













The future of marketing to education

A research report



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Introduction

At Buzz Education we pride ourselves on sharing our in-depth knowledge of UK education to help you focus your marketing to schools efforts.

Since March 2020, we've seen a lot of disruption to education. We've kept you updated on everything that's been happening in schools and helped many organisations to adapt and develop their marketing during this time.

Now schools are well into the 2021-22 academic year and have settled into a more normal routine, we've gathered all of our insights and completed in-depth research into **how education has changed and how it will impact your marketing plans.**







Read our report to learn more about:

- Changes schools have made for the 2021-22 academic year.
- Education recovery and the future.
- School finances and spending plans.
- The future of marketing to schools.
- And more.



Research

To carry out in-depth research and provide accurate information we've:

-  Completed our 2021 UK schools survey.
-  Gathered insights from teachers across the UK.
-  Interviewed UK head teachers and senior leaders.
-  Analysed our clients' email marketing campaign performance from 2019 to 2021.
-  Completed our 2021 client survey.
-  Reviewed all the government guidance and funding updates.

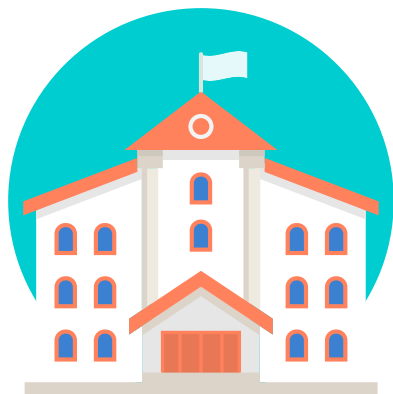


Changes schools have made for the 2021-22 academic year

Schools have experienced a lot of disruption since March 2020.

The lockdowns caused them to close twice, for a combined period of 6 months. During this time, schools were only open to children of key workers and vulnerable children.

Most schools reopened to all children from April 2021. They kept strict regulations in place until July 2021 to minimise the risk to children and staff, and to try to prevent outbreaks of Covid-19.



Now, as schools across the UK have settled into the 2021-22 academic year, we've seen restrictions ease and more changes to the way they're running.

Government guidance for 2021-22

In July 2021, the government released a detailed document providing guidance on how schools should learn to live with the pandemic to reduce any further disruption to children's education. This included relaxation of measures such as:



Social distancing

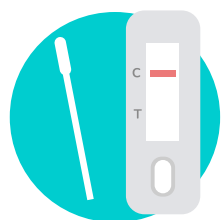
- Class and year group bubbles are no longer necessary.
- Contact tracing is not required.
- Staggered start times aren't needed anymore.



Face coverings

- Are no longer mandatory in classrooms.
- But are still recommended in crowded spaces like school buses.

1st December 2021 update: Face coverings are strongly advised again in secondary schools amid concerns about the Omicron Covid variant.



Regular testing

- Secondary school pupils did a series of lateral flow tests on their return to school.
- Testing is now only requested if a pupil displays symptoms or comes into contact with another pupil who has tested positive.



Self-isolation for whole class or year groups

- Pupils are no longer required to self-isolate if they come into contact with another pupil or staff member who has tested positive.
- Instead they are required to take a PCR test.



To find out more about the specific guidance for schools for the 2021-22 academic year, you can take a look at [our blog](#).

Education recovery

Currently, there's a huge focus on **education recovery and helping pupils catch up** after over 18 months of interrupted learning. We spoke to teachers and senior leaders in a range of schools across the UK to find out their plans.

Focus for 2021-22

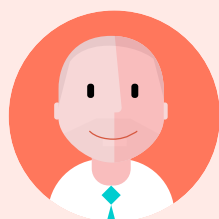
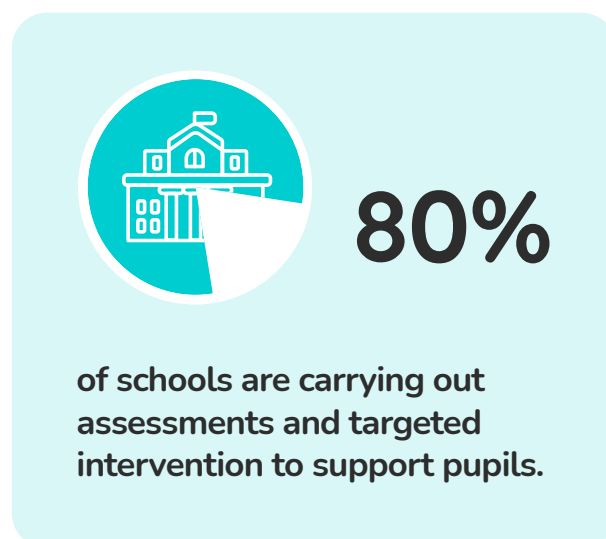
To support pupils in catching up, all teachers and senior leaders we spoke to reported a focus on:

- Progress assessments
- Targeted intervention
- Mental health support

Targeted intervention

Many schools have already assessed pupils to determine their current attainment levels and progress. This has helped identify areas where whole classes, year groups or individual pupils need extra support.

Schools and teachers have started putting appropriate intervention plans in place, planning their lessons to cover the key topics where pupils are behind and identifying areas where external support might be helpful.

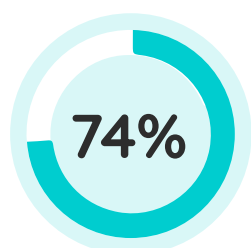


“We’re planning a lot of targeted intervention this year - this will involve lots of assessments and identifying the gaps that our children have in their learning.”

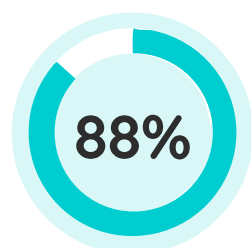
Paul Jackson, Head Teacher, Manorfild Primary School, London

Mental health support

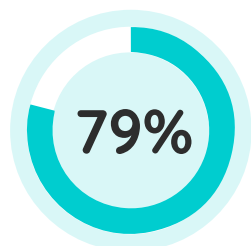
The pandemic and school closures had a serious effect on both pupil and staff mental health and wellbeing. Mental health charity, YoungMinds, spoke to over 1,000 teachers and school staff and found that:



74% agreed that the lockdowns had a negative impact on the mental health of young people.



88% agreed that a lack of structure and routine had an effect on student wellbeing.

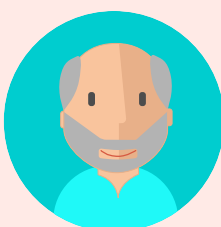


79% think increased anxiety as a result of the pandemic has had an effect.¹



“I got tired of looking at a screen all day, it definitely had an effect on both my physical and mental health, and I’m so glad it’s over!”

Modern Foreign Languages Curriculum Leader,
Secondary School Academy



“There were a sizable number of students that made no progress in remote learning and as a result of their mental health issues they moved backwards.”

Teacher, Secondary School

The social interaction that pupils missed out on during the school closures was seen to be very detrimental, affecting their mental health, social skills and even their academic work.



“It's not so much the gaps in content, which are large, that worry me. It's far more socialisation, mental health and general life skills that worry me.”

Head of Department, Secondary School



70%

of schools have now put plans in place to support mental health and wellbeing.



“Staff wellbeing came out as a priority in our annual staff survey. This is both school leaders ensuring staff are ok and also staff themselves being aware of it. We're introducing opportunities for staff to look after their wellbeing with their colleagues, for example, at lunchtime and in after school yoga / keep fit sessions.”

Chair of Governors, Primary School, Bolton

The importance of technology in education

During the school closures, the main way of providing education to pupils across the UK was by remote and home learning. It forced schools to quickly adopt new technology.

Schools have now recognised the importance of keeping up with modern technology and the benefits it has offered them and their pupils. They're keen to continue using the practices they've introduced and making advances with technology.

We've looked at how schools reacted to the introduction of new technology, how it has changed their every day processes and what it means for the future.



The reaction

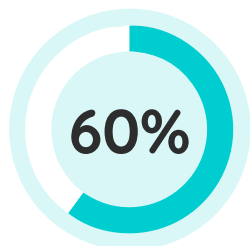


The majority of teachers say the increased use of technology has had a positive effect on their pupils' learning.



“Online lesson provision for absent pupils has been great - we've seen an increase in our pupils' ICT skills so this is something we're hoping to continue for the rest of the academic year.”

Deborah Williams, Head Teacher, Princethorpe Junior School, Birmingham



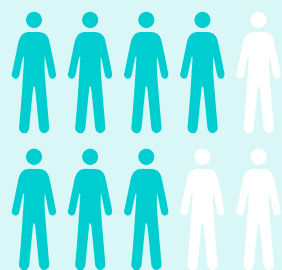
60% of teachers think the pandemic has had a positive technological impact on schools.



“I've developed practices and learned things about technology that I wouldn't have otherwise.”

Head of Modern Foreign Languages, All-Through School

The future of technology in schools



70%

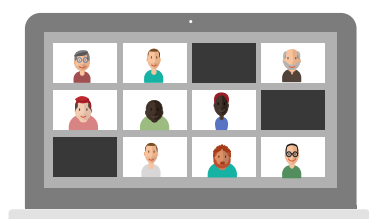
of head teachers highlighted their intention to continue the use of technology.



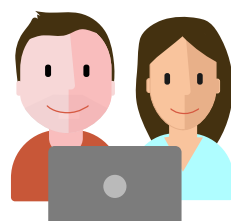
45%

of teachers expect their schools to invest in further technology and IT development.

Schools plan to continue using technology and develop better online provision for:



Online staff meetings



Parents' evenings

60%

of schools intend to continue online parents' evenings in the coming months.



A third of schools have no intention of going back to in-person parents' evenings.



Managing learning for absent pupils



Enhancing day-to-day learning in class

“We’ve just invested £28,000 on 180 iPads for the children to help enhance their in-class learning and technology skills.”



Chair of Governors,
Primary School, Bolton



Homework and coursework management

“It’d allow pupils to access learning materials at any time. Homework and classwork can be provided and assessed using Google Classroom.”



Pre-recorded lessons or cover work for teacher absences or PPA time



Director of Learning
Technology, All-Through
School



Online assessments

“Use of Microsoft Teams I hope. Online Meetings with external providers, it’s quicker and easier and involves less travel.”



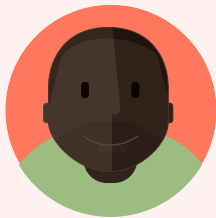
Meeting external providers online



SEN Teacher,
All-Through School

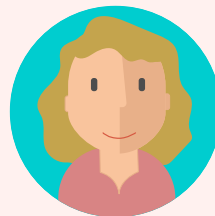
Creating equal opportunities for all

The pandemic and school closures highlighted vast inequalities across the UK in terms of access and opportunities for children. It also highlighted the **important support role that schools play**, particularly for less able and vulnerable children and their families.



“The support that schools offer as a safe space for the most vulnerable has not been available.”

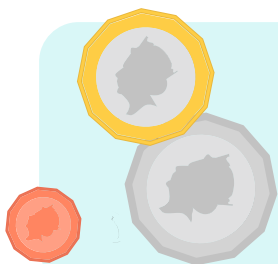
Teacher, Primary School



“Students with lack of access or vulnerable students were not able to engage well. Some not at all through no fault of their own.”

Teacher, Secondary School

The government has now realised the need to narrow the gap in access and opportunities for all children from different backgrounds across the UK.



There is a **£153 million** government fund to strengthen early years teaching and address the impact of the pandemic on the youngest children, with a focus on the most disadvantaged areas of England.

Food poverty

According to research by The Food Foundation:



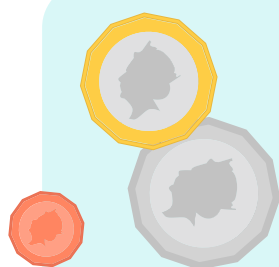
2.3 million children experienced food insecurity between August 2020 and January 2021.



1 million 8 to 17 years olds visited a foodbank between December 2020 and January 2021.²

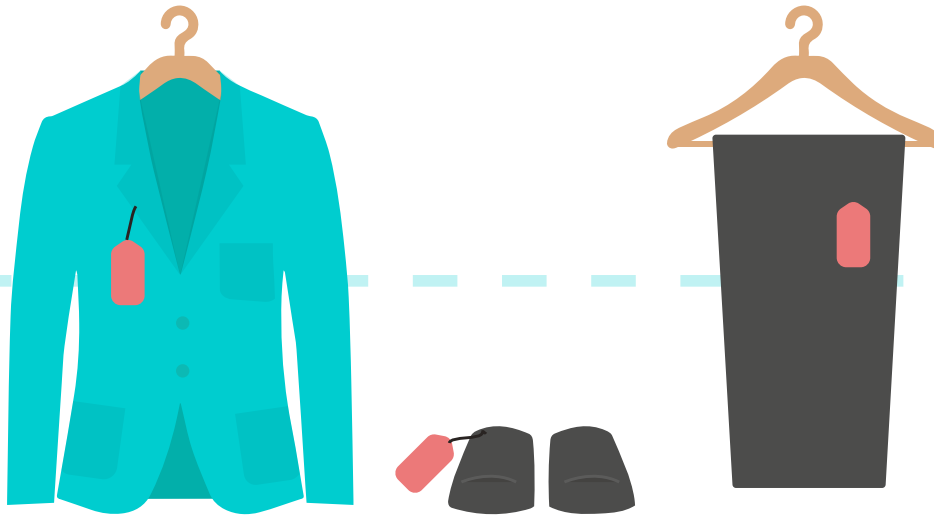
To support children and families during the school closures, the government made food vouchers available to all children who would usually have received free school meals.

The government has accepted that food poverty is an ongoing issue that was highlighted further as a result of school closures.



They extended the meal voucher scheme to support those in need during school holidays and have also committed to investing over £200 million each year to continue the Holiday Activities and Food programme.³

School uniform costs



The government will introduce legally binding guidelines to make school uniforms “far more affordable” for all.

Research suggests that parents could save almost £50 on average, if they bought all uniform items from high street shops instead of designated suppliers.

Therefore, the guidance states that parents must be allowed to buy some school uniform from high street stores and supermarkets. From next autumn, items with logos that are purchased from specialist suppliers must be kept to a minimum.

Schools are also being encouraged to make sure second-hand uniforms are available as an affordable and sustainable option.⁴

Exams and assessments

The government and schools have been pushed to consider how pupils are assessed over the last 18 months.

In the summer 2021 exam period, GCSE and A level exams were replaced by stringent teacher assessments. Any learning gaps that occurred due to the year of disrupted learning were taken into account.



In our 2021 school survey, many schools reported that the change in exam protocol had a positive impact on their pupils' learning.

As per the government guidance, exams are expected to return in 2022. However, there will be modifications to avoid disadvantages to the pupils who have missed learning:

- Pupils will get a choice of topics on which they'll be assessed in GCSE English literature, history, ancient history and geography exams.
- GCSE maths, physics and combined science pupils will be provided with formulae and equations sheets in advance and also during exams.
- GCSE pupils will be given topic information in advance for some exams.
- AS and A level students will receive information in advance about exam topics.
- The advanced information about GCSE, AS and A level topics will be published no later than Monday 7th February 2022.⁵

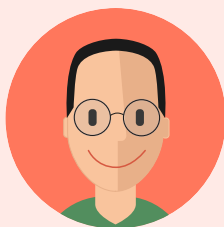
If exams do need to be cancelled in summer 2022, the government has confirmed that pupils will receive Teacher Assessed Grades based on a range of their work, in a similar way to the 2021 grading system.⁶

The future of exams

The adaptations to the 2021 exams and plans for 2022 assessments have prompted discussion for longer term reviews of exams and assessment procedures.



The government has confirmed they will review examination processes after 2022.



“Perhaps education will move away from a reliance on exams at the end of a 2 year course towards continued assessment throughout the course and a more modular approach.”

Teacher and Assessment Coordinator, All-Through School



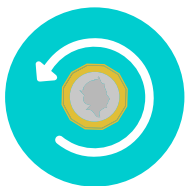
“I think there have been some really interesting questions raised about whether external exams should be the only form of assessment, and whether there is a place for some teacher assessment in the future and a move towards grades based on more than just 2 or 3 hours in an exam hall.”

Teacher, Secondary School

School finances

Government funding

The government has recognised the need to substantially aid recovery from the pandemic. Several new grants and programmes have been released to help schools and pupils get back on track:



Catch-up funding

In July 2021, the government released £10 million to help pupils in primary and secondary schools catch up in core subjects. An additional £2 billion was allocated to further help pupils to recover lost learning in the Autumn Budget 2021.



Mental health grants

Pupils across the UK will benefit from a £17 million mental health grant that will be used to offer better support and advice in schools. The funding will help develop a mental health lead in all schools and provide teachers with free expert training, resources and support.



National Tutoring Programme

To help children catch up on missed learning, the government is offering pupils across the UK up to 100 million hours of free tuition. A total of £1.4 billion is also being invested to support up to 6 million, 15-hour tutoring courses for disadvantaged pupils.



Buildings and facilities improvement

The government has invested £483 million as part of an initiative to improve school facilities. This will lead to improved classrooms and more energy efficient buildings which will reduce energy bills and tie into the government's net zero energy target.



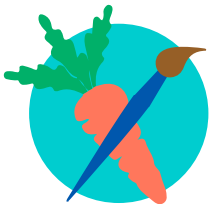
P.E. and Sport Premium

The £320 million P.E. and Sport Premium prioritises physical activity in education. This provides primary school children with higher quality P.E. lessons and better sport opportunities to improve social skills and physical activity levels.



Early years funding

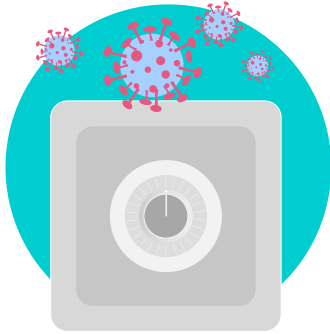
There is a £153 million government fund to strengthen early years teaching and address the impact of the pandemic on the youngest children, with a focus on the most disadvantaged areas of England.



Holiday Activities and Food programme

The government has committed to investing over £200 million each year to continue the Holiday Activities and Food programme.

School spending plans



75% of schools put spending plans on hold due to the pandemic.

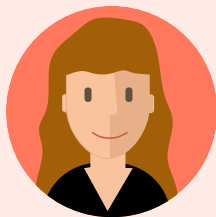


80% of schools are planning to access government funding to use on missed opportunities and pupil catch-up.



Over 10% of schools usually have a surplus budget at the end of the financial year.

Schools are taking the opportunity now to spend surplus budgets and additional funding on projects they had to cancel because of Covid-19.

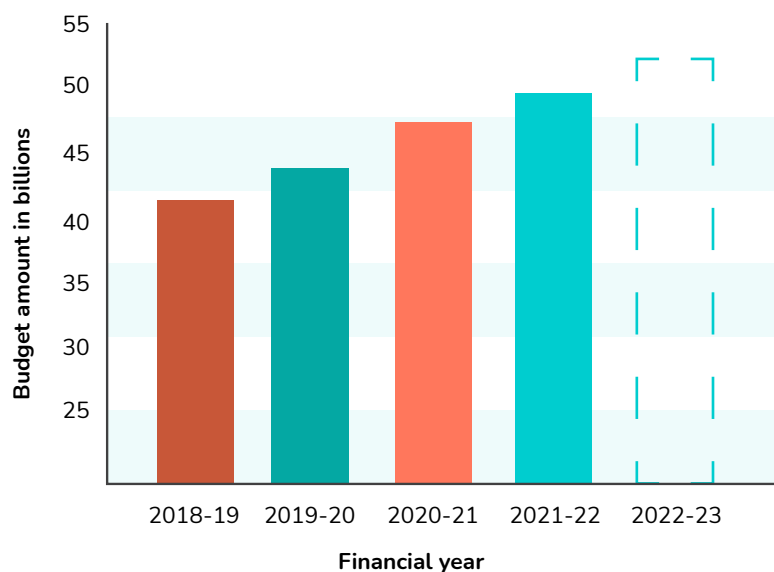
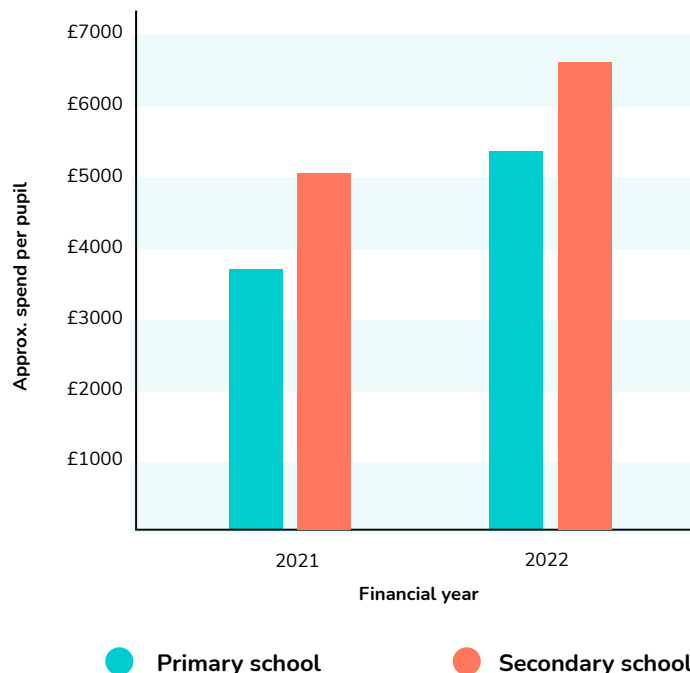


“There have been a couple of cancelled projects that we were going to undertake but haven’t - hopefully we’ll be able to carry those out this year.”

Christina Wilkinson, Head Teacher,
St Andrew’s CE Primary School, Oswaldtwistle

School budgets

- In the Autumn Budget, the Chancellor announced that school finances will be restored to 2010 levels after 10 years of cuts.
- Schools will receive an additional £4.7 billion in core funding by 2024-25.
- **This means a cash increase of £1,500 for every child.**



- The next financial year starts in April 2022.
- Many schools will receive their indicative budget in January 2022 so they can start planning ahead.
- **80% of schools start preparing their spending plans 3 to 6 months before they receive their annual budget.**

The current state of marketing to schools

Who we support

We're proud to have supported many long-term clients, new clients and start-up businesses with their marketing efforts throughout the pandemic.

Whilst we saw marketing activity from some sectors slow down for a short while due to the school closures, we were also delighted to help a lot of new and emerging industries and organisations.

With such an important focus on health and wellbeing in schools this year, we've helped many cleaning, hygiene, PPC, health, mental health and social care businesses to break into the education sector and raise awareness of their services in UK schools.

As could be expected, businesses offering remote teaching platforms, home-learning support and devices, and online learning tools have been huge this year.



In fact over 12% of our current clients offer IT services and learning technology to schools.



Due to a renewed government focus on climate change, we've also seen a huge increase in the number of environmental businesses and eco-charities marketing to schools this year.

We're proud to have supported organisations from a wide range of sectors with marketing to schools since the pandemic began.

Sectors we support

- Classroom and study resources
- Health and safety
- Professional services
- Education workshops
- IT services and learning technology
- Publishing
- School trips and travel
- Catering
- Charities and fundraising
- Premises, buildings and maintenance
- Food growing
- Sports and leisure
- Teacher training and personal development
- Playground equipment
- School supplies
- Transport and vehicle leasing
- Outdoor learning
- Recruitment
- Careers and higher education
- Cleaning
- Videography and film making
- Exam boards



55% of our clients said their sales performance increased after schools reopened in April 2021.

[Meet some of our clients](#)



Who our clients target

Our schools database of over 400,000 decision makers in 30,000 UK schools helps organisations target the exact schools, teachers and decision makers they need to achieve their marketing goals.



70%
target both **primary** and
secondary schools



82.5%
target **state schools**



25%
target **nurseries**



82.5%
target **independent** or
private schools



52.5%
target **sixth forms**
and **colleges**



52.5%
target **academy**
schools



In the last year, we've seen a **44% increase in clients targeting international schools.**

Engagement rates

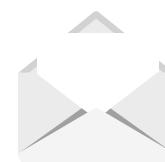
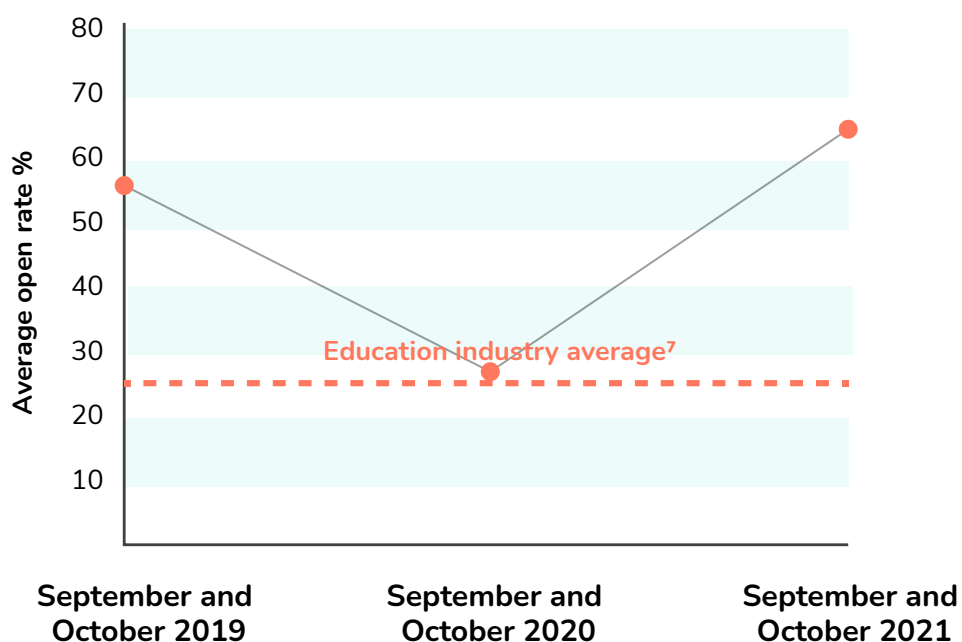
Since schools returned for the 2021-22 academic year we've seen **email marketing engagement rates increase significantly**. This is a clear sign that email marketing to schools is working and is the perfect way to achieve a wide reach and generate new leads.



Over 70% of our clients prefer email marketing.

How engagement rates have changed from 2019 to 2021:

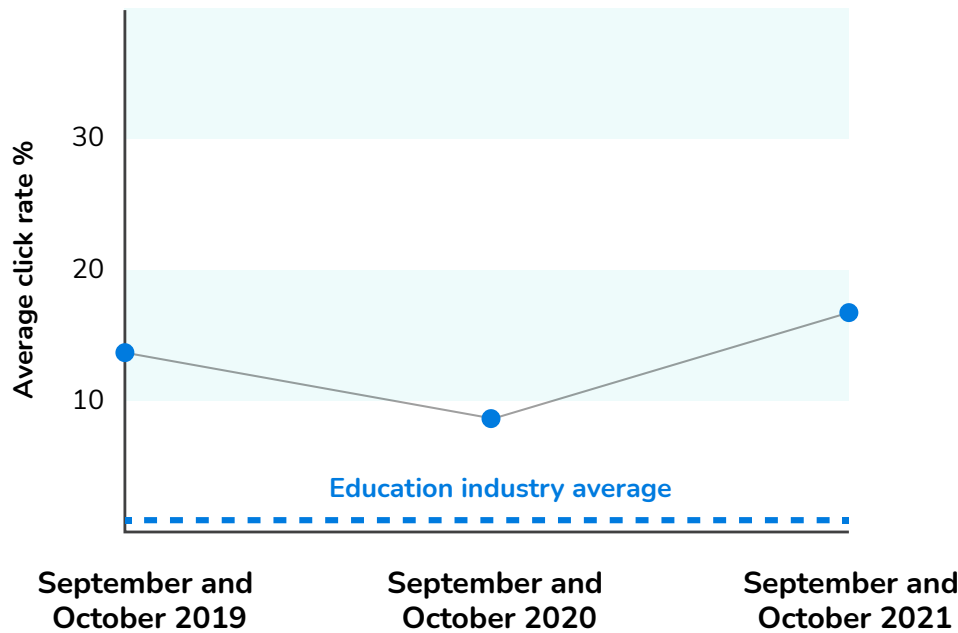
Open rate



Average open rates have increased by 182% between 2020 and 2021.

Average open rates have increased by 20% between 2019 and 2021.

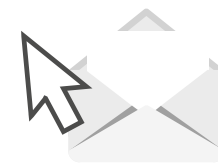
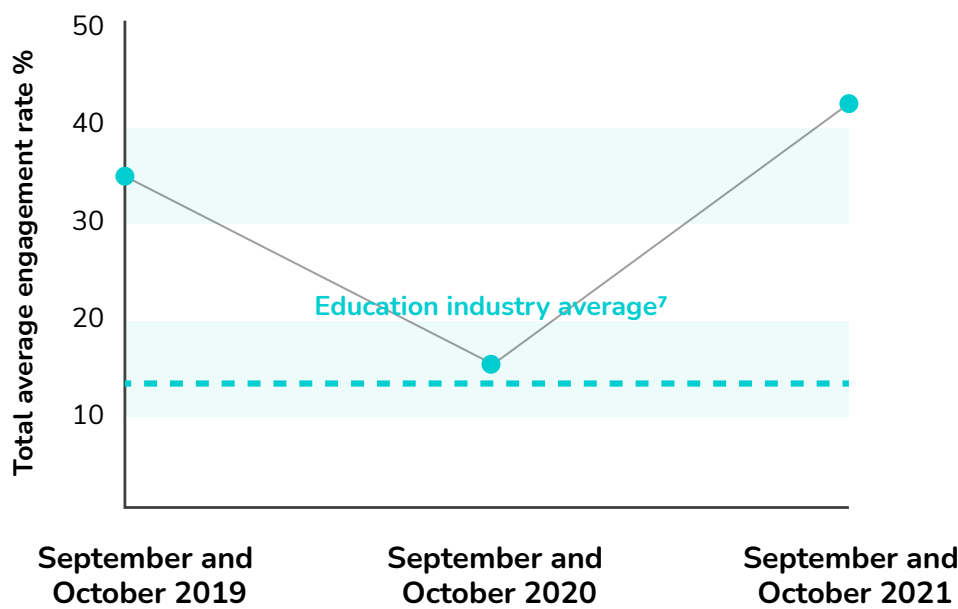
Click rate



Average click rates have increased by 85% between 2020 and 2021.

Average click rates have increased by 19% between 2019 and 2021.

Total engagement rate



Average total engagement rates have increased by 150% between 2020 and 2021.

Average total engagement rates have increased by 20% between 2019 and 2021.



Did you know that our in-house creative copywriting and design team can increase your engagement rates by over 50%? [Find out more.](#)

What's next for marketing to schools

As we've seen a huge increase in engagement rates over the past couple of months, it's clear that now is the **right time to put your marketing plans into action.**

New opportunities for education suppliers



Technology

As schools continue to introduce more technology into day-to-day learning, and school and pupil management, we expect to see the surge in spending on IT and technology services continue.



Catch-up and recovery

The focus on catch-up and recovery will continue for the foreseeable future. Pupils have suffered 2 academic years' worth of disruption to their learning which means they have a lot to catch up on, both academically and emotionally. Schools will continue to seek external support to re-engage pupils with learning, help those who have fallen behind or are struggling to catch up, and support any pupils or staff who are suffering emotionally as a result of the pandemic.



Environmental education

The Education Secretary announced a range of measures at the recent COP26 summit to bring climate change and environmental matters to the heart of education. This includes helping schools to become more energy efficient and meet net zero targets, and providing world-leading climate change education by 2023.⁷



Now is the ideal time for organisations who can **provide energy efficient building solutions, or climate change and environmental education**, to support schools in creating a more sustainable and environmentally friendly learning environment.

Marketing in the spring term

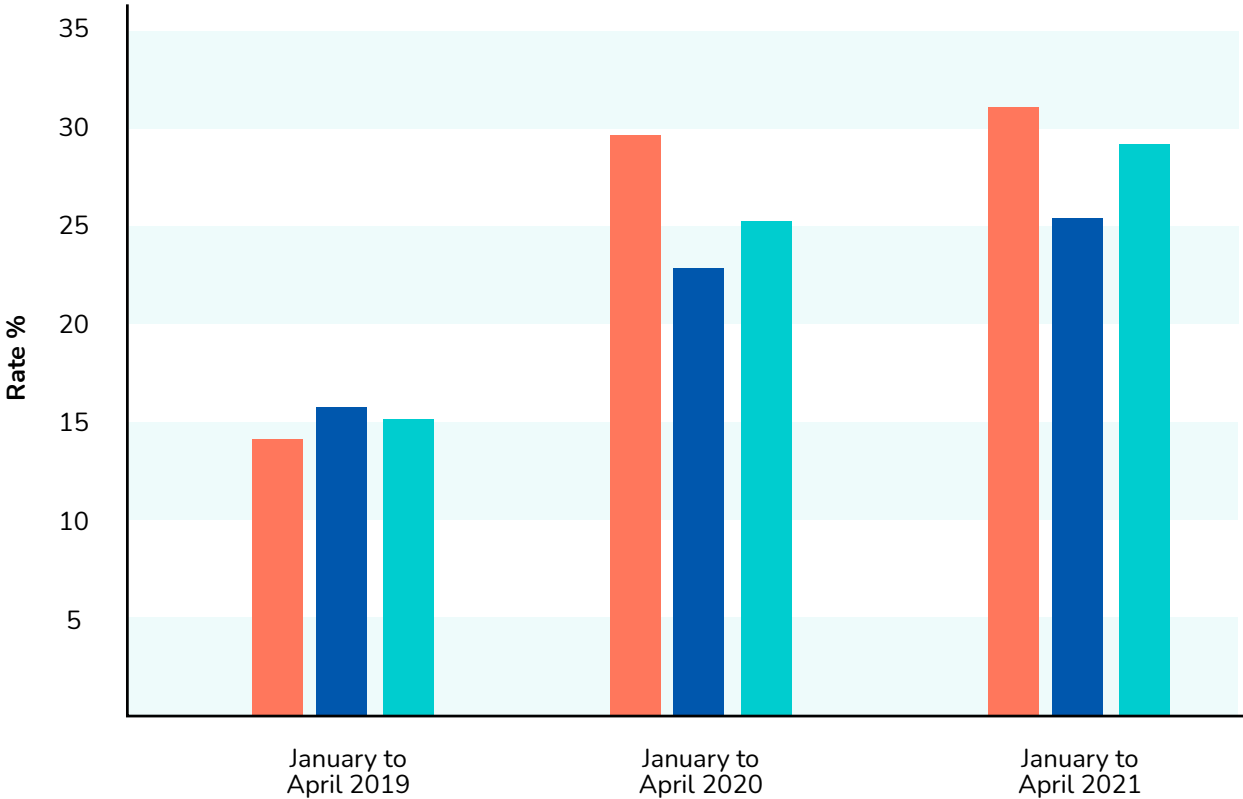
We expect that more teachers and decision makers will continue to engage strongly with marketing campaigns as they plan to spend additional funding and prepare for their next annual budget.



Email campaigns sent to schools during the first quarter of the year consistently achieve great engagement rates, and are increasing year on year.

A series of marketing campaigns direct to the key decision makers during these months will help to build your brand awareness and generate leads.

Open rates **Click through rates** **Average engagement rates**



How we can help

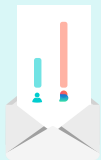
Our friendly team of education and marketing experts are on hand to help plan and implement your marketing to schools strategy.



We can help you with:

[Email Marketing](#)

Work with our dedicated campaigns team to develop your email marketing strategy and create an attention-grabbing email marketing campaign.



Email campaigns written and designed by us can increase your engagement rates by over 50%.

[Schools Data](#)

Manage your own multi-channel marketing to schools. You can choose the exact data you need from over 400,000 teachers in 30,000 schools across the UK.



Our education data comes with a 97% accuracy guarantee.

[Email Sending Platform](#)

Manage your own marketing on Staff-Room, our specialist marketing platform for email marketing to schools.

[International Schools Data](#)

Our newly refreshed international schools data can help you break into the international market and expand your business globally.

Target 4,565 international schools and decision makers all over the world.

[Postal Marketing](#)

Our postal marketing solution offers you the ultimate flexibility, allowing you to stand out with personalised marketing campaigns direct to the key decision makers.

Contact us

Our dedicated customer campaign strategists will create a proposal to outline the different campaign options and marketing strategies we can develop for you.



Charlotte Calvert

Customer Campaign Strategist
charlotte@buzz-education.com



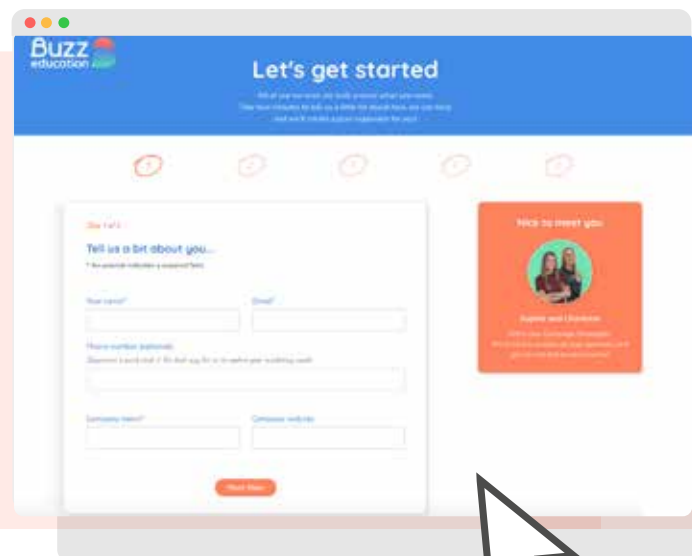
Sophie Williams

Customer Campaign Strategist
sophie@buzz-education.com

Get in touch with us today

✉ info@buzz-education.com

☎ 01257 460036




Sources

Buzz Education 2021 UK schools survey.

Buzz Education client email marketing campaign analysis, 2019 to 2021.

Buzz Education 2021 client survey.

-  ¹ <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/about-us/media-centre/press-releases/school-staff-warn-of-the-extensive-impact-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-young-people-s-mental-health/>
-  ² <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/publication/crisis-within-crisis-impact-covid-19-household-food-security>
-  ³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/all-schools-and-colleges-to-receive-extra-funding-for-catch-up>
-  ⁴ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-59339687>
-  ⁵ <https://www.tes.com/news/gcses-and-levels-2022-how-exams-will-run-next-summer>
-  ⁶ https://www.gov.uk/government/news/contingency-plans-confirmed-for-gcses-as-and-a-levels?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=b29eb7b8-0c06-4e40-80c4-d9cd1bc03051&utm_content=daily
-  ⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-puts-climate-change-at-the-heart-of-education--2>



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