Time to Teach

Teacher attendance and time on task

Ghana

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Abbreviations

CS	Circuit supervisor
DEO	District education officer
ESAR	Education Sector Annual Review
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
FGD	Focus group discussion
GES	Ghana Education Service
GoG	Government of Ghana
GPEG	Ghana Partnership for Education Grant
ICT	Information communication technology
IDI	In-depth interview
IEP	Inclusive education policy
JHS	Junior high school
MoE	Ministry of Education
mSRC	Mobile school report card
NTC	National Teaching Council
NCTE	National Council for Tertiary Education
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTPDM	Pre-tertiary teacher professional development and management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SHS	Senior high school
SMC	School management committee
SPAM	School performance appraisal meeting
STARS	Teaching accountability to reach all students
TCAI	Teacher Community Assistant Initiative
TLM	Teaching and learning material
TTT	Time to Teach
WASH	Water, sanitation, and hygiene

Executive summary

Teachers play a significant role in learners' success and are crucial to achieving learning goals. Their presence in the classroom is considered an essential 'pre-requisite' for learning to take place and for achieving national and regional education goals, and reducing inequalities. Lost teaching time can reduce pupil learning, hinder overall academic achievement, and limit learners' opportunities in life. In the post COVID-19 environment, learning losses are expected to be significant, with estimates suggesting immediate effects on the acquisition of foundational skills.[1]

Since the 1990s, Ghana has made considerable progress in poverty reduction and universal access to primary education across the country. However, there are rural/urban disparities, inequalities across and within regions (including insufficient teaching and learning materials, and availability of qualified teachers), and gender gaps in learning and achievement at the secondary level. Dropout and repetition rates are also high, especially among those from disadvantaged backgrounds. There are also concerns regarding teacher attendance, with school absenteeism estimated to be as high as 27 per cent,[2] and 33–39 per cent of scheduled teaching time is lost to non-teaching activities.[3]

Prior to COVID-19 lockdowns, the government had taken measures to enhance the quality of education and teacher attendance, including improving school infrastructure and providing textbooks and incentive packages to attract more teachers to rural and remote areas. It has also doubled the national capitation grant so that schools can secure essential resources, and has strengthened the role of head teachers, parents, and school management committees (SMC) through leadership training. To address teacher attrition and shortages, candidates from the National Youth Employment Program and the National Service Scheme have been deployed into primary teaching positions.

Despite these measures, there is concern that both school closures and the economic impacts of COVID-19 will have a serious impact on teaching and learning, especially among low-performing pupils and marginalized children, thus widening existing inequalities. Evidence from previous crises, such as the Ebola virus epidemic in Sierra Leone, shows that prolonged school closures increase dropout rates, notably among girls and children in low-income households, and increase teen pregnancies.[4] The shift to remote learning also raises concerns about the preparedness of in-service teachers to work with these technologies, particularly in rural settings, despite efforts from the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ghana Education Service (GES) to provide them with online training.

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1   Alban Conto, Maria Carolina; Akseer, Spogmai; Dreesen, Thomas; Kamei, Akito; Mizunoya, Suguru; Rigole, Annika, COVID-19: Effects of School Closures on Foundational Skills and Promising Practices for Monitoring and Mitigating Learning Loss, *Innocenti Working Papers* no. 2020-13, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2020.

2   Salifu, I., and Agbenyega, J. S., Teacher Motivation and Identity Formation: Issues affecting professional practice. *MIER Journal of Educational Studies Trends and Practices*, 2013, pp. 58–74.; World Bank, 'Education in Ghana: Improving equity, efficiency and accountability of education service delivery', Africa Education Country Status Report, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 23 February 2010.

3   ibid

4   Global Partnership for Education (GPE), 'Cover Note for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Request', 2020.

Main findings

How frequently are school teachers absent?

- **Absence from school** was self-reported by 11 per cent of surveyed teachers across all levels. The highest rates were among pre-primary school teachers at 14.6 per cent, followed by junior high school (JHS) (12.4 per cent), senior high school (SHS) (10.1 per cent) and primary (9.9 per cent) educators. School absence was higher in rural settings (14 per cent) than in urban (9 per cent). Although there are no statistical differences in terms of gender and school type (public/private) at the aggregate level, differences arise at the school level. Male teachers in pre-primary schools were more likely to be absent from school (43 per cent) than female teachers (9 per cent); while at junior and senior high schools, female educators were twice as likely to be absent (18 per cent) than their male counterparts (8 per cent).

- **Late arrival/early departure** was **the most frequent form of absence**; 12.7 per cent of teachers affirmed they had arrived late or left school early on a recurring basis (i.e., at least once a week) since the start of the school year. The highest rates were among JHS teachers (20.2 per cent) and the lowest at the SHS level (10.1 per cent). Figures among pre-primary and primary school teachers were 11.4 per cent and 13.6 per cent respectively. Lack of punctuality was more likely in rural areas (16 per cent) than in urban areas (10 per cent), as it was in private schools (19 per cent) compared with public schools (11 per cent). Younger teachers (those aged below the median of 32 years in the sample) were also more likely to arrive late/leave early on a recurrent basis (15 per cent) than older educators (10 per cent). Moreover, JHS male teachers (24 per cent) reported they were less likely to be punctual than female educators (6 per cent).

- **Classroom absence** was the least frequent form of absenteeism and was reported by 9.3 per cent of teachers across all levels. The highest rates were reported by secondary school teachers at 15.5 per cent in JHS and 8.8 per cent in SHS. Teachers in pre-primary and primary schools reported the lowest rates: 6.7 per cent and 5.1 per cent respectively. Across all levels, absence from the classroom was more prevalent among teachers in private schools (15 per cent) than those in public schools (7 per cent). Although 59 per cent of Ghana's primary teaching workforce is male, female teachers at the primary level were more likely to be absent from the classroom (15 per cent) than their male counterparts (0 per cent), while in JHS male educators were more frequently absent (18 per cent compared with 6 per cent of female teachers).

- **Limited time on task** was reported by 10.1 per cent of surveyed teachers. The highest rates were reported by JHS (15 per cent) teachers, followed by primary (9.2 per cent), SHS (9 per cent), and pre-primary (7.5 per cent) educators. As in other forms of absenteeism, reduced instruction time was more prevalent among private school teachers (15 per cent) than those in public schools (8 per cent). Male teachers in JHS were more likely to reduce time on task while at school (18 per cent compared with 5 per cent for female teachers).

What are the main factors associated with teacher attendance?

- **National level factors** influencing attendance include the timing of training programs as these often conflict with teaching times, thus resulting in school and classroom absence, and low punctuality. Teachers also lack access to training which they need, especially in subject-knowledge, lesson preparation, and classroom management. All these factors limit classroom presence and time on task. Salary delays equally result in low punctuality and school absence, while low salaries affect teacher motivation and subsequently, their time on task as well as their regular presence at school due to having second jobs.

- **Subnational factors** such as limited monitoring by district education officers (DEOs) and circuit supervisors (CSs), mainly due to lack of travel funds. The focus is often on measuring and sanctioning school absence but not classroom absence or limited instructional time use. Engagement with teachers working in schools farther away from education offices is less frequent, thus lowering teacher motivation. This also increases the occurrence of school and classroom absence and low punctuality, especially at primary and secondary school levels.

- **At the community level**, climatic conditions (e.g., heavy rains) limit not only teachers' presence in school but their punctuality, especially among male teachers and those who rely on transportation systems to get to school. Public school teachers also experience higher instances of classroom absence and limited instructional time use due to inadequate school infrastructure such as protection from rain while in the classroom. The challenge appears less severe at the pre-primary level than across other levels. Additionally, some teachers worry that parents do not provide pupils or teachers with sufficient support, which affects (lowers) their time on task.

- **School level factors** include a lack of focus from head teachers on classroom absence and instructional time use while tracking and sanctioning attendance. School absences and low punctuality are also common when head teachers do not emphasize the importance of attendance and/or regularly monitor absenteeism. Also, the lack of teaching and learning materials (TLMs) limits teachers' time on task and their classroom presence, especially at pre-primary and primary levels. Likewise, teachers' heavy workloads (including non-teaching engagements) reduce their school and classroom presence and intended time on task, especially among male and secondary school teachers.

- Finally, at the **teacher leve**l, health and personal responsibilities (e.g., looking after family, social engagements, etc.) are common reasons why teachers may not be punctual or may be absent from school. Teachers' level of commitment towards their work also affects their classroom and school presence, punctuality, and time on task. Motivation appears lower at the secondary level and among male and public school teachers.

Implications for policy making

Findings from this study highlight several factors across the pre-tertiary education system which have been found to contribute to teacher absenteeism. The recent education policy changes carried out by the MoE and GES reveal the commitment of the Government of Ghana (GoG) to improve teachers' working conditions and attendance in order to improve learning outcomes. However, pervasive challenges continue to limit teacher attendance and time on task.

There is concern that teacher attendance will be further hindered by COVID-19 due to their increased workload, issues with timely payments, a lack of teaching materials, and health worries, among other issues.

This study identifies four key areas of action to further reduce teacher absenteeism: the development of tailored training programs; the improvement of existing school infrastructure; the strengthening of teacher monitoring and school management; and teacher incentivization. The most relevant recommendations are:

1. Equip teachers with the pedagogical skills needed to achieve learning outcomes, as required by the new standards-based curriculum

It is essential to develop tailored teacher training programmes that focus on teachers' needs and do not interfere with their teaching time in the classroom. Teachers should be provided with enhanced training to improve their skills in lesson planning, positive discipline, and classroom management to optimize learning opportunities and tackle issues of pupil behaviour. Strengthening relations between the public and private education sectors could overcome training gaps.

The effective implementation of these initiatives will require the provision of basic infrastructure. Thus, the MoE needs to provide the necessary TLMs and infrastructure to encourage the use of existing e-learning platforms. Previous evidence in the region shows that coaching programmes can lead to large educational gains and increase teacher motivation (Evans and Acosta, 2021; Conn, 2017; Cilliers et al., 2019) and technology can make it easier to reach more teachers.

2. Ensure that schools and classrooms are conducive to teaching and learning, especially in rural or remote areas

The Ministry should consider expediting the timely disbursement of the capitation grant, enabling schools to acquire the necessary resources needed to provide lessons. However, this should be accompanied by head teachers' management training as regional evidence shows that school grants are most effective when this is done (Blimbo, Evans and Lahire, 2015). Furthermore, the MoE's Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation division's goal of refurbishing basic education classrooms should consider prioritizing schools where weather conditions and low-quality infrastructure are a regular challenge and implement water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) interventions.

This study revealed that pupil absenteeism lowered teachers' time on task and presence in the classroom. Therefore, the MoE should consider working with the Ministry of Transport to scale up its allocation of buses across all levels, prioritizing pupils in rural areas, and extend access to teachers in deprived communities. Finally, in line with efforts to focus on practical teaching, the MoE should consider scaling up its Teacher Community Assistant Initiative (TCAI), especially in low performing schools, as this has been found to be cost effective in improving teachers' time on task and pupils' engagement and learning levels (Duflo, Kiessel, and Lucas 2021).

3. Clarify and strengthen teacher management processes so that attendance monitoring efforts also include classroom presence and time on task

Teacher engagement in non-teaching activities needs to be minimized so they can be in class and on task. The MoE should ensure classroom presence and instructional time use are included in the new proposed duties and responsibilities contract for new teachers, the mobile School Report Card (mSRC), and the new accountability framework. The effective implementation of these initiatives will require additional monitoring support, which can be achieved through the scaling up of GES' vehicle allocation to school inspectors and its training programme to strengthen Parent Teacher Association's (PTA) supervisory roles.

4. Continue supporting teachers through non-monetary incentives so that they are motivated to carry out their responsibilities without facing additional hardships

The MoE should consider upscaling its incentive package, providing tutoring opportunities for additional income while reinforcing the national Code of Conduct so that teachers can be present in class and on task. Finally, the implementation of School Performance Appraisal Meetings needs to be strengthened so that rewarding teachers for good attendance is systematized across all schools.

Section 1
Introduction

1.1   Research background and rationale

Since the 1990s, Ghana has made remarkable progress in poverty reduction alongside major improvements in education access. The country has achieved near universal access to primary school, even in the most remote regions of the country (World Bank, 2017).

However, inequalities across and within regions, particularly in the Northern zone[5] where poverty rates are above 40 per cent and 90 per cent of districts are classified as educationally deprived (MoE-G, 2019a); between rural and urban settings; and by gender, continue to be significant at upper levels of education. Gross enrolment rates exceed 100 per cent at the pre-primary and primary levels, are 85 per cent in junior high school (JHS) and 63 per cent in senior high school (SHS) *(see Figure 1 and Box 1)*.

Progression rates show that a substantial number of pupils drop out of school at upper levels. For every 100 children who enter the primary level, 75 enter JHS, 41 continue to SHS and only 38 are expected to complete their secondary education. Repetition and dropout rates are, on average, 15.1 per cent and 4.7 per cent across all levels *(see Table 4 in Annex 1)* and more than 240,000 children and adolescents of primary and lower secondary school age are still out of school, most of them from disadvantaged backgrounds (MoE-G, 2019a; UNESCO Institute of Statistics). Inadequate school infrastructure, distance to school, or unaffordable education contribute to these numbers (LeClercq et al., 2017). Consequently, the GoG has invested considerable resources in school infrastructure to guarantee a proper learning environment for pupils at the basic level. As a result, 2,578 schools under trees have been upgraded since 2016 (MoE-G, 2019a). The free SHS policy[6] is expected to further increase progression rates.

Figure 1. School enrolment in Ghana by school level, 2000–2019
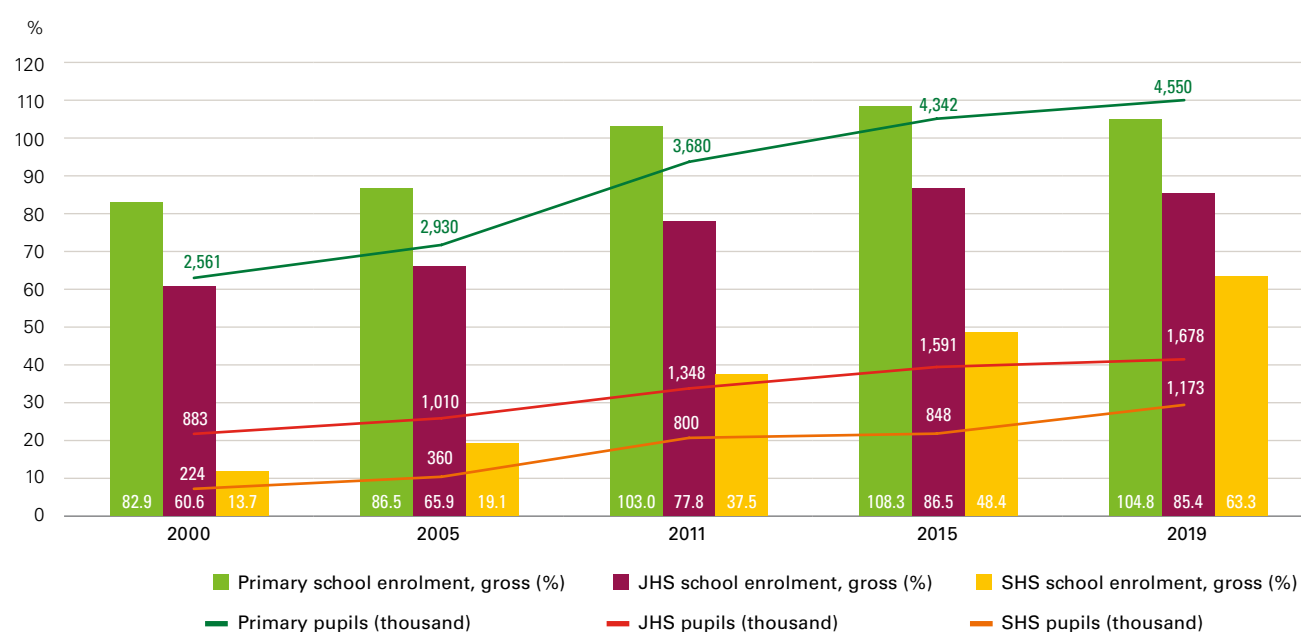
Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics

5   The North zone consists of the Northern region, Upper East region, and Upper West region. The Middle belt consists of the following regions: Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Eastern and Western. The Coastal zone consists of the Greater Accra, Volta, and Central regions.

6   The Government of Ghana introduced the free SHS education policy in September 2017 (Free SHS, 2017).

Quality of education was also a concern, even though the proportion of trained teachers had increased over time, reaching 58.3 per cent in 2016. Yet there were still significant differences across school type (public/private) and levels, with less qualified teachers working in early grades with higher pupil–teacher ratios *(see Table 3 in Annex 1)*[7].

Early grade reading and math assessments still show that in 2015, 98 per cent of pupils in Primary 2 level were unable to read a text for their level, 50 per cent were unable to recognize a single word and 75 per cent were unable to answer a single math question correctly (USAID, 2016; MoE-G, 2019a). To address this issue, the GoG introduced a teacher training programme for basic education under the Ghana Partnership for Education Grant (GPEG) and the Untrained Teacher Diploma in Early Childhood Education that had proven to be more cost effective than traditional pre-service training (MoE-G, 2019a).[8]

Box 1. Country background

Ghana has a population of 31 million inhabitants, 26 per cent of whom are of compulsory school age (6–14 years old). Committed to the value of education and its role in achieving SDG 4 over the last decade, the Government of Ghana has been allocating approximately 20 per cent of the government budget (5 per cent of GDP) to the education sector (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, education statistics). Government expenditure within the sector has reached unprecedented levels, representing double the average for Africa and other developing nations (World Bank, 2010).

Despite being one of West Africa's leading economies and having achieved remarkable social and economic progress in the last decade leading to the country's reclassification from low-income to lower middle-income in 2011, Ghana continues to face various development challenges such as widening inequalities by region, locality (urban/rural), gender, and socioeconomic background (MoE-G, 2019a; World Bank, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic poses further risks in addressing these challenges and achieving the country's development goals as the combined impact of school closures and the pandemic's economic consequences could push millions of vulnerable children out of the education system. By the end of March 2020, more than 9.2 million Ghanaian children and adolescents at the primary and secondary levels were estimated to be out of school due to school closures (UNESCO Institute of Statistics).

Ghana's school system has a 2-6-3-3-4 structure divided into five levels: two years of pre-primary (for children between 4 and 6 years old), six years of primary (which begins at age 6), three years of JHS, three years of SHS, and four years of tertiary education. Basic education encompasses the first three levels and is compulsory and free. During the first three years of primary school the language of instruction is the local vernacular, and English remains the official language from upper primary to the tertiary level (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016; World Bank, 2010). The 2019 Pre-Tertiary Education Bill redefined basic education to include the SHS level (MoE-G, 2019b; MoE-G, 2019e). The public system represents two thirds of pupils enrolled at all levels *(see Table 3 in Annex 1)* with substantial regional variation. Private education has seen a rapid expansion, accounting for approximately 75 per cent of newly created schools between 2011 and 2017 at the pre-primary level, almost 90 per cent in primary, and 50 per cent at the secondary levels (MoE-G, 2019a).

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7   In 2016, the share of trained teachers in public schools was 65 per cent in pre-primary, 75 per cent in primary, 86 per cent in JHS; the share in private schools was 7 per cent in pre-primary, 10 per cent in primary, and 20 per cent in JHS (Ghana Statistical Service, 2018). The share of trained teachers at SHS was 90 per cent in 2016 (MoE-G, 2019a). The average pupil–teacher ratio at the pre-primary level was 31:1, 28:1 in primary schools, 14:1 in JHS (Ghana Statistical Service, 2018) and 20:1 in SHS *(see Table 3 in Annex 1)*.

8   In 2018, a new pre-service training curriculum for teachers was introduced, overseen by the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), giving greater focus to practical teaching practice in partner schools from the first semester, and continuous assessment and portfolio building instead of one final written examination (MoE-G, 2019a).

Low **textbook–pupil ratios**[9] and **teacher absenteeism** may have contributed to these numbers. In 2016, only 0.2 textbooks per child were provided in pre-primary schools, 1.4 per child at primary, 1.5 at JHS and 0.48 at SHS (MoE-G, 2019a). Teacher attrition, absenteeism, and time on task were also recognized by the MoE as a problem that could explain issues concerning quality of education. Teacher attrition in the country increased from 2 to 4 per cent between 2009 and 2016 (MoE-G, 2019a). Boateng (2019) suggests that the low status of the teaching profession, low salaries, poor working conditions, and the lack of incentives may explain high attrition rates among teachers. Furthermore, teacher absenteeism was estimated to be as high as 14 per cent in 2014/15,[10] with important variations across regions (MoE-G, 2019a). Other studies suggest that teacher absenteeism in pre-tertiary schools might be as high as 27 per cent and its economic costs to be roughly 5.6 to 7.6 per cent of the government's total budget (Salifu and Agbenyega, 2013; World Bank, 2010). The time lost to non-teaching activities is estimated to be between 33 and 39 per cent of scheduled teaching time (World Bank, 2010). While there is no recent long-term analysis on teacher attendance, a World Bank (2010) study suggests that the incidence of absenteeism worsened between 1988 and 2003, as the share of teachers who were absent in the selection of schools grew from 15 to 39 per cent.

Existing evidence suggests common reasons for teacher absenteeism in Ghana are ill teacher health; salary collection and untimely payment; personal commitments (e.g., frequent funeral attendance and religious practices); and other income generating activities (e.g., a second job and farming). There are other system-related reasons contributing to the country's high absenteeism rates: lack of monitoring; distance to school (especially in rural areas); and the scarcity of hygienic resources at schools (e.g., potable water and toilets) (CDD-G, 2008; World Bank, 2004; World Bank, 2010; Abadzi, 2007; Transparency International, 2009). However, previous studies have primarily focused on absence from school with little evidence on other forms of teacher absenteeism (i.e., absence due to lack of punctuality, absence from the classroom, and time on task). As the utilization of instructional time is a key factor and closely related to school progress and pupils' ability to achieve learning outcomes, issues of low attendance can be compounded by the problem of low instructional time while at school and may explain problems of quality of education in Ghana.

Prior to COVID-19 lockdowns, the GoG had taken measures to improve upon the quality of education and teacher attendance. These included the improvement of school infrastructure; the provision of textbooks and uniforms; increasing capitation grants; and providing monetary incentives to reward teacher performance (World Bank, 2010) *(see Box 1 and Annex 2)*. Following COVID-19 school closures in mid-March 2020,[11] Ghana developed a Coordinated Education Response Plan to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the education system, to help guide the provision of remote learning, and to prepare the school system once schools reopened (MoE-G, 2020) *(see Annex 2)*.

Despite these measures, concern remains that both school closures and the economic consequences of COVID-19 will have a significant impact on teaching and learning, especially for low performing pupils and marginalized children (e.g., those from poor socio-economic backgrounds, those with disabilities, and migrant, refugee, and displaced children and adolescents), while widening existing inequalities. Existing evidence from previous crises, such as the Ebola virus epidemic in Sierra Leone, finds prolonged school closures can increase dropout rates, especially for girls and children in low-income households, and increase the incidence of adolescent pregnancies (GPE, 2020). The shift to remote learning also raises concerns about in-service teachers' preparedness to work with some technologies, especially in rural settings, despite efforts from the MoE and GES to provide online training to teachers through TV, radio, and online platforms (Hatch, 2020).

The TTT report seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of teacher attendance in pre-tertiary schools in the country. While the study does not specifically address the impact of COVID-19 on teacher attendance (data collection was completed before the pandemic), its aim is to provide valuable insights into how the

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9   According to GES norms, there should be one textbook per child at pre-primary and three textbooks per child at primary and JHS (MoE-G, 2019a).

10 Teacher attendance data was collected using school report cards in basic schools in 75 deprived districts under the Ghana Partnership for Education Grant (GPEG). GPEG districts received a number of inputs and thus, these figures may not be representative at the national level (MoE-G 2019a). Figures at the pre-primary level were estimated at 15.3 per cent, 14.4 per cent in primary schools and 13.8 per cent in JHS. There is no data available at the senior high school level.

11 The initial school closure directives allowed final year students in both JHS and SHS to continue attending school to prepare for their exams, with schools ensuring that social distancing and enhanced hygiene protocols where observed. Following the postponement of the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE), secondary school students were allowed to remain at home (MoE-G, 2020).

pandemic may exacerbate existing challenges within the education system that may affect teacher attendance, motivation, and time on task. This study is therefore informative for education policy and programming, both in the COVID-19 era and beyond.

Box 2. A snapshot of teacher policies in Ghana

Education has been a major priority on the government's agenda since independence in 1960. As a result, Ghana's education system has long been considered one of the most highly developed and effective in West Africa. This has been possible due to the implementation of a significant number of reforms including: the Accelerated Development Plan of 1951 and Education Act of 1961, the New Structure and Content of Education of 1974, the 1987 Education Reforms and the Education Act of 2008. These reforms aimed not only to rapidly expand an educational system to reflect the African identity, but recognized the importance of teacher training, favorable working conditions, and adequate remuneration (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016).

More recently, major reforms have been implemented to modernize the education system and improve quality and equity. The most recent and relevant plans and programs are summarized below:

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Education (2015):

- Promoted the use of ICTs in education and provided opportunities for the professional development of both pre-service and in-service teachers, especially through distance education.

- Strengthened the collaboration between schools and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) to improve 'social accountability' at the school level through ICT tools.

- In 2015, the Mobile School Report Card (mSRC) began and was expanded progressively to 20 districts. The mSRC is a web-based platform providing real-time data on teachers, resources, and overall management at the school level.

Inclusive Education Policy (IEP) (2015):

- Ensured that all pre-service and in-service training courses include training on inclusive education.

Education Strategic Plan 2010–2020 (ESP) (2012):

- Promoted the decentralization of teacher management to the district and school level through the School Report Card System to improve the efficiency of pre-tertiary education and to improve the monitoring of teacher attendance and time on task.

- Created the National Schools Inspectorate Authority (formerly National Inspectorate Board) to set, enforce, and monitor academic, infrastructure, and education standards in both public and private schools, with routine inspections of schools.

- Addressed the issue of gender imbalances of teaching staff and the protection of women's rights.

Pre-tertiary teacher professional development and management in Ghana policy framework (PTPDM) (2012):

- Provided the minimal requirements needed to be held to access the teaching profession.

- Teachers are required, as a prerequisite to keep their license, to periodically participate in In-Service Education and Training programmes to update their knowledge and skills. Moreover, non-professional teachers are required to obtain the necessary qualification for licensing in a period of time determined by the National Teaching Council (NTC).

- Prioritized the introduction of a teacher appraisal scheme by the GES and NTC to improve the socio-economic and professional status of teachers. Also gave priority to accommodation schemes for teachers and to specific incentives for those working in remote and rural areas.

1.2   Research objectives

The principal objective of the Time to Teach study in Ghana is to generate evidence on the determinants of teacher absenteeism in pre-tertiary schools, and to provide potential recommendations for improving teacher attendance rates and time on task.

The key objectives of the study are to:

- Understand the various forms of teacher absenteeism (absence from school, lack of punctuality, absence from the classroom, reduction of instruction time) and assess their prevalence at different school levels (pre-primary, primary, junior high school, senior high school), regions, type of schools (public, private) and settings (rural, urban).

- Identify the motivations and key factors at different levels of the education system (national, subnational, community, school, and teacher) associated with pre-tertiary teacher attendance and time on task, from a systemic and multilevel perspective.

- Highlight commonalities and differences in teacher absenteeism at different school levels and among population subgroups.

- Identify pathways for policy makers and policy recommendations to strengthen teacher attendance rates and time on task as a means of improving learners' academic performance.

1.3   Definition, data, and methods

The Time to Teach study is built on the foundation that both school progress and learning depend on the fulfilment of a number of minimum conditions related to the role of teachers in the learning process. Specifically, teachers need not only to (i) be present at school, but also (ii) be punctual, (iii) be in the classroom (while at school), and (iv) spend sufficient time on task (while in the classroom) *(see Box 3)*.

> **Box 3. The Time to Teach study concept of teacher absenteeism**
>
> The Time to Teach study moves beyond the conventional definition of teacher attendance – which has focused mainly on being present at the school – and introduces the concept of multidimensional teacher absenteeism recognising four forms of teacher absence: (i) absence from school; (ii) absence of punctuality (late arrival and/or early departure from school); (iii) absence from the classroom (while in school); (iv) absence from teaching (i.e., reduced time on task while in the classroom).

The study takes a systemic approach towards explaining teacher absenteeism and therefore, examines the relevance of factors at all levels of the education system, including the national, subnational, community, school, and teacher levels *(see detailed conceptual framework in Annex 3)*. As a mixed-methods project, Time to Teach employs both qualitative and quantitative research tools to collect a unique set of primary data and detailed information from teachers and other relevant stakeholders within the education system.

A total of 80 schools, 20 at each education level (pre-primary, primary, junior high school and senior high school) were visited in 10 regions of the country: Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo, Central, Eastern, Greater Accra, Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Volta and Western.[12] These schools were purposively selected based on the following criteria: location (region), community setting (urban and rural), and type of school (public, private and faith-based schools).

The study employed three types of collection tools: (i) in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGD) with head teachers, teachers, pupils, community representatives, subnational, national and district level officials (reaching 604 individuals in total); (ii) a pen-and-paper survey administered to all teachers present

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12   It should be noted that the 10 regions of the country were classified for statistical comparison purposes into three zones: North, Middle, and Coast. The North zone consists of the Northern region, Upper East region, and Upper West region. The Middle belt consists of the following regions: Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Easter and Western. The Coastal zone consists of the Greater Accra, Volta, and Central regions.

in the selected schools on the date of the visit (609 surveys in total: 51 in pre-primary, 107 in primary, 115 in junior high school and 336 in senior high school);[13] and (iii) an observation tool to record enumerators' observations during the visits.[14] Overall, 973 individuals participated in the study *(see Table 1)*. It is important to note that these data were drawn from schools selected for qualitative data collections and therefore, are only representative of the selected schools and not the country as a whole.[15] More details on the conceptual framework and research design of Time to Teach study in Ghana are presented in Annexes 3 and 4.

Data collection, storage and management were in line with international best practice and the UNICEF Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis *(see Annex 6)*.

Table 1. Number of study participants by level of analysis, data collection method and school level

Respondent type	Data collection method	Pre-primary	Primary	Junior high school	Senior high school	Total
National level						
National Ministry of Education officials, national teacher union representatives	IDI					**6**
Sub-national level						
Subnational education officers	IDI					**18**
District education officers	IDI					**60**
Community level						
Community leaders (PTA/SMC)	IDI	20	20	20	20	**80**
School level						
Head teachers	IDI	20	20	20	20	**80**
Teachers	Survey/IDI	51	107	115	336	**609**
Pupils	FGD	-	40	40	40	**120**
Total number of respondents		**91**	**187**	**195**	**416**	**973**

Note: *At the school level, a total of 51 teachers in pre-primary, 60 in primary, 60 in junior high school and 60 in senior high school were selected for in-depth interviews.

This report is structured as follows: Section 2 presents key findings on the incidence, motivation and factors associated with teacher absenteeism in the selected schools in Ghana. Section 3 discusses national policy implications and provides potential recommendations that can contribute to the design of promising practices aimed at improving teacher attendance and time on task across the country.

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13 The survey took place between 12 to 27 March 2019. School visits were announced well in advance. The 2018/2019 academic year began on 11 September 2018 and ended on 25 July 2019.

14 A structured observation tool was used to record enumerators' observations on teacher absences, teacher pupil interactions, and teacher working relations during visits to selected schools. These were used to understand school context and are not included in the total number of interviewees.

15 Like all studies relying on self-reported data, TTT is not free of methodological limitations. See Annex 5 for a detail explanation of this study's methodological limitations.

Section 2
Key findings

This section presents the findings of the Time to Teach study in Ghana, beginning with an overview of the reported frequency of teacher absenteeism disaggregated by level of education (i.e., pre-primary, primary, secondary) and the form of absence (i.e., school absenteeism, lack of punctuality, classroom absenteeism, and reduced time on task). It is followed by a more in-depth discussion of the factors associated with these different forms of absenteeism, combining survey information and qualitative data collected from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

How frequently are teachers absent?

According to survey findings, one in five teachers (21 per cent) across all levels has been absent on a recurring basis (i.e., at least once a week) in any of the four dimensions of teacher attendance. The most common form of absence in primary, junior high school, and senior high school is lack of punctuality, while classroom absence is more frequent among teachers at the pre-primary level *(see Figure 2)*.

Figure 2. Proportion (%) of teachers who reported being absent frequently (i.e., at least once a week), by form of absence and education level
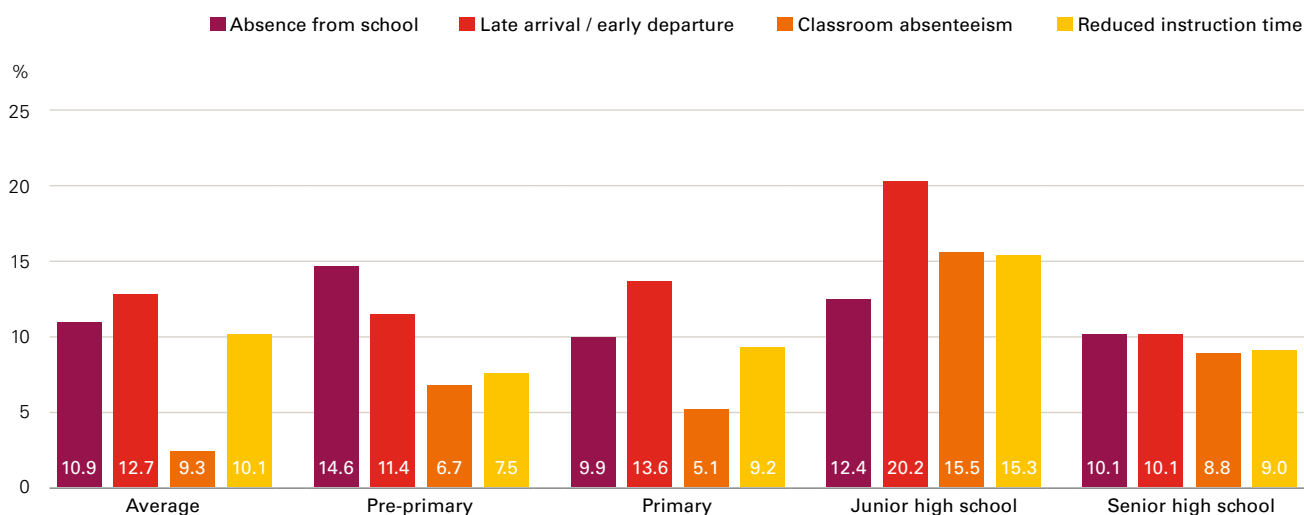
Results by form of absenteeism and school level show:

■ **Absence from school** was reported by 11 per cent of surveyed teachers across all levels. The highest rates were among pre-primary school teachers at 14.6 per cent, next were junior high school (JHS) (12.4 per cent), senior high school (SHS) (10.1 per cent), and primary educators (9.9 per cent). School absence was higher in rural (14 per cent) than in urban settings (9 per cent). Although there are no statistical differences in gender and school type (public/private) at the aggregate level, differences arise at the school level. While male teachers in pre-primary schools were more likely to be absent from school (43 per cent) compared with female teachers (9 per cent), female educators were twice as likely to be absent (18 per cent) than their male counterparts (8 per cent) at junior and senior high schools.

- **Late arrival/early departure was the most frequent form of absence:** 12.7 per cent of teachers affirmed to have arrived late or left early on a recurring basis (i.e., at least once a week) since the start of the school year. The highest rates were found among JHS teachers (20.2 per cent) and the lowest at the SHS level (10.1 per cent). Figures for teachers in pre-primary and primary schools were 11.4 per cent and 13.6 per cent, respectively. Lack of punctuality was much more likely in rural (16 per cent) than in urban areas (10 per cent), just as it was in private schools (19 per cent) than in public schools (11 per cent). Younger teachers (those whose age is below the median (32 years old) in the sample) were also more likely to arrive late/leave early on a recurrent basis (15 per cent) than older educators (10 per cent). Moreover, male teachers in JHS reported more often to be unpunctual (24 per cent) than female educators (6 per cent).

- **Classroom absence was the least frequent form of absenteeism.** This was reported by 9.3 per cent of teachers across all levels. The highest rates were reported by secondary school teachers at 15.5 per cent in JHS and 8.8 per cent in SHS. Teachers in pre-primary and primary schools reported the lowest rates: 6.7 per cent and 5.1 per cent, respectively. Across all levels, absence from the classroom was more prevalent among teachers in private schools (15 per cent) than among those in public schools (7 per cent). Although 59 per cent of Ghana's primary teaching workforce is male *(see Table 2 in Annex 1)*, female teachers at the primary level were more likely to be absent from the classroom (15 per cent) than their male counterparts (0 per cent), while at JHS it was male educators who were frequently absent (18 per cent compared with 6 per cent for female teachers).

- **Limited time on task was reported by 10.1 per cent of the surveyed teachers.** The highest rates were reported by JHS teachers (15 per cent), followed by primary (9.2 per cent), SHS (9 per cent) and pre-primary (7.5 per cent) educators. As in other forms of absenteeism, reduced instruction time was more prevalent among private school teachers (15 per cent) than among those in public schools (8 per cent). Male teachers in junior high schools were more likely to reduce time on task while at the school (18 per cent) than female teachers (5 per cent).

Surveyed teachers were queried on the main reasons behind each form of absenteeism. What motivated teachers from each level of education and for each form of absenteeism were very similar *(see Figures 3 to 6)*. Specifically, ill health was the most frequent reason given for teacher absence from school, late arrival/early departure, and reduced time on task; while it was the third most frequent answer for teacher absence from the classroom. Weather and official school business were equally mentioned, as highlighted below:[16]

- **Health, weather, and official school business were the most common reasons for school absence,** reported on average by 65, 27, and 26 per cent of surveyed teachers respectively *(see Figure 3)*. Ill health was a main reason for teacher absence. It was more frequently mentioned by rural (90 per cent) and male (100 per cent) pre-primary school teachers than by urban (69 per cent) and female (73 per cent) pre-primary educators, as well as by urban JHS educators (83 per cent) compared with rural JHS teachers (68 per cent). Across all levels, weather was reported as a key reason for teacher absence by 29 per cent of public school teachers compared with 22 per cent of their counterparts in private schools. Climatic conditions were more prevalent among rural primary school teachers (32 per cent) than those in urban primary schools (12 per cent). Public school teachers (32 per cent) were more likely to state that official school business kept them away from school than those in private schools (12 per cent).

- The **main reasons for lack of punctuality, according to teachers, were health, weather, and transport** as indicated by 50, 37 and 29 per cent of teachers, respectively *(see Figure 4)*. Across all levels, 58 per cent of female teachers reported ill health as a reason for arriving late to school or leaving early from school, compared with 46 per cent of the male teachers. On the contrary, 41 per cent of male teachers indicated weather as a reason versus 28 per cent of their female counterparts. Additionally, 32 per cent of male teachers, compared with 22 per cent of female teachers, reported transport as the reason for their lack of punctuality. Climatic reasons were more frequent in public schools (39 per cent) than in private schools (31 per cent) and among secondary school teachers (39 per cent) more so than those in primary schools (31 per cent).

16 The findings presented are those for which the differences are statistically significant across all levels.

■ **Administrative reasons (e.g., office work, teacher meetings) were the most common motivation for classroom absenteeism**, followed by official school business and health *(see Figure 5)*. Administrative reasons were mentioned by 69 per cent of teachers across all levels and were more frequently reported by male teachers (72 per cent) than female educators (62 per cent), and in rural JHS (83 per cent) than in urban JHS (63 per cent). Official school business, indicated by 47 per cent of surveyed teachers, was more common among male teachers (51 per cent) and in public schools (51 per cent) than among female teachers (37 per cent) and in private schools (34 per cent). Ill health was mentioned by 44 per cent of teachers as a reason for absenteeism. These findings are significantly lower at the primary school level.[17]

■ **Health, lack of teaching materials, and learner misbehaviour were the main reasons for reducing instruction time**, as noted by 36, 29 and 24 per cent of surveyed teachers, respectively *(see Figure 6)*. Lack of TLMs was more common both in rural settings[18] (37 per cent) and in public schools (32 per cent) than in urban (23 per cent) and private schools[19] (26 per cent). It was also more prevalent at the primary school level than in secondary schools.[20] Ill health was more frequently mentioned by rural pre-primary school teachers (47 per cent) than those in urban areas (7 per cent), and in urban primary schools (42 per cent) compared with rural primary schools (25 per cent). Pupil misbehaviour was more prevalent in public JHS (33 per cent) than JHS in private settings (18 per cent). Both health and pupils' misbehaviour were more prevalent among secondary school teachers than those in primary schools.[21]

Figure 3. Primary reasons for school absenteeism, by school level
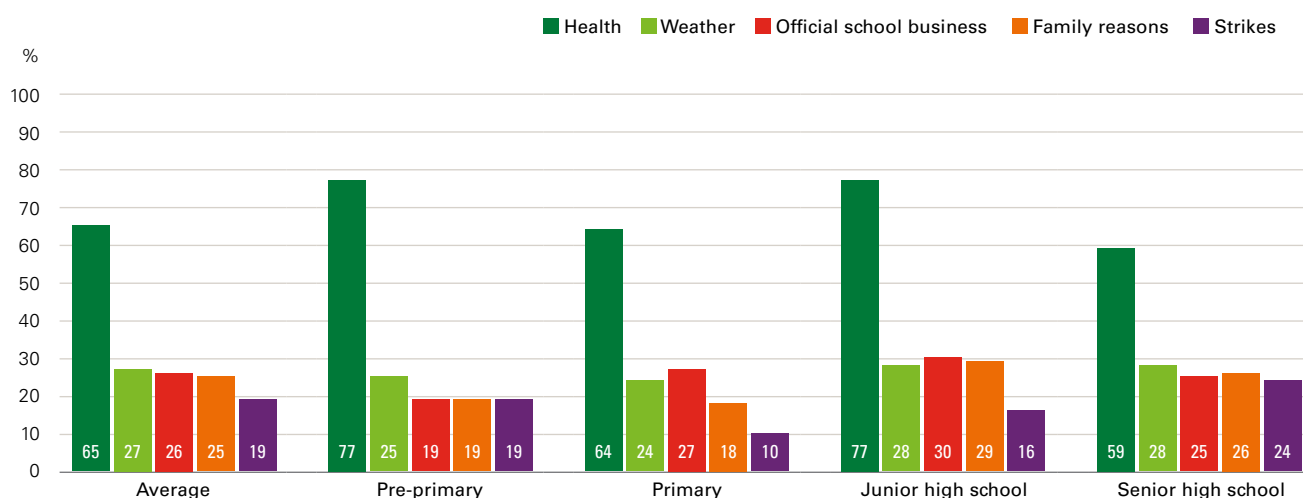
17 Secondary school teachers were significantly more likely to mention administrative reasons (73 per cent secondary, 59 per cent primary); health (46 per cent secondary, 38 per cent primary); and official school business (50 per cent secondary, 37 per cent primary) than their peers in primary schools.

18 Differences are significant using the full sample of teachers and at the primary level.

19 Differences are only significant at the primary level.

20 Overall, 43 per cent of teachers at the primary school level affirmed to reducing time on task because of lack of teaching materials, compared with 24 per cent of their peers in secondary schools.

21 Overall, 39 and 27 per cent of secondary school teachers mentioned health issues and pupil's misbehavior respectively as reasons for reducing instruction time compared with 28 and 16 per cent at the primary level respectively.

Figure 4. Primary reasons for lack of punctuality (late arrival and early departure), by school level

Legend: ■ Health ■ Weather ■ Transport ■ Family reasons ■ Official school business

%

	Health	Weather	Transport	Family reasons	Official school business
Average	50	37	29	24	18
Pre-primary	60	27	27	15	4
Primary	53	33	30	27	18
Junior high school	64	40	26	28	18
Senior high school	42	39	30	24	19
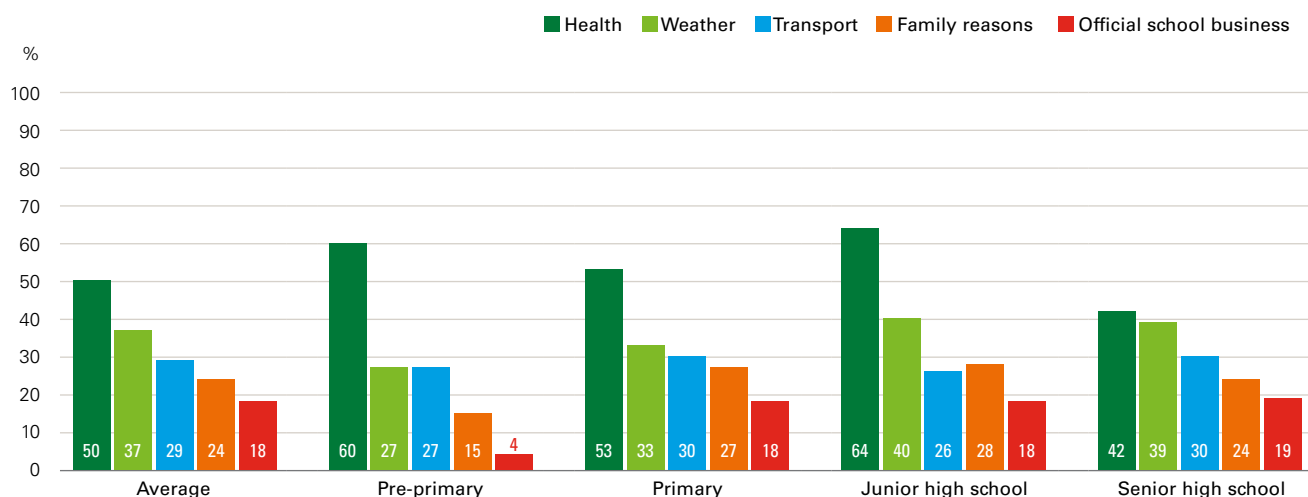
Figure 5. Primary reasons for classroom absenteeism (while at school), by school level

Legend: ■ Administrative reasons ■ Official school business ■ Health ■ Weather ■ Too many preparation tasks

%

	Administrative reasons	Official school business	Health	Weather	Too many preparation tasks
Average	69	47	44	13	12
Pre-primary	58	21	33	10	21
Primary	59	45	40	20	10
Junior high school	71	51	40	15	20
Senior high school	73	50	48	10	10
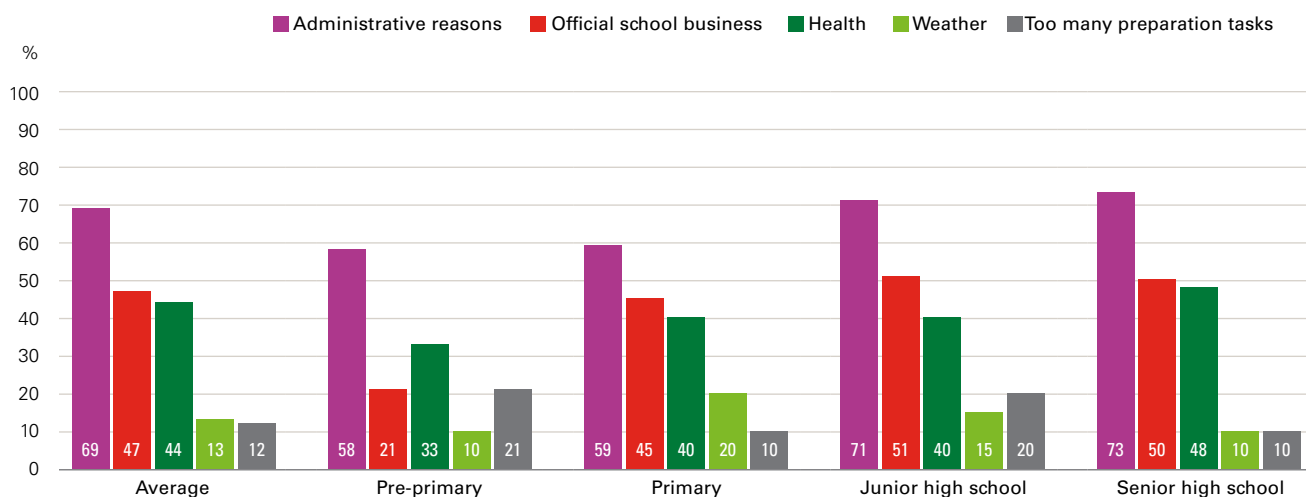
Figure 6. Primary reasons for reduced time on task (while in the classroom), by school level
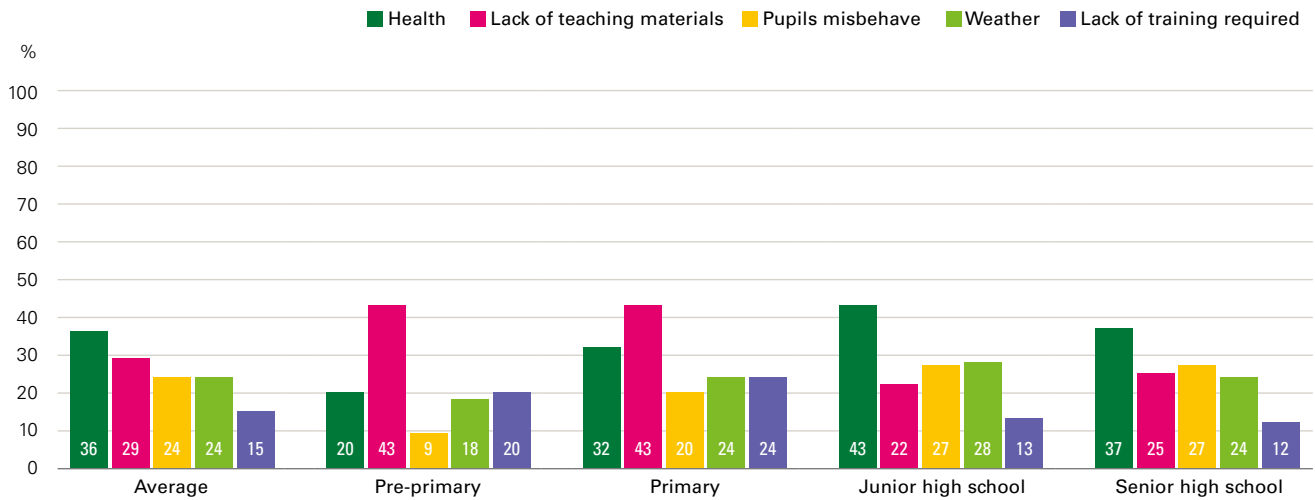
Figures 3 to 6 provide a useful snapshot of the most frequently reported reasons for absenteeism. However, survey data only captured part of the details. Interviews with head teachers, teachers, pupils, and government officials complement this data with a contextual understanding of the determinants of teacher absenteeism in pre-tertiary schools in Ghana and will be discussed in detail in the next section.

Why are teachers absent?

2.1 National level factors

2.1.1 Training

Attending **in-service** training programmes was one of the main reasons for school absenteeism and low punctuality among teachers across different school levels. Respondents described these as "valid" and "justified" and thus head teachers did not stop teachers from attending. Figures 3 and 4 show that engagement in official school business (including in-service training) was a common cause of school absence and low punctuality across schools. One reason is that **training sessions are often held outside of the school, and during teaching time**, which requires teachers to leave school, ranging from a few hours to several days. Sometimes training programmes were also held at the school, which resulted in classroom absence *(see Figure 5)*.

> "Our education district office is very far from this school. When teachers are attending workshops, you cannot ask them to come to school first unless the training is at noon. Instead, they must go there straight from home."
>
> – Primary level headteacher, urban public school, Greater Accra region

It emerged that in some schools, head teachers encouraged teachers to provide a lesson plan that could be used in their absence, although this did not seem consistent across all the schools. Additionally, teachers explained that they were often not given enough notice to prepare in advance for missed lessons. When the teacher was away, their class was sometimes taught by another teacher or head teacher although that was not frequent. In most cases, pupils were left on their own with a prefect in charge who helped to review the previous day's lesson, and in most cases, this resulted in excessive noise that disturbed other classrooms. In some instances, lessons were either shortened or cancelled.

Narratives from head teachers and local education officials pointed to the fact that, while aware of the constraints placed on teachers' time on task, they did not prevent the teachers from attending training programmes due to the programme's overall (long-term) positive outcomes in the classroom. Additionally, although a vast majority of surveyed teachers throughout the different school levels described themselves as having the necessary skills needed to teach (95 per cent across all levels), they seemed to feel their peers needed additional support.

> "The pupils confided in another teacher that they did not understand their teacher's lessons. So, I called the teacher to find out what the problem was, and he confessed he was not comfortable with the subject."
>
> – Junior level community representative, urban public school, Upper East region

This need was also confirmed by some respondents who pointed to **teachers' lack of subject knowledge and lesson planning skills as a common dilemma**, especially at the junior and senior secondary levels. They described this as a key factor hindering teachers' instructional time and presence in the classroom. Some head teachers tried to support teachers by assigning them subjects they felt confident teaching. Teachers also tried to overcome this challenge on their own by seeking support from their peers or by learning on their own. A junior level teacher at an urban public school in the Upper East region explained: "Many teachers need in-service training, but I try to read on my own. I have a smartphone so if I have a problem, I always look for solutions through the Internet."

A potential reason for this gap in knowledge might be the **limited availability of in-service training opportunities**, especially at the junior and senior levels. There appeared to be **a significant shortage of access to training opportunities** as only 32 per cent of JHS and SHS teachers confirmed they had access to training, compared with 60 per cent of pre-primary and primary teachers. Even within the secondary level, junior high school teachers (46 per cent) had more access to training than their senior counterparts (28 per cent) *(see Figure 7 and Tables 13 to 15)*. This may be because most **senior high school teachers (99 per cent) have university degrees**, compared with teachers in other levels *(see Table 5 in Annex 4)*. Thus, these teachers may be seen by administrators as not needing additional training. However, as findings from this study show, **they struggle with subject knowledge**, also evident in Figure 6 where the lack of required training is identified as

one of the top five reasons for not being on task. This challenge appeared to be a hindrance across other levels also, especially in rural areas (20 per cent) more than urban (11 per cent), in public schools (18 per cent) more than private (12 per cent) and in faith-based schools (9 per cent), with 17 per cent being recorded among male teachers, compared with 12 per cent among female teachers *(see Figure 21).*[22]

In the current strategic plan, the MoE prioritizes continuous professional development through school-based in-service training to improve the quality and relevance of the basic education curriculum (MoE-G, 2019b). It is not clear if timing will help avoid conflict with scheduled lessons. Similarly, in the National Teachers' Standards Guidelines (MoE-G, 2017b), teachers are expected to have high levels of attendance and punctuality as part of their professional values and attitudes. This does not give consideration to the impact that training-related absenteeism could have on teachers' ability to carry out these responsibilities.

Figure 7. Opinions of teachers on selected statements related to absenteeism – knowledge, skills, and training
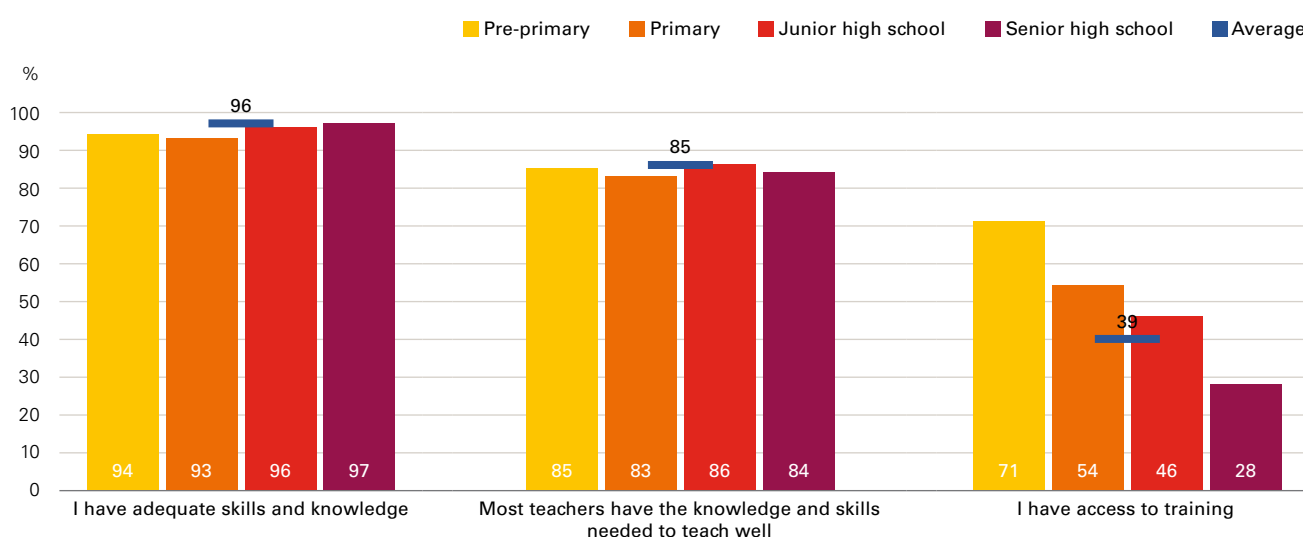
It is worth noting that COVID-19 might further increase teachers' need for training as currently, their training focuses primarily on enhancing remote-learning strategies (Hatch, 2020), and puts on hold training related to the new curriculum implementation (Ferdinand, 2021b). Moreover, the MoE has already started training 32,000 pre-service teachers in the delivery of online lessons (UNESCO, 2020), but it is not clear if similar training is underway for in-service teachers.

As TTT findings reveal, it is vital that teacher presence in the classroom and their teaching needs are given priority. The Ministry's new teacher licensing system offers the potential to track teachers based on qualifications and school needs although this may require priority being given to under-performing schools. Additionally, in the future GES will deploy subject-based teachers to ensure equity, but it is not clear if in-service teachers will also be given similar consideration.

Finally, while the Ministry recognizes the significant gap in training of public and private school teachers, it is not clear from the above policies whether special attention will be given to private school teachers' training needs. A recent decision by GES to place private schools under National Schools Inspectorate Authority (formerly known as the National Inspectorate Board) instead of the MoE might also further widen the gap in training among public and private school teachers (Aboroampa, 2020). There is a need, therefore, for closer collaboration between the Ghana National Association of Private Schools, the MoE, and GES to ensure that private schools are included in decisions related to basic education, something that does not seem to currently be the case (Ola-Morris, 2020).

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22 Differences in terms of locality (urban/rural), type of school (public/private/faith-based), and gender are statistically significant at the 10 per cent level.

2.1.2   Remuneration

Throughout the different schools and across school levels, teachers **are regularly absent from school or arrive late/leave early in order to collect their wages**. Respondents explained that banks were far from their schools or were closed during non-teaching times. Survey responses suggest that **public school teachers find it easier to collect their pay** (70 per cent at pre-primary/primary and 72 per cent lower/upper secondary), than teachers in private schools (61 per cent at pre-primary/primary and 65 per cent at lower/upper secondary).[23] There are also variations across regions *(see Table 13 in Annex 11)*: only 58 per cent of teachers in the North zone find it easy to collect their salaries compared with 66 per cent of teachers in the Coast zone and 72 per cent of teachers in the Middle zone. Likewise, **teachers in rural areas who are often absent or not punctual cited receiving their pay as a motivation more frequently** (6.7 per cent for school absence in rural schools compared with 3.6 per cent in urban; 5.2 per cent for low punctuality among rural teachers compared with 3.1 per cent among urban). A pre-primary teacher at a rural public school in the Northern region explains: "Visiting the bank can affect a teacher's presence at school because they have to travel a long distance to the bank since it is very far [away] and can take the full day."

Delay in receiving pay also limited teachers' presence in school and their punctuality. Further, it created challenges in meeting their monthly household expenses, including food and transportation. This could be explained by the technical challenges GES experienced in 2019, which delayed the payment of salaries for new teachers. This comprised 17 per cent of those sampled in survey responses for Time to Teach, especially at the primary (24 per cent) and JHS (20 per cent) levels, as indicated in Table 5, Annex 4, and more than 22,000 others who had received a promotion (Kale-Dery, 2019).

Delay and insufficiency of salary were described as lowering teacher motivation, especially with regard to being present in the classroom and using instructional time effectively. In survey responses, **only 14 per cent of public and 24 per cent of private school teachers appeared satisfied with their salaries**. This dissatisfaction was significantly higher among secondary school teachers (87 per cent) than primary school teachers (77 per cent), as seen in Table 14 in Annex 11. A potential explanation for this

> "Some of the teachers' salaries have not been paid for around three months. They sometimes call and say that they do not have sufficient money for transportation. So, they stay home, especially if they live far."
>
> – Senior level teacher, Greater Accra region, urban public school

might be because secondary teachers perhaps feel their salaries do not reflect their qualifications. Teachers in the TTT survey also work **in classrooms with significantly higher pupil–teacher ratios** (48:1 junior, 56:1 senior) than at the pre-primary (29:1) or primary (34:1) levels.[24] Moreover, absence from the classroom was also higher among secondary teachers (10 per cent) than pre-primary/primary (6 per cent), as shown in Figure 15 in Annex 7. This means it is likely they have more preparation and assessment responsibilities which would explain why absence due to reduced time on task also occurs more frequently at JHS and SHS levels (11 per cent) than at pre-primary/primary levels (9 per cent). A junior level teacher from an urban public school in the Central region affirmed this: "Our break between classes is very brief so it is difficult to assess work pupils have done earlier, especially if you have a higher ratio of learners. Therefore, when they return to class from break, you still continue on with marking while they sit."

Furthermore, teachers with lower salaries[25] were more likely to experience absenteeism than those with higher salaries, especially with regard to late arrival/early departure (18 per cent among teachers with lower salaries compared with 9 per cent with higher salaries); school absence (15 per cent among teachers with lower salaries compared with 8 per cent with higher salaries); and limited time on task absence (15 per cent among teachers with lower salaries compared with 6 per cent with higher salaries) *(see Table 10 in Annex 10)*. One possible reason absenteeism might be higher among teachers with lower salaries could be because they **are engaged in additional income-generating activities**, which explains the higher frequency of classroom absenteeism and low punctuality in the survey data.

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23   Differences between public and private school teachers are statistically significant at the 10 per cent level.

24   The pupil–teacher ratios in the Time to Teach sample differ from national statistics. *See Table 2 in Annex 1* for figures at the national level.

25   Lower salaries are defined as those below the median in the sample.

It has been reported that the government will provide additional financial incentives to SHS teachers by giving them opportunities to teach extra classes during non-teaching hours (Kale-Dery, 2019). This may help them remain focused on their teaching responsibilities while at school and provide opportunities for additional income. It is not clear however if these incentives will be available during post-COVID-19 school reopening or for teachers at other levels.

Finally, there is concern COVID-19 school closures will exacerbate salary-related issues and increase further teacher attrition rates, especially among private school teachers who, unlike their peers in public schools, only received half their pay, or none, during school closures. The government has included the education sector in its stimulus package for the Coronavirus Alleviation Programme Business Support Scheme to help private school leaders in continuity of pay however, only 20 per cent of schools have accessed these (Richter, 2021).

2.2 Subnational level factors

2.2.1 Monitoring

Across the different levels and types of schools, respondents pointed to regular monitoring by regional and district officials as helpful and encouraging in deterring absenteeism at their school. They explained that teachers were less likely to be absent when government officials conducted regular monitoring visits and sanctioned teachers for attendance violations. During school visits, education officials sometimes intentionally did not inform the school in advance of their arrivals and thus used this as a strategy to assess the occurrence of absenteeism and address it. Often these actors were described by community representatives, teachers, and head teachers as working closely with school managers to overcome this problem. Notably, respondents found it especially effective when sanctioning measures were enforced quickly, as this often served as a deterrent to other teachers too.

Common sanctioning measures included following up with teachers and providing verbal warnings and in many cases, deducting part of their salary when they were absent from school for several days and without the head teacher's permission. Deduction of salary was described by teachers and school managers as an effective measure against low attendance.

"Teachers are afraid of their money being deducted so they will avoid being absent from school. This policy has helped deter school absence a lot."

– Primary level head teacher, rural public school, Ashanti region

When circuit supervisors and district directors visited schools, **they often checked attendance books and followed up with teachers who had not been present or punctual.** They also verified sign-in sheets by visiting classrooms and seeing if teachers were present and engaged in teaching. In some cases, education officials observed teachers while they were teaching and checked their lesson plans, providing feedback for improvement as necessary.

Survey responses showed that there were variations in visits between primary (74 per cent) and secondary (58 per cent) levels. Circuit supervisors appeared to visit senior secondary schools less frequently (53 per cent) than pre-primary (80 per cent), primary (71 per cent), and junior high school (72 per cent) as shown in Figure 8.[26] **Likewise, across all levels, teachers who are often not punctual were less likely to affirm that school inspectors visited regularly** (51 per cent) than teachers who were punctual (64 per cent) on a regular basis. These differences were also significant at the pre-primary level, where 20 per cent of teachers who frequently arrived late or left school early agreed that school inspectors discouraged absenteeism, compared with 78 per cent of those who were punctual on a regular basis. Primary school teachers who were not punctual, in the classroom, or on task, rated school inspectors' visits lower.[27]

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26 Differences between primary (pre-primary/primary) and secondary (JHS/SHS) schools and between JHS and SHS are statistically significant at the 10 per cent level.

27 Survey responses indicate that primary school teachers who were often unpunctual were less likely to affirm that school inspectors visit regularly (36 per cent) compared with those who were punctual on a regular basis (72 per cent). Likewise, primary school teachers who were regularly absent from the classroom (25 per cent) were less likely to declare school inspectors visit often compared with those who were in the classroom regularly (72 per cent). Finally, primary school educators who reduced instruction time on a regular basis declared they receive fewer visits from school inspectors (29 per cent) compared with teachers who were often on task (70 per cent).

Figure 8. Opinions of teachers on selected statements related to absenteeism – school inspectors monitoring

Legend: Pre-primary | Primary | Junior high school | Senior high school | Average
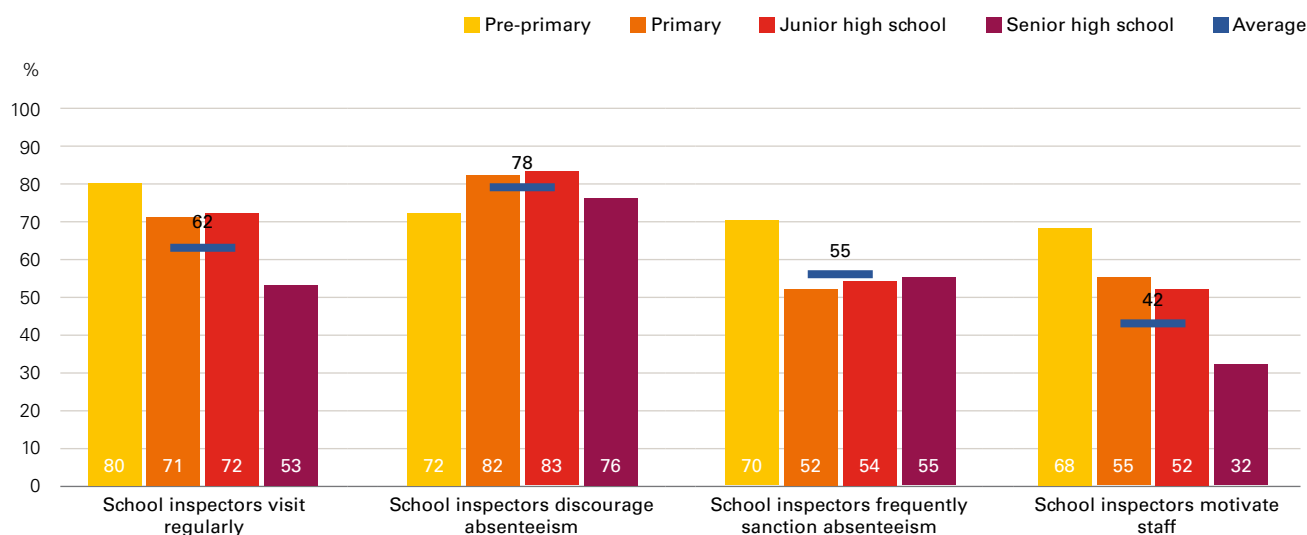
These findings suggest that **the low frequency of visits by education officials is a factor in teachers' low attendance, especially regarding punctuality, classroom absence, and limited instructional time use**. At the primary level, differences were evident among teachers who reduced time on task as they were more likely to affirm that school inspectors sanctioned absenteeism. This might be because subtle forms of absences (like time on task) were often not monitored as frequently as school absence or punctuality.

Regionally, monitoring occurred less frequently in the North (52 per cent) than in the Coastal (65 per cent) or Middle (63 per cent) zones *(see Table 13 in Annex 11)*. Notably, absenteeism in general was more frequent in the North at 30 per cent than in the Middle (18 per cent) and Coastal (22 per cent) zones. **These findings support respondents' views that teacher attendance rates are lower when the frequency of monitoring visits is also low.**

Similarly, monitoring was also more frequent in urban areas (65 per cent) than in rural (58 per cent) as indicated in Table 11 in Annex 11. There were also important variations between public and private schools regarding how frequently school inspectors discouraged absenteeism (79 per cent in public and 74 per cent in private) or sanctioned it (59 per cent in public and 48 per cent in private), as seen in Table 12. This might also explain why forms of absenteeism commonly monitored by school inspectors (school absence and punctuality) are higher in rural areas[28] and in private schools[29], as shown in Table 10 in Annex 10. The government has also expressed concerns over the absence of teacher monitoring in private schools, which they explain is a consequence of the lack of availability of data from these schools (MoE-G, 2019b).

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28 The self-reported school absenteeism rate among rural school teachers was 14 per cent compared with 9 per cent in urban settings. Likewise, 16 per cent of teachers in rural schools declared arriving late/leaving early from school as compared with 10 per cent of those in urban settings.

29 The self-reported school absenteeism rate among school teachers in private schools was 13 per cent compared with 10 per cent in public schools and 12 per cent in faith-based schools. Likewise, 19 per cent of teachers in private schools confirmed arriving late / leaving early from school compared with 11 per cent of those in public schools and 7 per cent of those in faith-based schools.

Travel constraints limit education officials to monitoring schools nearby more frequently than others. To help address this issue, in 2020 the MoE distributed 365 vehicles and 493 motorbikes to local officials and will deliver an additional 475 vehicles and 1,507 motorbikes in 2021 (Ferdinand, 2020b; Prince, 2020). However, there is concern about the need for additional funding to effectively utilize these resources, including maintenance and fuel costs (GBC, 2020b; Modern Ghana, 2019), which, according to the findings, were higher in rural and remote areas. Additionally, circuit supervisors in the North region have not been included in the distribution of motorbikes (Ferdinand, 2021c), which is concerning as findings from this study found absenteeism to be higher in this region and monitoring less frequent.

> "I feel the need to monitor schools because circuit supervisors might not enforce attendance measures due to their relationship with the teacher. I, however, can enforce them, but I do not have the financial resources to visit schools, including fuel for the vehicles. If we could get budgetary allocations in time, then I can work. "
>
> – Regional education official, Ashanti region

Another challenge experienced by school inspectors is limited sanctioning power due to a lack of authority or interference from other stakeholders. The Ministry sees this as the consequence of the absence of a sector-wide accountability framework (MoE-G, 2019b). The Ministry has thus developed a new Education Bill to decentralize school management so that local officials can enforce supervision quickly and efficiently (GoG, 2019).

In a similar vein, the Teachers' Code of Conduct also recommends disciplinary committees at the school, district, regional, divisional, and national levels (MoE-G, 2008). This study revealed these were not active across all schools and that enforcing sanctions was a challenge. Moreover, though a variety of sanctioning measures were included and evident across schools (e.g., providing verbal warnings, pay deduction), they focused mainly on school absence or punctuality and not on classroom absence or reduced instructional time.

During COVID-19 school closures, monitoring focused on measuring the effectiveness of remote learning through virtual inspections in public and private schools using the Inspection Evaluation Framework of the National Schools Inspectorate Authority (Ferdinand, 2021d). However, the implementation may have lacked consistency as most rural and low-income settings had not been able to provide virtual lessons through digital platforms. For instance, in November 2020, only 5 and 32 per cent of children in the country (except in Greater Accra region) had used digital platforms, and TV or radio, respectively (Richter, 2021). As schools re-open, the MoE plans to strengthen in-person monitoring to ensure schools adhere with the new COVID-19 protocols (GBC, 2021b), though it is not clear which schools will be visited and if scheduled lesson times will be prioritized.

2.2.2 Subnational engagement

Some school inspectors provide materials, staff support, and in-service training to address absenteeism more effectively at schools. A regional education official from Brong Ahafo region explained that when they noticed teachers were struggling with subject knowledge, they reached out to subject associations to organize in-service training for them.

The study revealed that working closely with other stakeholders, like the community and the teachers' union, helps local officials in preventing teacher absenteeism. A district education official from the Eastern region highlighted: "When there is a problem, I invite the union to be part of our discussions with the teacher. This is because when we normally sanction teachers, they often go to the union to appeal it. However, if unions are part of the discussion, then whatever measures you take, they will be understood." Such close collaboration, nevertheless, was not consistent across all schools. Teachers and head teachers throughout the different schools described the need for additional engagement with local government officials.

Responses to the Time to Teach survey also indicate that **most teachers do not think that school inspectors motivate staff**. This dissatisfaction was significantly higher among secondary school teachers , where only 37 per cent of teachers noted that school inspectors motivated staff compared with those in primary at 59 per cent, as indicated in Figure 8. Similarly, public (38 per cent) and faith-based (38 per cent) school teachers appeared far less satisfied than private school teachers (54 per cent) *(see Table 12)*. Regionally, the number of teachers who found **school inspectors motivate them was higher in the Middle and North zones (47 per cent and 45 per cent, respectively) than in the Coast zone (33 per cent)** *(see Table 13 in Annex 11)*.[30] Teachers in the Coastal zone also appeared less satisfied with their job than teachers in the other two zones,[31] suggesting that low subnational engagement was a factor in low job motivation.

> "Sometimes, when we hear of cases of teacher absenteeism, we invite the union the teacher belongs to and have a friendly conversation with them about the challenge. We try to include them in the initial stages so that if we need to sanction, it would be easy to do so with their support."
>
> – District education official, Greater Accra region

Teachers assume that they are not well respected by their communities and have low salary satisfaction. Survey responses revealed that only 43 per cent of teachers in the Coast zone felt respected by the community compared with 52 per cent in North and 59 per cent in the Middle zones. In addition, only 12 per cent of teachers in the Coast zone said they were satisfied with their salaries compared with 18 per cent in the North and 17 per cent in the Middle zones.[32] As discussed further in Section 2.3.2, support from the community is crucial to teacher motivation and sense of dedication towards their work.

Finally, teachers who were frequently absent from school were less likely to regard school inspectors as motivating to staff (31 per cent) than those who were often present (44 per cent) across all school levels. This was especially evident at the primary and secondary levels, where teachers who were absent from school, arrive late/leave early, or had limited instructional time on a regular basis, were less likely to regard school inspectors as motivating.[33]

This dissatisfaction with subnational engagement might be due to poor implementation of national directives. For example, circuit supervisors are responsible for monitoring schools and ensuring that they implement the School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) effectively through SMC engagement and regular School Performance Appraisal Meetings. However, findings show that these were not carried out across all schools, possibly due to limited resources and capacity (World Bank, 2018b).

To strengthen accountability, the Education Bill 2015 (MoE-G, 2015) requires that all basic schools and secondary levels, including members from across different system levels, establish a District Assembly and a Board of Governors, respectively, with the potential to provide opportunities to communicate and share concerns among stakeholders.

The government, with support from the World Bank (2019), is also working on a project to strengthen monitoring by ensuring that circuit supervisors have the support they need to engage and support teachers. However, this support appears to focus primarily on in-service training, and it is not clear if circuit supervisors would also be encouraged to motivate staff through increased feedback and communication.

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30 Differences in terms of school type and geographic zones are statistically significant at the 10 per cent level.

31 Although differences are not statistically significant.

32 Differences are not statistically significant.

33 Survey responses reveal that primary level school teachers who were often unpunctual or reduced time on task were less likely to affirm that school inspectors motivate staff (18 per cent and 14 per cent, respectively) compared with those who were regularly punctual (53 per cent) and on task (54 per cent). At SHS, teachers who were regularly absent from school or limited their instructional time were also less likely to agree to the same statement (19 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively) as compared with teachers who were often present at school (35 per cent) and on task while in the classroom (34 per cent).

2.3   Community level factors

2.3.1   Weather

Figures 3 to 6 highlight that **weather** is one of the main reasons teachers are **absent from school or are not punctual**. In their narratives, teachers indicated that when it rained, both teachers and pupils found it difficult to attend school due to the **lack of transportation, especially during heavy rains, and/or the poor quality of roads.** Those who travelled by foot or bicycle/motorbike also found the roads to be challenging and more prone to accidents occurring. It was therefore common for teachers to

> "If it rains from 6:30-8:30 am, I will leave my house and stand at the bus terminal for a few hours. Even if the transportation arrives, I know that by the time I make it to school I will be very late, so I stay home."
>
> – Pre-primary teacher, rural public school, Ashanti region

wait for the rain to stop before continuing their journey to school, or to stay home until the next day. Some educators pointed out that GES allowed schools to close if the rain continued after 11 a.m. It is equally necessary to note that **heavy rains affect both the frequency and cost of transportation**, making it difficult for those who lived farther away from the school to arrive regularly or on time. In surveyed responses, rural/urban differences were not significant, though **public school teachers were affected more than private school teachers across all forms of absenteeism**.[34]

The 2018–2030 Education Strategic Plan recognizes lack of housing as a challenge for rural teachers (MoE-G, 2019b), though it does not indicate if it has plans to alleviate it. Some efforts have been made, in collaboration with the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), to help teachers acquire affordable housing (Quarshie, 2017), however, teachers have not taken advantage of these due to the lack of viable financing options (Acheampong and Gyasi, 2019).

Men seemed to be affected by weather issues much more often than women in regard to school absence (29 per cent of men compared with 21 per cent of women) and low punctuality (41 per cent of men compared with 28 per cent of women). This might be because men are considered to be dropping their children to school before going to work and this might be more challenging during rainy seasons. This also explains why **male teachers cited "family reasons" more than female teachers as a reason for school absence** (27 per cent men; 20 per cent women) **and lack of punctuality** (26 per cent men; 22 per cent women).

> "When it is raining and you are speaking to the pupils, it becomes very difficult for them to hear. I have to shout and by the time the class is finished, my ribs hurt. So instead, I give them something to read silently, and we wait for the rain to stop."
>
> – Junior level teacher, rural public school, Western region

Evidence suggests that the **quality of school infrastructure and classroom working environment impacts teaching during difficult weather conditions**. Respondents pointed out that classroom infrastructure often did not provide protection against rain or extreme heat. This made it challenging to be present in the classroom or on task. They explained that the weather created excessive heat/cold, wetness, and noise due to the low quality of roofs on the school buildings together with darkness due to a lack of sources of lighting or the absence of windows. Consequently, teachers do not go to class and would wait elsewhere at school, stop teaching, or revise their lesson plans so they do not have to speak above the noise in the classroom.

Weather conditions was cited as a cause of limited time on task less frequently at the pre-primary level (18 per cent) than at the primary (24 per cent), junior (28 per cent), or senior high school (24 per cent) levels, as seen in Figure 6, indicating that **school and classroom infrastructure appears to be more adequate at the pre-primary level than at others** *(see Figure 9 and Table 14 in Annex 11)*.[35]

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34   A significantly higher share of teachers in public schools (across all levels) mentioned weather as a reason for school absenteeism (29 per cent public, 22 per cent private); lack of punctuality (39 per cent public, 31 per cent private); and classroom absenteeism (15 per cent public, 9 per cent private) than their peers in private schools. Although answers take the same direction for reduced time on task (26 per cent public, 21 per cent private), differences between private and public schools are not statistically significant.

35   Teachers at the primary (pre-primary/primary) were significantly more likely to agree that the school has a good work environment, and they have the materials needed for class than their peers in secondary schools (JHS/SHS).

Weather conditions affect public school teachers' classroom presence and instruction time more than that of private and faith-based school teachers'; most teachers in public schools indicated that they did not have a good working environment compared with private and faith-based school teachers[36] *(see Figure 9)*. Additionally, **most teachers believe that education officials are not prioritizing infrastructure**, especially at public schools (*see Table 11 and 12 in Annex 11*)[37] and in secondary schools *(see Table 14 in Annex 11)*. This suggests that **private schools might provide better options for continuing with teaching during challenging climatic conditions**.

The Ministry's plan to improve school infrastructure, especially in disadvantaged communities (MoE-G, 2019b), includes small-scale initiatives that focused primarily on the Ashanti region (Ampomah, 2021) and at the SHS level (Afful, 2021); however, these have not materialized. Relatedly, it is also unclear if its plans to rehabilitate more than 7,000 classrooms across all school levels (MoE-G, 2019b) will include weather protection.

Figure 9. Opinions of teachers on selected statements related to absenteeism – school resources[38]
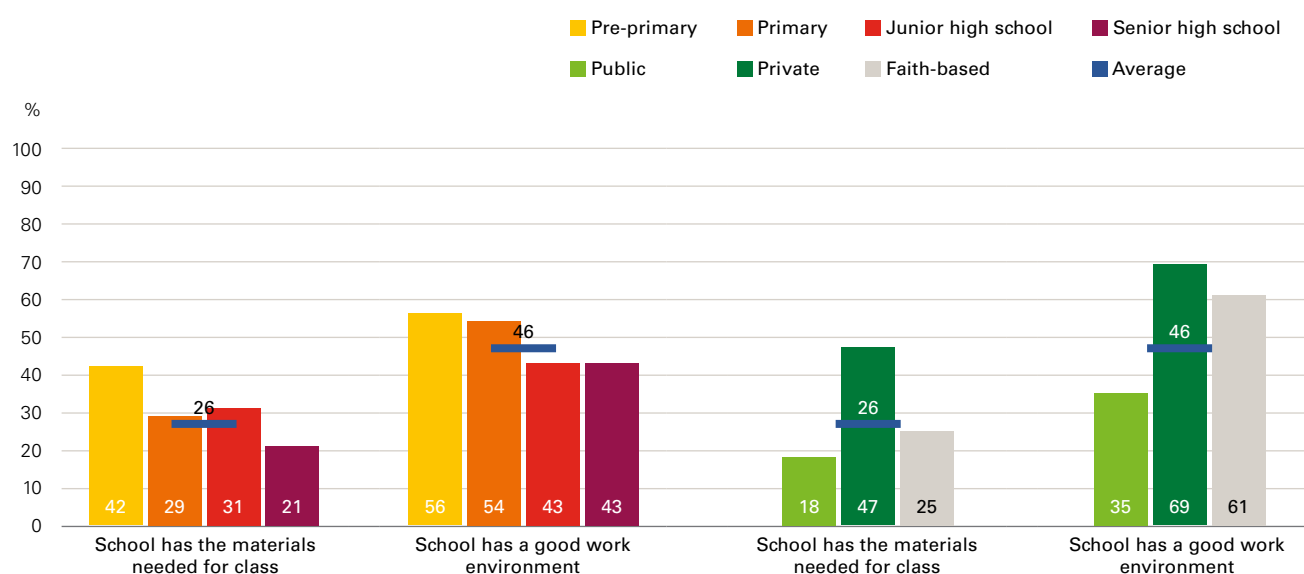
2.3.2 Community engagement

In many schools, members of the community, including Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs) work closely with school managers to ensure teachers are actively engaged in teaching. Sometimes parents provide financial or material support to the school to improve its infrastructure or to reward teachers for their work. Teachers spoke positively about the impact of such involvement on their dedication towards their job.

Parents and community representatives also play an important role in monitoring and following up on teacher attendance. Respondents explained that the community followed up on attendance by checking in with pupils to see if they were being provided regular lessons and inquiring about teachers who were absent from school or the classroom.

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36 The share of teachers who affirmed that weather affected classroom attendance and instruction time was 15 per cent and 26 per cent respectively in private schools, 9 per cent and 21 per cent respectively in public and 10 per cent and 20 per cent respectively in faith-based schools across all levels.

37 Teachers in secondary schools (JHS/SHS) were significantly less likely to affirm that education officials prioritized infrastructure than those in primary schools (pre-primary/primary).

38 Percentages indicate the share of teachers who agree or strongly agree with each statement by school level and by school type (across all levels).

Additionally, if parents found out that their child's teacher had been absent from school, the classroom, or had not been using instructional time effectively (after checking the child's work), they followed up with the head teacher. Some respondents revealed that teachers would avoid being absent when they were aware the community was keeping track. A head teacher from an urban public pre-primary school in the Ashanti region highlighted: "The parents will ask their children, and if a teacher has been absent, especially for a day or two, they follow up with us. So, the teachers are aware that the community is interested in the affairs of the school, and this helps in monitoring their attendance."

Some subnational and national level education officials explained that they **encourage SMCs to include teacher's attendance as part of their overall assessment of teachers' performance.** These measures however, were not discussed by most teachers or head teachers, suggesting that they might not have been enforced throughout schools. One national level official also pointed out that although SMCs could monitor schools' activities, they did not interfere directly with the teachers or the school. Qualitative interviews with head teachers, however, suggest that this is not always the case as **parents approach teachers directly and this sometimes results in intimidation or violence towards the teacher**. Similarly, some head teachers were concerned that the community was sometimes controlling, as noted by a head teacher at a primary rural public school in the Eastern region: "Sometimes the community has this perception that the school belongs to them and they can dictate what the school should or should not do, and this is not right."

> "When I come to school, I go the classrooms and ask the teachers and the pupils how they are doing. I think the teachers see this as a source of motivation as well, which is why I make sure that I visit all the classes while I am at school. "
>
> – Pre-primary level community representative, urban public school Brong Ahafo region

> "Some community members go to the school, especially in cases where a teacher might have disciplined a pupil, and they physically attack the teacher. This can really hinder the teacher's motivation and engagement with learners."
>
> – Junior school community representative, rural public-school Greater Accra region.

GES plans to strengthen PTAs and SMCs' supervisory functions (MoE-G, 2019b), which Time to Teach findings showed was helpful in curbing absenteeism. However, such empowerment also needs to consider the potential conflict with teaching responsibilities.

Self-reported teacher data showed that on average, only 53 per cent of teachers across all schools felt they were respected, with variations among faith-based (40 per cent), public (48 per cent), and private (70 per cent) school teachers . This might be related to levels of involvement as **parental engagement is much lower at public (30 per cent) and faith-based (31 per cent) schools than at private schools where it is almost double (61 per cent)**, as shown in Figure 10. The challenge appeared more common at the secondary school level where perceived respect for teachers was lower (48 per cent), compared with pre-primary/primary (71 per cent), along with parental engagement (31 per cent), which was also lower at the pre-primary/primary level, at 60 per cent. This might also explain teachers' difficulty in managing learners' misbehaviour more at the secondary levels than at the pre-primary/primary *(see Table 9 in Annex 8)*.

COVID-19 might have further weakened relations as parents expressed dissatisfaction with educational authorities' measures, including the re-opening of schools during the pandemic (Ansah, 2020) and their limited provision of TLMs for the re-opening (Ampomah, 2020).

Findings also showed that pupil attendance and inability to keep up with lessons were factors that directly hindered teachers' time on task *(see Table 9 in Annex 8)*. Parental encouragement of pupil attendance was lower at public (36 per cent) and faith-based schools (39 per cent) than at private schools (73 per cent), as shown in Figure 10. There were regional variations, with the Middle and North zones generally scoring better than the Coastal zone *(see Table 13 in Annex 11)*. Teachers found it difficult to stay on task when learners did not attend class with the necessary learning materials. Respondents pointed to poverty and low levels of education among parents as key reasons why parents may not be able to support learners.

The pandemic has drawn significant attention to the importance of regional variations in parental involvement; a recent study found six of 10 pupils in the country had used peer and parental support in learning during

school closures (Richter, 2021). While educated parents had been able to assist their children's home-schooling during school closures, the same could not be said for those who were not formally educated, especially in northern districts (Mohammed, 2020). Additionally, Ghana's COVID-19 Education Response Plan recognizes the importance of sensitizing parents to support their child's learning but seems to focus mainly on developing catch-up programmes (MoE-G, 2020). It is not clear however how these would be carried out and whether they would be extended to include broad support for pupil learning.

Figure 10. Opinions of teachers on selected statements related to absenteeism – community engagement[39]
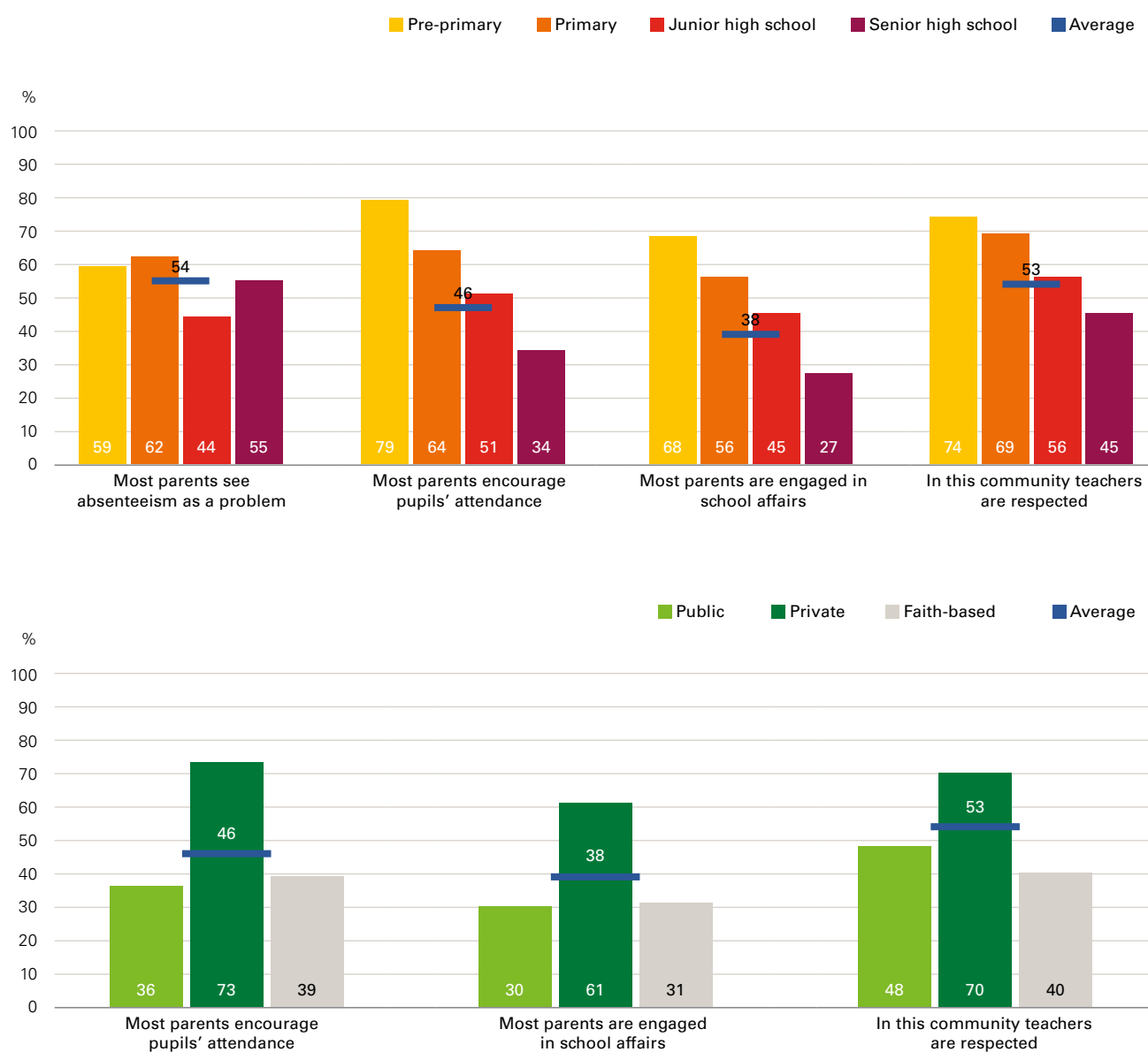
39 Percentages indicate the share of teachers who agree or strongly agree with each statement by school level and by school type (across all levels).

2.3.3 Community infrastructure

Teachers in some **communities lack access to necessary public infrastructure and facilities**, which lowers their school attendance, punctuality, and presence in the classroom. Common challenges include poor quality of roads, a shortage of hospitals and banks within communities where schools are located, insufficient public transport, poor telecommunications networks, and a lack of clean water. **The shortage of water might become a greater concern during the pandemic as schools are required to implement WASH interventions**, which might not be possible due to the lack of water in more than half of all public and private schools (GBC, 2021a).

Lack of quality infrastructure affected teachers who live farther away from school more than those who live nearby *(see section 2.3.1)*. On **Fridays and Mondays in particular, teachers living in different towns were absent or not punctual more often due to challenges in securing transportation**. This was also evident in

> "You know, we are not all from the same community. Some of us live far [away] and this can make us tired of having to travel every day to school."
>
> – Senior high school teacher, rural public school, Western region

> "For teachers who do not live in the same community as their school, they usually leave early on Friday in order to get the last car, leaving usually around 11 a.m. On Mondays they will also arrive before noon or evening, so they lose two days of teaching. "
>
> – Regional education official, Ashanti region

the survey responses as teachers who were frequently absent or not punctual were much more likely to mention distance as a factor (19 per cent for school absence and 29 per cent for lack of punctuality) compared with those who were frequently at school (5 per cent) and on time (12 per cent); they also tended to live further away from school *(see Table 10 in Annex 10)*.[40] The problem appeared more common in rural than urban schools.[41] Additionally, rural teachers also appeared to be more frequently absent from school (14 per cent) and not as punctual (16 per cent) compared with urban school teachers (9 per cent for school absence, 10 per cent for lack of punctuality), suggesting that these constraints might have a greater impact on them than those working in urban settings. Teachers in rural areas struggled with transport (20 per cent) more than urban teachers (12 per cent)[42] and, as highlighted in Section 2.1.2, were also less satisfied with their salary than urban teachers (13 per cent in rural compared with 18 per cent in urban). When salaries were delayed, teachers living farther away were more likely to be absent than those living closer to the school.

Sometimes **living farther away causes teachers to be tired upon reaching school, as the common mode of transport for teachers is walking**, especially in rural settings *(see Figure 11)*. A regional education official for Ashanti region explained: "Imagine a teacher walking 5 to 6 kilometres just to get to school. They have to leave their house at 6 a.m. and by the time they reach school, they are tired. Then they have to leave early to get back home." These findings support previous research that income, family environment, and distance to school determine teachers' mode of transportation (Amoh-Gyimah and Aidoo, 2013). As this study highlights, there do not seem to be any incentives to help teachers overcome their struggle to secure affordable and efficient transportation.

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40 Differences are statistically significant only for school absenteeism. Teachers who live further away from school are defined as those whose time to reach school is higher than the median in the sample.

41 In survey responses, 8 per cent of surveyed teachers in rural areas mentioned distance to school as a reason for school absence and 15 per cent as a reason for not being punctual, compared with 7 and 12 per cent of those in urban settings respectively. Differences between rural and urban settings are not statistically significant.

42 Differences are statistically significant at the 10 per cent level.

Figure 11. How teachers get to school during rainy and dry seasons, by locality and school level

Legend: On foot | Car | Motorcycle | Bicycle

	Average		Pre-primary		Primary		Junior high school		Senior high school	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
On foot	61	38	50	46	52	39	48	32	76	39
Car	15	52	22	54	30	47	22	50	6	53
Motorcycle	20	8	28	0	17	8	24	15	20	7
Bicycle	3	2	0	0	2	5	7	2	3	2
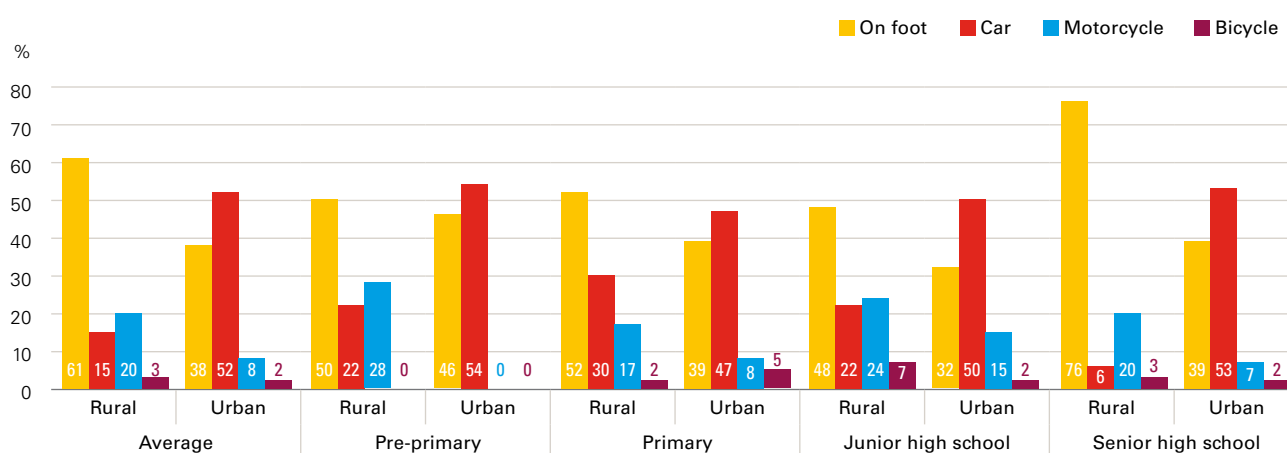
2.4 School level factors

2.4.1 Role of the head teacher

Head teachers actively involved in the work carried out by teachers at their schools were described as helping to limit the frequency of teacher absenteeism. Across all schools, 83 per cent of teachers responded that they were satisfied with their head teachers' feedback and 82 per cent stated that head teachers were always present at school *(see Figure 12)*. Head teachers' attendance, however, appeared higher in private (90 per cent) and faith-based schools (88 per cent) than in public (78 per cent) schools. Likewise, teachers at faith-based (94 per cent) and private schools (88 per cent) appeared more satisfied with how their head teachers managed the school and teachers, compared with public school teachers (76 per cent) *(see Table 12 in Annex 11)*.

> "Last year we had a new headmaster who put measures in place to improve teacher attendance. This included moving from class to class to check if the teacher is there, and if they are not, to follow up with the teacher immediately."
>
> – Senior high school head teacher, urban public school, Upper West region

Head teachers appear to be more involved at the primary levels (92 per cent) than at the secondary levels (78 per cent). When head teachers were not at school, teachers were also more likely to be absent. In the new Ghana Accountability for Learning Outcomes Project (GALOP),[43] the MoE plans to increase head teachers' sense of responsibility and urgency by demoting those who do not improve the performance of their schools within three years (Ferdinand, 2019a). This will put an end to the current practice, whereby teachers are automatically qualified to be head teachers if they serve within the sector for a long time. It is not clear however, if this measure will also consider how head teachers deal with teacher attendance, a reason why teachers are not able to fulfil their instructional obligations and hence, leading to the potentially low performance of a school.

Across all schools, 81 per cent of head teachers appear to track attendance. While there are no major variations between pre-primary (81 per cent) or primary (85 per cent) teachers, it seems that at the secondary level, attendance was recorded less frequently (78 per cent) than at the junior level (84 per cent) *(see Figure 12)*.

In several accounts, respondents pointed out that **head teachers also follow up and verify teacher presence in classrooms and observe their instructional time use**. They also discussed the importance of attendance at staff meetings, which teachers described as an effective reminder and a warning to deter teachers from absenteeism.

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43 For more information on the GALOP project visit: <https://moe.gov.gh/gallop/>

Figure 12. Opinions of teachers on selected statements related to absenteeism – head teacher's role
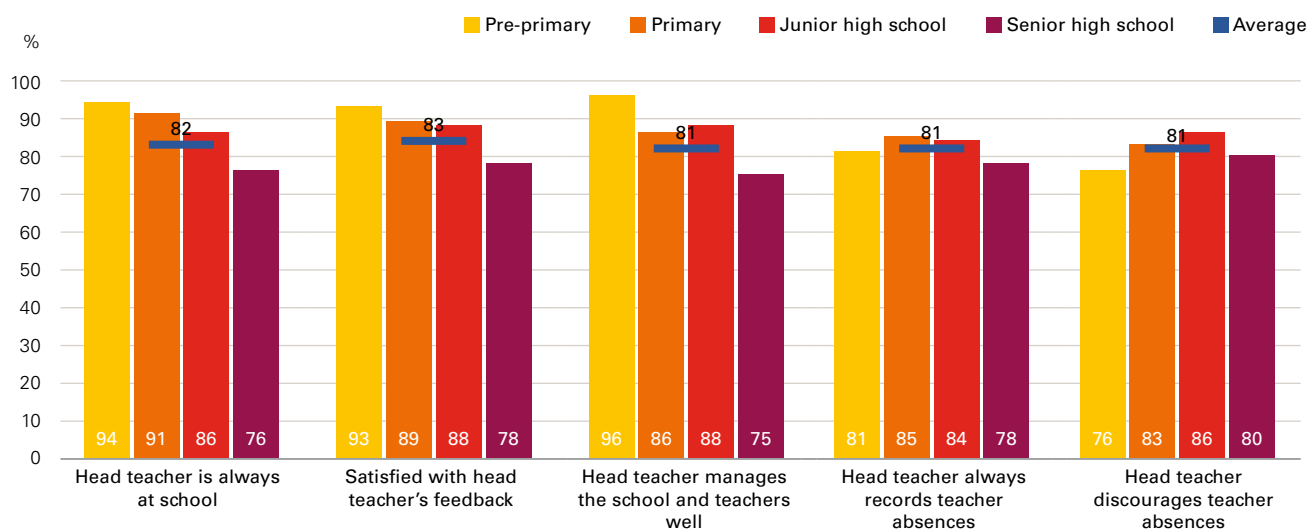
When teachers were not at school as required, head teachers queried them and if the behaviour continued, they sought the local school manager's help in sanctioning the teacher. At public schools, this often entailed the issuing of a query letter or threat of transfer and in private schools, a deduction of salary which, as noted earlier, teachers tried to avoid. **Some head teachers have implemented measures to address the problem at their school**, including giving a certain number of days off per term for rest, providing awards and recognition for best attendance, and taking 'secret' attendance through a prefect while the teacher was in the classroom teaching. A head teacher at a pre-primary rural public school in the Eastern region illustrated the measures taken at their school: "As the manager, I expect my teachers to be at the school before me and when they are not, I warn them immediately. When I do this a couple of times, then the teacher does not repeat their mistake and will come to school early."

> "When a teacher is absent, the head teacher will not mention it in our staff meetings, unless that teacher is absent regularly. As a teacher, you feel embarrassed and obligated to ensure that you are on time in the future."
>
> – Primary level teacher, rural public schoolteacher, Eastern region

It is worth noting that **some district and regional-level officials are not satisfied with head teachers' monitoring, especially classroom absence and time on task**, mainly due to lack of leadership skills. Survey responses found that teachers who were frequently absent from the classroom, or who reduced time on task, were more likely to state that head teachers recorded teacher absences (87 per cent for absence from the classroom, 93 per cent for reduced time on task) than those who did not (78 per cent for absence from the classroom, 78 per cent for reduced time on task). This suggests that **teachers focus mainly on school absence and punctuality in their understanding of absenteeism**. Similarly, the Teacher's Code of Conduct focuses primarily on monitoring school absence and punctuality and sanctioning only school absence (MoE-G, 2008). This means that schools might not have measures in place to hold teachers accountable for classroom absence or limited instructional time use.

Additionally, the Ministry plans to strengthen head teachers' supervision and management skills, although it has focused mainly on SHS (MoE-G, 2019). It is not clear if these efforts would be extended to other levels or if clearer mechanisms for tracking subtle forms of absenteeism will also be included. Without giving attention to these, head teachers might find it a challenge to prepare effective school performance improvement plans and thus, may not benefit from district education officials' support to improve school performance.

Some subnational respondents pointed out that they try to work closely with head teachers in enforcing attendance. This close relationship often strengthens accountability and the follow up on attendance. According to the TTT survey, teachers who affirmed that school inspectors visited their school regularly were more likely

to state head teachers recorded absenteeism (87 per cent) than in schools where visits were not frequent (70 per cent). Likewise, in schools where school inspectors discouraged absenteeism, teachers were more likely to note head teachers recorded absenteeism (84 per cent) than in schools where school inspectors were not perceived to discourage absenteeism (67 per cent).[44] This relationship was especially salient at the junior and senior high school levels.[45] There is concern that circuit supervisors do not fulfil important components of their monitoring responsibilities (i.e., checking teacher's lesson plans), thus making it difficult to encourage accountability among teachers (Akyeampong, 2017). In response, the Ministry will implement an accountability system that includes lesson observations by head teachers and CSs (MoE-G, 2019c), although it is not clear how frequently these would be conducted or how head teachers' observations might differ from those of CSs.

In the post-COVID-19 environment, school presence or punctuality might look different, as the country plans to incorporate technology and remote learning options to learners beyond COVID-19 closures (GPE, 2020; UNESCO and UNICEF, 2020). Thus, the emphasis on lesson observations by head teachers is a step in the right direction. However, it is not clear how this would evolve with the use of online platforms and whether head teachers (and CSs) would receive additional support in implementing these measures. Finally, during future pandemics or prolonged school closures, strong school leadership will be crucial in helping teachers to carry out their new responsibilities, as established in the COVID-19 education recovery plan (e.g., psychosocial support, assessing pupils learning gaps, respect of health measures in the classroom) (World Bank, 2020).

2.4.2 School resources and environment

Figure 6 demonstrates that **lack of TLMs is a key factor limiting teacher time on task, across all levels**, although this occurred more at the pre-primary and primary levels (43 per cent in both) than at the junior (22 per cent) or senior levels (25 per cent), *(see Table 9 in Annex 8)*. Teachers in rural, faith-based, and public schools appeared to face the challenge more than others *(see Figure 20 in Annex 9)*. Teachers explained that **when they did not have TLMs, they revised and sometimes shortened or delayed their lessons**. This was evident in the survey data, where only 26 per cent of teachers confirmed their school had necessary teaching materials *(see Figure 9)*. Rural schools appeared to be affected more (21 per cent) than urban schools (31 per cent), as did public schools (18 per cent) compared with private schools (47 per cent).

> "Sometimes I will prepare a lesson, but because there is no laboratory, I can only talk about [the] theory and not the practical. When it comes to the practical, I lose my motivation because I will stand up in front of the class talking about something but won't be able to show it to them."
>
> – Secondary level teacher, urban private school, Brong Ahafo region

There were also major differences among school levels as **TLM shortage was cited as a factor in classroom absence[46] and limited time on task more often by primary than secondary school teachers .** In primary schools, 16 and 43 per cent of teachers respectively cited the lack of TLMs as a reason for classroom absence and limited time on task. At the secondary level, only 9 and 24 per cent of surveyed teachers respectively affirmed the lack of TLMs kept them away from the classroom and caused them to reduce instruction time.

The implementation of the new standard-based curriculum in 2019/2020 has increased concern among teachers that the already existing shortage of TLMs will be exacerbated, which would make it difficult for them to achieve their instructional goals, especially after months of COVID-19 school closures (Ferdinand, 2021a). Teachers in the TTT survey found it difficult to carry out their teaching

> "Though we do not have TLMs for many subjects, it is mainly the ICT that affects me. If I am teaching about typing, and there is no equipment, how can I do that?"
>
> – Primary level teacher, rural public school, Central region

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44 Differences are statistically significant at the 10 per cent level.

45 Survey responses show that in schools where teachers affirmed school inspectors visited regularly, 91 per cent of teachers in JHS, 86 per cent in SHS, 84 per cent in pre-primary, and 86 per cent in primary agreed with the statement "head teachers always recorded absences", while in schools where teachers believed school inspector visits were not regular, only 64 per cent of teachers in JHS, 69 per cent in SHS, 70 per cent in pre-primary, and 83 per cent in primary agreed with the same statement.

46 Survey responses also show that teachers who were absent from the classroom on a regular basis (21 per cent) were also more likely to mention lack of teaching materials as a motivation for their absence than those who did not (9 per cent).

responsibilities effectively without these resources. In the current strategic plan, GES indicated that it will develop a comprehensive policy framework for the distribution of TLMs, although it is not clear when this would happen and whether the disbursement would be based on need. Also, even though the Ministry prioritized its support to SHS through the Secondary Education Improvement Project (SEIP) (MoE, 2017), which focuses on building additional schools, it was not clear if existing schools would also receive support.

The **school environment is sometimes not conducive to learning due to lack of adequate classroom spaces**, as discussed in section 2.3.1. Sometimes the scarcity of classrooms meant they were also used for non-teaching purposes, which shortened the start of lessons after the break period. In the School Guidelines for Reopening, GES would require schools to dedicate additional space and resources for protection against COVID-19, including using classrooms as isolation centres (GES, 2020). However, in schools where classrooms are limited or in dire condition, safety measures may be difficult to implement.

> "Sometimes you enter a classroom and the ceiling is leaking or animals are entering the classroom. How can you teach in such an environment? It's not comfortable to go to work. How can you enjoy teaching if what you need, including pencils and books, are not there?"
>
> – Pre-primary schoolteacher, rural private school, Ashanti region

For some levels and subjects, specific materials were required and when teachers did not have these, they **struggled with using instructional time effectively**. A pre-primary head teacher at an urban public school in Brong Ahafo region explained: "Children at this age learn more with pictures and textbooks, but if all they have is a slate and chalk, then it is very difficult for them to learn. I have raised this as an issue, but I have been told that this is how it is." Lack of TLMs affected teachers' presence in the classroom and time on task, and as some explained, **when they lacked these resources, they did not feel confident teaching and therefore avoided going to class or struggled to keep learners interested during scheduled lessons**. Prior to the pandemic, SEIP developed an online repository of resources for SHS core subjects, although these appeared to focus mainly on learning resources rather than teaching (MoE, 2017). The COVID-19 Education Response Plan aims at accelerating the process and extending it to all school levels (GPE, 2020).

Additionally, the latest government announcements indicate that GES plans to provide mandatory laptops to all public school teachers with essential teaching resources, including textbooks on core subjects, curriculum content and guidelines, and teacher resource packs (Ferdinand, 2021e). The Ministry will cover 70 per cent of the cost and teachers are expected to cover the remaining 30 per cent, which teacher unions support (Ferdinand, 2021f). However, this may still be a challenge for teachers already dissatisfied with their salaries *(see Table 14 in Annex 11)*. Likewise, as the country moves towards blended learning, there are concerns about teachers' preparedness to work with these technologies and to deliver lessons online due to digital literacy issues, access to technology, and a lack of appropriate skills necessary for remote teaching (UNESCO and UNICEF, 2020).

2.4.3 Workload and classroom management

Across school levels and types, teachers appeared to be **engaged in a variety of non-teaching activities that limit their attendance**. As noted in Section 2.2.1, teachers were frequently absent or not punctual due to their engagement in other 'official' activities (i.e., attending in-service training), particularly male teachers and those in public and faith-based schools. [47]Respondents explained that even though these were approved engagements, they nonetheless took away from their teaching time.

> "Sometimes I am prepared to go to class and teach but the headmaster will tell me to go to the office and work on something else. This also forces me to leave school sometimes, even though it is time for me to be teaching."
>
> – Junior level teacher, urban public school, Greater Accra region

Figure 5 reveals that **"administrative tasks" and "too many preparation tasks" were among the top reasons for classroom absence**. Equally, Figure 19 in Annex 9 points to "administrative reasons" affecting classroom absence were similar across rural and urban schools and across public and private schools, although male teachers were affected more than female teachers. Survey responses showed higher absenteeism rates at the secondary levels as more JHS (71 per cent) and SHS (73 per cent) teachers cited administrative reasons as a cause of classroom absence than pre-primary (58 per cent) or primary (59 per cent) teachers *(see Table 8*

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47 Teachers in public and faith-based schools were significantly more likely to mention "official school business" as a motivation for classroom absenteeism and lack of punctuality, while gender differences were statistically significant only for lack of punctuality.

and Figure 16 in Annex 8). Some non-teaching activities that teachers were involved in included: school clubs and social events; sports activities; providing administrative support to school managers; and meeting with visitors. A number of head teachers had tried to prevent this by implementing measures that prioritized scheduled lesson times although this was not common across most schools.

Other non-teaching activities included attending mandatory meetings at the school or elsewhere organized by school managers and by local government officials. Teachers explained that these meetings were not always planned, thus resulting in them not having enough time to engage pupils with class activities. Some worried that the **regular occurrences of such meetings increased their workload as they found it difficult to make up for missed lessons.**

> "Sometimes the teacher will come but he will be marking the books so he will not get time to teach us."
>
> – Junior level student, urban private school, Brong Ahafo region

Meetings and visits with community representatives affected teachers' presence in the classroom and their time on task as these visits were often unplanned and interruptive. The new administrative changes of the GES acknowledge the importance of avoiding conflict between meetings and teaching by requiring that staff meetings be held at the beginning of term, before schools reopen (Ferdinand, 2020c). Additionally, GES also advised schools to utilize revision weeks effectively so that instructional time was not lost. Although important suggestions, it is not clear if similar requirements are included for ongoing staff meetings.

In survey responses, teachers point to **pupil misbehaviour – more likely to occur in larger classrooms –as a significant cause of their reduced time on task**. Some teachers were forced to stop teaching in order to control and manage pupils. Another important factor that increased teachers' workload and limited their instructional time use and classroom absence was the amount of grading and assessment they were required to do. High pupil–teacher ratios affected both punctuality (12 per cent) and time on task (11 per cent) more than absence from school (9 per cent) or the classroom (9 per cent). This might be because teachers often use class time or stay up late (thus being absent or arriving late the next day) to finish marking assignments. A pre-primary teacher at an urban public school in Brong Ahafo region explained: "We have to enter all of the pupil's work into the computer and prepare examinations at the end of the term which is very tiring. Sometimes, getting up early in the morning the next day for school is difficult. Last Thursday and Friday I was late because of this reason."

For teachers at the secondary level, **pupil behaviour is also a challenge hindering their motivation to remain in the classroom and stay on task**. This caused them to sometimes miss scheduled lessons or avoid going to their classrooms. Table 9 and Figure 16 in Annex 8 show that **junior and senior high school teachers struggle with pupil behaviour (27 per cent in both) more than pre-primary (9 per cent) or primary (20 per cent) teachers, leading them to reduce instruction time.** Moreover, survey findings suggest that teachers at the secondary level considered pupils less motivated (57 per cent) than those at the primary level (79 per cent). The recent merger of SHS with basic education[48] might be a key reason why teachers are struggling with pupils' conduct at this level as this increased teacher–pupil ratios, adding to teachers' workload (discussed further below), thus leaving them with little time to manage their pupils. GES has tried to address this challenge by providing SHS with more than 800 facilities between 2017 and 2020 (Ferdinand, 2019b), although it was not clear if deprived regions were given priority as the need appeared to be poignant in those areas.

Finally, teachers pointed out that **they sometimes feel tired and stressed because they are not able to keep up with their teaching responsibilities**. Since survey findings also suggested that secondary level teachers worked in classrooms with higher pupil–teacher ratios *(see Table 3 in Annex 1 and Table 5 in Annex 4)*, it is possible these teachers experienced greater exhaustion due to workload. There were concerns that during the COVID-19 school closures, teachers were engaged in additional professional

> "Sometimes a teacher will be moving from class to class teaching the entire day. In the last class, they will find that they are simply too tired to carry on."
>
> – Senior secondary level teacher, rural public school, Northern region.

responsibilities that may have further increased their workload (Tawiah, 2020). Even when schools reopened, teachers' workload (and ultimately stress) would continue to increase (Henry, 2020) as teachers assumed their new responsibilities, as established in the government's education recovery plan alongside teaching.

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48   In 2019 the Government of Ghana redefined basic education (pre-primary to SHS) to include the SHS level *(see Box 1)*.

2.5   Teacher level factors

2.5.1   Personal and family obligations

Family, social and communal obligations are common reasons why teachers are absent from school or unpunctual *(see Figures 3 to 4, Table 6 to 7 in Annex 8)*. Notably, 40 per cent of teachers frequently absent selected "family reasons" as a key determinant for absenteeism compared with 25 per cent of teachers who attended school regularly. Similarly, 36 per cent of teachers who were often unpunctual indicated "family reasons" for their low punctuality compared with 24 per cent of those

> "Death rate is so high in this country that on a daily basis there is a funeral and a teacher who is a member of the community will need to attend. They cannot excuse themselves from such gatherings."
>
> – Senior secondary level head teacher, rural private school, Brong Ahafo region.

who did not. Participants pointed to funerals, looking after sick relatives, and other social obligations in the community as common reasons why they were not punctual or present in the school. Some explained that they were also frequently late because they needed to look after their family (including taking them to the doctor or dropping children off at school as noted earlier).

Although there were no significant differences between the different school levels, there were variations across school contexts as **school absence due to social/communal obligations occurred significantly more in rural settings (13 per cent) compared with urban (6 per cent), where public infrastructure was of lower quality. Male teachers (12 per cent) were more likely to be absent for this reason, compared with their female counterparts (4 per cent),** most likely because they helped family to travel to school and/or hospitals more commonly than female teachers. Also, teachers in the North were more likely to be absent (20 per cent) or late (22 per cent) due to social/communal obligations than those in the Middle zone (9 per cent for school absence, 7 per cent for lateness) or Coast zone (5 per cent for school absence, 4 per cent for lateness). This might be due to high patient–doctor ratios and poor health facility distribution in the northern regions, making it more challenging for teachers to secure quality medical care in the communities where they teach, thus needing to travel to towns to access health care (University of Ghana, 2018).

Finally, **teachers' attendance is hindered due to engagement in professional development or additional training programmes.** The teacher survey data *(see Table 10 in Annex 10)* revealed that a significantly higher share of teachers who were studying or training were absent from the classroom (19 per cent) compared with those who were not (7 per cent). Many respondents explained that such teachers were often present at school but instead of teaching, they were usually in the staff room or elsewhere, engaged in their own private studies. Moreover, Table 9 in Annex 8 suggests that while "lack of training" was a challenge across the different levels (21 per cent pre-primary, 24 per cent primary, 13 per cent JHS, and 12 per cent SHS), it was especially pervasive at the primary levels and an important factor in primary and pre-primary teachers' limited instructional time use.[49] There were significant variations between urban (11 per cent) and rural (20 per cent) schools, and it **appeared more frequent in public schools (18 per cent) than in faith-based (9 per cent) or private (12 per cent) schools.**

As part of its learning outcome accountability framework, the Ministry plans to introduce policy reforms that dedicate time in the instructional calendar for teachers' professional development (MoE-G, 2019c). While this may be helpful in enabling teachers to receive INSET related to their needs, as mandated by the PTPDM policy (MoE-G and GES, 2012), it is not clear if there are measures in place at the school or district level to ensure teachers' participation does not conflict with scheduled lessons. Similarly, the Teachers Code of Conduct (MoE-G, 2008) mandates only that teachers engaged in professional learning seek the head teacher's permission for school-related absences and not for classroom absence or limited time on task.

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49 Teachers at the primary levels (pre-primary/primary) were significantly more likely to mention lack of training as a reason for reduced time on task (23 per cent) than their peers in secondary schools (JHS/SHS) (12 per cent).

2.5.2 Personal health

Teachers across the different school types and levels pointed to **health as familiar and frequent reason why teachers are absent from school or the classroom and not punctual or on task.** Figures 3 to 6 show that "health" was a key factor mentioned by teachers across all forms of absenteeism. Head teachers described **health as a "valid" and "unavoidable" reason for being away from school** and thus did not object when a teacher requested it. The findings revealed that teachers who were frequently absent from school were more likely to mention health as a reason for their absence (74 per cent) than those who did not (62 per cent). Moreover, there are regional differences as teachers in the North more often selected health as a cause of their school/classroom absence and low punctuality/time on task than those in the Middle or Coast zones[50] *(see Figure 17 to 20 in Annex 9).*

> "Health is very important and sometimes, when a teacher calls me [to say] that they are not coming to school because they have to go to a hospital or a clinic, I do not force the teacher to come. Their health is very important."
>
> – Head teacher, junior level urban public school, Greater Accra region

Interviews suggest some indication that teachers struggled with substance abuse, mainly at the primary level, and that this was a factor in their school absence. **Mental health and stress were other forms of health-related challenges** preventing teachers from being present in the classroom or in school and hindering their instructional time use. There were concerns that teachers' attendance was likely to be hindered further by COVID-19 because of teachers' fear that the virus would continue to spread and the ongoing need for psychological support (Henry, 2020; United Nations, 2020). Although the government's COVID-19 response plan incorporates the provision of psychosocial support and protection to pupils, it is not clear whether it will also be offered to teachers.

Findings from this study showed **an assumption among some respondents that female teachers are absent much more frequently than male teachers for health reasons**. Several head teachers, local education officials, and teachers pointed to pregnancy and family responsibilities as common obstacles limiting female teachers' attendance. Some female teachers explained that they left school to attend pregnancy-related appointments or to look after a newborn. **Survey data showed slight variations as females appear more likely to be absent from school (67 per cent) or late (58 per cent) than their males counterparts (64 per cent for school absence, 46 per cent for lateness) due to health issues.[51]** However, for classroom absence there were no variations (44 per cent for both male and female), and for limited instructional time use, health-related absenteeism was higher among male teachers (37 per cent) than female teachers (34 per cent).[52] These findings suggest female teachers were not absent more frequently with regard to classroom absence or limited time on task. However, **due to the focus mainly on school absence and punctuality by education and school managers, there may have been an assumption that female teachers were absent more** frequently than their male colleagues for health-related reasons.

> "A teacher sometimes will need to see a medical specialist, so they come to school and then ask for permission to go for a medical check-up."
>
> –Teacher, senior level rural private school, Brong Ahafo region

Usually, when a teacher was sick, they stayed at home to rest or visited a healthcare centre, resulting in school absence and/or late arrival and early departure from school. In most cases, teachers informed the head teacher that they would be absent on that day or in advance. Some head teachers requested proof of illness (e.g., visit to hospital) but this did not appear to be consistent across all schools. Similarly, when teachers knew that they would be absent the following day, they worked with head teachers to ensure learners had classwork they could do in their absence. This was not consistent across all schools, however, as in most cases, classrooms were simply merged or left on their own with a prefect in charge.

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50 Regional differences are only significant for school absenteeism.

51 Gender differences in reported rates of health issues are only significant for lack of punctuality.

52 Differences are not statistically significant.

Sometimes a teacher fell ill while at school and thus could not be present in the classroom or on task, even though they were physically present in the school. Findings from this study revealed that health was the main cause for limited time on task, especially at the JHS (43 per cent) and SHS (38 per cent) levels, compared with pre-primary (21 per cent) or primary (32 per cent).[53] As noted earlier, teachers who were absent from school often faced sanctions. The narratives suggest that to avoid these measures, some **teachers came to school while they were sick, specifically because they did not want to be penalized**. Moreover, though these teachers were at school, they were often resting either outside or inside the classroom, and thus not teaching. A head teacher at a senior level urban private school in Ashanti region pointed out: "Sometimes teachers are sick, but they do not want the administration to mark them down as absent, so they come to school, but it is difficult for them to teach." District officials also appeared to be aware that teachers were coming to school while sick, simply to avoid being marked as absent.

Finally, as noted in Section 2.2.1, **lower frequencies of monitoring classroom presence and instructional time use at the secondary level might explain why teachers who are not well enough to teach are still able to attend their classes**. This, coupled with head teachers at the SHS level not recording absenteeism as frequently as at other levels *(see Section 2.4.1)*, were factors that further enabled sick teachers to be in class but not teaching.

2.5.3   Teacher commitment

Throughout the findings, motivation to teach was described as essential to maintaining regular attendance and ensuring that teachers were progressing with their teaching aims in the classroom. Respondents described motivated teachers as willing to prioritize teaching, even when they faced challenges. On the other hand, **low levels of motivation were described as central**

> "Sometimes, when the community or the school environment is not conducive to learning, it can lower a teacher's motivation. If a teacher does not have collegial relations with other staff, especially if they are intimidated by their school managers, it can also affect their level of commitment."
>
> – National level representative

to why teachers were not present in the school or in the classroom, or why they might lack punctuality and limit their time on task. In the survey responses, only 59 per cent of teachers across the different school levels agreed that they were satisfied with their job. However, they rated their colleagues as less satisfied (32 per cent), as seen in Figure 13. This suggests that low motivation was a challenge encountered by teachers at their schools, especially at the secondary level.[54] Female teachers (64 per cent) appeared significantly more satisfied with their jobs than male teachers (56 per cent) *(see Table 11 in Annex 11)*, as were more public school teachers (61 per cent) than private (55 per cent) and faith-based (52 per cent) *(Table 12 in Annex 11)*.[55] This suggests that motivation might be a reason why **school absenteeism is generally much higher among private school teachers ,** at 28 per cent across all forms, than among public at 18 per cent and faith-based teachers, at 16 per cent *(see Table 10 in Annex 10)*.

There was concern that the COVID-19 pandemic would further reduce teachers' motivation and increase attrition rates in the country. A recent study (Sakyi, 2021) among private pre-primary school teachers suggests that **1 of 9 surveyed teachers were unlikely to return to teaching when schools reopen.** They attribute their decision to salary dissatisfaction, career changes due to the long break, and lack of motivation. Similarly, increased workload among teachers had been raised by health officials as a key factor hindering teachers' motivation towards their job, thus suggesting the need for an incentive package to help teachers manage additional responsibilities during COVID-19 (Tawiah, 2020).

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53   Differences between primary (pre-primary/primary) and secondary (JHS/SHS) are significantly different at the 10 per cent level.

54   Teachers at secondary schools (JHS/SHS) were significantly less likely to be satisfied with their job (57 per cent) and to believe their colleagues were satisfied (28 per cent) with theirs than those in primary schools (pre-primary/primary) (64 per cent for their own job satisfaction, 44 per cent for their peers).

55   Differences in terms of job satisfaction by school type (public/private/faith based) are not statistically significant.

Figure 13. Opinions of teachers on selected statements related to absenteeism - job satisfaction

■ Pre-primary ■ Primary ■ Junior high school ■ Senior high school ■ Average
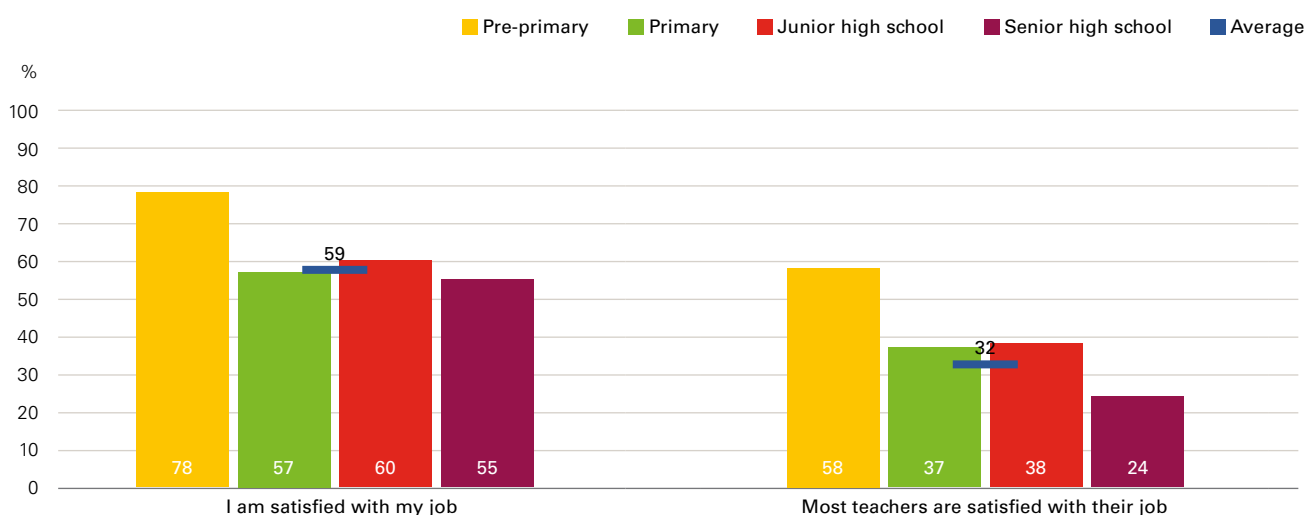
As this section has highlighted, there were a variety of causes for why teachers' motivation might be low, including inadequate salary, insufficient monitoring, and heavy workloads. The availability of resources in the community, school, and classrooms were additional barriers to teachers feeling encouraged and motivated. Some of these factors were described by respondents as reasons why **teachers engaged in additional income-generating activities, citing their low salary**. Consequently, teachers who had second jobs were regularly absent or late to school.

"Some teachers are involved in other jobs, including farming, because their salary or allowance is not enough to help them look after their families. Sometimes they will ask to be absent for a whole day so that they can engage in other income-generating activities or to leave school early so they can pick up food for the family from the farm."

– Head teacher, senior level, rural private school, Brong Ahafo region

Table 10 in Annex 10 shows that teachers with a salary below the median in the sample were twice as likely to be absent from school (15 per cent); unpunctual (18 per cent); absent from the classroom (11 per cent); and to reduce time on task (15 per cent) compared with their peers with higher salaries (8 per cent for school absence, 9 per cent for unpunctuality, 6 per cent for classroom absence, 6 per cent for reduced time on task). The Teachers' Code of Conduct (GES, 2008) prohibits teachers from being engaged in other income-generating activities while on school premises, but this does not specify any conditions for working outside of the school premises.

Several respondents – especially **pupils – explained that at times, their teachers were in the school or classroom but were not teaching because they were engaged in personal activities such as using their phone, surfing the internet,** or engaged in conversations unrelated to learning with pupils or other teachers. Some respondents explained that teachers remained in the staff room after the lunch period ended, carrying on conversations, until they were reminded, either by a headteacher or a pupil, to go to class. Additionally, pupils at a rural public primary school in the Eastern region stated that their teacher sometimes pulled pupils out of the class to help them with house chores. The Teachers' Code of Conduct states teachers are strictly prohibited from using business hours for personal or private engagements, including the use of mobile phones (GES, 2008: 7), or the improper use of children's labour (GES, 2008: 8). However, it appears these rules were not enforced across all schools. Also, teachers were required to sign a contract at the beginning stages of their

career that emphasized their commitment to attending school regularly and to be on time (MoE-G and GES, 2012: 13), but this did not include their presence in the classroom or their use of instructional time which may explain why they were engaged in the above activities.

Finally, teachers' confidence and motivation were lowered **when they lacked subject knowledge, compromising their instructional time use as they were not able to plan lessons in advance or effectively cover subject content.** A junior level head teacher at an urban public school in Central region explained: "If the teacher is not confident in the subject content they are required to teach, then they will be in the classroom but only pretending to teach."

In the PTPDM framework, the government has proposed the development of a teacher appraisal scheme that focuses on identifying areas where teachers need support (MoE-G and GES, 2012: 14). However, this study supported findings (Debrah, 2016) that these schemes were not implemented effectively, thus making it difficult to identify teachers requiring additional support. The government will provide subject-specific training as part of their continuous professional development, but this appears to be primarily focused on SHS teachers (MoE-G, 2019d: 37). With the implementation of the revised curriculum, along with preparing teachers to carry out their duties in the post-COVID-19 environment, monitoring of and addressing their subject knowledge might increase. Thus, there is a need to ensure teachers are not only receiving training in the use of new technologies for remote learning but also in their existing understandings of content and course material.

Section 3
Policy implications and recommendations

The Time to Teach study's multi-dimensional approach to teacher attendance highlights factors influencing attendance at various levels of the education system. This approach recognizes that challenges at specific levels often intersected, resulting in new constraints or exacerbating existing ones. Thus, addressing factors at a specific system level might not necessarily result in improved attendance. Instead, a system-wide approach is needed to overcome barriers across the different levels.

Findings from this study also reveal many commonalities across pre-tertiary education levels, but also some variations, especially at the secondary levels. MoE policy documents indicate that the GoG has continued its ongoing commitment to improve teachers' working conditions and attendance in order to achieve national learning outcomes in the classroom. Its swift response to protect learning during the COVID-19 pandemic further showcases this dedication. Yet there are ongoing challenges that limit teacher attendance and time on task, and the risk that COVID-19 might exacerbate these further.

This section builds on findings from this study, providing suggestions on how to reduce absenteeism, offered by teachers and other respondents, and examining existing policy documents to provide potential recommendations that might help GES achieve its educational aims, both during and beyond the pandemic.

1. Equip teachers with the pedagogical skills needed to achieve learning outcomes, as required by the new standards-based curriculum

- The new Teacher Licensing System may be useful in identifying gaps in in-service teachers' training needs and should be used by the National Teaching Council to develop tailored programmes. Studies show that when training programmes are tailored to teachers' needs and years of experience, there are significant gains in pupils' learning (Popova et al., 2019). The Time to Teach study highlights the importance of subject knowledge and lesson planning skills in teacher attendance and time on task. Consequently, teacher professional development courses should prioritize these elements, especially in areas with trained teacher shortages. Such capacity-building programmes should be organized regularly, ensuring teachers are up to date and up to the task to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the total delivery of instruction and, more importantly, optimal student learning.

- The GES should consider scaling up its Teaching Accountability to Reach all Students (STARS) initiative, which provides teachers with targeted instruction, and head teachers and CSs with management training. This initiative was found to be effective in a recent evaluation (Beg et al., 2020). Other studies (Lucas et al., 2014; Evans and Mendez Acosta, 2021) show that when interventions combine teacher training with enhanced managerial support, teachers' time on task and pupil learning improves.

- The GES' decision to utilize e-learning platforms for training purposes should ensure that all required TLMs and infrastructure are made available to teachers, especially those working in deprived regions like the North. Existing evidence suggests technology in education can be effective only when the infrastructure is in place to support it (Evans and Mendez Acosta, 2021; Evans, 2021). It is worth noting that even when the right infrastructure is in place, adequate training of teachers on how to use appropriate technologies to teach is equally critical. This is because the use of inappropriate technologies for teaching could affect learning outcomes and teacher effectiveness negatively. Although the provision of these platforms is mainly to prepare teachers for blended learning, it is important for CSs to encourage teachers in utilizing it as a resource during non-teaching hours. CSs also need to work closely with head teachers in scheduling training programmes to avoid conflicting with scheduled lessons. Such programmes need to be shared with district and regional education offices to make them more official and well monitored. This is especially important during school closures (e.g., pandemics, extreme weather, etc.) where heavier workloads might make it difficult for teachers to make up missed classes.

- E-learning platforms for training and teaching purposes should consider the inclusion of 'virtual coaching' as regional evidence shows this increases motivation and accessibility (Evans and Mendez Acosta, 2021; Conn, 2017; Cilliers et al., 2019). Also, it may be financially feasible since travel and other expenses could be managed.

- Since GES plans to provide training in positive discipline and classroom management, it should consider prioritizing primary and secondary school teachers , especially at the SHS level. This will equip teachers with better management skills to address conduct issues effectively and focus on engaging pupils in learning tasks.

- Finally, although the Ministry focuses primarily on public schools, it is crucial they consider collaborating and strengthening relations with private schools through Ghana National Association of Private Schools. This will help address the significant training gap between public and private school teachers and ensure the intended subject outcomes are achieved. Such measures are needed for the Ministry to achieve its current strategic focus of improving learning outcomes in the country.

2. Ensure schools and classrooms are conducive to teaching and learning, especially in rural or remote areas which may face additional resource constraints

- There is a need to continue expediting the timely disbursement of the capitation grant to make the teaching environment more conducive to learning through purchasing necessary classroom and learning resources. However, this should be accompanied by management training for head teachers, as regional evidence shows that school grants are most effective when this is done (Blimbo et al., 2015). It is also important to provide subject-specific equipment in deprived regions, including the North zone. These regions should be given priority in the proposed textbook development and distribution framework.

- The Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation (PBME) goal of refurbishing classrooms across pre-primary, primary, and JHS should consider prioritizing schools where weather conditions and low quality of infrastructure are a regular challenge. These measures should include providing stronger and soundproof roofs, better windows or lighting, fans or heaters, and adequate WASH facilities. Additionally, PBME should consider upscaling its provision of science facilities so that SHS and primary schools could also benefit.

- Since pupil absenteeism lowers teachers' time on task and presence in the classroom, the Ministry should consider scaling up its allocation of buses currently supplied to SHS. In the short-term, these should prioritize rural SHS and in the medium-term, they should be provided to other schools, with priority to those in deprived areas. It might be necessary to also include teachers working in areas where transportation and road quality are poor, as this will help to ensure teachers are in school and on time, especially during extreme weather conditions.

- The MoE should consider scaling up TCAI as this was found to be cost effective in boosting pupil learning levels and improving teachers' time on task and engagement with pupils (Duflo et al., 2021). In line with the MoE's efforts to focus on practical teaching in the new pre-service training curriculum, the Ministry could also deploy 'pupil teachers' as teacher aides.

- In line with the governments' aim to promote the use of e-learning platforms as part of its Blended Learning Programme, the MoE should provide teachers with access to detailed lesson guides or scripted lessons. The existing evidence in the region shows that providing content support to teachers reduces workloads and enhances learning outcomes (Piper et al., 2018).

3. Clarify and strengthen teacher management processes so that attendance monitoring efforts also include classroom presence and time on task

- To ensure teachers are able to carry out their teaching responsibilities, regional officials should encourage DEOs, CSs, and head teachers to minimize teacher engagement in non-teaching activities so they can manage their teaching workload effectively, without feeling overworked. The proposed duties and responsibilities contract new teachers will be expected to follow should mandate teachers to prioritize scheduled lessons over other activities. Again, in order to ensure head teachers can effectively

implement this measure, it is important that the leadership and accountability training GES plans to provide to head teachers should include training in how to avoid this conflict.

- With guidance from district and regional education officials, CSs and head teachers should include classroom presence and time on task as part of their attendance monitoring, since the current Code of Conduct focuses mainly on school absence and punctuality. This information should also be included in the mSRC, which currently only requires head teachers to input school absence. These measures can help to achieve the aims of Ghana Accountability for Learning Outcomes Project by providing GES with details related to teachers' use of class time and whether they are on track for achieving learning outcomes or not. The proposed accountability framework should also include increased monitoring of classroom presence and time on task.

- GES should consider scaling up its initiative to strengthen the supervisory role of PTAs at secondary schools. This can significantly improve teacher–pupil relations and pupil behaviour if the focus also includes awareness of parental support and encouragement of their child's learning, as well as their sense of accountability towards pupil progress. Existing evidence shows that when parents are involved and informed, pupil behaviour improves (Avvisati et al., 2014; Rogers and Feller, 2018) alongside their academic performance (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2020a; Bergman, 2021; Dizon-Ross, 2019). This can be included in the planned monitoring and accountability training of PTAs and SMCs. It might be useful for district officials to establish clear guidelines on the community's responsibilities, ensuring they support head teachers' leadership roles. Existing evidence suggests that parental involvement interventions can backfire if institutional rules about their role are unclear (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2020b).

- Finally, in order for head teachers and district officials to regularly and consistently follow up across all schools, GES should consider upscaling its provision of vehicles to school managers, especially in the North zone. It may also be useful to consider providing support for maintenance and fuel so that CSs and DEOs can effectively carry out their tasks.

4. Continue supporting teachers by providing reliable salaries and non-monetary incentives so that they are motivated to carry out their responsibilities without facing additional hardships

- Teachers need a sufficient salary so that they will not have to supplement their income with second jobs to meet basic standards of living. Access to their salary needs to be reliable and easily accessible to retain teachers and keep them present in the classroom, especially in rural areas. While local pay points may be far away and difficult to reach in some areas, introducing e-payment systems could reduce travel times for teachers and thus, issues with school absenteeism and punctuality.

- The Ministry should consider expanding incentive packages that provide teachers with additional income through tutoring. At the same time, with the help of head teachers and district officials, the Ministry should reinforce their code of conduct in schools by reminding teachers to not only be punctual and present at school but also be engaged in the learning process of pupils in the classroom. This will be easier to implement when classroom attendance and time on task are explicitly included in the current Teachers' Code of Conduct and in the monitoring efforts of head teachers and CSs.

- The Ghana National Association of Teachers should reconsider its financing options for affordable housing and consider lowering interest rates so teachers can secure housing closer to their schools. Teachers who live in towns different from the ones in which they teach should be considered on the scheduled timetable, if possible, so that the current trend of higher absentee rates on Fridays and Mondays can be minimized.

- Finally, local government officials and school managers should use school performance appraisal meetings to systematize a rewarding system for teachers who are regularly present and who achieve teaching goals. DEOs should work closely with CSs, PTAs, SMCs, and head teachers to ensure school performance appraisal meetings are held regularly, and that teachers' attendance is included in discussions. Additionally, since regional education officers will be providing training workshops to head teachers and community stakeholders on resource mobilization for school level health and sanitation facilities, it might be useful to encourage these actors to include incentives (rewards or recognition within the community) for teachers who carry out their responsibilities effectively.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Education statistics in Ghana

Table 2. Number of school teachers, by gender, pupil–teacher ratio and education level in 2019

Level	Male teachers	Female teachers	Total	Pupil–teacher ratio
Pre-primary	10,094	51,747	61,841	30 :1
Primary	96,150	72,396	168,546	27 :1
Junior high school	94,311	33,763	128,074	13 :1
Senior high school	46,025	13,815	59,840	20 :1
Total	246,580	171,721	418,301	22 :1

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

Table 3. Basic education statistics by education level and type of school in 2016[56]

Indicator	Type of school	Pre-primary	Primary	JHS
Number of pupils	Public	1,281,733	3,243,490	1,251,903
	Private	485,520	1,128,642	352,584
	Total	1,767,253	4,372,132	1,604,487
Number of schools	Public	14,394	14,920	10,382
	Private	8,781	8,487	5,439
	Total	23,175	23,407	15,821
Number of teachers	Public	38,953	109,906	88,491
	Private	16,340	50,327	30,900
	Total	55,293	160,233	119,391
Share of trained teachers	Public	64.9	75.0	86.0
	Private	6.9	9.9	19.6
	Total	47.9	56.0	71.0
Average pupils per school	Public	89.0	217.4	120.6
	Private	55.3	133.0	64.8
	Total	76.3	186.8	101.4
Pupil–teacher ratio	Public	32 :1	30 :1	15 :1
	Private	28 :1	23 :1	12 :1
	Total	31 :1	28 :1	14 :1

Source: Based on data from the Ghana Statistical Service (2018).

56   The share of trained teachers at SHS was 90 per cent in 2016 (MoE-G, 2019).

Table 4. Repeater and dropout rates by level of education from a cohort simulation model[57]

Level	Grade	Repetition rate (%)	Dropout rate (%)
Pre-primary	KG1	37	1
	KG2	10	1
Primary	P1	12	1
	P2	13	1
	P3	16	1
	P4	16	1
	P5	15	3
	P6	10	12
Junior high school	JHS1	19	3
	JHS2	15	7
	JHS3	5	23
Senior high school	SHS1	13	3
	SHS2	15	4
	SHS3	15	

Source: Data from the EMIS database/ Perry et al. (2018) in MoE-G (2019).

57 In its Education Sector Analysis (2019), the Ministry of Education of Ghana recognized the lack of reliability in reported figures of repeaters due to a number of reasons: schools may underreport repeaters to avoid scrutiny of the quality of teaching at school or by a definitional issue (e.g., children who repeat due to having left school during the year for seasonal work, migration, and lack of sense of achievement are often not considered by school management as repeaters). Thus, they provide statistics using a cohort simulation model.

Annex 2: Recent national education initiatives prior and during COVID-19

Prior to COVID-19 lockdowns, several initiatives had been established and expanded across basic education level schools: school feeding programmes; improvement of school infrastructure; provision of textbooks and uniforms; supplements for teachers; and monetary incentives to reward teacher performance (World Bank, 2010). The 2016 Education Sector Annual Review (ESAR) highlighted the need to attract more teachers in rural and remote areas through the establishment of incentive packages (i.e., provision of bicycles, radios, and accelerated promotions). Other incentive schemes were implemented to attract more teachers into the teaching of science and technical education (MoE-G, 2019a).

To address teacher attrition and shortage, the government deployed individuals from the National Youth Employment Program (NYEP) and the National Service Scheme into primary teaching positions (Balwanz and Darvas, 2013). However, this policy may affect the quality of education as studies show that pupils taught by trained teachers score significantly better that those taught by untrained professionals (MoE, 2012; Balwanz and Darvas, 2013). The MoE recently evaluated the Teacher Community Assistant Initiative (TCAI) which deploys individuals from NYEP as teaching assistants to support low-performing pupils in schools, thus helping reduce class size and teacher workload. This initiative also trains teachers to focus on engaging pupils in learning tasks (Duflo et al., 2021).

In order to enhance school leadership and management, the capitation grant amount was doubled in 2017. This enabled basic education schools that were otherwise forced to look for alternative sources of funding to cover basic school operations. Likewise, in addition to standard capitation grants, the GPEG was introduced to enable schools, especially smaller ones, to obtain a fixed amount of financial resources. However, delays in disbursement of the grant – often arriving more than a year late – prevent the timely implementation of activities identified in School performance improvement plans (MoE-G, 2019). Head teachers and district education officials have also been trained in how to conduct School Performance Appraisal Meetings (SPAM)[58] to strengthen community participation in pupil performance and quality of schooling (Akyeampong, 2004). However, fewer than 50 per cent of basic schools have operational SMCs (MoE-G, 2019b), thereby contributing to poor community oversight in SPAM meetings. The MoE is currently evaluating the Teaching Accountability to Reach all Students (STARS) initiative, which provides teachers with targeted instruction and head teachers and CSs with management training.

Following COVID-19 school closures in mid-March 2020, Ghana quickly developed a **Coordinated Education Response Plan** to mitigate the pandemic's impact on the education system and to prepare the school system once schools re-open. The MoE, through the GES (MoE-G, 2020), introduced a variety of modalities for distance learning including through radio, television (Ghana Learning TV), and online (iBox, iCampus and other training tools) programmes based on the new curriculum by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (MoE-G, 2020). The MoE in coordination with the Ghana Library Authority plans to maintain these online lessons under the **parallel online learning system** to ensure pupils and teachers are able to immediately access school content in the future (Graphic Online, 2020). As in many other African countries, these platforms are intended to ensure inclusive and equitable access to education. However, there is concern that access to these may be limited and unequal as just 71 per cent of households in the country have uninterrupted electricity, only 39 per cent have access to internet, 45 per cent have smartphones, and 28 per cent have a computer at home, most of these in urban settings (World Bank WDI; Zupork Dome and Armah-Attoh, 2020). To address this issue, remote learning content is also provided through paper-based materials and SMS messaging using USSD codes. Additionally, the education response plan outlines several post COVID-19 measures designed to improve access to basic education across all levels for out-of-school children. These include a back-to-school campaign, accelerated education, and remedial and catch-up programmes. The MoE and GES, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, also included in the education response plan psychological support, prevention of gender-based violence and increased health measures when schools reopen[59] (i.e., improved health conditions of schools, fumigation of schools, awareness campaigns on hygiene, and safety of schools) (GPE, 2020).

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58 SMCs, teachers, and other members of the community meet at school performance appraisal meetings to discuss pupils' performance on school education assessments to elaborate plans to improve quality of schooling.

59 In mid-June 2020, JHS and SHS reopened, partially to allow learners in their final year to prepare for their respective end of cycle examinations. As part of a national directive, JHS and SHS classes comprised a maximum of 30 and 25 students respectively. All other educational facilities, both private and public, for non-final year students remained closed (Kokutse, 2020; Hatch, 2020). All pre-tertiary schools were expected to reopen in January 2021 after a nine-month closure (XinhuaNet, 2021).

Annex 3: Time to Teach conceptual framework

As the determinants of teacher absenteeism are likely to be located at various levels of the education system, the Time to Teach study adopts a systemic analytical framework. In particular, the study follows the work of Guerrero et al. (2012) who suggested three sets of factors affecting teacher attendance: (i) teacher-level variables, (ii) school-level variables, and (iii) community-level variables. Expanding this framework, the TTT study also looks at national and subnational level factors affecting different forms of teacher absenteeism *(see Figure 14)*. This approach helps to better understand the bottlenecks of absenteeism and their relationship to effective learning.

Figure 14. Time to Teach explanatory framework

National level
- National teacher management policies
- Policy implementation and teacher monitoring capacity

Subnational level
- Policy implementation and teacher monitoring capacity

Community level
- Rurality/remoteness
- Socio-economic development
- Community infrastructure
- Climatic conditions
- Conflict/insecurity
- School-community partnership
- Parental engagement and monitoring capacity

School level
- School infrastructure
- Availability of teaching and learning materials
- School management
- Head teacher's leadership style and monitoring capacity
- Work environment and norms
- Pupil behaviour/absenteeism

Teacher level
- Age, gender, level of education and training, years of experience, employment status
- Intrinsic motivation, work ethic and professionalism, health, family/personal issues, social/community obligations, alternative employment

Teacher absenteeism

- School absence
- Late arrival /early departure
- Classroom absence
- Reduced time on task

Source: Adaptation of the work of Guerrero et al. (2012).

Annex 4: Data collection and analysis methods

The study has three main data sources: in-depth interviews (IDI), focus group discussion (FGD), and paper-based surveys administered to teachers. In the first case, a total of 604 interviews were conducted among four distinct groups of respondents: teachers; head teachers; education officials (national, subnational and district level); and community leaders *(see Table 1)*.

FGDs were conducted with 120 pupils in primary, junior high school, and senior high school who were present at the time of the survey. Interviews and FGDs were of an average duration of one hour, and in English. They were transcribed word-for-word and analysed in the students' original language using Thematic Content Analysis. Coding was done manually, and data were organized into themes based on the TTT Conceptual Framework *(see Annex 3)*.

A total of 609 paper-based surveys were collected (51 in pre-primary, 107 in primary, 115 in junior high school, and 336 in senior high school), cleaned and compiled, removing any information that would identify the participants. Table 5 presents basic statistics of survey data, by education level.

Table 5. Survey data summary statistics on selected teacher characteristics, by school level

	Category	Pre-primary	Primary	Junior high school	Senior high school
Urban/Rural (%)	Rural	39.2	58.9	41.7	39.6
	Urban	60.8	41.1	58.3	60.4
Type of school (%)	Public	52.9	56.1	60	70.5
	Private	47.1	43.9	38.3	14.6
	Faith-based	–	–	1.7	14.9
Gender (%)	Female	13.7	64.1	75.6	77.7
	Male	86.3	35.9	24.4	22.3
Age (years)		34.9	30.1	31.4	35.5
Pupil–teacher ratio		29 :1	34 :1	48 :1	56 :1
University degree (%)		70.6	70.5	71.3	99.1
Studying or in training (%)		10.6	14.1	10.9	7.7
Work experience (%)	< 1 year	14.0	24.0	19.8	15.1
	1–5 years	36.0	43.3	32.4	23.2
	> 6 years	50.0	32.7	47.8	61.8

Source: Ghana TTT Survey data.

The comparative analysis of survey data by different levels of aggregation (urban/rural, type of school) and teacher characteristics is limited to those cases where differences between subgroups are statistically significant, at a confidence level of at least 90 per cent. Stata was used for the descriptive and statistical analysis of survey data.

Annex 5: Study limitations

Like all studies relying on self-reported data, TTT is not free of methodological limitations.

Response bias may have been a challenge, as absenteeism is generally a taboo subject. It is unclear how truthfully teachers responded to questions around the nature and frequency of their absences, even though the principles of anonymity and confidentiality were highlighted during data collection. Enumerators were trained to communicate the objectives of the study clearly and to clarify any misconceptions regarding possible consequences and implications of voluntary participation. Moreover, other typical problems of self-reported data may have arisen, such as selective memory, social desirability bias, telescoping, and differentiated weighting of events with respect to their true significance.

Selection bias may also have been an issue, as the teacher survey was administered only to teachers who were present at school on the day of the school visit. This means that some frequently absent teachers may not have been surveyed. To pre-empt this problem, all school visits were announced, and teachers were informed about them well in advance.

Finally, the research team recognizes issues of **representativeness of the survey data** due to the purposive approach in selecting schools[60] and the size of the TTT survey sample (609 teachers). Although important, it is small and may affect the accuracy of any population estimates and limit the disaggregation of the analysis. Thus, the TTT findings only provide a snapshot of the selected schools rather than a representative view of the situation across all schools in the country.

For these reasons, the above-mentioned limitations were taken into consideration when interpreting the data and all findings reported have been thoroughly triangulated through qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with key education stakeholders.

Annex 6: Research ethics

The UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti applied for ethical clearance for the TTT study to the Health Media Lab and to the Institutional Review Board of the Office for Human Research Protections in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, both located in Washington, D.C. Ethical clearance was granted in July 2018.

Study implementation was preceded by extensive consultation with the Ministry of Education and key education stakeholders on research tool design, sampling, and instrument administration. Tools were also shared with the Ghana Education Service (GES) for review and feedback and were refined accordingly.

All contracted partners were extensively trained in research ethics and abided by the UNICEF Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation and Data Collection, and Analysis.

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60   The main units of analysis are a total of 80 schools, 20 for each education level, selected based on regional diversity, type of school (public, private, faith-based) and location (urban/rural). All teachers present in the school at the time of the survey were selected for a paper-based survey and three teachers were interviewed.

Annex 7: Self-reported frequency of teacher absenteeism in pre-tertiary schools

Figure 15. Self-reported frequency of teacher absenteeism, by school level

Reduced time on-task

Secondary (JHS/SHS)	11%
Primary (Pre-primary/Primary)	9%

Difference= -2%
p-value= 0.52

Absence from the classroom

Secondary (JHS/SHS)	10%
Primary (Pre-primary/Primary)	6%

Difference= -5%*
p-value= 0.08

Lack of punctuality

Secondary (JHS/SHS)	13%
Primary (Pre-primary/Primary)	13%

Difference= 0%
p-value= 0.94

Absence from school

Secondary (JHS/SHS)	11%
Primary (Pre-primary/Primary)	11%

Difference= 1%
p-value= 0.83
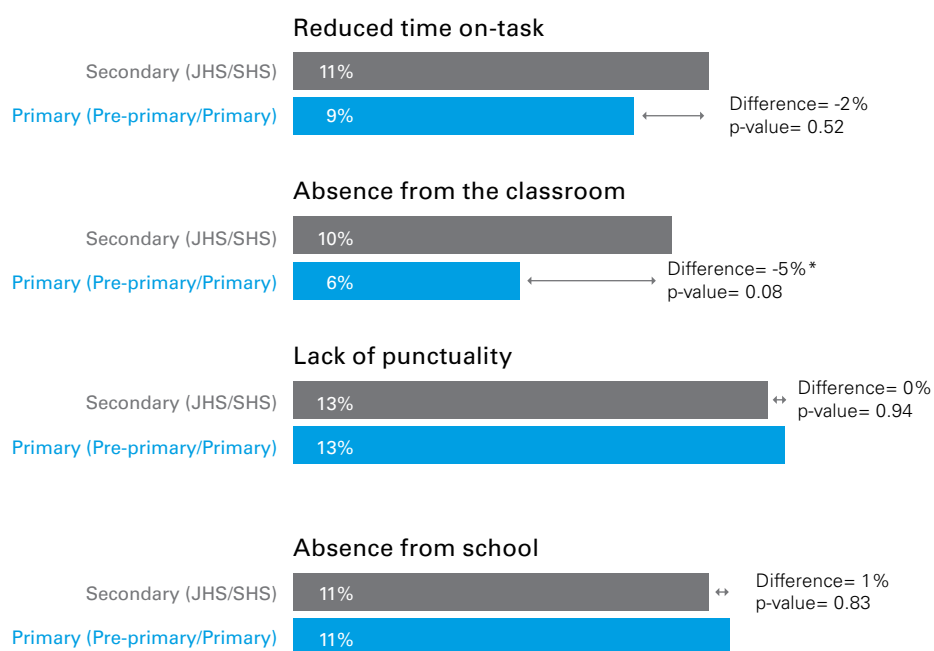
Note: Percentages indicate the share of teachers who attribute being absent frequently (i.e., at least once a week), by form of absenteeism and school type. The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each variable using robust standard errors. Stars indicate confidence levels at *10 per cent, **5 per cent, and *** 1 per cent.

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Annex 8: Motivations for teacher absenteeism, by school level

Table 6. Motivations for school absenteeism, by school level

Motivation	Average (%)	Pre-primary (%)	Primary (%)	Junior high school (%)	Senior high school (%)
Health	64.7	77.1	64.4	76.8	58.8
Weather	26.7	25.0	24.0	27.7	27.6
Official school business	26.1	18.8	26.9	30.4	25.4
Family reasons	24.7	18.8	18.3	28.6	26.3
Strikes	19.3	18.8	9.6	16.1	23.5
Transport	15.8	18.8	15.4	16.1	15.5
Social/communal obligations	9.2	4.2	7.7	8.0	10.8
Lack of pay	8.0	8.3	13.5	9.8	5.6
Distance to school	7.3	2.1	8.7	8.0	7.4
Receiving salary	4.9	4.2	7.7	3.6	4.6
Not enough pupils present	3.7	2.1	1.9	2.7	5.0
Lack of security	2.4	0.0	2.9	3.6	2.2
Others	1.7	0.0	1.9	1.8	1.9
Other income generating activities	1.2	0.0	1.0	1.8	1.2

Note: Percentages indicate the share of teachers by school level who attribute being absent from school because of each statement.

Table 7. Motivations for lack of punctuality, by school level

Motivation	Average (%)	Pre-primary (%)	Primary (%)	Junior high school (%)	Senior high school (%)
Health	49.9	60.4	53.3	64.2	42.4
Weather	37.0	27.1	33.3	39.6	38.9
Transport	29.0	27.1	30.5	26.4	29.7
Family reasons	24.3	14.6	26.7	28.3	23.7
Official school business	17.6	4.2	18.1	17.9	19.3
Distance to school	13.2	8.3	16.2	17.9	11.4
Strikes	8.3	6.3	3.8	4.7	11.4
Social/communal obligations	8.0	6.3	5.7	5.7	9.8
Receiving salary	4.0	2.1	6.7	1.9	4.1
Lack of pay	3.3	0.0	9.5	2.8	1.9
Others	2.8	2.1	2.9	4.7	2.2
Not enough pupils present	2.3	0.0	1.0	2.8	2.8
Lack of security	1.7	2.1	0.0	0.0	2.8
Other income generating activities	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.9

Note: Percentages indicate the share of teachers by school level who attribute arriving late/leaving early because of each statement.

Table 8. Motivations for classroom absenteeism, by school level

Motivation	Average	Pre-primary	Primary	Junior high school	Senior high school
			Proportion (%)		
Administrative reasons	68.9	58.3	59.0	70.6	73.2
Official school business	46.9	20.8	44.8	51.0	50.2
Health	43.9	33.3	40.0	40.2	47.9
Weather	12.9	10.4	20.0	14.7	10.4
Too many preparation tasks	12.4	20.8	9.5	19.6	9.8
Lack of teaching materials	11.0	20.8	14.3	5.9	10.1
Not enough pupils present	6.3	4.2	9.5	5.9	5.7
Strikes	4.2	4.2	2.9	2.9	5.0
Others	3.0	4.2	2.9	2.9	2.8
Lack of security	1.7	2.1	2.9	2.9	0.9

Note: Percentages indicate the share of teachers by school level who attribute being absent from the classroom because of each statement.

Table 9. Motivations for reduced time on task, by school level

Motivation	Average	Pre-primary	Primary	Junior high school	Senior high school
			Proportion (%)		
Health	36.1	20.5	32.0	43.3	37.5
Lack of teaching materials	29.2	43.2	43.3	21.6	25.1
Pupils misbehave	24.0	9.1	19.6	26.8	26.8
Weather	24.0	18.2	23.7	27.8	23.7
Lack of training required	15.1	20.5	23.7	13.4	12.0
Too many preparation tasks	14.0	13.6	15.5	19.6	11.7
Pupils have rrouble following the class	6.1	11.4	7.2	7.2	4.7
Others	5.4	6.8	4.1	6.2	5.4
Not enough pupils present	4.5	2.3	7.2	7.2	3.0
Distraction by family/personal problems	3.2	2.3	3.1	1.0	4.0

Note: Percentages indicate the share of teachers by school level who attribute reduced time on task because of each statement.

Figure 16. Top six factors affecting absence from school, by school level

■ Primary (Pre-primary/Primary)   ■ Secondary (JHS/SHS)   ▬ Average

School absenteeism

%

	Health	Weather	Official school business	Family reasons	Strikes	Transport
	66	26	26	23	27	16
Primary	68	24	24	18	12	16
Secondary	63	28	27	27	22	16
	Diff= 5% P-v= 0.26	Diff= -3% P-v= 0.43	Diff= -2% P-v= 0.57	Diff= -8%** P-v= 0.03	Diff= -9%*** P-v= 0.01	Diff= 1% P-v= 0.81

Lack of punctuality

%

	Health	Weather	Transport	Family reasons	Official school business	Distance to school
	52	35	29	24	16	13
Primary	56	31	29	23	14	14
Secondary	48	39	29	25	19	13
	Diff= 8% P-v= 0.1	Diff= -8%* P-v= 0.08	Diff= 1% P-v= 0.91	Diff= -2% P-v= 0.62	Diff= -5% P-v= 0.12	Diff= 1% P-v= 0.83

Absence from the classroom

%

	Administrative reasons	Official school business	Health	Weather	Lack of teaching materials	Too many preparation tasks
	66	44	42	14	13	13
Primary	59	37	38	17	16	13
Secondary	73	50	46	11	9	12
	Diff= -14%*** P-v= 0.01	Diff= -13%*** P-v= 0.00	Diff= -8%* P-v= 0.08	Diff= 6% P-v= 0.11	Diff= 7%** P-v= 0.03	Diff= 1% P-v= 0.78

Reduced time on-task

%

	Lack of teaching materials	Health	Weather	Pupils misbehave	Lack of training required	Too many preparation tasks
	34	34	23	22	18	14
Primary	43	28	22	16	23	15
Secondary	24	39	25	27	12	14
	Diff= 19%*** P-v= 0.00	Diff= -11%** P-v= 0.02	Diff= -3% P-v= 0.5	Diff= -10%*** P-v= 0.00	Diff= 10%*** P-v= 0.00	Diff= 1% P-v= 0.72

Note: Percentages indicate the proportion of teachers who attribute any form of absenteeism to each motivation, by school level. The reported p-values (P-v) are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each variable using robust standard errors. Stars indicate confidence levels at *10 per cent, **5 per cent, and *** 1 per cent.

Annex 9: Motivations for teacher absenteeism, by locality and school type

Figure 17. Motivations for school absenteeism, by locality and school type
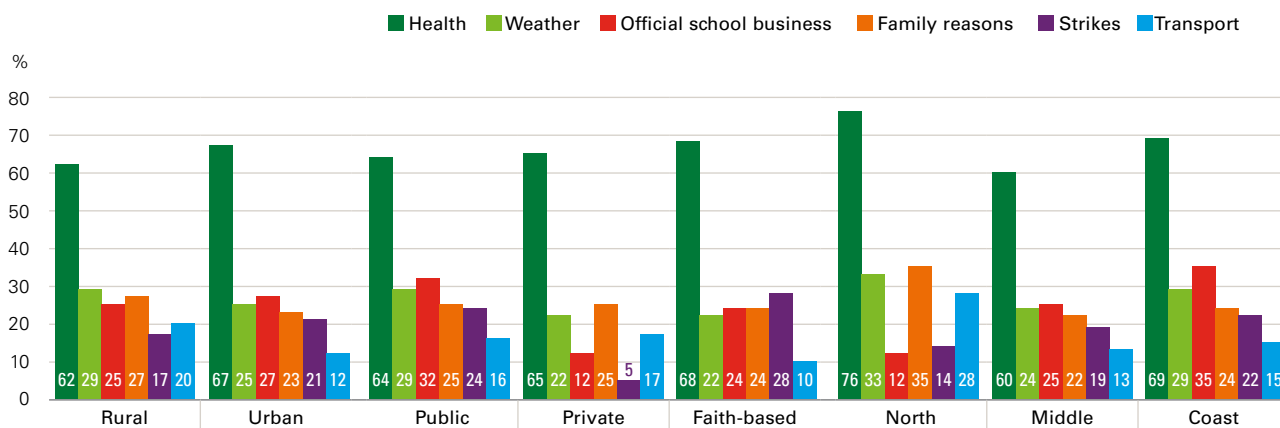
Figure 18. Motivations for lack of punctuality, by locality and school type
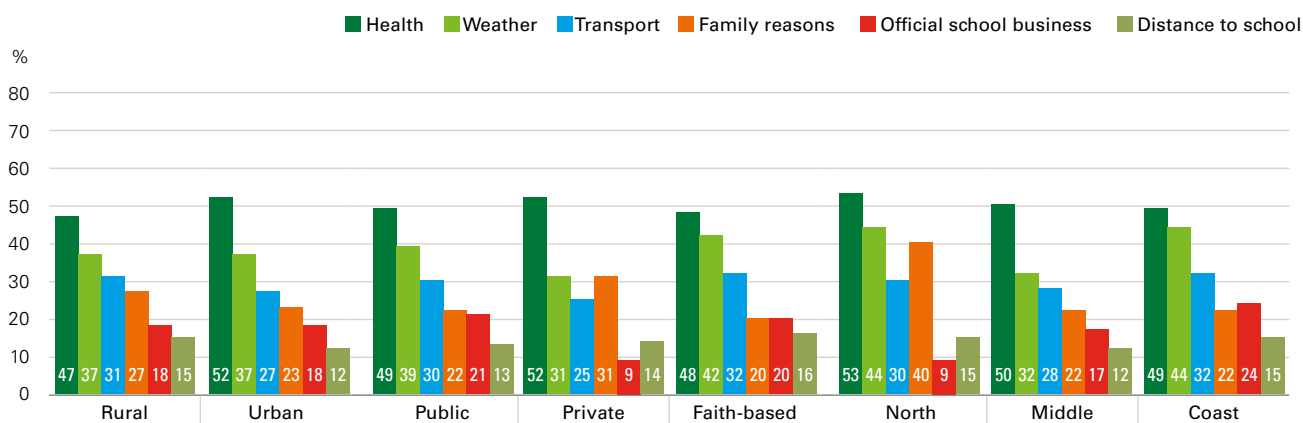
Figure 19. Motivations for classroom absenteeism, by locality and school type

■ Administrative reasons ■ Official school business ■ Health ■ Weather ■ Too many preparation tasks ■ Lack of teaching materials
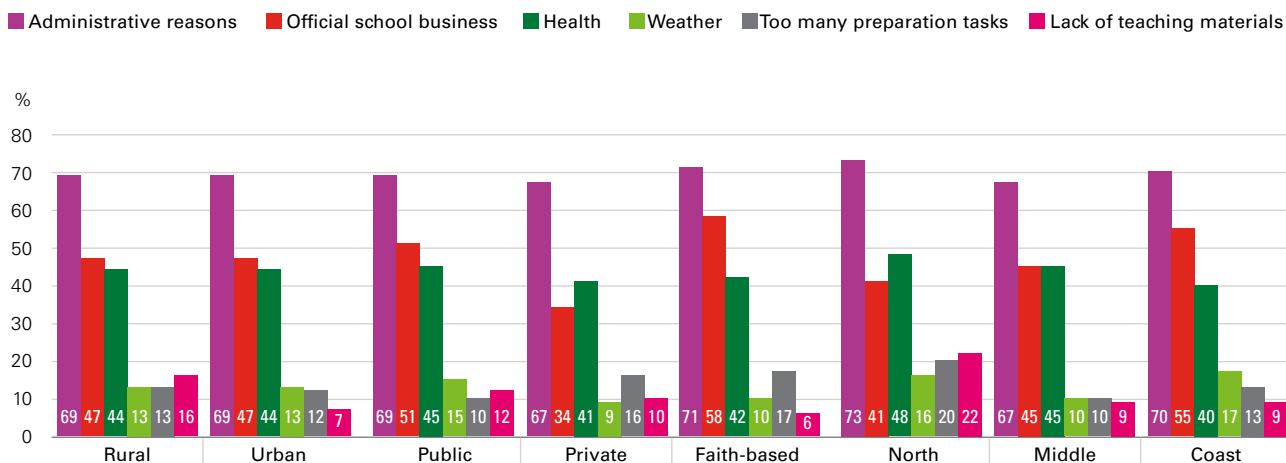
Figure 20: Motivations for reduced time on task, by locality and school type

■ Health ■ Lack of teaching materials ■ Pupils misbehave ■ Weather ■ Lack of training required ■ Too many preparation tasks
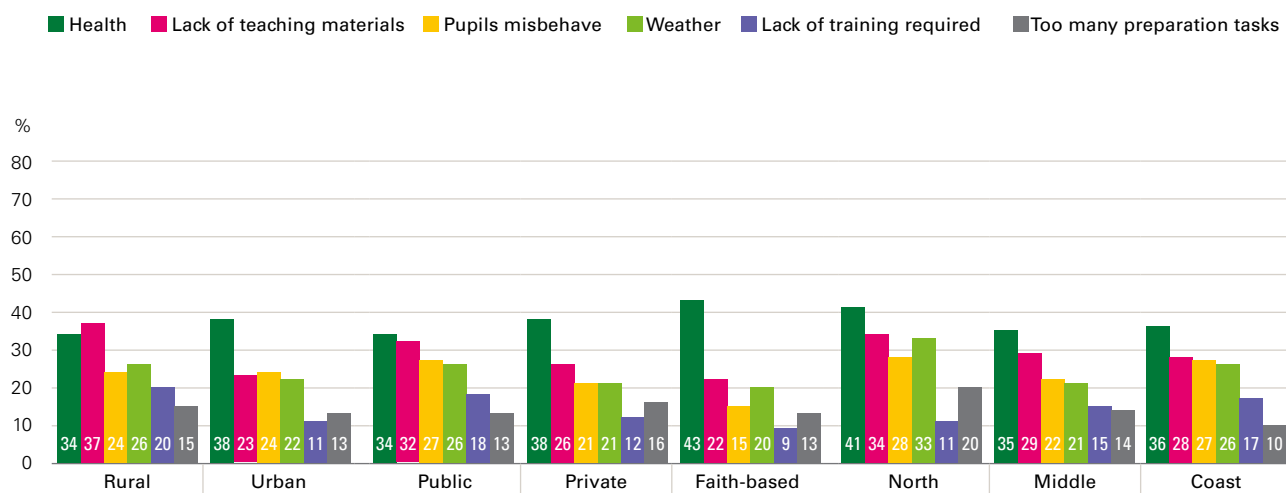
Annex 10: Absenteeism and selected teacher characteristics

Table 10. Rate of absenteeism and selected teacher characteristics

	Absence from school	Lack of punctuality	Absence from the classroom	Reduced time on task	Any form of absenteeism
Location					
Urban (%)	9	10	9	10	19
Rural (%)	14	16	9	10	23
Diff (%)	**−5**	**−7**	**0**	**1**	**−4**
p-value	**0.07**	**0.03**	**0.93**	**0.83**	**0.23**
Region					
North (%)	23	21	19	17	30
Middle (%)	8	10	7	10	18
Diff Middle–North (%)	**−15**	**−11**	**−11**	**−7**	**−12**
p-value	**0.00**	**0.03**	**0.03**	**0.19**	**0.03**
Coast (%)	0.10	0.14	0.09	0.07	0.22
Diff Coast–North (%)	**−0.13**	**−0.07**	**−0.10**	**−0.09**	**−0.08**
p-value	**0.02**	**0.25**	**0.10**	**0.09**	**0.17**
Type of school					
Public (%)	10	11	7	8	18
Private (%)	13	19	15	15	28
Diff Private–Public (%)	**4**	**9**	**8**	**7**	**10**
p-value	**0.28**	**0.02**	**0.03**	**0.04**	**0.02**
Faith-based (%)	12	7	3	11	16
Diff Faith-based–Public (%)	**2**	**−4**	**−5**	**3**	**−2**
p-value	**0.71**	**0.37**	**0.14**	**0.58**	**0.66**
Gender					
Female (%)	12	9	8	10	20
Male (%)	10	14	10	10	21
Diff (%)	**2**	**-5**	**−2**	**0**	**0**
p–value	**0.60**	**0.13**	**0.43**	**0.99**	**0.90**
Age above median (32)					
Yes (%)	11	10	9	9	17
No (%)	11	15	9	10	24
Diff (%)	**0**	**−5**	**0**	**−1**	**−7**
p-value	**0.87**	**0.09**	**0.88**	**0.77**	**0.07**
Marital status					
Single (%)	10	13	11	10	23
Married/Widowed (%)	11	12	8	10	20
Diff (%)	**−1**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**3**
p-value	**0.62**	**0.62**	**0.39**	**0.95**	**0.39**

	Absence from school	Lack of punctuality	Absence from the classroom	Reduced time on task	Any form of absenteeism
Has children					
Children (%)	12	11	8	10	19
No children (%)	9	14	11	11	23
Diff (%)	**3**	**–3**	**–3**	**–1**	**–4**
p-value	**0.36**	**0.30**	**0.32**	**0.62**	**0.24**
University degree					
Yes (%)	10	11	8	9	19
No (%)	15	24	18	20	32
Diff (%)	**–5**	**–14**	**–10**	**–11**	**–13**
p-value	**0.26**	**0.01**	**0.07**	**0.04**	**0.02**
Years experience school					
Above median (%)	9	11	11	11	20
Below median (%)	11	14	8	9	21
Diff (%)	**–2**	**–3**	**3**	**1**	**–2**
p-value	**0.42**	**0.38**	**0.29**	**0.69**	**0.59**
Teacher–student ratio					
Above median (%)	9	12	9	11	19
Below median (%)	13	13	9	9	23
Diff (%)	**–4**	**–1**	**–1**	**2**	**–4**
p-value	**18**	**72**	**86**	**47**	**29**
Studying/training					
Training (%)	7	9	19	9	20
No training (%)	11	12	7	10	20
Diff (%)	**–5**	**–3**	**12**	**–1**	**0**
p-value	**0.26**	**0.44**	**0.06**	**0.88**	**0.99**
Salary					
Above median (%)	8	9	6	6	12
Below median (%)	15	18	11	15	29
Diff (%)	**–7**	**–9**	**–5**	**–9**	**–17**
p-value	**0.04**	**0.01**	**0.10**	**0.01**	**0.00**
Salary covers monthly expenditure					
Yes (%)	12	12	6	7	23
No (%)	11	13	10	10	21
Diff (%)	**1**	**–1**	**–4**	**–3**	**3**
p-value	**0.80**	**0.84**	**0.33**	**0.47**	**0.67**
Time to school dry season					
Above median (%)	15	16	8	9	24
Below median (%)	9	11	10	11	20
Diff (%)	**6**	**5**	**–2**	**–2**	**5**
p-value	**0.07**	**0.12**	**0.54**	**0.48**	**0.20**
Time to school rainy season					
Above median (%)	14	15	8	9	23
Below median (%)	9	11	11	12	20
Diff (%)	**5**	**4**	**–3**	**–3**	**3**
p-value (%)	**0.13**	**0.18**	**0.33**	**0.28**	**0.35**

Note: Percentages indicate the proportion of teachers across all levels who report recurrent absences (i.e., once a week or more) based on each characteristic. The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each variable using robust standard errors.

Annex 11: Views and opinions related to teacher absenteeism on a selection of statements

Table 11. Views and opinions on a selection of statements, by location and gender

	Urban	Rural	Diff		Female	Male	Diff	
	Proportion (%)			p-value	**Proportion (%)**			p-value
School inspectors visit regularly	65	58	7	0.08	66	60	6	0.19
School inspectors motivate staff	43	42	1	0.87	45	42	3	0.44
School inspectors prioritize infrastructure	26	28	–2	0.56	32	24	8	0.05
School inspectors discourage absenteeism	78	78	0	1.00	75	79	–4	0.25
School inspectors frequently sanction absenteeism	55	56	–1	0.75	63	52	11	0.02
In this community teachers are respected	52	55	–3	0.49	50	55	–4	0.35
Most parents encourage pupils' attendance	50	40	10	0.01	47	45	2	0.69
Most parents are engaged in school affairs	40	36	3	0.42	42	37	6	0.20
Most parents see absenteeism as a problem	52	58	–6	0.18	53	55	–2	0.69
Most students are motivated to learn	63	62	1	0.76	69	60	9	0.03
School has the materials needed for class	31	21	10	0.01	29	25	3	0.43
School has a good work environment	52	38	14	0.00	46	45	1	0.85
Most teachers work well with one another	80	78	2	0.51	76	80	–4	0.34
Head teacher is always at school	85	79	6	0.06	83	82	1	0.78
Satisfied with head teacher's feedback	83	83	–1	0.85	83	83	0	0.96
Head teacher encourages teacher training	81	75	6	0.07	80	78	2	0.55
Head teacher supports teacher involvement	79	76	3	0.36	79	77	2	0.58
Head teacher discourages teacher absences	83	80	3	0.34	78	82	–4	0.27
Head teacher always records teacher absences	80	81	–1	0.76	80	81	–1	0.87
Head teacher manages the school and teachers well	86	75	11	0.00	84	80	5	0.17
I am satisfied with my job	59	58	2	0.66	64	56	8	0.08
I am satisfied with my salary	18	13	5	0.11	14	17	–2	0.45
I receive my salary on time	64	54	9	0.02	58	60	–3	0.54
It is easy to collect my salary	71	65	6	0.12	66	69	–3	0.46

	Urban	Rural	Diff		Female	Male	Diff	
	Proportion (%)			p-value	Proportion (%)			p-value
I have access to training	43	35	9	0.03	44	37	7	0.12
I have adequate skills and knowledge	96	95	1	0.50	94	97	–2	0.24
I am upset when I am absent	89	90	–1	0.68	82	92	–10	0.00
Most teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to teach well	86	82	4	0.20	87	84	3	0.37
Most teachers are satisfied with their job	32	32	–1	0.87	35	30	4	0.31
Most teachers are always present	83	83	0	0.91	88	80	7	0.02
Most teachers feel upset when absent	62	60	2	0.63	61	60	0	0.92
Most teachers come late and/or leave early	17	12	5	0.08	18	13	5	0.17
When in school, teachers always attend classes	87	85	2	0.56	85	86	–1	0.73

Note: Percentages indicate the share of surveyed teachers who agree with each statement. The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each statement using robust standard errors.

Table 12. Views and opinions on a selection of statements, by school type

	Public	Private	Diff Private-Public		Faith-based	Diff Faith-based-Public	
	Proportion (%)			p-value	Proportion (%)		p-value
School inspectors visit regularly	62	61	–1	0.86	63	1	0.86
School inspectors motivate staff	38	54	15	0.00	38	0	0.95
School inspectors prioritize infrastructure	23	34	11	0.02	29	6	0.35
School inspectors discourage absenteeism	79	74	–5	0.24	79	0	0.96
School inspectors frequently sanction absenteeism	59	48	–11	0.02	56	–3	0.70
In this community teachers are respected	48	70	22	0.00	40	–8	0.28
Most parents encourage pupils' attendance	36	73	38	0.00	39	4	0.61
Most parents are engaged in school affairs	30	61	32	0.00	31	1	0.87
Most parents see absenteeism as a problem	54	55	2	0.74	58	4	0.57
Most students are motivated to learn	60	72	12	0.01	52	–8	0.28
School has the materials needed for class	18	47	29	0.00	25	8	0.24
School has a good work environment	35	69	34	0.00	61	26	0.00
Most teachers work well with one another	76	89	13	0.00	73	–3	0.70

	Public	Private	Diff Private-Public	p-value	Faith-based	Diff Faith-based-Public	p-value
	Proportion (%)			p-value	Proportion (%)		p-value
Head teacher is always at school	78	90	**12**	**0.00**	88	**11**	**0.03**
Satisfied with head teacher's feedback	80	89	**10**	**0.00**	88	**8**	**0.10**
Head teacher encourages teacher training	73	87	**14**	**0.00**	94	**21**	**0.00**
Head teacher supports teacher involvement	73	84	**11**	**0.00**	94	**21**	**0.00**
Head teacher discourages teacher absences	80	80	**–1**	**0.85**	94	**14**	**0.00**
Head teacher always records teacher absences	80	82	**2**	**0.54**	79	**–1**	**0.84**
Head teacher manages the school and teachers well	76	88	**12**	**0.00**	94	**18**	**0.00**
I am satisfied with my job	61	55	**–5**	**0.26**	52	**–9**	**0.25**
I am satisfied with my salary	14	24	**9**	**0.02**	2	**–12**	**0.00**
I receive my salary on time	63	55	**–7**	**0.12**	52	**–11**	**0.15**
It is easy to collect my salary	72	63	**–8**	**0.07**	57	**–15**	**0.04**
I have access to training	37	51	**14**	**0.00**	24	**–13**	**0.04**
I have adequate skills and knowledge	96	95	**–1**	**0.49**	96	**0**	**0.94**
I am upset when I am absent	92	83	**–9**	**0.01**	86	**–6**	**0.27**
Most teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to teach well	85	83	**–2**	**0.65**	87	**2**	**0.75**
Most teachers are satisfied with their job	33	33	**0**	**0.92**	23	**–10**	**0.13**
Most teachers are always present	81	88	**7**	**0.03**	78	**–3**	**0.65**
Most teachers feel upset when absent	61	59	**–2**	**0.63**	62	**0**	**0.99**
Most teachers come late and/or leave early	12	19	**7**	**0.07**	18	**6**	**0.29**
When in school, teachers always attend classes	85	88	**3**	**0.28**	87	**2**	**0.76**

Note: Percentages indicate the share of surveyed teachers in different schools who agree with each statement. Faith-based schools are only at the secondary school level. The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each statement using robust standard errors.

Table 13. Views and opinions on a selection of statements, by zone of residence

	North	Middle	Diff Middle–North	p-value	Coast	Diff Coast-North	p-value
	Proportion (%)			p-value	Proportion (%)		p-value
School inspectors visit regularly	52	63	0.11	0.06	65	0.13	0.04
School inspectors motivate staff	45	47	0.01	0.85	33	-0.12	0.06
School inspectors prioritize infrastructure	23	30	0.08	0.15	21	-0.02	0.78
School inspectors discourage absenteeism	73	79	0.06	0.27	79	0.06	0.26
School inspectors frequently sanction absenteeism	60	57	-0.03	0.60	51	-0.09	0.17
In this community teachers are respected	52	59	0.07	0.23	43	-0.09	0.19
Most parents encourage pupils' attendance	57	47	-0.10	0.11	38	-0.19	0.00
Most parents are engaged in school affairs	45	42	-0.04	0.53	28	-0.18	0.01
Most parents see absenteeism as a problem	58	56	-0.02	0.79	49	-0.08	0.21
Most students are motivated to learn	62	65	0.03	0.61	57	-0.05	0.47
School has the materials needed for class	28	26	-0.02	0.77	25	-0.03	0.66
School has a good work environment	41	50	0.10	0.11	40	-0.01	0.93
Most teachers work well with one another	72	81	0.08	0.12	79	0.06	0.27
Head teacher is always at school	78	81	0.03	0.56	85	0.07	0.19
Satisfied with head teacher's feedback	82	84	0.02	0.71	82	0.00	0.96
Head teacher encourages teacher training	81	76	-0.04	0.36	82	0.01	0.82
Head teacher supports teacher involvement	78	76	-0.01	0.81	81	0.03	0.57
Head teacher discourages teacher absences	83	79	-0.04	0.43	84	0.02	0.75
Head teacher always records teacher absences	75	83	0.08	0.11	78	0.03	0.62
Head teacher manages the school and teachers well	77	81	0.04	0.41	83	0.05	0.31
I am satisfied with my job	56	63	0.07	0.27	51	-0.06	0.40
I am satisfied with my salary	18	17	-0.01	0.87	12	-0.06	0.23
I receive my salary on time	51	63	0.12	0.06	58	0.07	0.31
It is easy to collect my salary	58	72	0.14	0.02	66	0.08	0.24
I have access to training	38	39	0.01	0.86	40	0.02	0.81
I have adequate skills and knowledge	98	96	-0.02	0.35	95	-0.02	0.33

	North	Middle	Diff Middle–North		Coast	Diff Coast-North	
	Proportion (%)			p-value	Proportion (%)		p-value
I am upset when I am absent	91	88	**-0.02**	**0.52**	90	**-0.01**	**0.87**
Most teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to teach well	81	87	**0.06**	**0.23**	82	**0.01**	**0.81**
Most teachers are satisfied with their job	25	34	**0.09**	**0.09**	31	**0.06**	**0.32**
Most teachers are always present	79	85	**0.06**	**0.21**	80	**0.00**	**0.93**
Most teachers feel upset when absent	58	63	**0.05**	**0.39**	58	**0.00**	**0.95**
Most teachers come late and/or leave early	20	14	**-0.05**	**0.26**	12	**-0.08**	**0.10**
When in school, teachers always attend classes	87	86	**-0.01**	**0.79**	85	**-0.02**	**0.65**

Note: Percentages indicate the share of surveyed teachers by zone who agree with each statement. The 10 regions of the country have been classified into three zones - Northern, Middle, and Coast. The northern zone consists of the Northern region, Upper East region and Upper West region. The middle belt consists of Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Easter, and Western regions. The coastal zone consists of the Greater Accra, Volta, and Central regions. The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each statement using robust standard errors.

Table 14. Views and opinions on a selection of statements by school level

	Primary (Pre-primary/ Primary)	Secondary (JHS/SHS)	Diff	
	Proportion (%)			p-value
School inspectors visit regularly	74	58	**15**	**0.00**
School inspectors motivate staff	59	37	**22**	**0.00**
School inspectors prioritize infrastructure	39	22	**17**	**0.00**
School inspectors discourage absenteeism	79	77	**2**	**0.69**
School inspectors frequently sanction absenteeism	57	55	**2**	**0.60**
In this community teachers are respected	71	48	**23**	**0.00**
Most parents encourage pupils' attendance	69	38	**31**	**0.00**
Most parents are engaged in school affairs	60	31	**29**	**0.00**
Most parents see absenteeism as a problem	61	52	**9**	**0.06**
Most students are motivated to learn	79	57	**22**	**0.00**
School has the materials needed for class	34	24	**10**	**0.02**
School has a good work environment	55	43	**12**	**0.01**
Most teachers work well with one another	88	76	**12**	**0.00**
Head teacher is always at school	92	78	**14**	**0.00**
Satisfied with head teacher's feedback	90	80	**10**	**0.00**
Head teacher encourages teacher training	89	75	**15**	**0.00**
Head teacher supports teacher involvement	89	74	**15**	**0.00**
Head teacher discourages teacher absences	81	82	**-1**	**0.80**
Head teacher always records teacher absences	84	79	**4**	**0.21**
Head teacher manages the school and teachers well	89	78	**11**	**0.00**
I am satisfied with my job	64	57	**8**	**0.08**

	Primary (Pre-primary/ Primary)	Secondary (JHS/SHS)	Diff	P-value
	Proportion (%)			p-value
I am satisfied with my salary	23	13	10	0.01
I receive my salary on time	62	59	3	0.46
It is easy to collect my salary	66	69	-3	0.54
I have access to training	60	32	27	0.00
I have adequate skills and knowledge	93	97	-3	0.11
I am upset when I am absent	82	92	-10	0.01
Most teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to teach well	84	85	-1	0.80
Most teachers are satisfied with their job	44	28	17	0.00
Most teachers are always present	90	80	9	0.00
Most teachers feel upset when absent	59	62	-2	0.60
Most teachers come late and/or leave early	17	14	3	0.37
When in school, teachers always attend classes	86	86	1	0.87

Note: Percentages indicate the share of surveyed teachers who agree with each statement, by school level. The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each statement using robust standard errors.

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