right-hand side of the chart indicate that at the lower quartile level, the secondary teachers' lower quartile amount trailed the average of the nine non-teaching jobs by 5.3%. By contrast, at more senior levels the upper quartile differential was larger at 27.2%, again in favour of the non-teaching occupations. As the chart also shows, the equivalent primary school figures are lower than those of their secondary school colleagues meaning they trail the non-teaching professions by an even greater degree when measured using these statistics.

Figure 42: Comparison of lower and upper quartile gross annual earnings for nine non-teaching professions with secondary school teachers in 2024

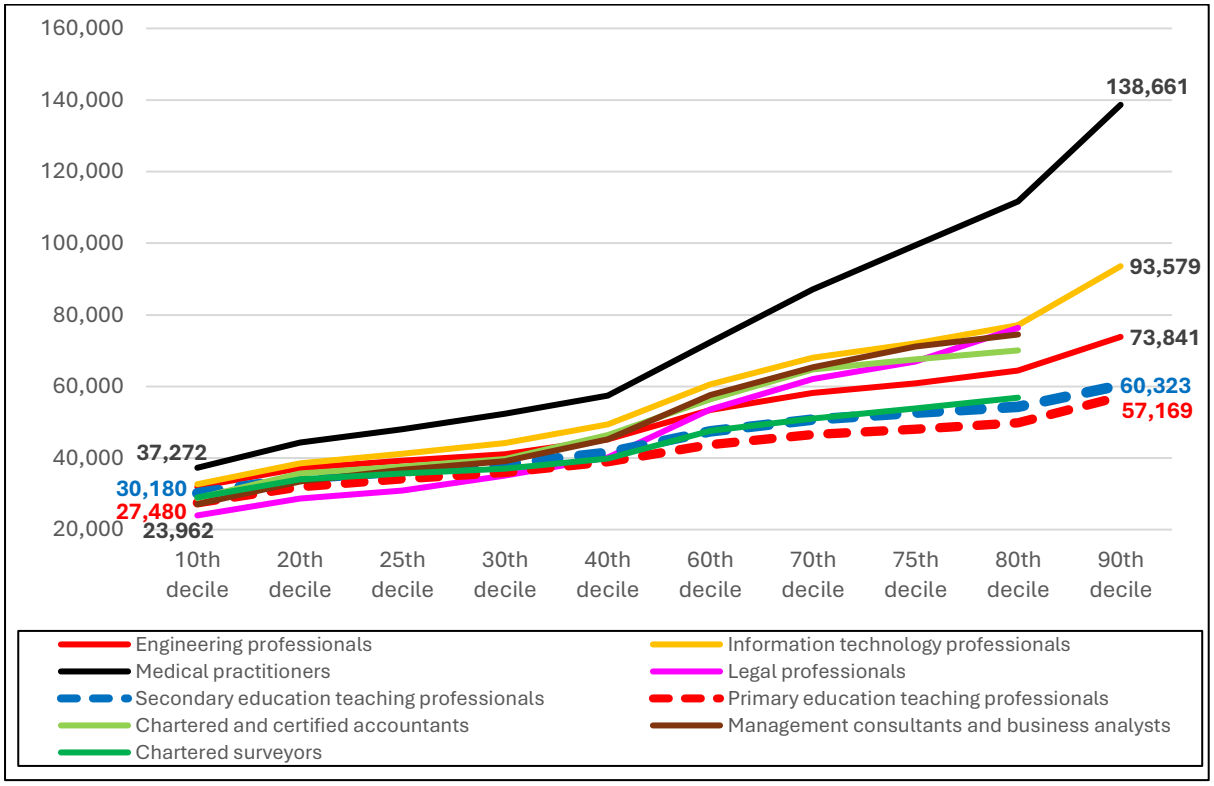


Source: ASHE

Looking at the individual comparisons with each non-teaching professions in isolation, the chart also shows that the secondary school teacher lower quartile figure was smaller than the equivalent figures for six of the comparator professions and higher for three. Where non-teaching lower quartiles were higher, differentials ranged between 1.1% for management consultants up to 32.3% for medical practitioners. By contrast, the secondary teacher lower quartile was higher than the equivalent statistics for chartered surveyors, biochemists and legal professionals with the shortfalls between 0.7% and 14.7%. As in the gross weekly analysis, the magnitude of this differential with the legal group may be because this group includes graduates that are in the early stages of their training.

To provide an even more granular assessment of the differences between all the pay distributions, where data is disclosed, we have conducted an analysis of all the decile points which follows. In the chart below, we again look at the ten-percentage point intervals between the lower and upper decile levels to determine how both teaching groups' annual earnings compared with those of the non-teaching professions. As before, the data for the two teaching professions is represented by thicker, dotted lines and are coloured blue/red and not all data is available for every job at every statistical point.

Figure 43: Lower to upper decile annual earnings levels for all comparator graduate professions in England including school teachers: 2024

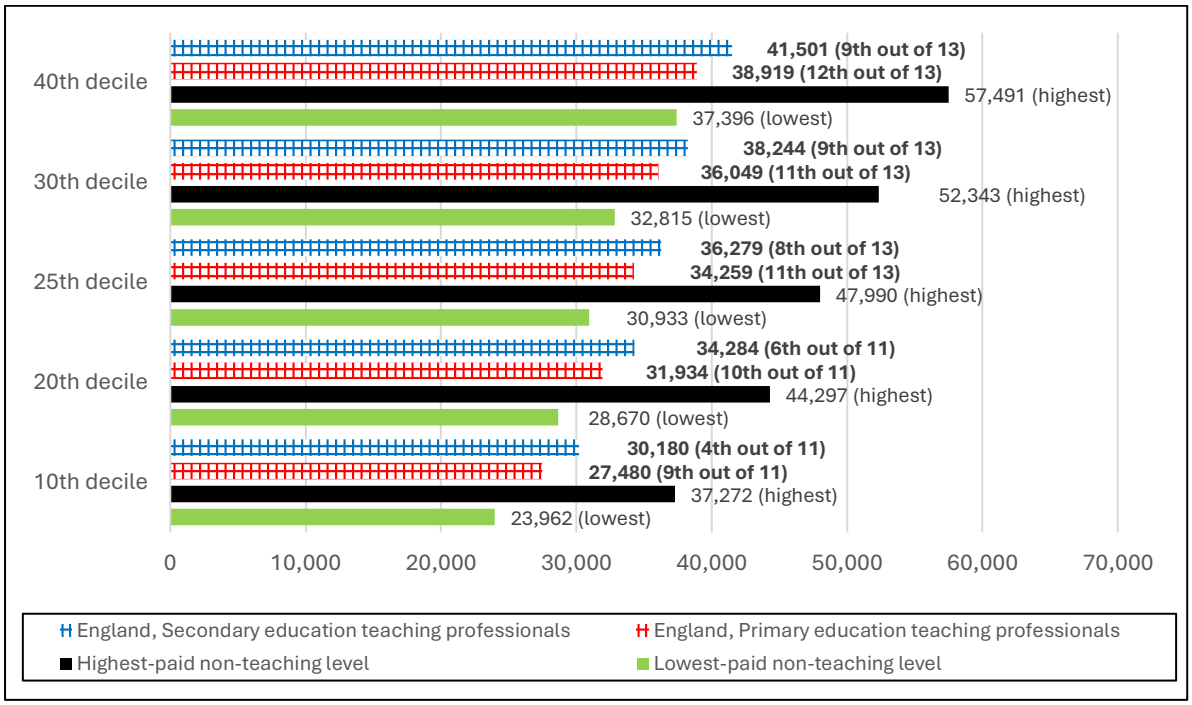


Source: ASHE

As with the gross weekly analysis, the chart illustrates that at the lower levels of all the distributions shown, as might be expected, the differentials between professions are significantly smaller than at the upper end. For instance, the lowest tenth decile annual figure related to legal professionals and stood at £23,962 while the highest corresponding highest amount was the medical practitioner figure of £37,272, a difference of 55.5%. By contrast, the difference for the upper decile level was 142.5% with primary teachers showing the lowest figure of £57,169 and medical practitioners the highest at £138,661.

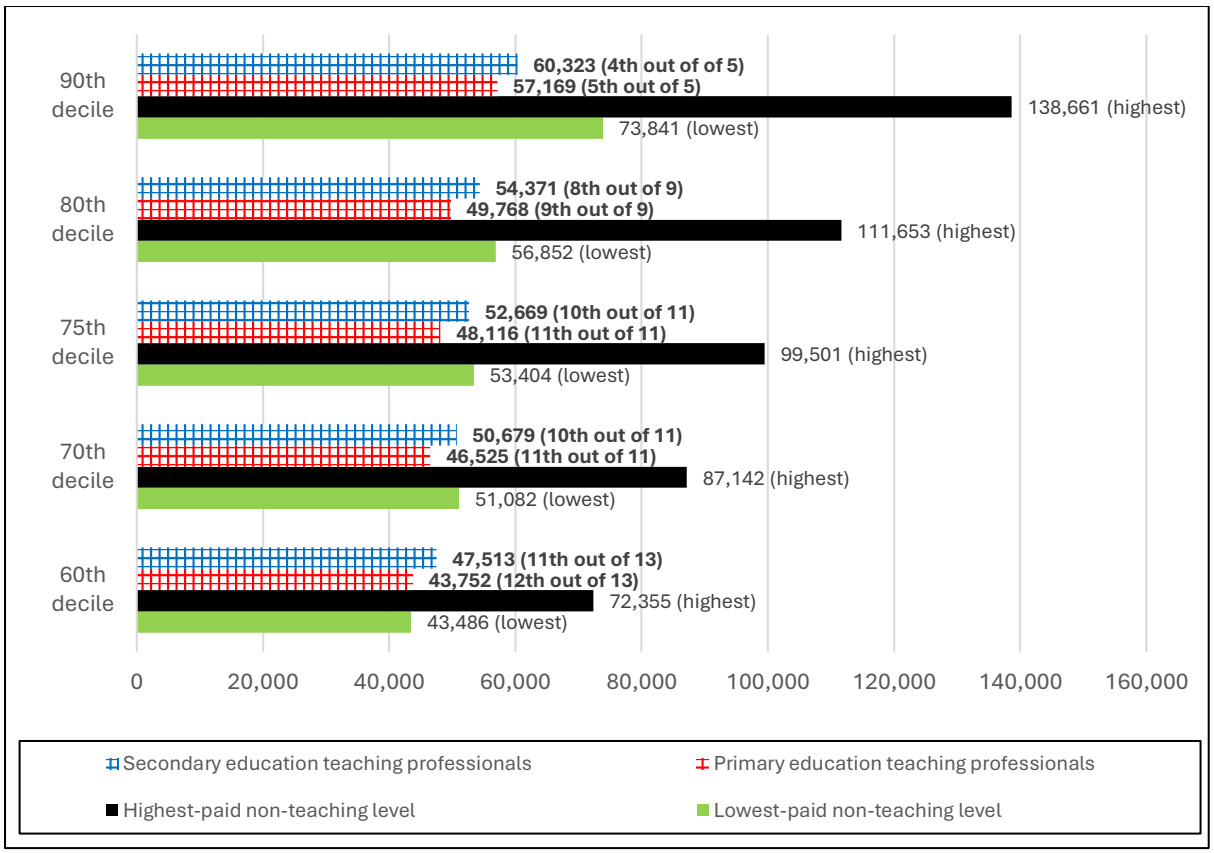
To provide further colour to the information above, we have analysed the precise differentials at each decile point to understand exactly how the teaching groups compare to the non-teaching occupations. We start by looking at the bottom half of the pay distributions as illustrated in Figure 44 below. As with the equivalent gross weekly earnings analysis, the chart demonstrates that the positions of both teaching groups tend to drop down the rankings as the statistics move higher up the pay distribution. In addition, data was not disclosed for all jobs at every decile as the chart also shows. Primary teachers, at the lowest decile level, in 2024, were ranked ninth out of the 11 professions. This fell to twelfth out of 13 professions at the 40th decile. For secondary teachers the corresponding placings were fourth and ninth respectively as the chart also demonstrates.

Figure 44: Position of both teaching groups when measured by gross annual earnings at lower pay levels in 2024



Source: ASHE

Figure 45: Position of both teaching groups when measured by gross annual earnings at higher pay levels in 2024



Source: ASHE

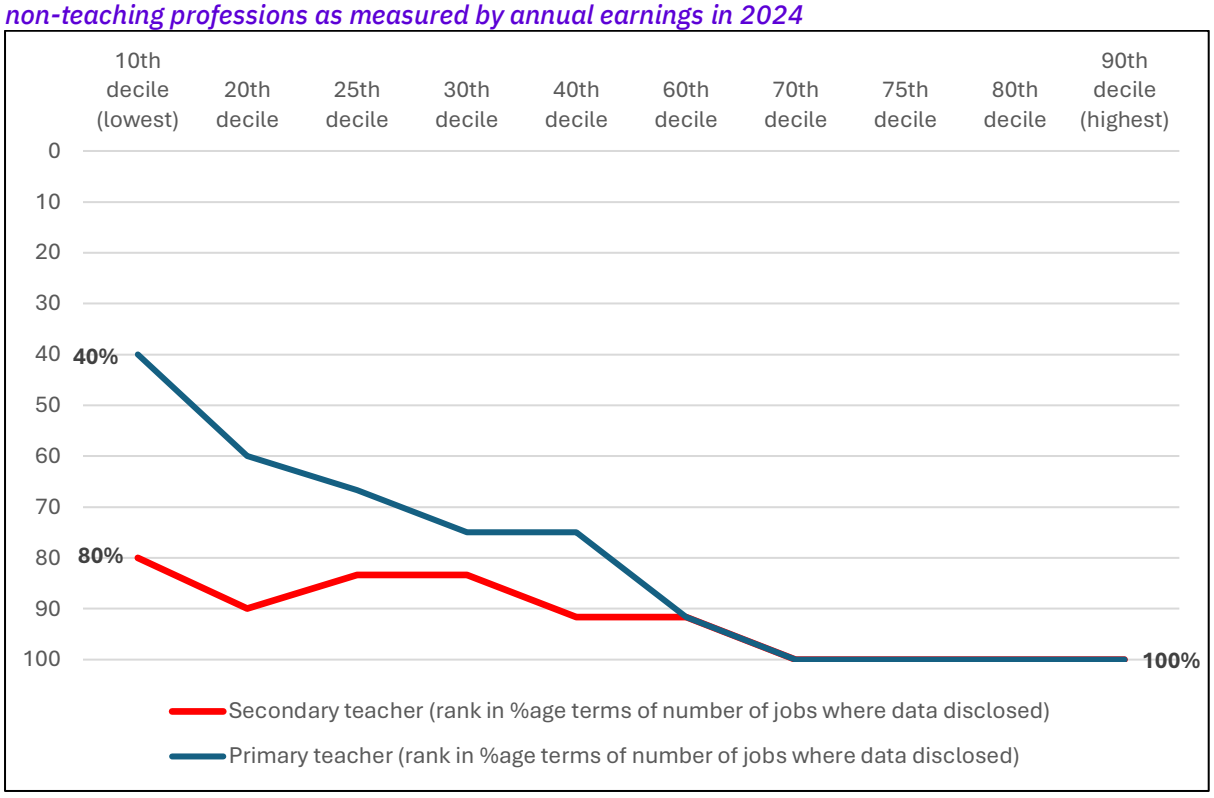
Focusing on the upper ends of the distributions illustrates quite a different pattern. At these higher earnings levels, both teaching groups tend to be placed at significantly lower rankings throughout. For instance, at the 60th decile, primary and secondary teachers were positioned in eleventh and twelfth position respectively out of 13 occupational categories. As was the case with the gross weekly earnings findings, moving up the distribution, the number of jobs for which data was available declined but primary teachers were still positioned in last place in all cases while secondary teachers were always next lowest.

As before, the data from the last two graphs can be presented in a different way whereby each teaching group's ranking can be expressed as a percentage of the number of jobs where data is disclosed at each statistical point. As described above, in basic terms, anything below 50% in the chart places the teaching group in the top half of the pay rankings and anything above puts them in the bottom half. In addition, for each teaching group, we have not included the other, so the comparisons are each with the non-teaching occupations alone. For both teaching groups, as with the gross weekly earnings analysis, the chart shows that

there is an overall trend downwards as earnings amounts get larger. Unlike the earlier analysis, however, both downward trends are more constant with fewer large fluctuations than found in the gross weekly analysis. This could be because the annual statistics take a greater account of bonus payments, thereby improving the relative position of most of the non-teaching professions compared to the two teaching groups.

More specifically, primary teachers start with a lower decile position of 80% near the bottom of the rankings which is followed by a gradual decline down to 100% for the four highest points in the chart, indicating that primary teachers are the lowest-paid at the 70th, 75th, 80th and 90th deciles. Turning to secondary teachers, the pattern was similar, but the group's relative position was better than their colleagues in primary schools at the lower ends of the earnings distribution. For instance, secondary teachers were placed at the 40% point when 10th decile earnings are examined and are placed in the bottom half of the rankings for all the other eight points presented. As demonstrated, at the upper ends of the distribution on the right-hand side of the chart, secondary teachers are also the lowest-earning, on average, when compared to the non-teaching professions for which data is disclosed.

Figure 46: Primary and secondary teacher positions for quartile and decile pay levels versus selected non-teaching professions as measured by annual earnings in 2024



Source: ASHE

Appendix 1: Use of ASHE data

For the purposes of our analysis, we have used full-time basic weekly and gross weekly earnings data as well as annual earnings from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). As far as possible, where comparisons have been made, we have tried to be consistent in collating occupational data for all the years where data is drawn from.

The ONS' Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes change from time to time with the latest alterations made in 2000, 2010 and 2020. As a result, some of the analysis where we have looked at ranking levels in previous years incorporate codes from all three classifications.

Because of this, some of the occupational definitions featured in this report have changed in the period analysed although we do not think this detracts from the overall robustness of the datasets.

Factors to bear in mind when interpreting results

The ONS provides guidance on data validation and quality assurance including sections on accuracy, sampling and non-sampling errors as well as the likely effect of data revisions. It points out that in terms of accuracy – the degree of closeness between an estimate and the true value – its estimates are subject to various sources of error. Total error consists of two elements, the sampling error and the non-sampling error.

Sampling error

Sampling error occurs because estimates are based on a sample rather than a census. ASHE estimates this error through coefficients of variation (CV) which are published alongside all ASHE outputs. The CV is the ratio of the standard error (SE) of an estimate to the estimate itself, expressed as a percentage. Generally speaking, when all other factors are constant, the smaller the CV value, the higher the quality of the estimate.

In published tables, ASHE uses colour coding as a quick reference guide to the CV of the estimates; estimates with CVs less than or equal to 5% are published with no colour fill; estimates with CVs between 5% and 10% are published with a light green background; estimates with CVs between 10% and 20% are published with a dark green background; cells for which estimates have been suppressed on quality or disclosure grounds are also filled in dark green as shown here.

Key	Statistical robustness
CV <= 5%	Estimates are considered precise
CV > 5% and <= 10%	Estimates are considered reasonably precise
CV > 10% and <= 20%	Estimates are considered acceptable
x = CV > 20%	Estimates are considered unreliable for practical purposes

It should be noted that at low levels of disaggregation, high coefficients of variation imply estimates of low quality. For example, for an estimate of £400 with a CV of 10%, the true value is likely to lie between £321.60 and £478.40. This range is given by the estimate +/- 1.96 x the standard error (1.96 multiplied by 10% of £400 equals £78.40). Where these ranges for different estimates overlap, interpretation of differences between the relevant domains becomes more difficult.

Non-sampling error

ASHE statistics are also subject to non-sampling errors. For example, there are known differences between the coverage of the ASHE sample and the target population (that is, all employee jobs). For example, jobs that are not registered on PAYE schemes are not surveyed. These jobs are known to be different from the PAYE population in the sense that they typically have low levels of pay. Consequently, ASHE estimates of average pay are likely to be biased upwards with respect to the actual average pay of the employee population.

Non-response bias may also affect ASHE estimates. This may happen if the jobs for which respondents do not provide information are different from the jobs for which respondents do provide information. For ASHE, this is likely to be a downward bias on earnings estimates since non-response is known to affect high-paying occupations more than low-paying occupations.

Finally, ASHE results tables do not account for differences in the composition of different 'slices' of the employee workforce. For example, figures for the public and private sectors include all jobs in those sectors and are not adjusted to account for differences in the age, qualifications or seniority of the employees or the nature of their jobs, all factors which may affect how much employees earn, particularly in teaching.

Various procedures are in place to minimise errors in returned data. Returns undergo a range of checks which include validation against previous returns and expected values, selective editing (a technique for prioritising suspicious values for follow-up based on their impact on published results) and re-contacting businesses for verification. Similar checks are also made at the aggregate level for key results.

Revisions

Provisional results are published in the November following the survey reference date. Revised results are then published one year later alongside the following year’s provisional results. The revised results take account of late returns to the survey and amendments to data resulting from validating returns to the current year’s survey.

Revisions are usually quite small, with revision at the UK level typically around 0.1%. However, estimates for domains with smaller sample sizes are susceptible to larger revisions.

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