

What 1,300+ education email campaigns tell us about engagement

A practical benchmark report for organisations marketing to schools.



Michael McVerry

Founder, Buzz Education

What 20+ years in education has taught me

For more than 20 years, I've worked with organisations trying to engage schools more effectively. As Founder of Buzz Education, I've overseen thousands of education marketing campaigns and seen first-hand what captures attention, what encourages action and what gets ignored.

My perspective also comes from the other side of the school gate;

- I'm a former Secondary teacher and Middle leader
- I'm Chair of Governors at 2 schools
- I sit on admissions panels across 2 local authorities
- I chair finance and disciplinary committees
- I have been through 3 Ofsted inspections
- I have been involved in 3 school academisation processes.

For this report, I brought together the campaign reporting held across Buzz Education and analysed more than 1,300 campaigns with usable engagement data. Rather than looking for generic email-marketing rules, I wanted to see how performance changed according to four practical factors: the supplier's industry, the objective of the email, the day it was sent and the length of the content.

The findings are useful partly because some of them challenge familiar assumptions. There isn't one magic day to email schools, and shorter emails don't automatically perform better. The clearest differences are much more closely connected to relevance: who you're speaking to and what you're asking them to engage with.

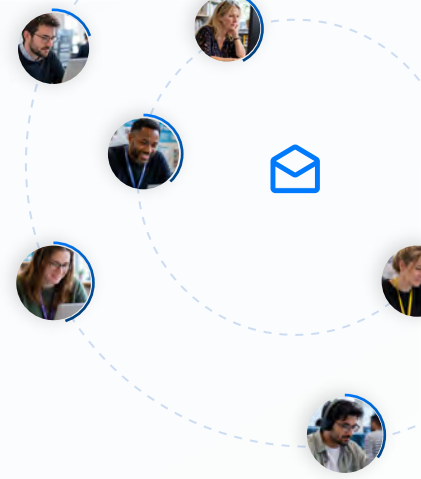
Michael McVerry, Founder of Buzz Education



How to use this report

Use the benchmarks on the following pages to compare your own recent campaigns. They are designed as broad reference points, not rigid targets: every campaign is affected by its audience, proposition, creative, targeting and wider context.

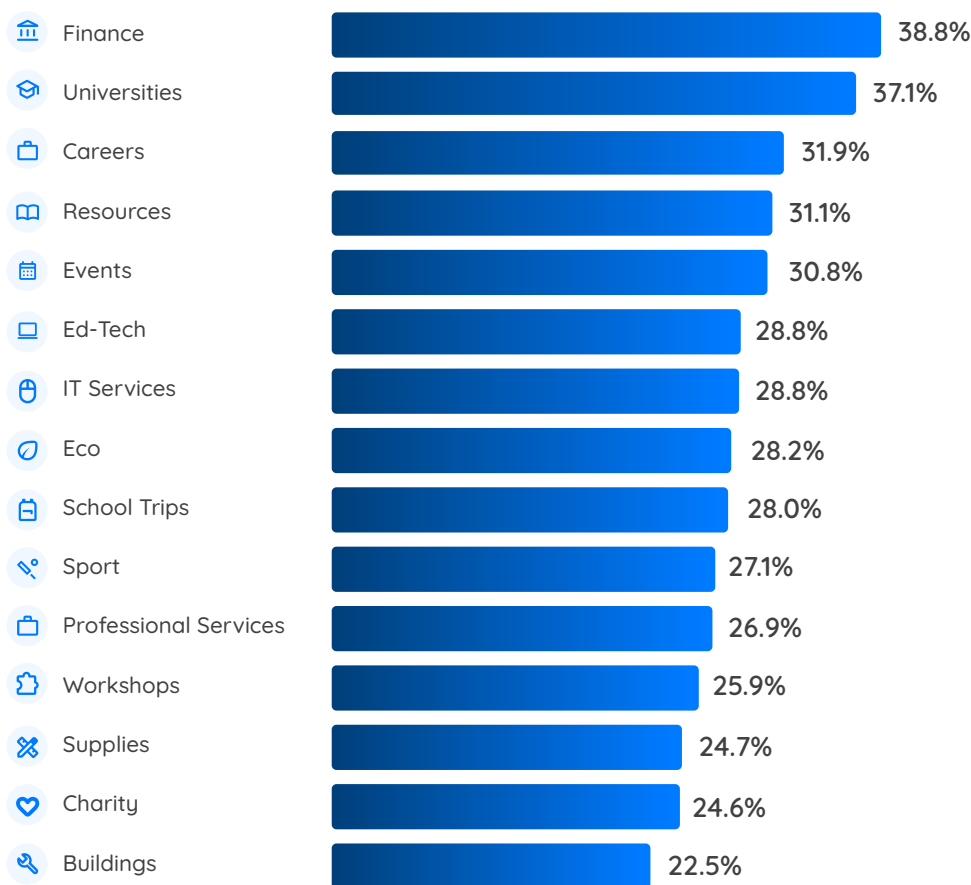




How does your industry compare?

Education suppliers operate in very different markets. A school-trip provider, finance organisation and classroom-resources supplier are asking schools to engage with very different propositions, so a single generic email benchmark can hide more than it reveals.

Average click-through rate by industry



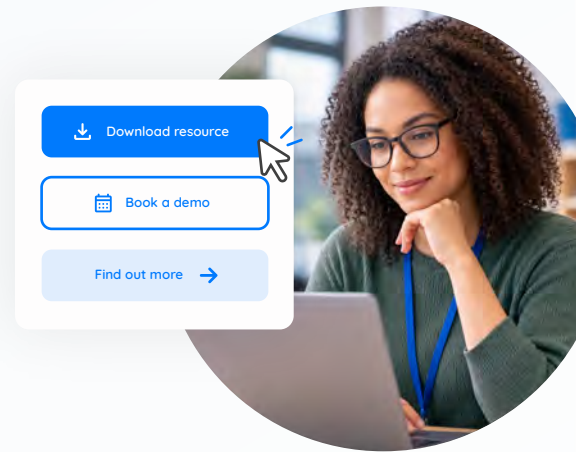
Sectors with fewer than 20 usable campaigns have been omitted.

What this tells us

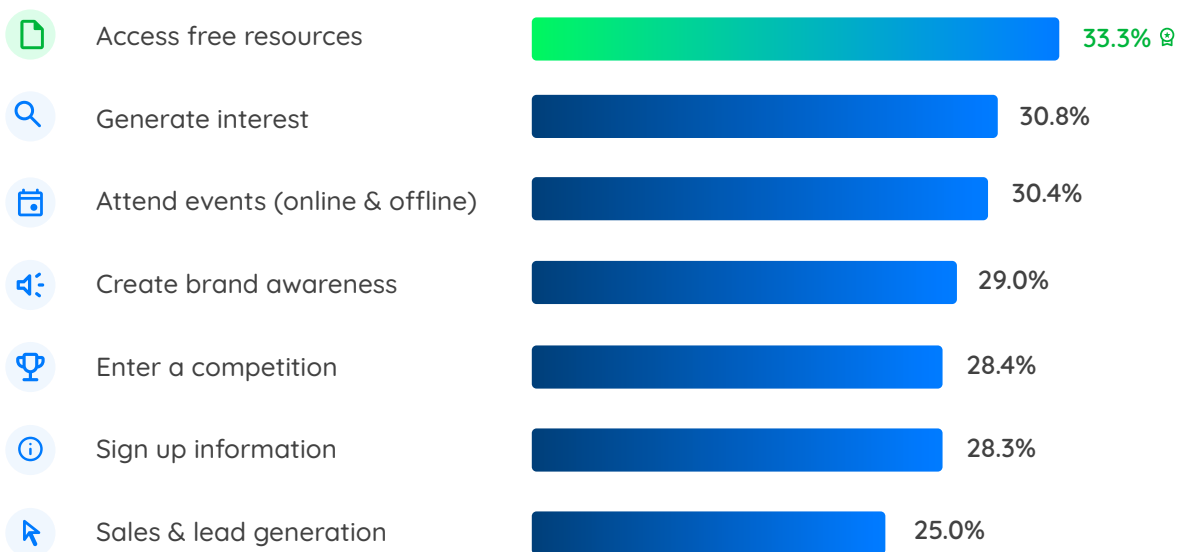
Industry is one of the clearest factors in our analysis. The differences remain even after allowing for campaign objective, send day and email length. That means the most useful comparison is not simply 'is my click rate good?' but 'how does it compare with organisations marketing a similar type of offer to schools?' If your campaigns regularly sit below your sector benchmark, review the relevance of the audience, proposition, messaging and calls to action before assuming the problem is simply timing.

What are you asking schools to do?

Campaign objective matters. An email offering a useful resource creates a very different decision for the recipient from one asking them to buy, book or commit immediately.



Average click-through rate by campaign objective



What this tells us

Resource-led campaigns generated much higher click-to-open engagement than direct sales campaigns. This doesn't mean suppliers should stop selling. It suggests that schools often respond more readily when marketing gives them value before asking for commitment.

Guides, research, practical resources, webinars and useful insight can demonstrate expertise, build confidence and create a more natural route into a later sales conversation.

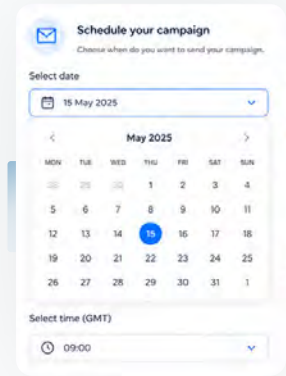


A useful question before your next campaign:

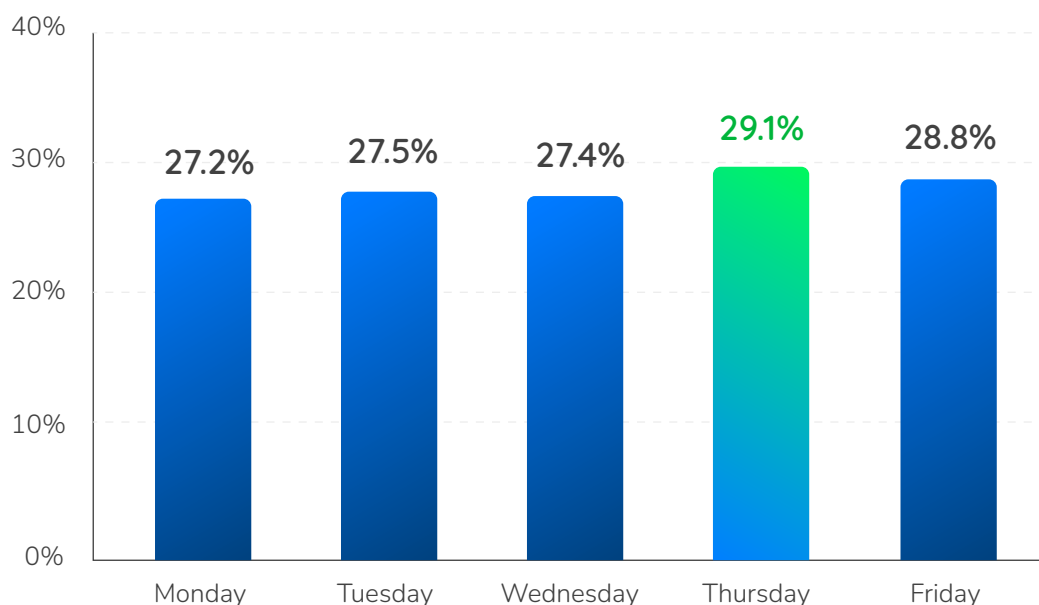
'Are we giving the recipient a compelling reason to engage, or simply asking them to do something for us?'

Is there really a best day to email schools?

Choosing the right moment can help, but our analysis suggests the importance of weekday is often overstated.



Average click-through rate by day of the week



What this tells us

Thursday produced the highest overall engagement, but the differences are relatively small. More importantly, once we accounted for industry, campaign objective and email length, weekday was not a meaningful independent predictor of engagement. Different campaign types also performed best on different days. In practice, this means there is no universal 'best day' for emailing schools.

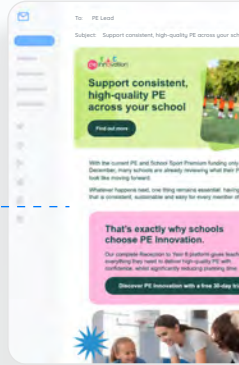
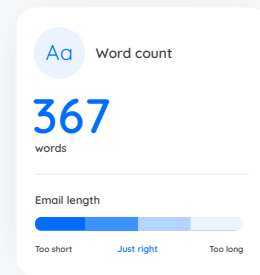
Our recommendation: don't delay a strong, relevant campaign because you think you've missed the perfect send day. Give more attention to the audience, offer and message than to finding a mythical ideal weekday.



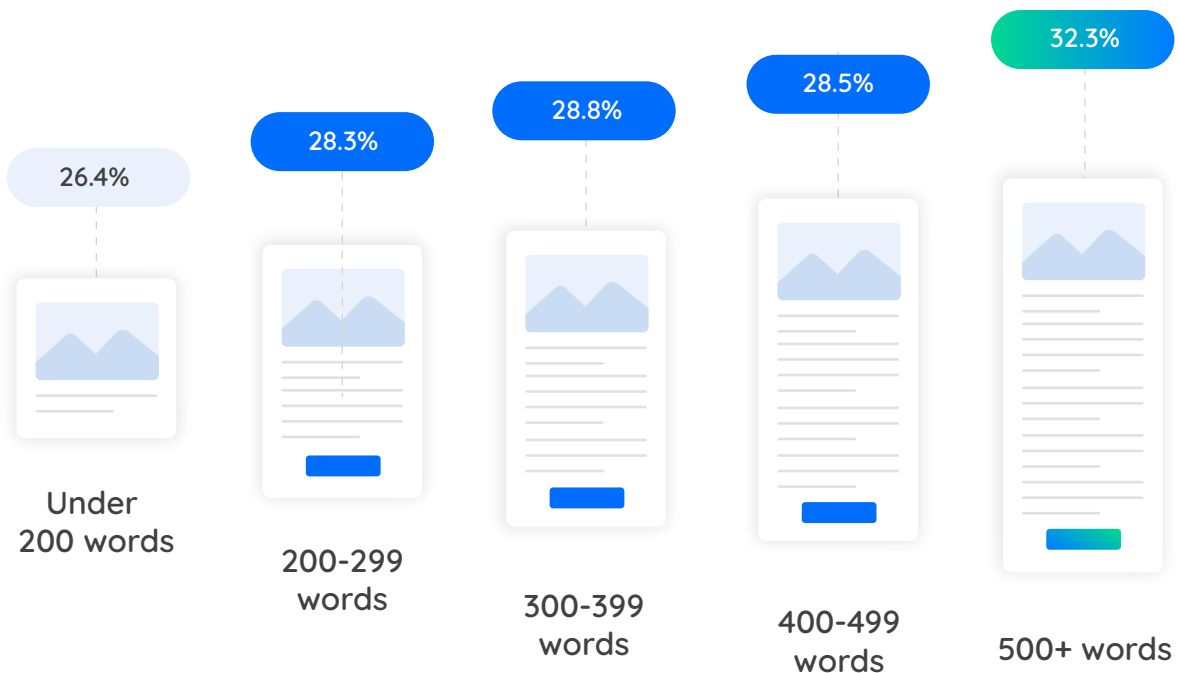
Different data can show different outcomes when looking at day of week. This data is based on Click Through Rates. Open rate data or a combination of open and click data may show different outcomes related to best day of the week.

How long should an email to schools be?

One of the most common pieces of email advice is to 'keep it short'. Our campaign data suggests the reality is more nuanced.



Average click-through rate by email word count



🔍 What this tells us

We found no clear evidence that shorter emails inherently generate better engagement. Emails containing 500+ words recorded the highest average CTOR, although this result is partly influenced by the types of campaigns in that group.

The better principle is not 'always write less'; it is 'communicate value quickly'. A reader should understand why the email matters within the opening lines. Once you've earned their attention, include the detail they genuinely need.



Benchmarks use platform-recorded click-to-open rate (CTOR) from campaigns with usable engagement data in the Buzz Education reporting dataset. Automated security activity can affect email-platform reporting, so the figures are intended as broad comparative benchmarks rather than precise diagnostic targets.

So, what really matters?

Audience. Relevance. Value. Message.



Audience

Understanding who you're talking to is the foundation of strong engagement.



Relevance

Speak to their challenges and prioritise offers that fit their world.



Value

Give genuine value first and you'll build trust, credibility and long-term relationships.



Message

Clear, compelling messages inspire action and drive meaningful results.

There is no magic send day, perfect word count or single formula for success. The strongest differences in our analysis appear in who you are targeting and what you are asking them to engage with. Good education marketing is less about finding tricks that generate clicks and more about giving the right people a compelling reason to respond.



How does your own marketing compare?

Use these benchmarks to review your recent campaigns. If you'd like help improving your results, Buzz Education can help plan, create and deliver your next education marketing campaign using the insight we've gathered from thousands of campaigns.

Let's talk →