

Historical Association Survey of History in Secondary Schools in England 2021

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Executive summary

Nature of the survey

This report details the results of an online survey of history teachers conducted by the Historical Association between May and July 2021.

Responses were received from 316 history teachers in England, working in 286 different contexts, including 214 state-funded, non-selective schools, 20 grammar schools, 37 independent schools and eight sixth-form colleges. Most respondents were experienced teachers with at least five years' experience. The vast majority (96%) described themselves as White, and we therefore acknowledge that representation of the views of those from a Black or Asian British background or from other minority groups is limited.

Teaching diverse histories within Key Stage 3

Some aspects of the history of **migration** to Britain are taught by 73% of the schools that responded to the survey, with 40% of schools treating the topic as the focus of a specific unit or enquiry sequence. Such teaching appears more common in non-selective state schools and where the majority of the school population is Black or from other minority ethnic backgrounds (BAME).³ The period most likely to feature in relation to teaching about migration to Britain is the twentieth century.

The majority of schools (82%) reported teaching (at least) a series of lessons about some aspect of the **British Empire**, although this appears to be more common within state-maintained schools than in the independent sector. In only seven schools among those represented by the respondents would it be possible for students to end their compulsory study of history without having learned anything about the history of the British Empire. (In all these schools, the majority of students are White). The periods most commonly taught about in relation to the British Empire are the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (especially the latter), but the number of schools dealing with the twentieth century – and thus with decolonisation – are smaller.

The vast majority of schools (86%) reported teaching a series of lessons (or a more substantial unit) about the **transatlantic slave trade**. Four dimensions were included by at least 90% of all state-maintained schools: 'the development of the "triangular trade"'; 'the experiences of enslaved peoples'; 'forms of resistance or rebellion by enslaved peoples'; and 'other forms of opposition, including the campaign for abolition'. Only around 60% of schools included considerations of earlier forms of enslavement and slave trading before

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³ The Historical Association acknowledges the limitations of the term 'Black and minority ethnic' as a way of describing those who do not identify as 'White', recognising both that it obscures important differences between people and that it can be confusing when applied in contexts in which non-White students may actually be in a majority. The term has been adopted with reservation, in order to try to present the findings concisely and highlight issues of concern to all those groups at risk of marginalisation.

looking specifically at the 'triangular trade'. Consideration of the 'legacies of the trade in enslaved peoples' was only included in the curriculum of 13% of respondents' schools.

Only 42% of schools reported allocating a series of lessons or a short unit to teaching about the **history of a non-European nation**. Schools with a majority BAME population or an even mix of students from different backgrounds are more likely to teach such a topic (54% report doing so) than predominantly White schools (38%).

Only 23% of schools reported devoting a series of lessons to teaching an aspect of **Black or Asian British history**. Most schools (57%) reported devoting just one or two lessons to such history. The ethnic mix of the student population seems to be significant here, with 36% of those with a majority BAME population devoting a series of lessons to Black and Asian history, compared with 23% of more evenly mixed schools and just 18% of schools with a majority White population. The length of schools' Key Stage 3 curriculum also seems to have some bearing here, with 28% of schools with a three-year curriculum choosing to devote a series of lessons to Black and Asian British history and only 13% of those with a shorter Key Stage 3 curriculum doing so.

Curriculum changes being made within Key Stage 3

The vast majority of schools (87%) report having made substantial changes to their Key Stage 3 curriculum in recent years to address issues of diversity (which here include other dimensions of diversity – such as the inclusion of women, disabled people, LGBTQ+ histories and working class history – as well as wider world history or the inclusion of Black and Asian British history). Only 4% of respondents' schools reported having made no changes at all, and these 11 schools are all those in which the majority of students are White.

The most important reasons cited for making changes to the curriculum were a sense of social justice, to better represent the nature of history and the stimulus of recent events. Among those who had made some change, the most important barriers they had encountered were lack of money for resources and lack of time (which were also cited as the most significant reasons for not making changes by those who had not done so). Other prominent obstacles cited were lack of subject knowledge, lack of training and lack of access to resources.

The main sources of support valued by those who had made changes were their own engagement with historical scholarship and the support of subject associations. Hearing directly from historians (for example, through a webinar) was also frequently cited as a very important source of support.

GCSE uptake and subject choices

The vast majority of respondents (86%) report that the take-up of history at GCSE by different students reflects the ethnic make-up of their school population.

When asked directly about how far they agreed with the claim that their particular GCSE specification 'allows sufficient scope for them to include the history of specific groups', respondents were most inclined to disagree in relation to the inclusion of the history of people with disabilities (88% disagreed), the inclusion of the history of LGBTQ+ (87% disagreed) and the inclusion of the history of Black and Asian British people (71% disagreed). The responses were more positive in relation to the inclusion of women (50% disagreeing) and lower/working class people (40% disagreeing), but it is clear that there are serious concerns about how adequately GCSE curricula reflect the diverse reality of past societies. There are noticeable differences between different exam boards in terms of how satisfied teachers are about the scope to include more diverse histories, although small numbers opting for particular boards make it difficult to judge the significance of these differences.

However, despite the apparent concern among teachers for a more diverse and representative history curriculum, there appeared to have been considerable reluctance to choose topics for study that offered a more diverse perspective, at least in looking beyond Europe. There is some prospect of change here, in that almost one-third of respondents (32%) indicated that they were contemplating or had set in motion some changes, in most (but certainly not all) cases in order to improve the diversity of the curriculum that they offered. The particular change most commonly mentioned in this respect was the decision to switch to a thematic study of migration to Britain (now offered by all three of the English exam boards).

A-level uptake and subject choices

At A-level, a much higher proportion of respondents report a disparity in terms of subject take-up and the ethnic mix of their school population: only 65% of schools report a close match between the ethnic profile of their cohort and of those taking history, although only one respondent attributed the lack of take-up among BAME students to the curriculum.

Respondents were generally more positive (than they had been in relation to GCSE) about the scope within their A-level specifications to include the history of specific groups, although the pattern of concern was similar, with most agreement in relation to there being sufficient scope to include the history of lower or working class groups (74% agreement) and the experiences of women (68%), less agreement in relation to the inclusion of the history of Black and Asian British people (43%) and least agreement in relation to the inclusion of LGBTQ+ people or people with disabilities (30% agreement in both cases).

Again, these concerns were not matched by a willingness to opt for less traditional or more diverse subject units (looking beyond Europe), and only 20% of respondents gave any indication that they were considering making changes to either their choice of A-level units or their choice of exam board, although some of the comments made here did point to changes being driven by a concern to diversify the curriculum.

In response to a final question about the possible impact of the periods of school closure on sixth-form leavers' preparedness for university-level study of history, teachers appeared to be particularly concerned about their students' lack of exam experience, but also acutely aware that the lack of opportunities for class discussion and debate would leave many students ill-equipped to engage in university seminars. In other respects, it was clear that experiences to which *some* had responded negatively (lack of access to university libraries, for example) had provided an invaluable stimulus to *others*, leading to improvements in independent research skills, for example.

1. The nature and focus of the survey

The findings reported here are based on the response of history teachers to a survey distributed by the Historical Association to its members and promoted more widely via social media. Its main focus was on the content of the history curriculum, examined with a particular focus on diversity. It was intended for secondary teachers, working in schools or colleges catering for any students in the 11–18 age range. The survey was launched in May 2021 (at the HA’s Annual Conference, which was held online) and ran until the end of July. Responses were sought from members in all four nations of the UK, but this report focuses only on England.

A separate report is being published for Scotland, based on the 76 responses received. The numbers who responded from Wales (nine) and Northern Ireland (four) were too low to be able to make any meaningful claims about practice in those contexts.

1.1 The rationale for a focus on the diversity of curriculum content

The strong focus on the teaching of diverse histories reflected one of the Historical Association’s current strategic priorities to ‘encourage and support diversity’. This involves commitments to ‘encouraging a greater diversity of people to study history at a higher level’ and to researching ‘the barriers to teaching a more diverse curriculum’ to direct the organisation in producing guidance and resources to overcome those barriers. We had learned from the 2019 survey that around one-third of schools were seeking to diversify or decolonise their history curriculum in response to concerns raised by the Royal Historical Society in their 2018 report ‘Race, Ethnicity and Equality’, which identified a significant ethnic imbalance in the take-up of history within higher education.⁴ This imbalance could be traced back to GCSE and A-level. Since then, many more schools have begun to question how inclusive their curriculum is – in relation both to race/ethnicity and to other protected characteristics. The survey therefore sought to understand more about the kinds of changes that schools have made, and to identify the barriers that they face and the kinds of support that are most helpful in overcoming those barriers. It looks particularly at diversity understood in terms of race and ethnicity, reflecting specific concerns raised by several petitions to Parliament in 2020, but several questions relate to other kinds of diversity too. We could not explore all these dimensions in depth within a single survey, but we will return in subsequent years to the other grounds on which the experience of particular people tends to be marginalised or dismissed.

1.2 The number of responses

Responses were received from 316 history teachers in England, working in 286 different contexts. Some responses (such as those asking teachers for their views or to give reasons for particular curricular decisions) were analysed at an individual level, but others (reporting on the actual curriculum taught, for example) were analysed in relation to the number of different schools (286 in total) represented among the respondents (i.e. multiple responses from teachers within the same school were eliminated so that each school was counted only once).

Responses to questions about teaching history at Key Stage 3 were received from 271 schools. Data relating to teaching at Key Stage 4 was provided by 261 schools, while 186 individual schools and sixth-form colleges reported on their A-level (or other post-16) history provision.

1.3 The range of schools represented

⁴ Royal Historical Society (2018) *Race, Ethnicity and Equality in UK History: a report and resources for change*. https://files.royalhistsoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/17205337/RHS_race_report_EMBARGO_0001_18Oct.pdf

Of the 283 schools for which sufficient data was provided for them to be categorised, 214 (75.6%) were state-funded, non-selective schools (i.e. comprehensives, academies and free schools), 20 (7.1%) were grammar schools, 37 (13.1%) were independent schools, eight were sixth-form colleges (2.8%) and two (0.7%) were schools catering exclusively for students with special educational needs.

Around four-fifths (80.9%) of the schools represented were mixed schools, while 8.1% were boys' schools (some with mixed sixth forms) and 10.9% taught girls only (again some with mixed sixth forms). Respondents were asked to give a broad overview of the nature of their school population in terms of its ethnic mix, choosing between just three categories. In almost three-quarters (73.1%) of schools, White students made up the majority of the school population. There was said to be an equal division between White students and BAME students in 15.9% of the schools, while in 11.0% of the schools represented, BAME students constituted the majority of the school population.

1.4 Ethnicity of respondents

Of the 315 individual respondents who answered a question about their own ethnicity, five (2.6%) preferred not to disclose their ethnicity. The vast majority of respondents, 304 (95.9%), described themselves as White, including 284 White British, five White Irish, and one White 'other'. Four respondents (1.6%) described themselves as Asian or Asian British. No respondents explicitly identified themselves as having any kind of Black heritage (whether defined as African, Caribbean, Black British or mixed/multiple ethnic groups within this category). Four respondents (1.6%) described their identity as that of 'other' Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups'.

This lack of responses from teachers who identify as 'Black' is a matter of particular concern, especially as it represents a fall from the last survey (2019), when two such teachers responded. It raises questions for the HA about how effectively it is supporting such teachers (through the survey, at least) in reporting their views and experiences. It is thus also worth noting that the proportion of respondents who identify as 'White' is also higher than it was among the respondents to the previous survey (93%).

1.5 The experience of the teachers

The opinions reported here tend to reflect those of experienced practitioners. The overwhelming majority of the 315 teachers who gave details about the length of their experience had been teaching for more than five years. This was the case for 251 (79.7%) respondents. A further 41 (13%) had been teaching for between one and five years, with the remainder being NQTs (15) or in training (eight). Of the 316 respondents who gave details about their position within the school, 182 (57.6%) were designated as the lead teacher or head of department for history, 23 (7.3%) as members of senior leadership teams (SLT) and 88 (27.8%) as main-scale teachers. Of the 15 respondents who described their role as 'other', most had some kind of responsibility within the faculty within which history was located or held pastoral leadership roles.

2. Teaching diverse histories within Key Stage 3

Given the focus of the survey on the teaching of diverse histories, respondents were asked about whether and in what ways they included teaching about various topics⁵ within their Key Stage 3 curriculum:

- Migration to Britain
- The British Empire
- The transatlantic slave trade
- The history of any non-European societies
- Black and Asian British history

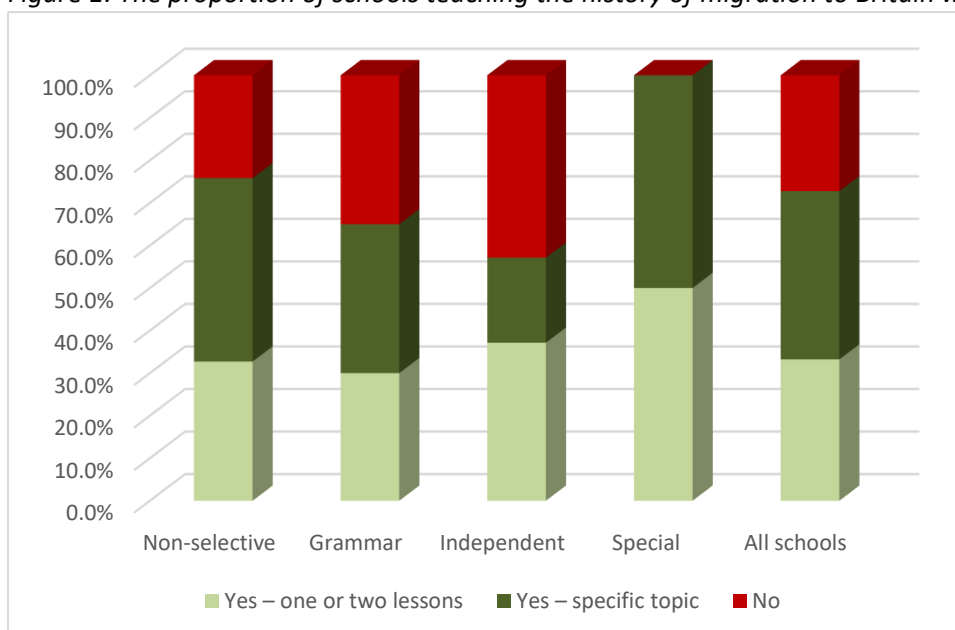
In each case we analysed the responses with reference to a number of variables:

- School type
- The length of time allocated by the school to Key Stage 3
- The ethnic balance of the student population
- Teacher ethnicity

2.1 Teaching the history of migration

As Figure 1 shows, in nearly three-quarters of the schools represented (72.8%), teachers reported teaching the history of migration in some way within their Key Stage 3 curriculum, most of them for more than just one or two lessons.

Figure 1: The proportion of schools teaching the history of migration to Britain within Key Stage 3



⁵ These topics were selected with reference to a range of factors: the National Curriculum for history in England (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-history-programmes-of-study>); various petitions that had been presented to Parliament in recent months calling for the teaching of more diverse histories (see <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/739/black-history-and-cultural-diversity-in-the-curriculum/>); teachers' own accounts (for example, in *Teaching History*) of curriculum changes that they had recently made; and recommendations from other organisations with which the HA is working to promote the teaching of more diverse histories (including the Royal Historical Society, the Institute for Historical Research, the Schools History Project and the Runnymede Trust).

While this means that 27.2% of respondents' schools do not teach about migration at all within Key Stage 3, two-fifths of the schools (39.6%) made the topic the focus of a specific unit or enquiry sequence.

As Figure 1 also illustrates, migration is most commonly taught in the non-selective state schools. While 76% of the non-selective state school respondents claimed to teach about migration in some way, this was only the case for 65% of the grammar schools and 58% of the independent schools. Even where the independent respondents reported including it within their Key Stage 3 curriculum, this inclusion was most likely to be as the focus of only one or two lessons.

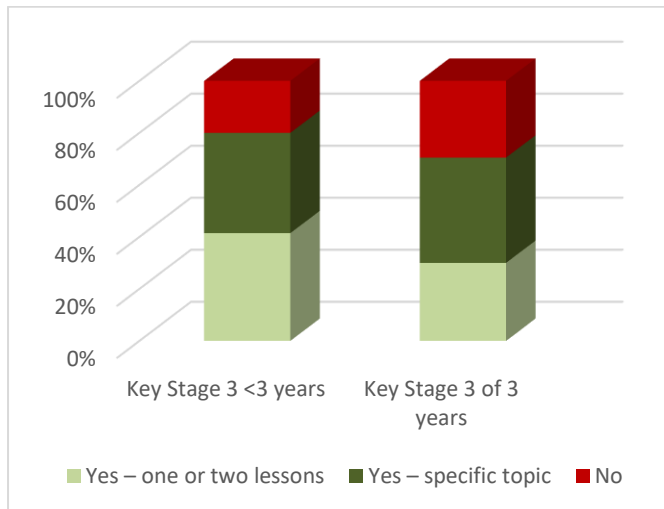
As Figure 2 illustrates, respondents from schools where the majority of the school population was Black or from other minority ethnic backgrounds were the most likely to report teaching the history of migration: 82% reported doing so compared with 73% of those with a White majority student population and 66% of those from schools with a more evenly mixed population. There did not appear to be any correlation between the inclusion of migration in the curriculum and the responding teacher's own ethnicity, but the small number of non-White teachers limits the validity of any such comparisons.

Figure 2: The teaching of migration within Key Stage 3 analysed in relation to the school population



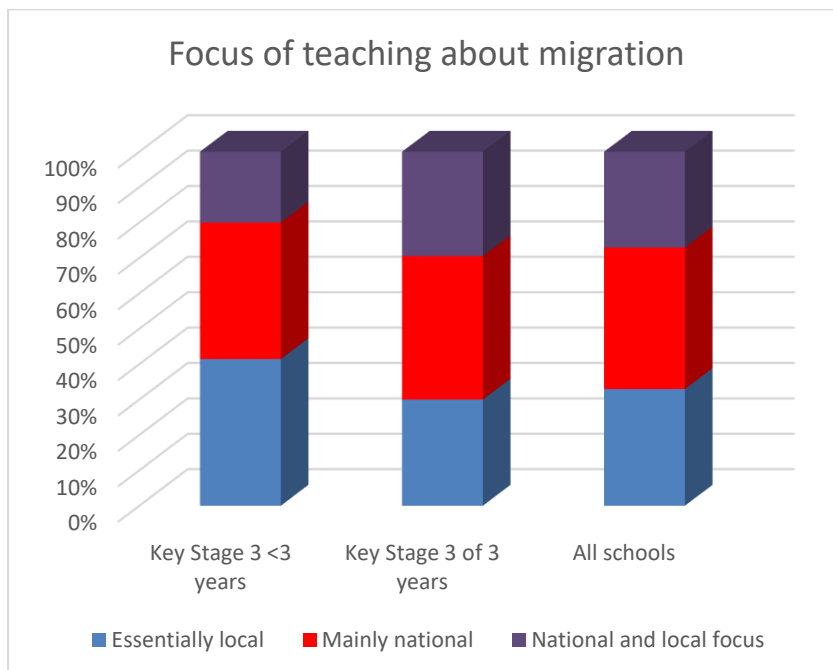
The data was also analysed in relation to the length of time that schools allocated to their Key Stage 3 curriculum. While we might have expected that schools that gave more time to their Key Stage 3 curriculum would have had greater scope to include a topic that might be judged as less relevant to the National Curriculum, this was not in fact the case. As Figure 3 shows, respondents from schools with a *shorter* Key Stage 3 curriculum (that had chosen to start GCSE at the start of Year 9 or part-way through the year, rather than waiting until the start of Year 10) were actually *more likely* to include some teaching about the history of migration within their Key Stage 3 schemes of work. Only 70% of schools with the full three-year curriculum reported that they taught some in some way about the history of migration, compared with 80% of schools with less curriculum time allocated to Key Stage 3. Where the topic is included within Key Stage 3, it is, however, the schools with more curriculum time (those with a three-year Key Stage 3) that are more likely to make it the focus of a unit or scheme of work.

Figure 3: The teaching of migration within Key Stage 3 in relation to the number of years allocated to Key Stage 3



There also appear to be some differences in terms of the specific focus of the migration teaching, which might reflect the more limited time available. As Figure 4 shows, in schools with less than three years allocated to Key Stage 3, respondents are more likely to report teaching migration from a *local* perspective, whereas those within schools with a full-length three-year Key Stage 3 curriculum are more likely to teach about migration at a *national* scale.

Figure 4: The focus of teaching about migration analysed in relation to the number of years allocated to Key Stage 3



Those who reported teaching about migration were asked to indicate the periods on which they focused and the regions from which the migrants that they studied came. Since this was a free-text response, answers varied considerably, from reference to single periods or topics – such as ‘Black Tudors’ or ‘Windrush’ – to lists variously structured by century period or theme – such as the eighteenth century, the medieval period or the British Empire. A thematic approach (which usually meant study of migration over at least 1,000

years) was reported by 56 respondents, some of whom also listed the specific periods or topics that were included within the unit. While this double-counting and the varied use of period/topic labels makes precise counting difficult, the period that clearly featured most often was the twentieth century, with topics from this period mentioned by at least 100 respondents, with specific reference to post-war migration, the Windrush generation and the end of the British Empire. The second most common period, mentioned by 45 respondents, was that between the end of Roman rule and the Norman conquest, with various references to the Saxons, Danes and Vikings. Somewhat surprisingly, these two periods were often mentioned as the only two periods when migration to Britain featured within the Key Stage 3 curriculum. The Tudor period was specifically identified by 37 respondents, although others referred more vaguely to the 'early modern period'. It is difficult to determine exactly which periods were included within study of the transatlantic slave trade, the Industrial Revolution and the British Empire, but the nineteenth century was specifically named more often than the seventeenth or eighteenth century. The Norman Conquest was specifically named by 20 respondents as an example of a topic dealing with migration; a similar number also referred to migration in the medieval period, sometimes with specific reference to the experiences of Jewish people.

Table 1: The specific periods named as a focus of teaching about migration to Britain

Periods included in a focus on migration	No. of schools teaching about migration in this period
Twentieth century <i>(including 'post-war migration', the Windrush generation and specifically the end of the British Empire)</i>	100
Between the fall of Rome and the Norman Conquest <i>(including reference to Saxons, Danes and Vikings)</i>	45
Tudor period/sixteenth century <i>(excluding the six references to the 'early modern' period)</i>	37
Norman Conquest	20
Medieval period <i>(sometimes with specific reference to Jewish migration)</i>	20
<i>Various references to the British Empire (23), the transatlantic slave trade (15) and the Industrial Revolution (8) that could not be tied to a specific period need to be considered alongside the numbers that named particular centuries: seventeenth century (12); eighteenth century (11) and nineteenth century (18).</i>	

As Table 2 shows, the high numbers of schools (118) reporting that the migrants that they studied came from countries or regions in Europe and of those reporting studying migrants from the West Indies (104) is entirely consistent with the predominant focus on migration after the fall of the Roman Empire up to and including the Norman Conquest, and on the post-war migration associated with the 'Windrush generation'. Africa was identified by 87 respondents as a region from which the migrants studied in their school came, with occasional reference to geographical regions within the continent or specific countries. This high figure suggests that the movement of enslaved peoples from Africa to the Caribbean was included by teachers in accounting for the ways in which they looked at the movement of peoples in ways that were associated with Britain (with relatively few of the references being to twentieth-century migrations directly from Africa to Britain). Where respondents expanded on references to Asia, it was generally clear that most of the 76 schools were referring to migration from the sub-continent: many named India, with smaller numbers specifically mentioning Pakistan or Bangladesh. Some 30 schools referred in very general terms to migrants from the British Empire (19), the colonies (one) or the Commonwealth (ten). Although it was clear from the 14 references to America or Canada that respondents were including the study of migration from Britain in their response to this question, little reference was made in the context of migration to Australia (mentioned seven times) and none in the context of New Zealand.

Migration from Ireland was mentioned by 15 schools, sometimes with specific reference to the Irish famine and occasionally with a particular focus on migrants in Whitechapel, studied alongside or in comparison with Jewish migrants.

The Middle East was identified by ten schools as a location from which the migrants that they studied came, but this was generally with reference to movement across the Roman Empire, with only one or two schools citing their study of much more recent refugee movements, such as those from Syria.

*Table 2: The parts of the world from which the migrants included in the curriculum came**

Broad region	Specific regions/countries named	No. of schools teaching about migrants from this region
Europe <i>excluding Ireland</i>	Northern Europe, Scandinavia, Norway, North Sea Empire, Holland/Low Countries, Germany, France, Normandy, EU, Eastern Europe, Poland	118
West Indies/Caribbean	Jamaica	104
Africa	North Africa, West Africa, East Africa, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, Nigeria	87
Asia – South Asia or India/Pakistan <i>excluding China</i>	Indian sub-continent, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam	76
Ireland		16
America/Canada	America, Canada	14
Middle East	Judea, Palestine, Syria, Yemen	10
Australasia	Australia	7
China		5
<i>British Empire/British colonies or Commonwealth</i>		30
<i>Jews (no specific region named)</i>		10
<i>Roma/travellers (no specific region named)</i>		3

** Note: In reporting on the regions from which the migrants that they studied came, it is clear that some respondents were reporting on migration from Britain as well as migration to Britain.*

2.2 Teaching the history of the British Empire

As Figure 5 shows, some aspect of the history of the British Empire is taught as the focus of a particular series of lessons at Key Stage 3 in more than four-fifths (82%) of the schools that responded to the survey.

A further 15% reported that the history of the British Empire featured as the focus of at least one or two lessons. State-maintained schools appear more likely to devote a sequence of lessons to the British Empire, with 85% of grammar school and 84% of non-selective school respondents reporting that they did so, compared with only 69% of independent schools.

Figure 5: The proportion of schools teaching the history of the British Empire within Key Stage 3

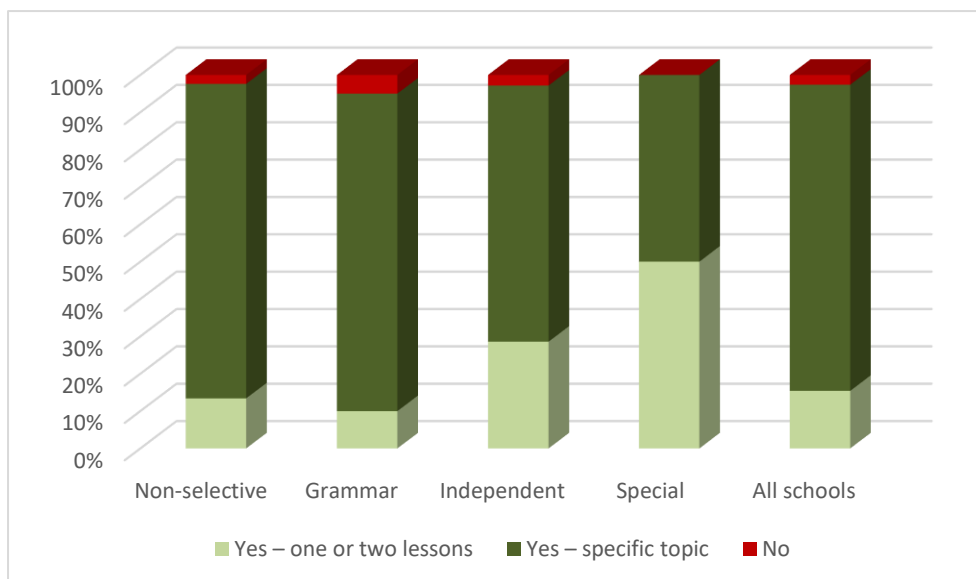
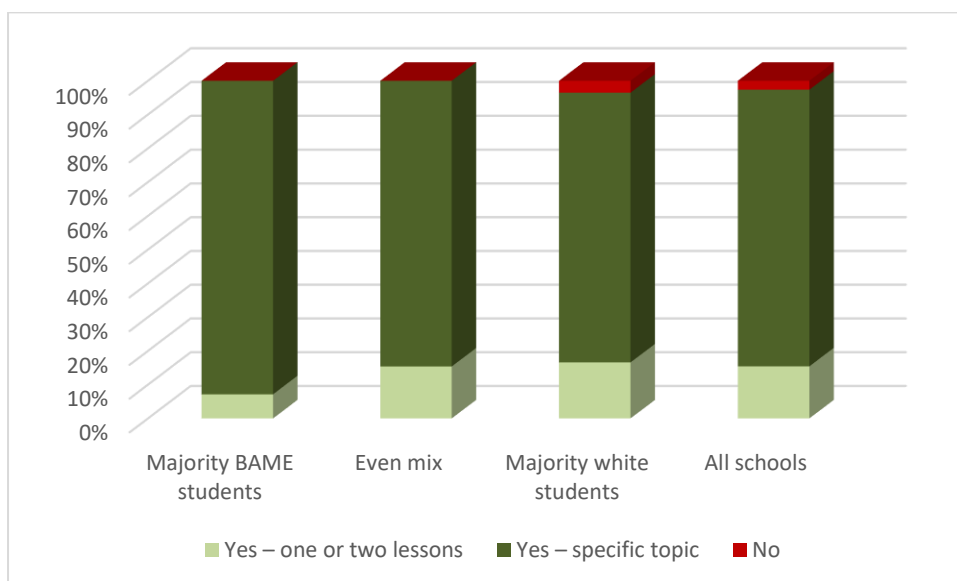


Figure 5 makes it clear that in 3% of the schools that responded to the survey it would be possible for students to end their compulsory study of history without having learned anything about the history of the British Empire. It is worth noting (as shown in Figure 6) that these schools (seven in total) all had cohorts in which the majority of students were White. It was the schools where the majority of the student cohort were from Black or other minority ethnic backgrounds that were most likely to devote a series of lessons to the history of the British Empire, with 93% of them reporting that they did so, while the remainder (7%) allocated just one or two lessons to studying the British Empire. In schools where the population was more evenly mixed or those with a White majority, the proportion allocating just one or two lessons to the topic was twice as high (15% and 17% respectively).

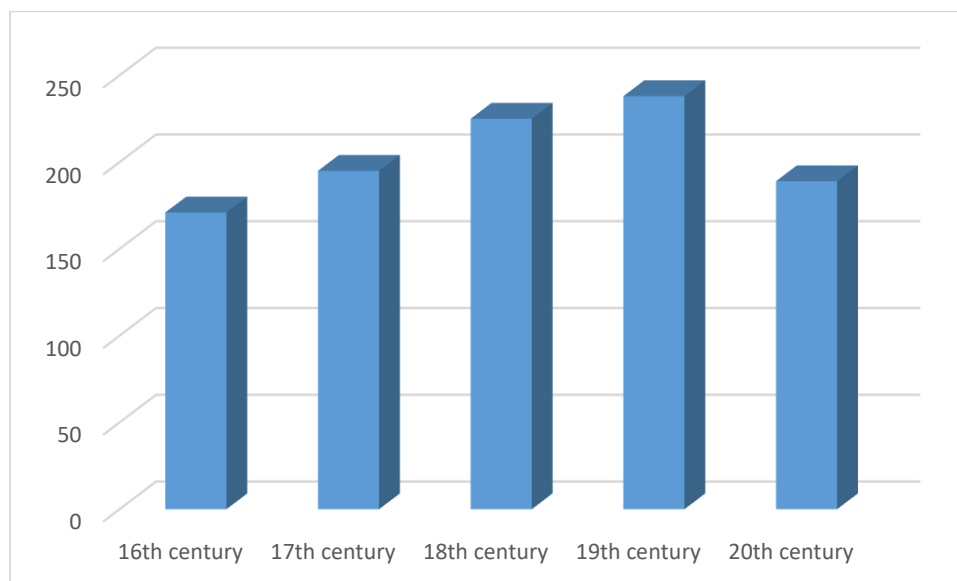
Figure 6: Teaching the history of the British Empire within Key Stage 3 analysed in relation to the school population



No differences related to teachers' own ethnic identities were evident in relation to decisions about including the history of the British Empire in the Key Stage 3 curriculum, nor did such decisions seem to be influenced by how many years were allocated to Key Stage 3.

Those respondents who reported including any history of the British Empire within their Key Stage 3 curriculum (260 schools in total) were also asked to identify which periods of time (which centuries) were studied in those lessons. Figure 7 shows that the periods most commonly taught about in relation to the British Empire are the eighteenth and, especially, the nineteenth century (included in the curriculum by 225 and 238 schools respectively), but the numbers dealing with the twentieth century are smaller (189 schools). Only 58% of all schools that reported teaching about the British Empire said that they included some kind of focus on the end of empire/decolonisation. This was more likely in state-maintained schools (61% of non-selective and 61% of grammar schools) than in the independent schools represented (38%). There appears to be some variation dependent on the mix of the school population, with 68% of those with a majority BAME population teaching about the end of empire, compared with around 56% of the White majority schools and of the schools with a more evenly balanced school population. The inclusion of the end of empire/decolonisation is a little more likely in schools with a three-year Key Stage 3: 60% of such schools reported including it in their teaching, compared to 53% of those schools that devote less than three years to Key Stage 3. Most (71%) of the schools that reported teaching about the history of the British Empire claimed to focus on the impact of colonisation on both the colonised and the colonisers, but where schools reported dealing with just one dimension, this was more likely to be the impact on the colonised (20% of the schools) than on the colonisers (9%). There was no obvious variation here in terms of types of school or different kinds of school population.

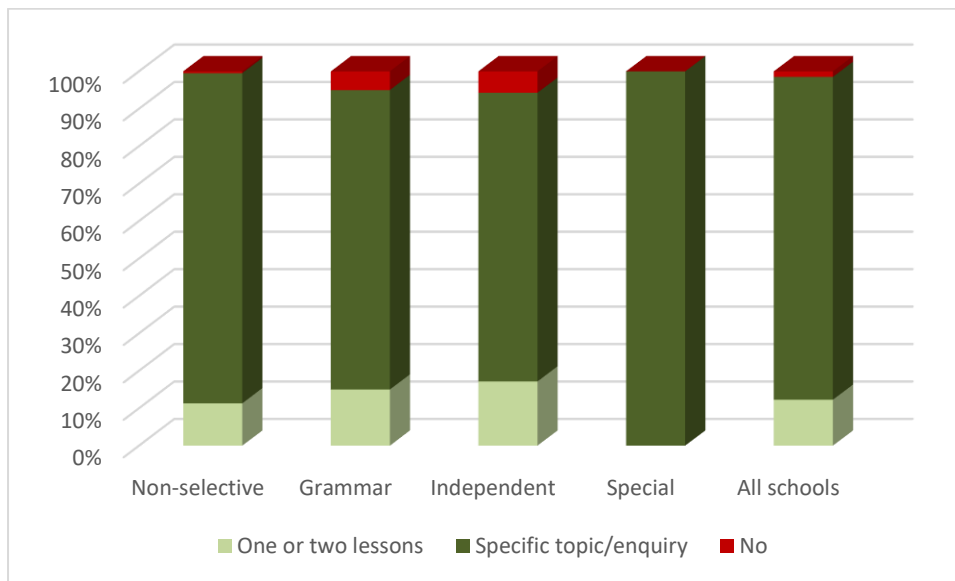
Figure 7: The number of schools that reported teaching about the British Empire in different periods



2.3 Teaching about the history of the transatlantic slave trade

As Figure 8 shows, the vast majority of schools (86%) reported teaching a series of lessons (or a more substantial unit) about the slave trade. Only four schools reported that they did not teach anything in their Key Stage 3 curriculum about the history of the transatlantic slave trade. Three of these schools had a student population in which White pupils were in the majority and one had a more evenly mixed White/BAME population.

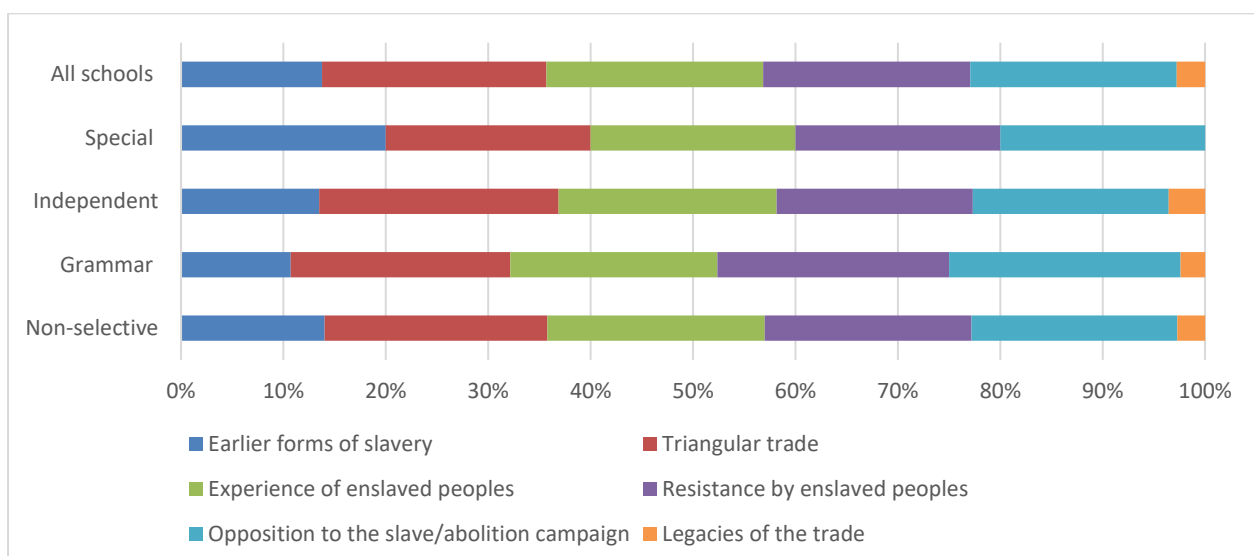
Figure 8: The proportion of schools teaching about the history of the transatlantic slave trade within Key Stage 3



A higher proportion of non-selective state schools (88%) reported allocating a series of lessons to this topic than was the case in grammar schools (80%) or in the independent sector (77%). There was no evident correlation between the ethnic mix of the school population and the likelihood of the school devoting a series of lessons to the issue – nor did the decision to focus on the issue for a series of lessons seem to be related to the length of the Key Stage 3 curriculum.

When respondents were asked about the specific issues that they included in their schemes of work, four dimensions were included by at least 90% of all state-maintained schools: ‘the development of the “triangular trade”’, ‘the experiences of enslaved peoples’, ‘forms of resistance or rebellion by enslaved peoples’ and ‘other forms of opposition, including the campaign for abolition’. As Figure 9 shows, the first two were equally common aspects of the curriculum in independent schools, but the last two (resistance by enslaved peoples and by others) were slightly less common in the independent schools, only included by 82% of respondents.

Figure 9: The particular aspects of the trade in enslaved peoples that different kinds of schools reported teaching about within the Key Stage 3 curriculum



2.4 Teaching about the history of a non-European society (independently of its relationships with Britain or other European powers)

As Figure 10 shows, only 42% of schools allocate a series of lessons or a short unit to teaching about the history of a non-European nation. While 30% of schools claim to devote one or two lessons to such teaching, 28% of respondents reported that their schools did not teach about the history of a non-European society at all within Key Stage 3. Such teaching appears slightly more common in the non-selective state schools, 75% of which reported devoting at least one or two lessons to a non-European society, compared with 70% of grammar schools and 63% of independent schools.

Figure 10: The proportion of schools teaching about the history of a non-European society in its own right within Key Stage 3

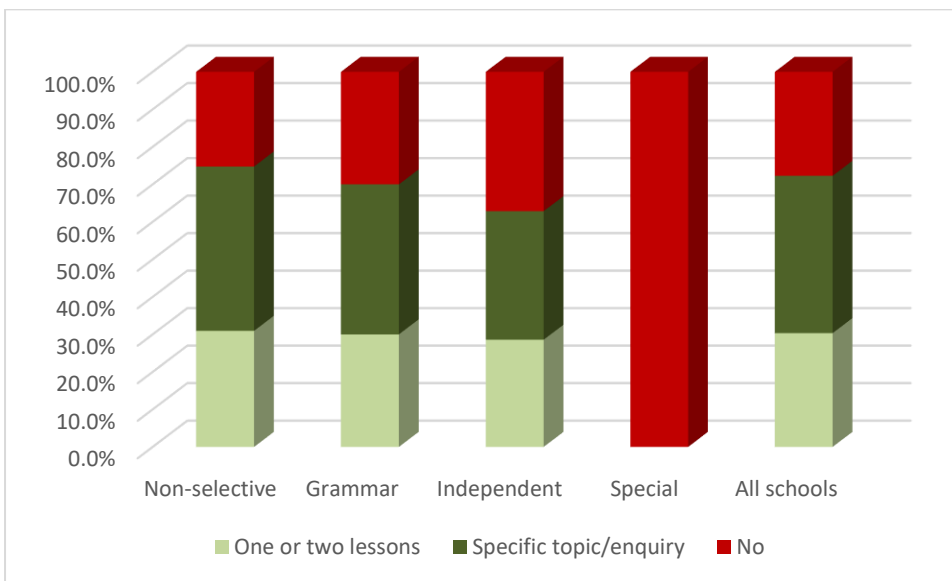


Figure 11 shows that schools with a predominant BAME population or an even mix of students from different backgrounds are more likely to teach such a topic (54% report doing so) than predominantly White schools (38%). The length of schools' Key Stage 3 curriculum seems to make little difference here.

Figure 11: Teaching the history of a non-European society within Key Stage 3 analysed in relation to the school population



When those who reported teaching about some aspect of the history of a non-European society were asked to provide details of the specific region and topics/periods about which they taught at Key Stage 3, responses were received from 156 schools. As Table 3 shows, the continent most commonly mentioned was Africa, within which the focus was most often on Mali (under the rule of Mans Musa), taught in some way by 86 respondents, or – much less frequently – on Benin (mentioned by 19 respondents). Here the emphasis appears to be on providing a positive picture of wealthy, powerful and culturally rich civilisations that predated both the transatlantic slave trade and colonisation by Europeans. (Despite being asked to focus on societies independent of their associations with Europe, some schools cited twentieth-century topics in countries that had been profoundly influenced by colonialism, such as the four schools that reported focusing specifically on apartheid in South Africa or the one that referred to teaching about the Rwandan genocide.)

Some aspect of the history of the Middle East was taught within 50 of the respondents' schools, with a strong focus on Baghdad and on the success of various 'Islamic empires' (rarely defined in more specific terms). The history of the Ottoman Empire received rather less attention (noted as a focus of study by only four schools). Despite the focus of the question on teaching the history of societies independent of their connections with Europe, the Crusades were identified as a focus for study by six schools.

Table 3: Regions of the world beyond Europe to which schools reported devoting at least one history lesson

Region	No. of schools teaching about it	Region	No. of schools teaching about it
Pre-colonial Africa	86	Japan	2
West Africa	7	Samurai	1
Mali	45		
Benin	19	Silk Roads	12
Songhai	4		
Asante	3	Middle East	50
(Ancient) Egypt	2	Persian Empire	2
Sudan (Hausa-Fulani)	1	Abbasid Caliphate	2
Kongo people	1	Baghdad	10
Zulu (Nguni)	1	Byzantium	3
Colonial/post-colonial Africa	5	Islamic empires	28
<i>South Africa (apartheid)</i>	4	Jerusalem	1
<i>Rwanda</i>	1	<i>Crusades</i>	6
		Ottoman Empire	4
India (total)	47	<i>Arab–Israeli conflict (Israel/Palestine)</i>	3
Mughal India	44		
		North America	20
Mongol Empire (Genghis Khan)	7	Indigenous/Native Americans (specifically Sioux 1, Lenape 1)	10
China	15	Australasia	3
Tang dynasty	1	<i>Specifically Maori/treatment of Aboriginal peoples</i>	2
Song dynasty	2		
Ming dynasty	3		

Notes: 1. Although specifically asked to focus on societies in their own right, some schools referred to colonial or post-colonial periods. 2. The figures for particular regions or continents *include* all the references to more specific peoples or countries within them. Some respondents only referred to the continent or broader region.

The history of India (before the arrival of the East India Company and the establishment of the British Empire) was mentioned by 47 respondents, nearly all of whom referred specifically to the Mughal Empire.

Twenty schools referred to teaching about indigenous peoples in North America, although again a small number of schools focused their attention on the twentieth-century history of race relations (sometimes as part of a thematic study over time that began with the experience of native American peoples and went on to look at the experience of enslaved peoples of African heritage, before focusing on civil rights).

China’s history appears to be taught much less frequently than that of India, with relatively few schools (15 in total) reporting specific periods that they studied, but there was clearly interest in examining the trade routes between Europe and China (likely to have been inspired by the work of Peter Frankopan on the ‘Silk Roads’, a term that was widely used by the teachers). Japan, in contrast, barely featured among the non-European societies whose history was reported as being taught.

In relation to the history of peoples within South America, seven schools made specific reference to teaching about the history of the Aztecs, who appear to be studied more regularly than the Incas, cited as a focus of study by only three respondents.

Australasia was also only mentioned three times and, even within those few references, associated explanations that the focus was on ‘how Aboriginals were treated’ seem to imply that at least one of these lesson sequences was actually related to European encounters with indigenous peoples or to colonisation.

2.5 Teaching Black and Asian British history

Only 23% of schools reported devoting a series of lessons to teaching an aspect of Black or Asian British history. As Figure 12 shows, most schools (57%) reported devoting just one or two lessons to such history.

Figure 12: The proportion of schools that include some teaching about Black and Asian British history within their Key Stage 3 curriculum



There is little variation between different types of schools, but Figure 13 suggests that the ethnic mix of the student population may be significant here, with 36% of schools with a majority BAME population devoting a series of lessons to Black and Asian history, compared with 23% of more evenly mixed schools and just 18%

of schools with a majority White population. The length of schools' Key Stage 3 curriculum also seems to have some bearing here.

Figure 13: Teaching Black and Asian British history within Key Stage 3 analysed in relation to the school population

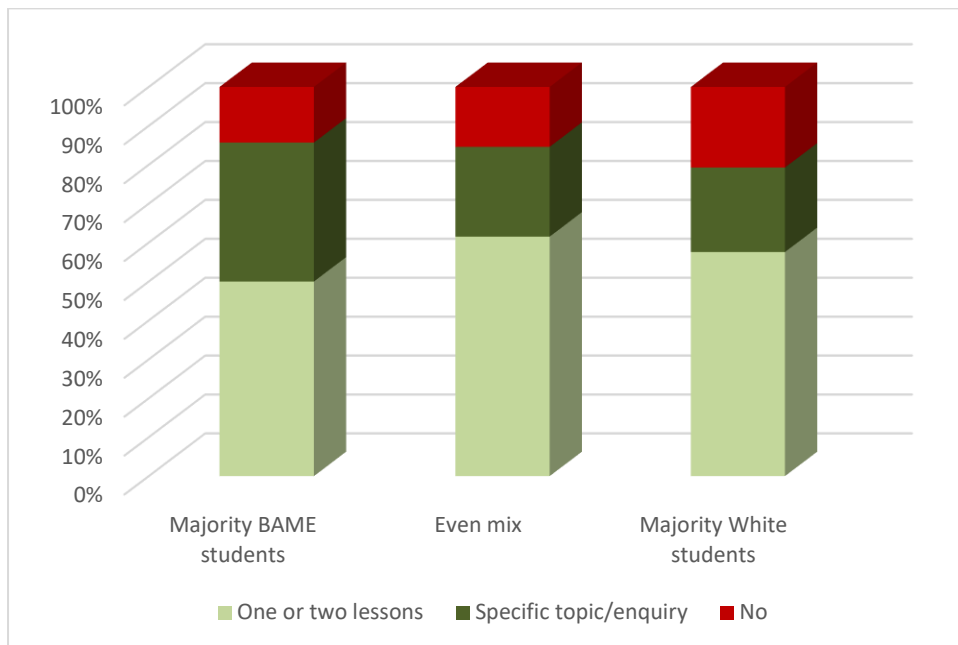
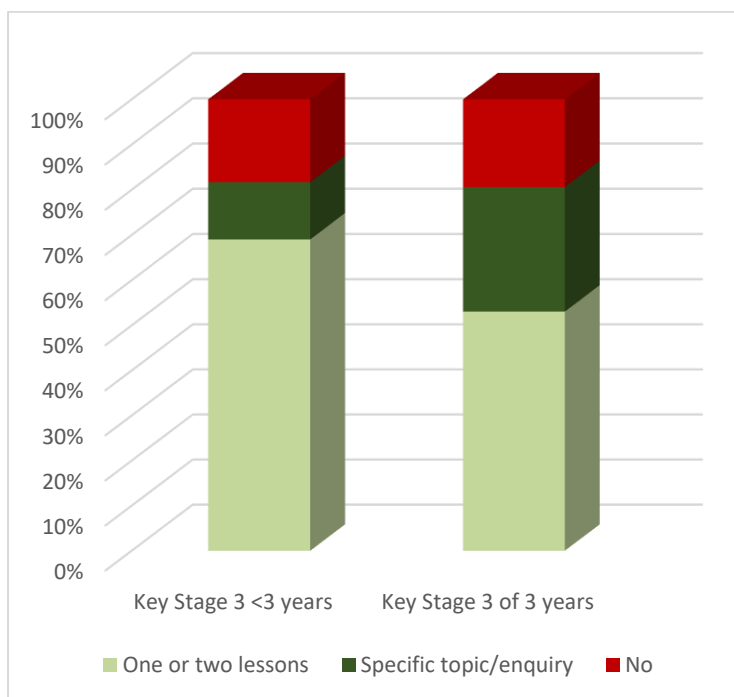


Figure 14 makes it clear that among the respondents, 28% of schools with a three-year curriculum had chosen to devote a series of lessons to Black and Asian British history, while only 13% of those with a shorter Key Stage 3 curriculum had done so.

Figure 14: The teaching of Black and Asian British history within Key Stage 3 in relation to the number of years allocated to Key Stage 3



As previously noted, the small number of BAME teachers who responded to the survey makes it very difficult to identify differences between the curricular decisions of teachers from different ethnic backgrounds that are statistically significant. It may be worth noting, however, that all of the respondents who identified as having a BAME background of some kind reported that their schools allocated at least one or two lessons within Key Stage 3 to teaching Black or Asian British history.

Table 4, which sets out the specific aspects of Black and Asian British history that respondents reported teaching, shows that most of this teaching is focused on the twentieth century, identified in some way as a focus in 127 individual comments. Within this period, there is a strong focus on post-war migration (specifically mentioned by 34 schools) and on struggles for civil rights (identified as a focus by 47 schools). A number of schools mentioned a particular focus on looking at the diversity of the troops fighting for Britain in the two world wars.

Table 4: The specific topics that schools reported they were teaching in relation to Black and Asian British history

Period	Total number of schools reporting some teaching related to this period	Specific topics or individuals named (within the total figure)
Roman Britain	12	Hadrian's Wall (1), Ivory Bangle Lady (2)
Anglo-Saxons	2	
Tudors	72	John Blanke (2), Mary Fillis (1), Jacques Francis (1), Diego (2)
17th century	1	
18th and 19th centuries	33	Impact of slavery and empire (10), <i>including a local focus (2), resistance in the Caribbean (1)</i> Development of racial ideas (1) Sake Dean Mahomed (1) Abolitionists (10), <i>including Equiano (2), Mary Prince (1), Sons of Africa (1)</i>
20th century	127	Campaigners for women's suffrage (5), <i>including Sophia Duleep Singh (1)</i> World War I – usually a focus on diversity within the armies fighting for Britain (17), <i>including Khudadad Khan (1), Walter Tull (1)</i> World War II – usually troops from the Empire (10) Post-1945 British society – in general (2) Migration (34), <i>including Windrush (17), Ugandan Asians (1)</i> Struggle for civil rights (47), <i>including Bristol Bus Boycott (7), Mangrove Nine (1)</i> Race riots (2) Grunwick Strike (1) Popular culture/Notting Hill Carnival (2) Doreen Lawrence (1)
21st century	2	
No specific period	6	Migration over time (12) Multiculturalism (1) Asian presence in Britain (2) Black presence in Britain (1)

The second most frequently mentioned period was the sixteenth century (identified as a focus by 72 respondents), with most using the term 'Black Tudors' to summarise their focus, pointing to the influence of Miranda Kaufmann's book of that title – which was also confirmed by particular references to individual characters that feature within it.

Black and Asian British history within the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries was mentioned as a focus in 33 schools. While some respondents simply identified the period, most explained that they were examining the impact of slavery and/or Britain's empire on Britain itself. The work of Black campaigners for abolition was specifically mentioned by ten respondents.

Some aspect of Roman Britain was mentioned by 12 schools, while a few others referred to thematic teaching of Black British or Asian history over time. In relation to the latter, it is important to note that since some respondents had listed the topics that they teach in relation to a specific focus on migration in response to a *previous question*, the responses here should not be regarded as giving an accurate impression of the number of schools that teach about Black and Asian British history explicitly in the context of migration. Some schools clearly repeated their previous answers, while others merely alluded to them.

It is also important to note that, although the question asked specifically about Black and Asian **British** history, a few respondents cited topics that did not appear to be directly related to Britain at all. The most frequently mentioned topic in this respect was the struggle for civil rights in the United States. Sometimes it was made clear that the teachers were undertaking a comparative study (of experiences in Britain and the USA), but on several occasions there was no reference to Britain at all. The 'Silk Roads' were also identified by two respondents as an example of 'Black and British Asian history', but with no explicit explanation of how this focus was related to experiences within Britain.

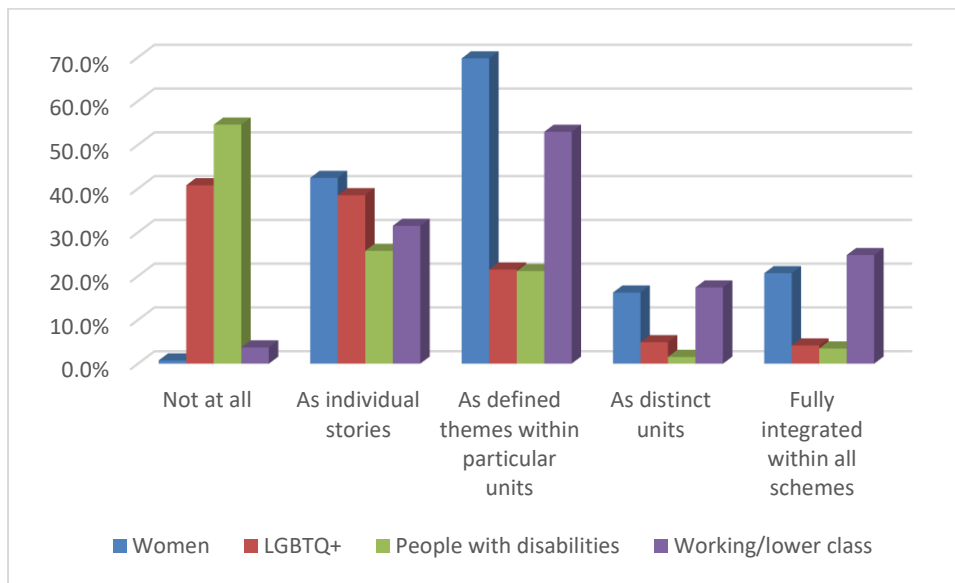
2.6 Teaching about the history of other groups at risk of marginalisation

Alongside the specific focus of the survey on teaching about diverse histories in terms of race and ethnicity, a small number of questions were asked about how schools were addressing other aspects of diversity. As Figure 15 illustrates, respondents were asked to indicate how they taught about a number of groups or types of people whose history tends to be excluded or marginalised: women, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities and poorer groups in society (the lower or working classes). They were asked to select as many of the approaches as they used. This free choice makes the data a little difficult to interpret, since some categories that appear to be incompatible with one another were occasionally selected by the same respondent (claiming, for example, that women's history was fully integrated across their whole Key Stage 3 curriculum and that they taught women's history as a distinct unit). Nonetheless, the summary findings presented in Figure 15 serve both to illustrate the most commonly used approaches in relation to each group and to show which groups that are known to be at risk of marginalisation tend to be most frequently overlooked.

As Figure 15 illustrates, of the four groups it is the history of people with disabilities and of those who identify as LGBTQ+ that tend most often to be absent from the curriculum, with 55% of schools acknowledging that they made no mention of the former and 41% of schools that they made no mention of the latter. Where the experiences of such people are included, it tends to be as individual stories or as a defined theme within a particular unit.

More attention is clearly given to the history of the working or lower classes, with only 4% of schools claiming that such groups were not included at all in their curriculum and a small majority of schools (53%) claiming that their experiences were included as a defined theme within one or more of the units that they taught. A quarter of schools (25%) claimed that the history of working or lower class people was fully integrated within their curriculum.

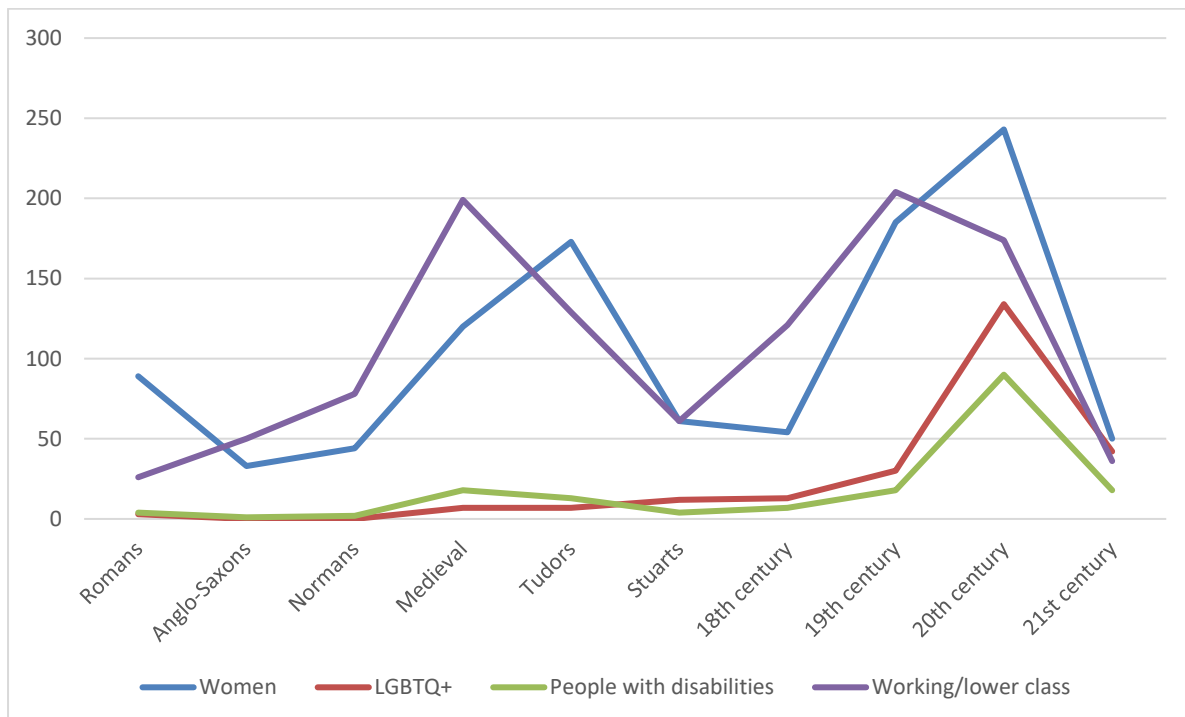
Figure 15: The ways in which the history of various groups (that are often excluded or marginalised) are included in the Key Stage 3 curriculum



Women’s experiences in the past were also most often included in the curriculum as a defined theme within particular units (an approach adopted by 70% of schools), but they would also tend to be the focus of individual stories (an approach used by 40% of respondents). Only a quarter of schools claimed that the experiences of women were fully integrated into their curriculum.

Respondents were also asked to identify the periods within which they taught about the experiences of these different people, as illustrated in Figure 16.

Figure 16: The periods within which the histories of different groups of people were taught



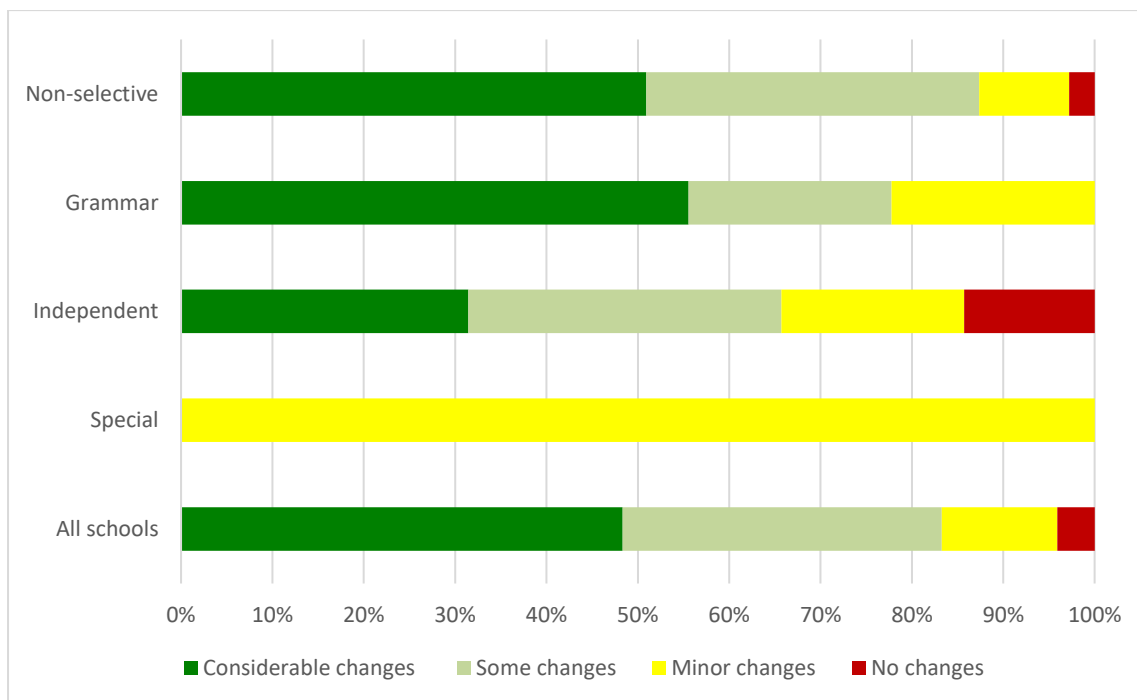
The broad patterns shown in Figure 16 are obviously likely to reflect the general emphasis given to different periods per se as well as the availability of evidence and of relevant academic scholarship work, but the fact

that the history of working class people is most evident in the nineteenth century and that of women is more commonly studied in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries suggests that their history is most commonly explored in relation to the struggle for suffrage.

2.7 Recent changes to the Key Stage 3 curriculum

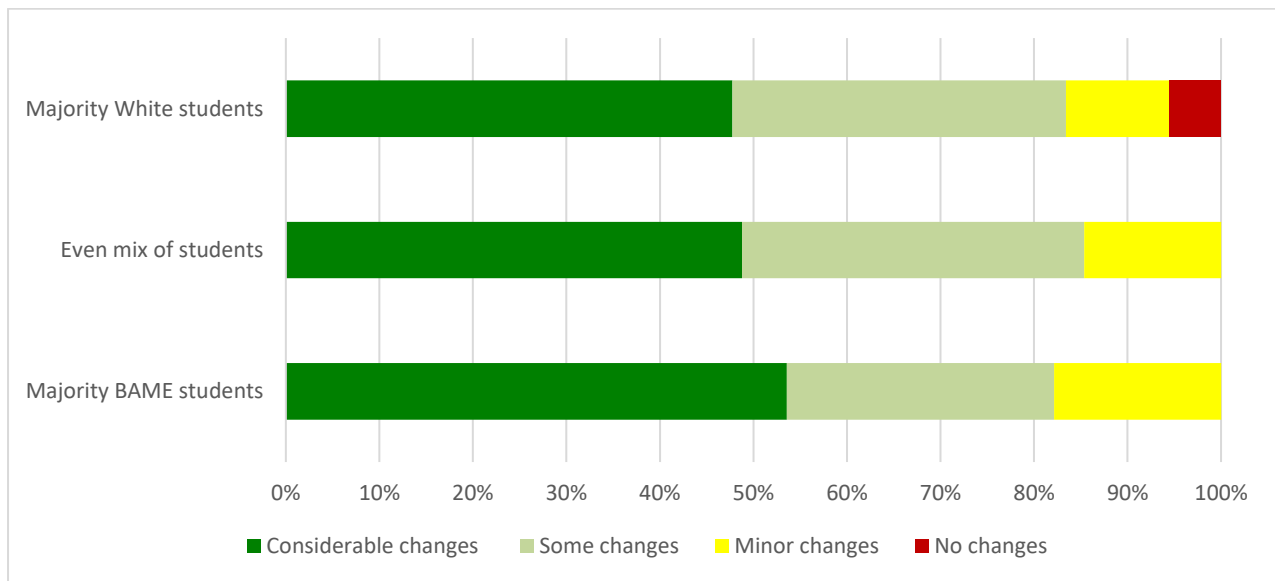
The survey asked all respondents to identify whether they had made any changes to their Key Stage 3 curriculum within the previous three years specifically in order to address issues of diversity. (For this question, diversity was defined as including the ethnic and geographical diversity on which the earlier sections of the survey had been focused, as well the history of other groups at risk of marginalisation: women, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities and the working/lower classes). As Figure 17 demonstrates, the vast majority of schools (87%) report having made substantial changes to their Key Stage 3 curriculum. Thirty-five per cent report having made ‘some’ changes, while 48% report having made ‘considerable’ change. Change appears to be happening more frequently in the state sector, with 87% of non-selective schools and 78% of grammar schools reporting having made ‘some’ or ‘considerable’ change, compared with 66% of the independent schools.

Figure 17: The proportion of schools of different types that reported having made changes in the past three years to address issues of diversity



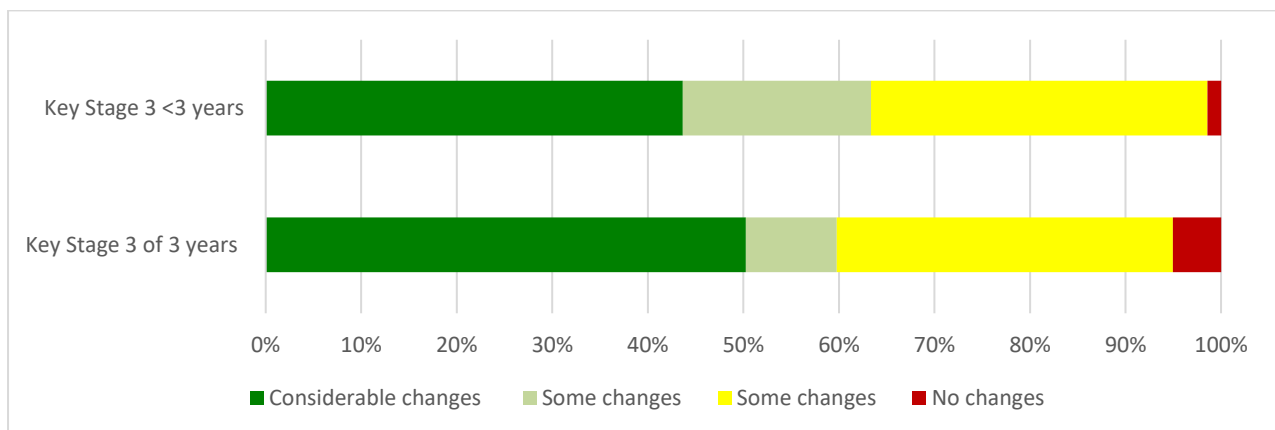
Only 4% of the schools reported having made no changes at all, and as Figure 18 shows, these 11 schools are all those in which the majority of students are White. There is some indication that ‘considerable’ change may be slightly more common in schools with a predominantly BAME population, but there is no real difference related to school population in terms of reporting at least ‘some’ recent change.

Figure 18: Recent changes to the school curriculum to address issues of diversity analysed in relation to the school population



When the responses are analysed in relation to the length of the Key Stage 3 curriculum, the picture is more mixed. While a higher proportion of school with a three-year Key Stage 3 curriculum report having made ‘considerable changes’ (50%, compared to 44% of those with a shorter Key Stage 3), the overall proportion reporting at least some element of change is higher among the schools with a shorter Key Stage 3 curriculum (99%) than among those with a full three-year curriculum (95%).

Figure 19: Recent changes to the school curriculum to address issues of diversity analysed in relation to the length of schools’ Key Stage 3 curriculum



In response to an open invitation to explain briefly the nature of the changes that they had made, 190 teachers chose to outline the kinds of decisions that they had made. While some chose to summarise the changes using broad terms to encapsulate the main purpose of their changes, others chose to enumerate specific aspects of the curriculum that they had altered or specific groups that they had sought to include more effectively.

Among the broad characterisations of change were references to ‘diversifying’ the curriculum or trying to make it ‘more representative’, along with occasional references to ‘decolonising’ the curriculum. While some teachers noted specific units that they had added to their curriculum, others were keen to stress that they had tried to ‘embed’ change across the curriculum and avoid a ‘tokenist approach’. Very occasionally,

teachers would make clear where they had reduced the attention given to certain topics – specifically medieval British or Tudor history – in order to accommodate new ones or new kinds of emphasis.

The kinds of changes that had been made were all generally encompassed within the specific topics that we had asked about earlier in the survey, tending to focus mainly on the inclusion of more diverse histories, understood in terms of either ethnic diversity (within Britain or across a wider geographical range) or the inclusion of women's experiences. Very occasionally, specific changes were noted in relation to teaching about the history of people identified (subsequently, if not at the time) as LGBTQ+. Future intentions but few changes that had already been made were noted in relation to teaching about the history of those with disabilities (including mental illness).

The following examples, which are certainly among the most extensive accounts of changes made, serve to exemplify the *kinds* of changes most commonly reported:

Introduced Medieval Mali unit. Increased Empire unit. Added aspects to current topics e.g. Black Tudors and early modern women. Added new scheme on political reform in 19th century. Added 'Meanwhile elsewhere...'⁶ for other cultures. Added unit on British civil rights relating to race, gender and sexuality.

(11–16 non-selective state school, East London, White majority population)

Inclusion of specific topics relevant to the students taught, on Islamic Kingdoms, West African Kingdoms, the Mughals, Black and British experiences, experiences of Indian and West Indian soldiers in war time, the Arab–Israeli Conflict.

(11–16 non-selective state boys' school, Bedfordshire, BAME majority population)

Teaching of World Views c1000 – Constantinople, Baghdad and the Islamic Empire. More lessons on BAME and women in history, inclusion of the campaign for women's suffrage.

(11–18 non-selective, mixed state school, Sheffield, evenly mixed population)

We have replaced one enquiry on migration with several linked enquiries threaded through the curriculum. We have changed several enquiries to focus on studying particular periods through the lens of women, or with a fully integrated approach to the roles of women alongside men. We have introduced enquiries which include Black British and LGBTQ+ history especially in the 20th century. We have divided up and broadened our enquiries on empire and decolonisation to encompass a wider range of locations, a broader span of time, a greater diversity of experiences, more on the legacy of empire in Britain and around the world, and more agency for indigenous peoples and their resistance to empire/colonialism.

(11–18 non-selective girls' state school, Hertfordshire, White majority population)

It is still a work in progress. We have made use of a number of 'Meanwhile elsewhere...' tasks to cover non-British, European History. We have included an overview of migration, a unit on Black Tudors and lessons on disability in Y7. We are working on disability lessons for Y8 as well as lessons on decolonisation for Y8. We have brought in some lessons on medieval queens as part of our 'Power in the Middle Ages' unit and are working on some lessons on the Norman Conquest through a 'women' lens.

(11–18 non-selective girls' school, Essex, evenly mixed student population)

⁶ For details of the 'Meanwhile... elsewhere' approach see Will Bailey-Watson and Richard Kennett (2019) 'meanwhile, elsewhere...' harnessing the power of the community to expand students' historical horizons', *Teaching History*, 176, pp. 36–43.

Development of a Year 7 thematic Migrants to Britain unit; change of lens when studying transatlantic slavery to build in the study of African Kingdoms, a greater focus on slave rebellions and even more focus on the long-lasting legacies of slavery; use of 'Meanwhile elsewhere...' to study people, regions and events that do not relate directly to Britain/Western Europe; development of our Tudor Portraits module to become a Global Tudors module with more focus on the beginnings of expansion and Empire and on the Black presence, use of OER [open educational resources] on World History to create an enquiry into Revolutionary Women in the Age of Revolutions; improvement in focus on Empire Troops in WW1.

(11–18 non-selective, mixed school, South-West England, White majority population)

While the number of changes outlined in these accounts might suggest that they are atypical in the extent of the curriculum change reported, many of the shorter statements made it very clear that departments had 'overhauled the entire curriculum', while a small number claimed that they had effectively 'started from scratch'. No single specific change stood out among those who identified just one or two changes, but the teaching of Black Tudors was among the most common, as was a focus on the global nature of the First and Second World Wars and the diversity of those fighting. New post-war British units were also frequently mentioned, providing particular scope to teach about migration (including study of the Windrush) and about struggles for civil rights, including second-wave feminism. In some cases, the study of such struggles in Britain was seen as a form of preparation for GCSE modules that included a focus on civil rights in the United States. There was also an emphasis on making comparisons and connections: the former particularly through a focus on different empires (medieval African, Islamic, Mughal), and the latter particularly to connect the Industrial Revolution in Britain to both the slave trade and the British Empire.

Several respondents reported on decisions to reframe the way in which they approached teaching particular topics: focusing, for example, less on European 'voyages of discovery' and more on 'encounters' between peoples, or approaching the history of the transatlantic slave trade in different ways (such as ensuring that they had previously taught about medieval African kingdoms; focusing more explicitly or specifically on slavery in the Caribbean, rather than the American south; or examining the resistance of enslaved peoples and the legacies of the trade). A couple of schools explicitly noted that they had begun to include consideration of the development of ideas about race.

A small number stressed not only that their choice of topics had changed, but that they had also taken action to introduce students to a more diverse range of historians. Focusing on local history was noted in a few cases as a way of addressing issues of diversity effectively. In one or two cases, schools were also clearly encouraging students to regard their curriculum as a construction, and to evaluate the range of content and approaches. One subject leader explained that they had:

Introduced a synoptic unit on how representative our history curriculum is – pupils interrogate a range of sources on topics studied throughout KS3 that show examples of diversity that they did encounter at the 'first time around' to consider how well constructed and how representative our curriculum is.

(11–16 non-selective, mixed state school, Crewe, white majority population)

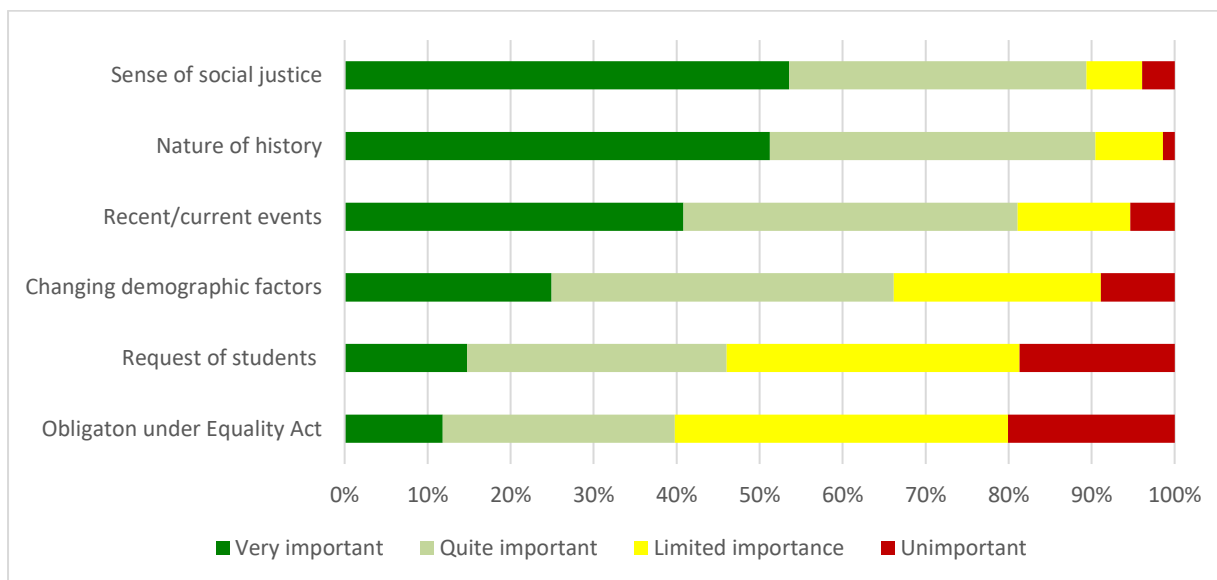
While some respondents made it clear that reverting to a three-year Key Stage 3 curriculum had given the time to expand the scope of what they covered or to improve the representative nature of their curriculum, there were also one or two schools noting that changes had been made as their curriculum was reduced to two years. A few schools also made it clear that they had chosen to

study fewer topics in more depth as a means of improving diversity and enabling students to engage confidently with the complex nature of past societies.

2.8 Stimuli and support for change

When the Royal Historical Society highlighted the issues of inequality in the teaching and uptake of history in higher education in their 2018 report ‘Race, Ethnicity and Equality’ in UK history, four rationales were outlined for addressing them: a legal rationale related to the Equality Act, a demographic rationale related to the proportion of young people from BAME backgrounds; an ethical rationale rooted in a commitment to social justice; and an intellectual rationale derived from the importance of attending to the value of embracing new interlocutors, asking new historical questions and drawing on new methodologies.⁷ Teachers’ rationales for making recent changes appear to be related most strongly to the third and fourth of those rationales. As shown in Figure 20, the most important reasons cited for making changes to the curriculum were a sense of social justice (cited as very important by 54% of all respondents) and to better represent the nature of history (cited as very important by 51% of individual respondents). The third stimulus that teachers described as exerting a ‘very important’ influence on their recent curricular changes were recent demands for change expressed in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and the renewed impetus that it gave to the ‘Black Lives Matter’ protest movement (cited as ‘very important’ by 41% of respondents). Demographic factors (the second of the four rationales offered by the RHS) were cited as ‘very important’ by 25% of respondents, while the legal argument to which the RHS had also appealed was only seen as ‘very important’ by 12% of respondents. Indeed, specific requests for change by current or former students (which was cited as a very important influence by 15% of respondents) appear to have played a slightly more important role in stimulating curriculum review and renewal than the legal obligations placed on schools by the Equality Act.

Figure 20: The extent to which different factors were reported by all respondents as acting as stimuli for changes to the Key Stage 3 curriculum



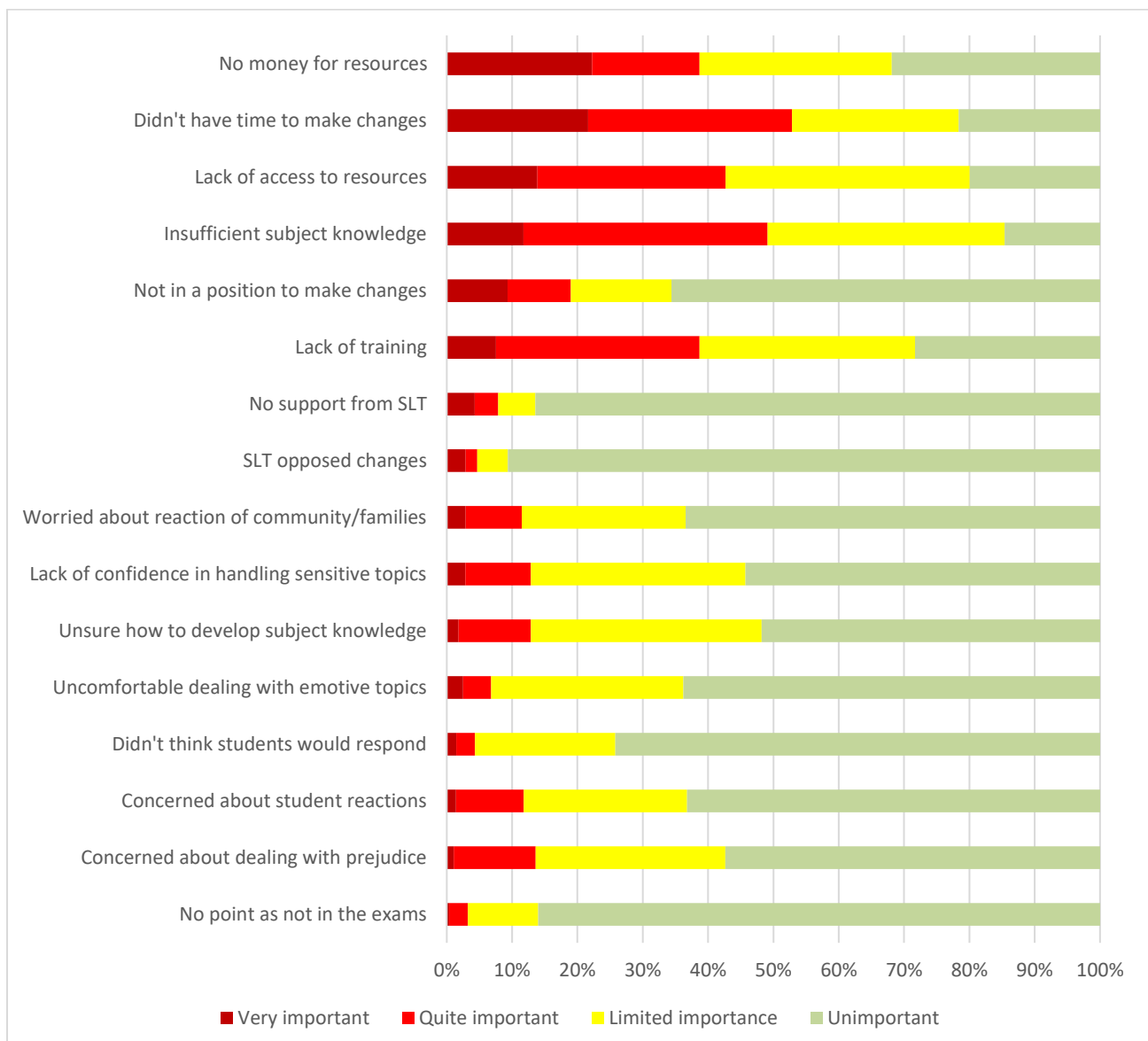
Where respondents reported having made recent changes to their curriculum, they were asked to indicate the kind of challenges they had faced in doing so, noting how important different kinds of obstacle had been.

⁷ Royal Historical Society (2018) *Race, Ethnicity and Equality in UK History: a report and resources for change*. https://files.royalhistoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/17205337/RHS_race_report_EMBARGO_0001_18Oct.pdf

Among this group, the most important barriers they had encountered were a lack of finances and lack of time (each cited as 'very important' by 22% of the respondents). The other prominent obstacles cited were lack of access to appropriate resources, lack of subject knowledge and lack of training. It is important to acknowledge the demands made on teachers in introducing curriculum changes, whether these are driven by their own concerns about issues of social justice or intellectual rigour in relation to the discipline or by government mandate (should the DfE decide to respond, for example, to calls made in recent petitions to modify the National Curriculum).

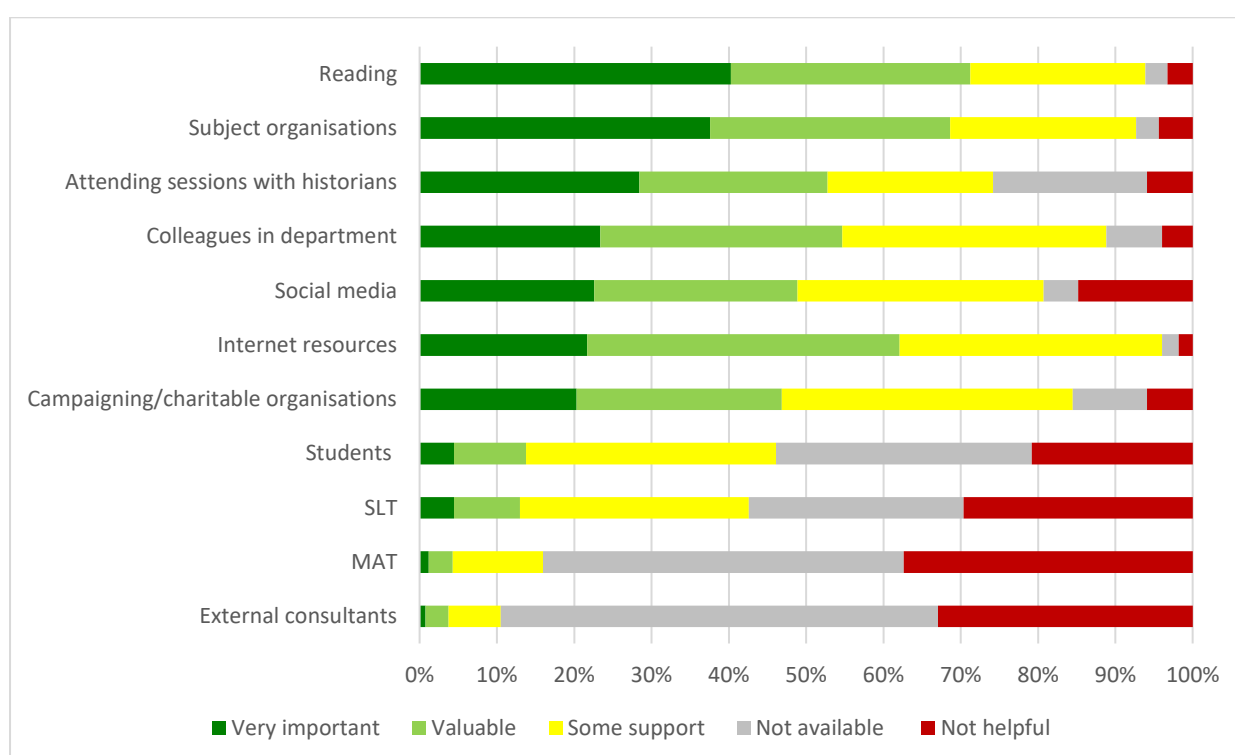
It is also worth noting that while anxieties about handling sensitive or controversial issues did not feature prominently as a 'very important' barrier, at least one-third of all respondents indicated a degree of concern (whether 'very', 'quite' or 'limited' in importance) in relation to their lack of confidence in handling sensitive topics (46%), concerns about dealing with prejudice (43%), concerns about the reactions of communities/families and the students' own reactions (each noted by 37% of respondents). It is clear that focused advice and appropriate professional development in dealing with issues perceived as potentially controversial or sensitive would be valuable to teachers wanting to make changes.

Figure 21: The extent to which different factors acted as a barrier to making changes to the Key Stage 3 curriculum (as reported by those who had made some change)



Given the obstacles noted by many teachers who were making changes, it is also important to note where and how those who identified difficulties in terms of their own subject knowledge or lack of existing resources turned for support and what help they were able to locate. The sources to which teachers turned are set out in Figure 22, which shows that the forms of support most valued by those who had made changes were their own engagement with historical scholarship (cited as ‘very important’ by 40% of all respondents) and the help of subject associations (cited as ‘very important’ by 38%). Hearing directly from historians (for example, in a webinar) was cited as a ‘very important’ source of support by 28% of respondents. Colleagues within their own department were also important sources of support (cited as ‘very important’ by 23%), but wider school-based support structures were reported as being of limited importance (either at an individual level or across the multi-academy trusts to which their schools belonged). Clearly, subject-based networks and contacts developed through social media were of more importance, as were materials accessed through the internet.

Figure 22: Sources of support identified by those who had made changes to their curriculum



Respondents from the 11 schools that reported having made no curriculum changes at all were asked whether this was because they saw no need to make any changes or because there were particular barriers that prevented them from doing so. Six responded that they had seen no need, although they *also* identified certain issues as preventing them from taking action. Since the total numbers are so small, the particular barriers that were acknowledged by any of these 11 schools are not presented in a summary figure, but some key features are noted here. The only types of barriers that were seen as significant by any of the respondents were: the fact that they personally were not in a position to implement or drive forward change (noted by four respondents); a lack of support from the senior leadership team (seen as significant by two respondents); and a lack of time to make changes (identified as significant barriers by two respondents). Indeed, most factors suggested to the respondents were dismissed as not representing any kind of obstacle at all. The following factors were all dismissed in this way by at least two-thirds (seven) of the 11 respondents: being unsure about how to develop their own subject knowledge; opposition to such changes from the school’s senior leadership team; a lack of support from the school’s senior leadership team; a lack of confidence in their own ability to handle sensitive issues; feeling uncomfortable talking about emotive

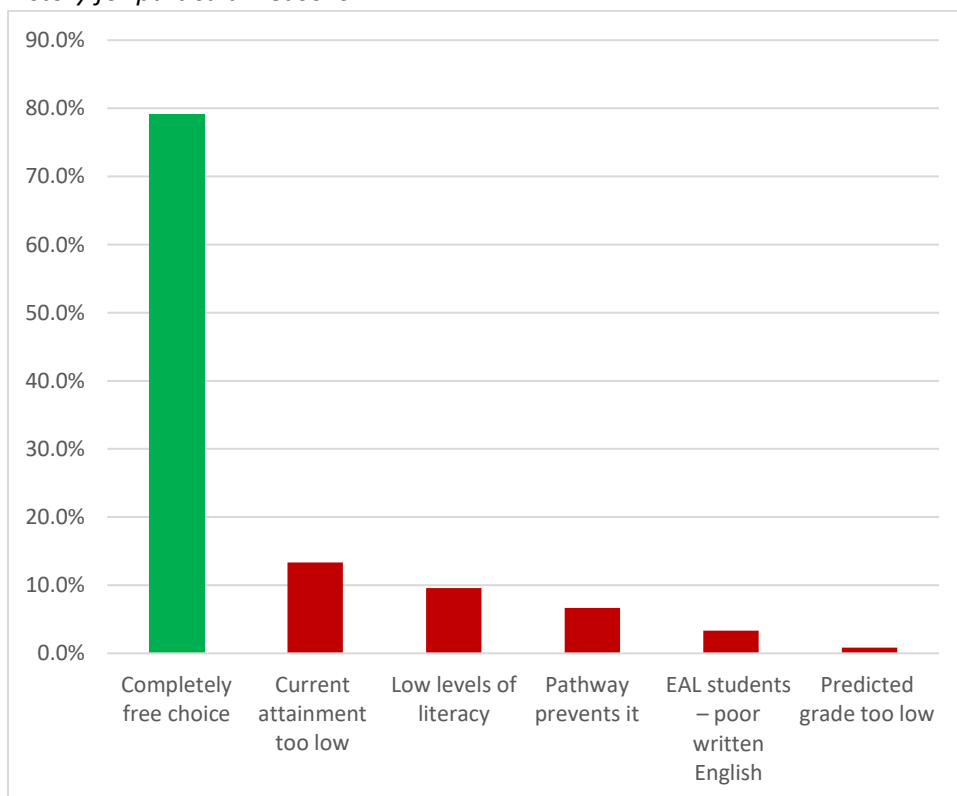
issues; concerns about how students might react to studying these topics/groups of people; concerns about having to deal with particular forms of prejudice; concerns about how students’ families/communities would react to the inclusion of these topics/groups of people; and the fact that such topics/approaches will not feature in public examinations further up the school.

3. GCSE: options, uptake and module choices

3.1 The scope for young people to continue with history beyond Key Stage 3

As in previous years, the survey included a question asking about the extent to which students were discouraged from continuing with the subject beyond Key Stage 3. This request reflects the Historical Association’s concern that all students, regardless of their levels of prior attainment, should be given the opportunity to continue their study of the subject. Of the 240 schools that responded to this question, the vast majority (80%) reported that all students were given a completely free choice, but a small proportion indicated that students might be discouraged or actively prevented from opting me for the subject at GCSE. Figure 23 shows that students’ current attainment or low levels of literacy were most commonly seen as barriers that meant that it was not worthwhile for students to continue with the subject (identified as relevant grounds by 13% and 10% of schools, respectively). While a small proportion of respondents’ schools (7%) continue to operate pathway systems (or ‘vocational’ tracks) in which history is not even offered to students, it is encouraging to note that very few schools (only 3%) make the assumption that students learning English as an additional language should be deterred from continuing with history.

Figure 23: The proportion of schools that reported that students might be prevented from opting for GCSE history for particular reasons



Note: Schools could identify more than one reason for deterring students from continuing with history

3.2 The range of history courses offered for the 14–16 age range (Key Stage 4)

Among the respondents, 261 different schools were represented that taught students in the 14–16 age range (or that offered GCSE teaching to older students). Among these schools, 241 offered GCSE history courses, which in most cases was the only history-focused option for this age range. Some 15 schools also reported offering another related course alongside GCSE History. In most cases, this was Ancient History (offered by seven schools, of which six were non-selective state schools and one an independent school), although other schools referred to offering GCSE Politics and GCSE Classical Civilisation (one school in each case).

Two independent schools offered IGCSE History as well as GCSE. One non-selective state school reported entering students for the Middle Years Programme of the International Baccalaureate.

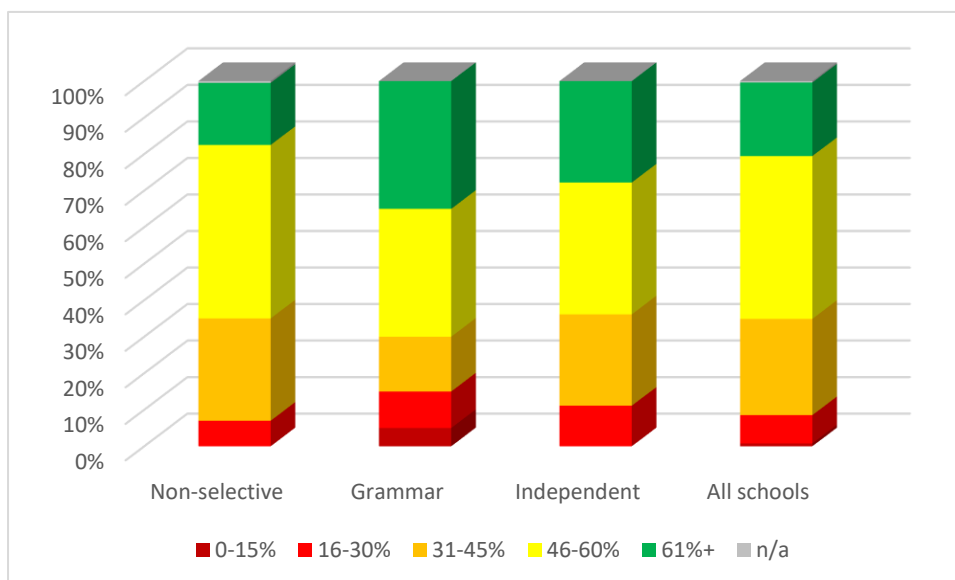
Only three schools (two non-selective state schools and one special school) reported offering an ‘entry-level’ qualification in history.

The IGCSE qualification in history was offered as the sole 14–16 qualification by 19 schools among the respondents, all of which were independent schools.

3.3 The proportion of students taking history

Respondents offering a GCSE qualification were asked to give an indication of the proportion of the cohort that had opted to continue with history at this level. Figure 24 shows that similar patterns in terms of GCSE uptake were found to those identified in previous surveys, in that the proportion of students taking GCSE appears higher in independent and selective schools than in non-selective state-maintained schools: 35% of grammar schools and 28% of independent schools reported that more than 60% of their cohort was taking history at GCSE, compared with just 17% of comprehensives, academies and free schools.

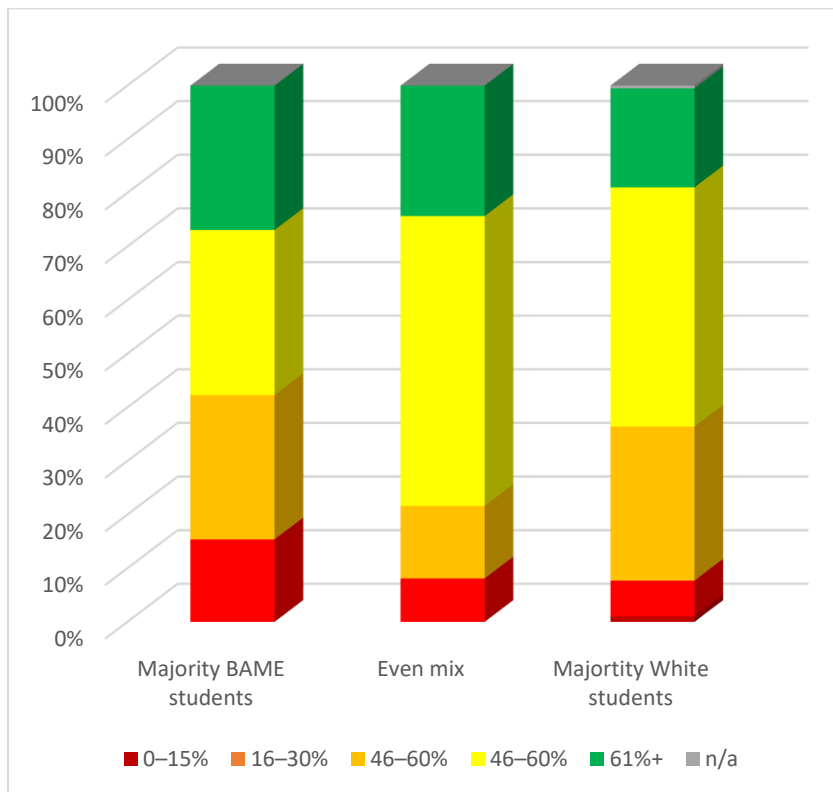
Figure 24: The proportion of the cohort in different types of school studying for history GCSE in Year 10



Comparisons across schools with a different ethnic mix of students reveal a rather complex picture. Schools with a higher BAME population are more likely to have low GCSE numbers: 15% of the BAME majority schools reported that they have history cohorts that make up 30% or less of the year group, compared with 8% of schools with a more evenly mixed student population and 7% of predominantly White schools. Yet the percentage of BAME majority schools with large history cohorts (more than 60% of the cohort taking history)

is actually slightly higher than for the more evenly mixed or the predominantly White schools (24% and 19% respectively).

Figure 25: The proportion of the cohort studying for history GCSE in Year 10, analysed in relation to the ethnic balance of the school population



The vast majority of respondents (86%) report that the take-up of history at GCSE by different students reflects the ethnic make-up of their school population. In seeking to determine how far this perception of take-up is confirmed by national statistics, the Historical Association requested recent data relating to GCSE entries in 2019 from the DfE. In Table 5, this information has been set out alongside data from a number of different years across the past decade in order to examine trends over time. This makes it clear that the overall proportion of history entries accounted for by White students has fallen significantly since 2012, accounting for 73% of entries in 2019 compared with 83% of entries in 2012, while the proportion of entries accounted for by students of mixed heritage has risen (from 3.4% to 4.6%), as have the proportions accounted for by Asian students (from 7% to 10%) and that of Black students (from 4% to 5.5%). The proportion of entries accounted for by students of Chinese heritage has fallen over the same period (from 0.4 to 0.3%).

Unfortunately, while this data demonstrates what proportion of total history entries are accounted for by students of different ethnic backgrounds, it does not allow us to explore what proportion of the different BAME cohorts in any year take history GCSE, and thus it remains difficult to check whether the perceptions of teachers reported in this study are an accurate reflection of patterns of subject uptake nationally.

Table 5: The proportion of GCSE history entries in previous years accounted for by different groups of students

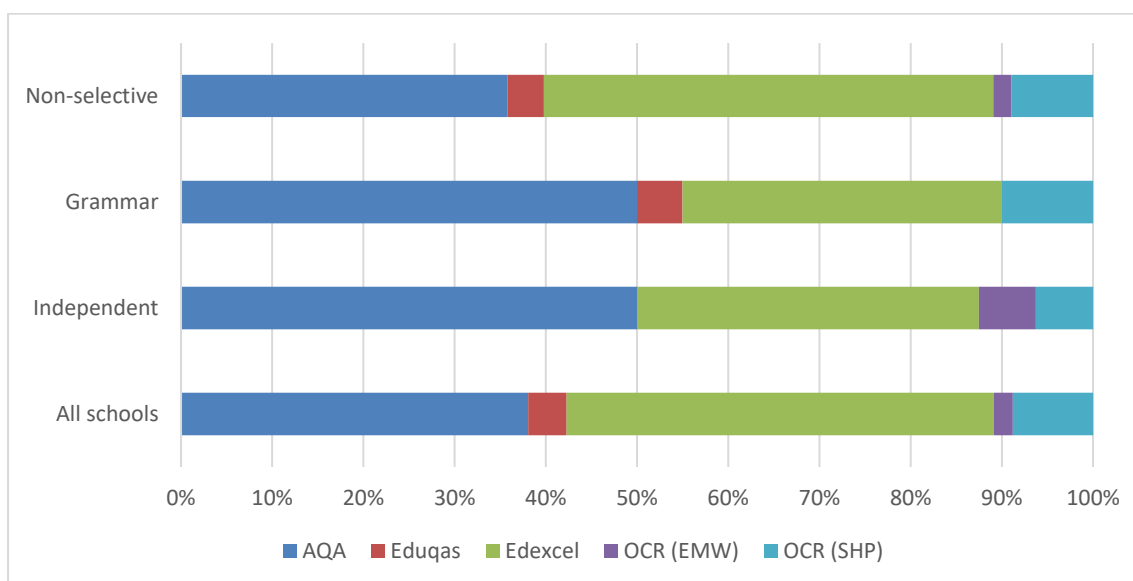
Group	2012	% of total entries	2013	% of total entries	2014	% of total entries	2015	% of total entries	2019	% of total entries
White	147,445	83	174,705	82	177,199	81	170,474	80	192,156	73
White British	141,388	79	167,284	78	168,798	77	161,764	76		
Mixed	6,114	3.4	7,923	4	8,782	4	8,692	4	12,569	4.6
Asian	12,915	7	16,808	8	18,252	8	18,755	9	26,030	10
Black	7,049	4	9,348	4	9,878	4.5	10,017	5	14,469	5.5
Chinese	741	0.4	842	0.4	842	0.4	767	0.35	829	0.3
Total entries	177,858		214,044		219,688		213,607		262,288	

Notes: 1. No figures were supplied by the DfE specifically for White British students taking GCSE in 2019. 2. Students for whom no data relating to ethnicity is available account for a small proportion (4.7%) of the total number of students.

3.3 GCSE exam board choice

Schools that entered candidates for the GCSE (9–1) qualification in history were asked to indicate the particular exam board and specification for which they entered candidates. As Figure 26 shows, the most common exam board choices overall among respondents were Edexcel (48%) and AQA (37%), although AQA was more popular among the independent and grammar school respondents, with 50% of schools of each type reporting that they worked with AQA for GCSE.

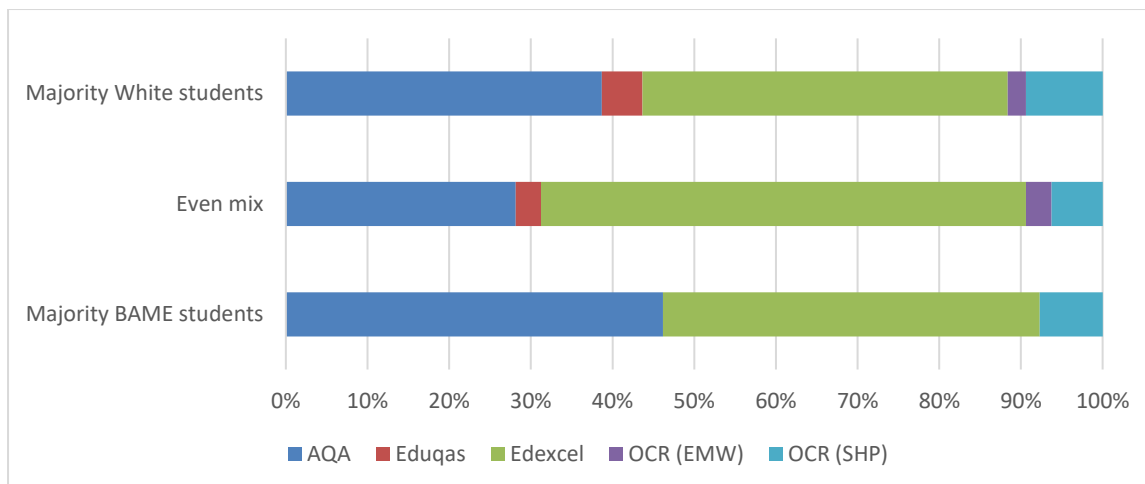
Figure 26: The GCSE exam boards with which respondents from different types of school entered students for GCSE History



There also appear to be some differences between schools with different student populations in terms of the exam board with which they work, but the picture is by no means clear. As shown in Figure 27, 46% of schools with a BAME majority population reported following the AQA specification, compared with 28% of

those with a more evenly mixed population and 39% of those with a majority White population. Among the schools with a more evenly mixed student population, Edexcel is the most popular exam board, used by 59% of schools.

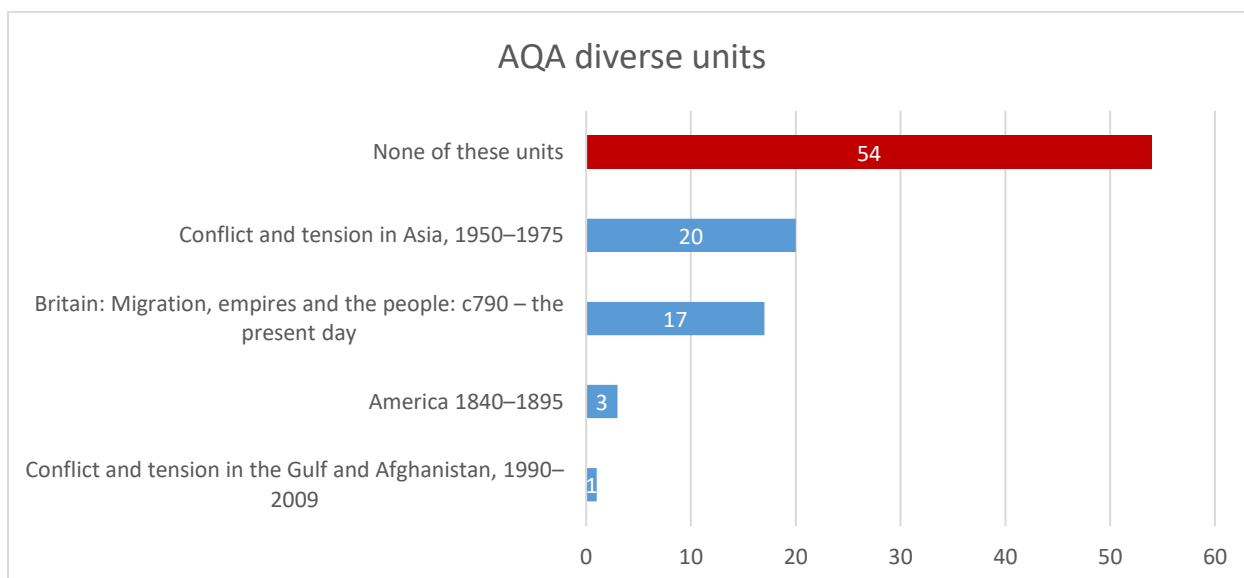
Figure 27: The GCSE exam boards with which respondents entered students for GCSE History, analysed in relation to the ethnic mix of the school population



3.4 Choices within the AQA specification

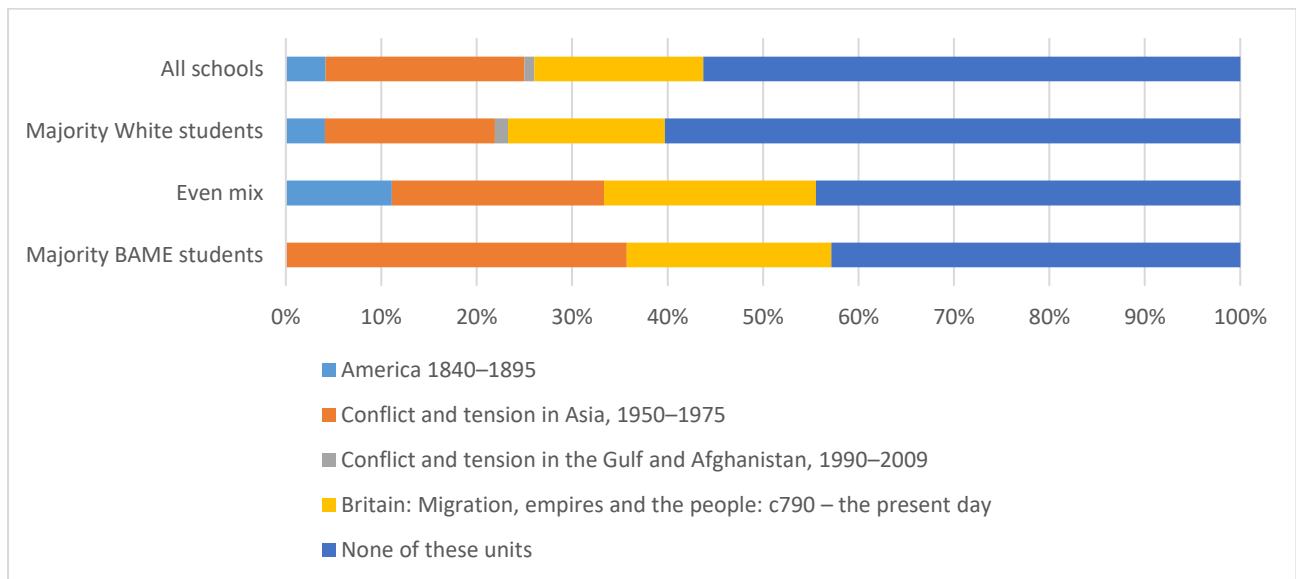
Within the AQA specification, respondents were asked about whether they taught any of the units that could be said to include ‘diverse’ content (in the sense of including some content related to the history of indigenous populations or of non-Western countries). As Figure 28 shows, more than half of the 96 schools that took the AQA specification did not teach any of these units. Of those that were taught, the most popular were ‘Conflict and tension in Asia, 1950–1975’, taught by 20 schools, and the thematic unit ‘Britain: Migration, empires and the people’, taught by 17 schools. Only three schools reported that they taught the unit on ‘America 1840–1895’ and just one taught the unit on ‘Conflict and tension in the Gulf and Afghanistan, 1990–2009’.

Figure 28: The number of schools among the 96 schools entering candidates for GCSE history with AQA that reported teaching the more diverse units



Schools where White students were in a majority seemed more likely to exclude any of the more diverse units from their curriculum. As Figure 29 shows, 60% of the 96 schools that entered students for GCSE History with AQA did not choose any of these units (compared with 42/43% of schools with a majority of BAME students or a more even mix). The unit on ‘Britain: migration, empires and the people’ seemed to be slightly more common in schools with a majority BAME or more evenly mixed school populations. As Figure 29 shows, this unit was taught in 21% of such schools that had opted for AQA, but in only 16% of the AQA schools that had a majority White population.

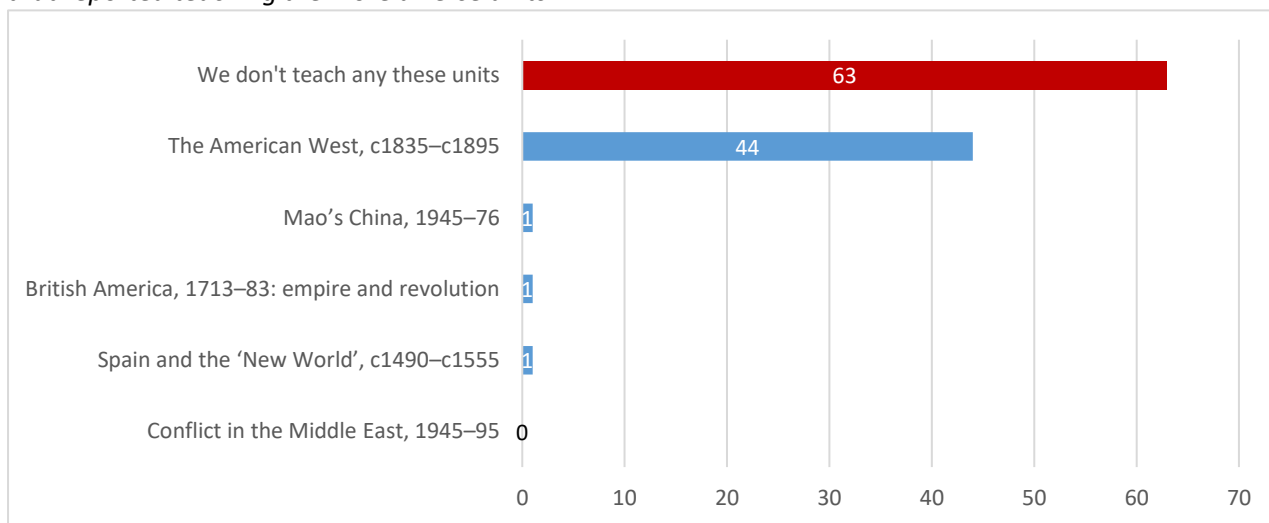
Figure 29: The proportion of the 96 schools entering students for GCSE History with AQA that reported teaching each of the more diverse units, analysed in relation to the ethnic make-up of the student population



3.5 Choices within the Edexcel specification

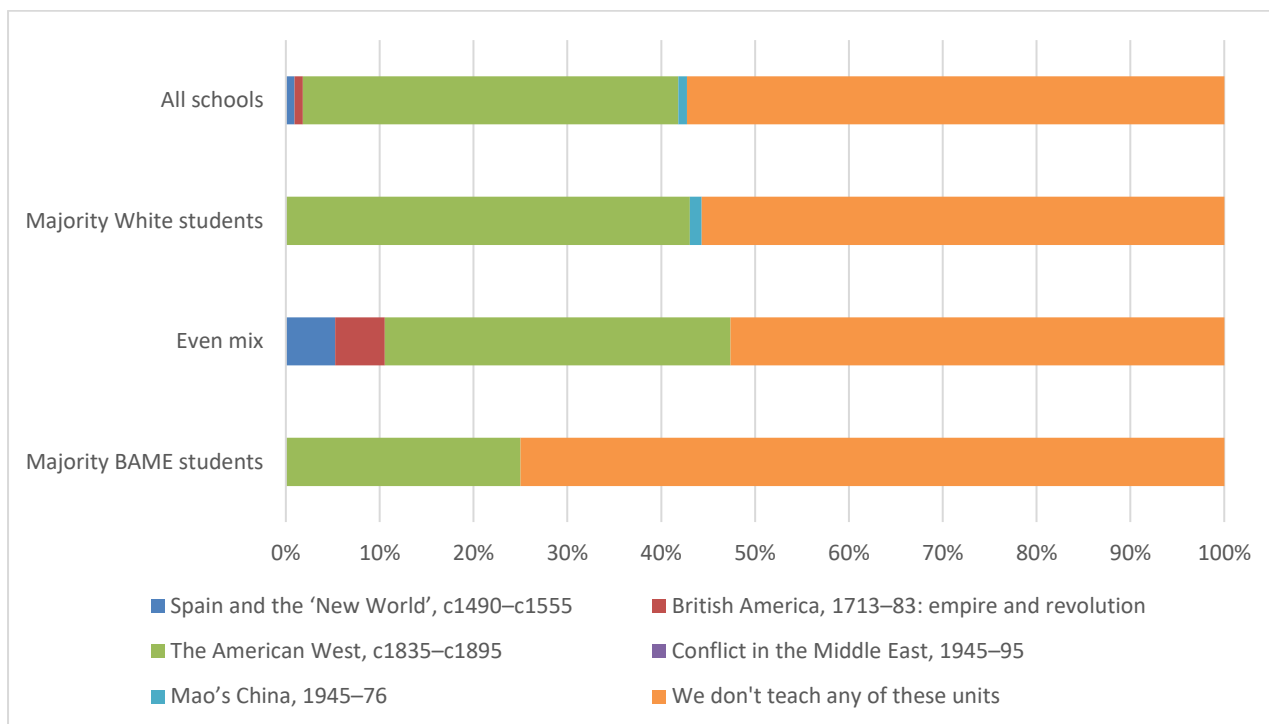
Among the 110 schools that reported teaching the Edexcel specification, a similar pattern to that found among the AQA schools is evident in terms of the proportion of schools (57%) that reported not teaching any of the more ‘diverse’ units. As Figure 30 shows, among those more diverse units that were actually chosen, the only one taught by a significant proportion of schools was ‘The American West, c1835–c1895’, which was taught by 44 schools. Beyond this, only one school in each case reported teaching the units on ‘Spain and the “New World” c1490–c1555’, ‘British America, 1713–83: empire and revolution’ and ‘Mao’s China, 1945–76’. No schools among the respondents reported teaching the unit on ‘Conflict in the Middle East, 1945–95’.

Figure 30: The number of schools among the 110 schools entering candidates for GCSE History with Edexcel that reported teaching the more diverse units



It was slightly surprising to note that 75% of the BAME majority schools, as shown in Figure 31, did not teach any topics beyond Europe, a fact that was true of 56% of the predominantly White schools and 53% of the schools with a more evenly mixed population.

Figure 31: The proportion of the 110 schools entering students for GCSE History with Edexcel that reported teaching each of the more diverse units, analysed in relation to the ethnic make-up of the student population

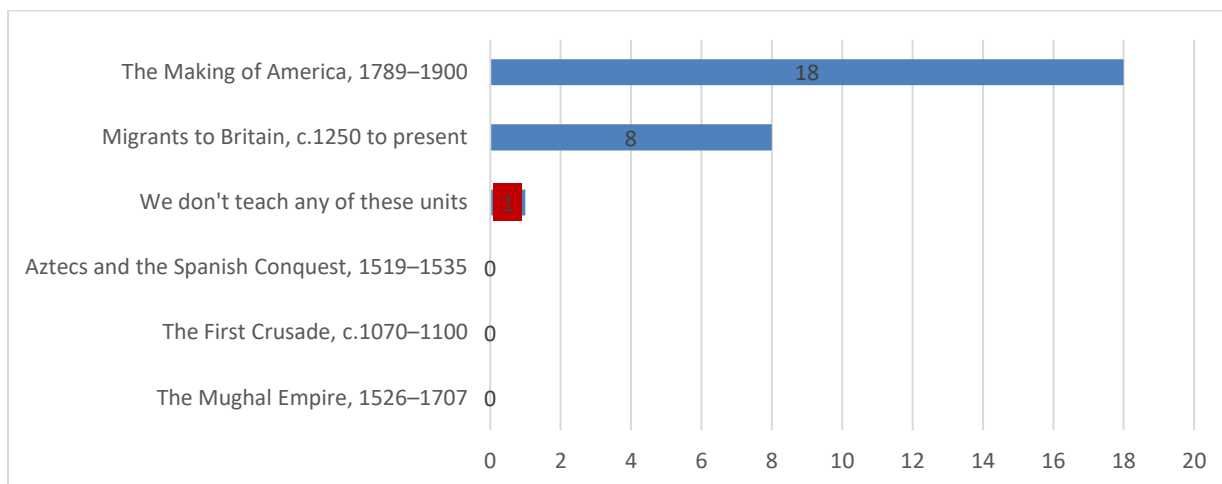


3.6 Choices within the OCR specification

Since only 9% of respondents reported that they taught the OCR SHP specification, it is difficult to make any general claims about options that would be valid beyond this sample of 27 schools. It is perhaps worth noting, however, that only one of these schools, as shown in Figure 32, had *not* taken the opportunity to teach a topic that included some kind of diverse content (i.e. extending beyond Europe and/or including Black or Asian British history). Two-thirds (18) of these 27 schools had opted to teach the unit on 'The

Making of America 1789–1900’, while eight schools had opted to teach the unit on ‘Migrants to Britain c.1250 to the present’.

Figure 32: The number of schools among the 27 schools entering candidates for GCSE history (SHP) with OCR that reported teaching the more diverse units

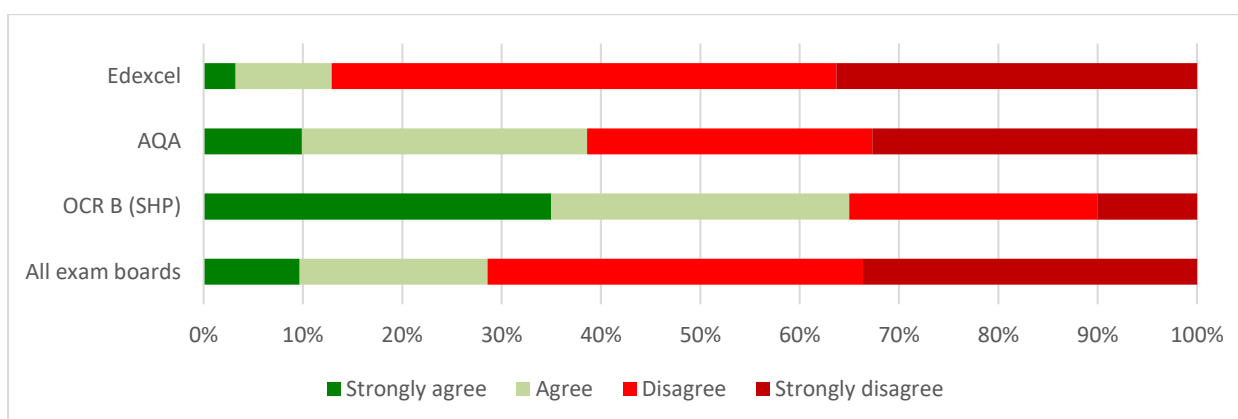


3.7 Satisfaction with the specifications in terms of their inclusion of more diverse topics

Respondents were asked how far they agreed with the claim that their particular GCSE specification allows sufficient scope for them to include the history of specific groups: Black and Asian British people, women, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities and lower or working class groups.

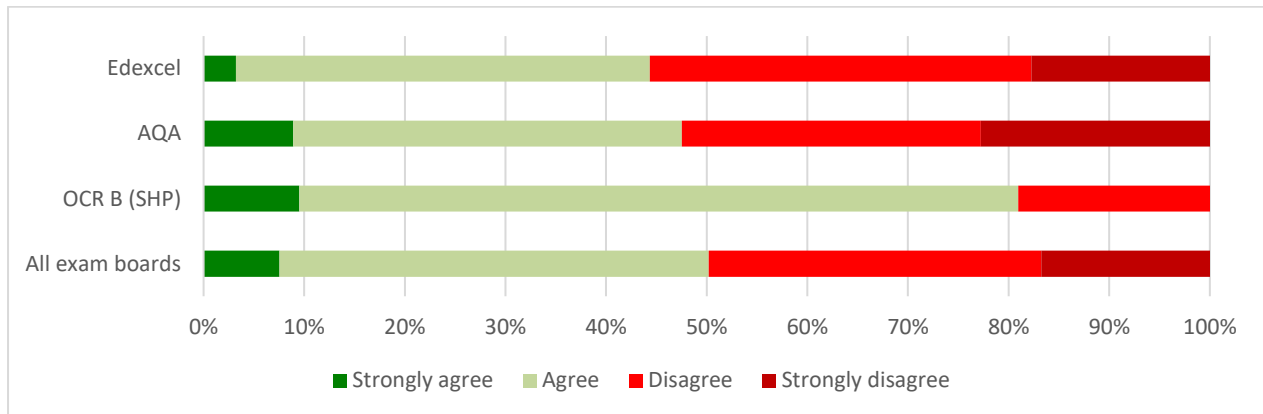
In terms of the teaching of Black and Asian British history, Figure 33 shows that 65% of the small number of OCR (SHP) respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the claim. This was the case for 39% of the AQA respondents and 13% of those taking Edexcel.

Figure 33: The proportion of schools agreeing or disagreeing with the claim that their particular exam board provided sufficient scope for them to include the history of Black and Asian British people



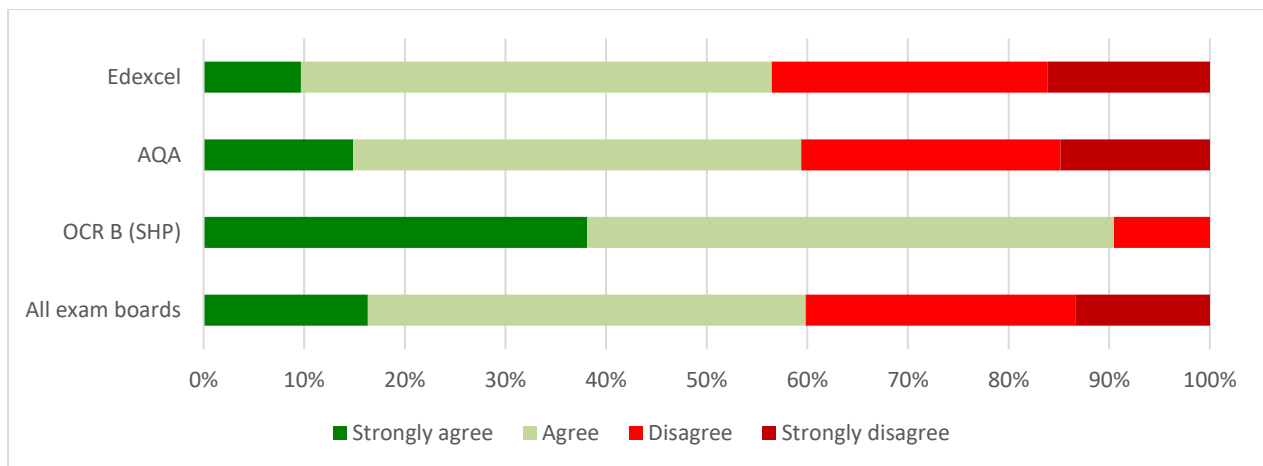
In relation to the inclusion of women, Figure 34 shows that 81% of OCR (SHP) respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, while only 48% of the AQA and 44% of the Edexcel respondents did so.

Figure 34: The proportion of schools agreeing or disagreeing with the claim that their particular exam board provided sufficient scope for them to include the history of women



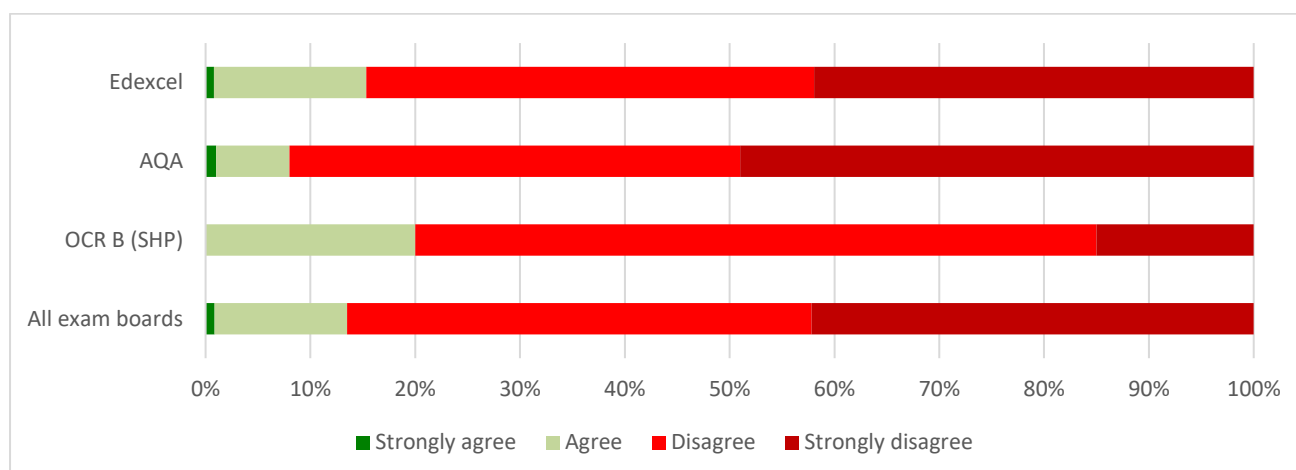
Responses were more positive overall in terms of the inclusion of lower/working class history. Figure 35 shows that 91% of OCR respondents, 60% of AQA and 57% of Edexcel respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their exam board provided sufficient scope for their inclusion.

Figure 35: The proportion of schools agreeing or disagreeing with the claim that their particular exam board provided sufficient scope for them to include the history of the lower/working classes



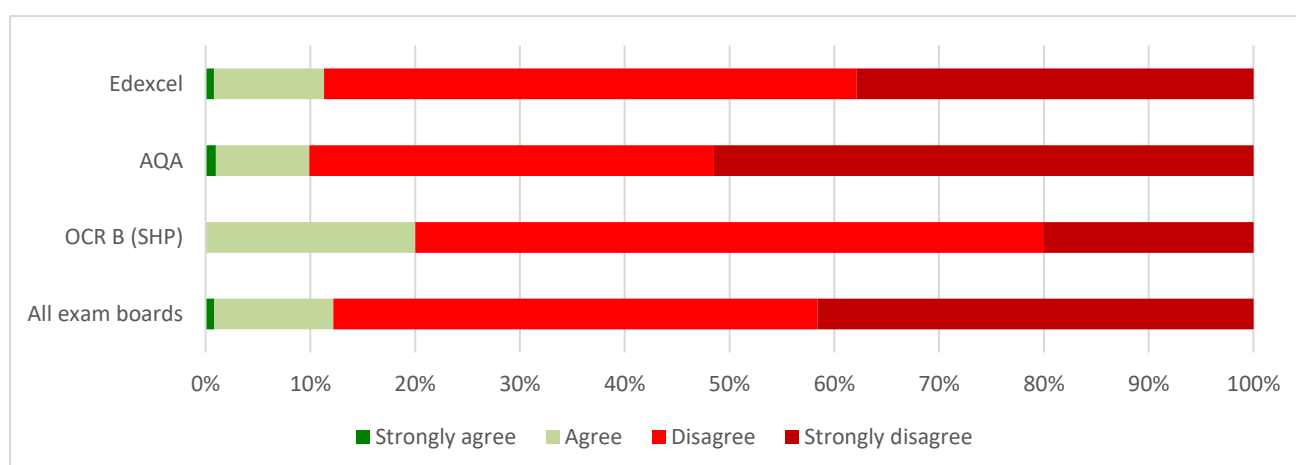
Responses were much more negative in relation to teaching about the history of LGBTQ+ people. As Figure 36 shows, 92% of the respondents entering students for AQA exams disagreed or strongly disagreed with the claim that their specification allowed sufficient scope for the inclusion of their history, as did 85% of those taking Edexcel and 80% of those following OCR (SHP).

Figure 36: The proportion of schools agreeing or disagreeing with the claim that their particular exam board provided sufficient scope for them to include the history of LGBTQ+ people



Responses were similarly negative in relation to teaching about people with disabilities in the past. Figure 37 shows that 90% of those following AQA, 89% of those following Edexcel and 80% of those following OCR (SHP) specifications disagreed or strongly disagreed with the claim.

Figure 37: The proportion of schools agreeing or disagreeing with the claim that their particular exam board provided sufficient scope for them to include the history of people with disabilities



In light of these levels of dissatisfaction with the inclusion of diverse groups within the history curriculum, it is perhaps unsurprising that around one-third of schools suggested that they had recently made or were considering changes to their GCSE courses. Some 5% of schools reported having changed exam boards, while 13% reported that they had recently switched their choice of units within a particular specification. Another 7% suggested that they were contemplating changing exam boards, while 8% suggested that they were contemplating a change of unit within their current specification. It is important to acknowledge, however, that the majority (68%) had neither made any recent change nor were contemplating making one.

Changes undertaken or under consideration among schools working with AQA

Among schools already following the AQA specification, 22 schools offered comments that gave some insight into their thinking. While several schools made reference to increasing diversity, for example by switching to a unit on Elizabeth I to increase the inclusion of women or switching to an American unit in order to 'get beyond Europe', the only common change reported was a move to take up the unit on 'Britain: Migration, empires and the people', which was noted by seven schools. (While the trend was thus towards improving

the diversity of schools' GCSE curricula in different ways, it should be acknowledged that one school was dropping a focus on America 1840–95, hoping that study of the Cold War would improve student engagement.) It is also worth noting that four respondents made explicit reference to decisions about unit choices being made at the level of their multi-academy trust, in some cases denying them (as heads of department) any influence over the decision.

Changes undertaken or under consideration among schools working with Edexcel

Among the 110 schools that entered students for GCSE History with Edexcel, 39 respondents chose to offer some comment or explanation of their thinking about possible changes. The most frequently mentioned change was to take up the new module being introduced from September 2021 on 'Migrants in Britain c800 to the present', which was cited as a definite decision by 15 respondents, while another five expressed interest in doing so – either at a later date or if they could persuade their colleagues to engage in the new planning that would be required. Four respondents explained that they were considering or had made a switch to OCR, all suggesting that the board offered greater diversity and two of them specifically noting that the OCR B (SHP) specification offered the chance to study local history.

While it is important to be cautious in drawing any general conclusions from the comparatively small number of schools following the OCR B (SHP) specification, the following comment, offered when explaining reasons for switching exam boards away from Edexcel, encapsulates some of the concerns that were expressed about the lack of diversity within the Edexcel specifications and the greater level of satisfaction with OCR specification B (illustrated in Figures 33–37 above):

The Edexcel (Pearson) GCSE consistently wipes out any opportunity to explore diverse histories. This is particularly evident in the American West unit where the Civil War is a sidenote and the experience of African Americans is reduced to the Exoduster movement. The Medicine in Britain unit also fails to address women of note in medicine, and any contribution by a person of colour. This is compounded by the sheer amount of content that is taught, meaning there is no time to explore stories not on the specification. We are considering switching to OCR SHP B where there seems to be more scope for exploring diversity, and potentially less content to be explored, freeing up time to delve into more diverse stories.

(11–18 non-selective girls' school, Kent, majority White population)

As was the case among the AQA respondents, teachers' intentions were not always focused on encompassing greater diversity. Six respondents explained that they would be switching away from the unit on 'The American West 1835–95', with four of them planning to study the Cold War instead.

Here too there was evidence that a small number of schools (three in this case) were being required to change exam board or to refrain from making changes because of policies decided at a trust-wide level within their multi-academy trust.

Changes undertaken or under consideration among schools working with OCR

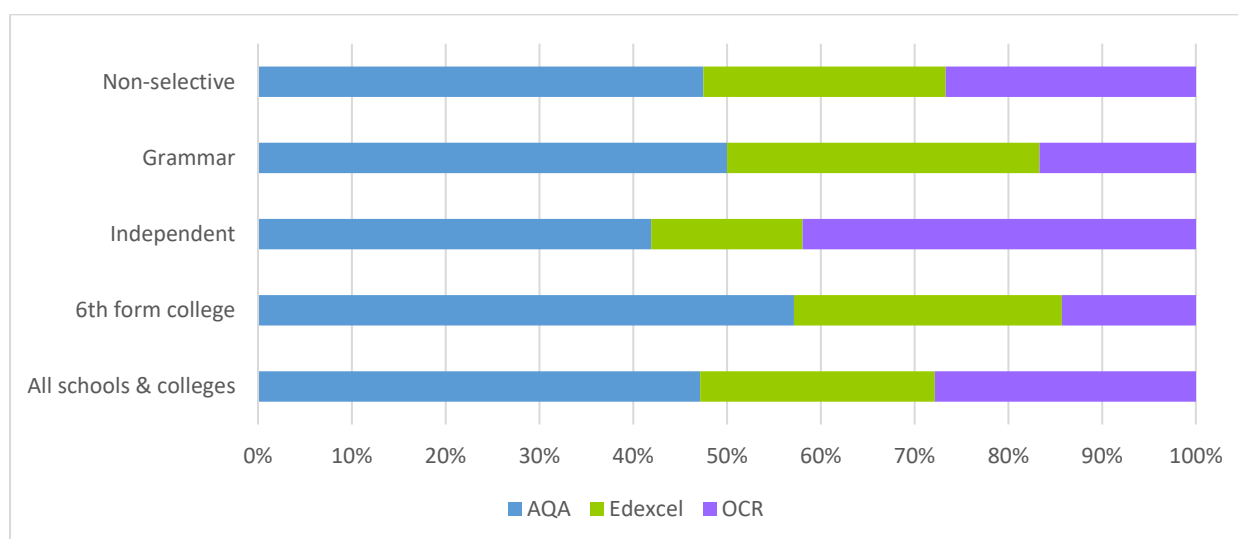
Only five respondents currently following OCR specifications offered any comments about changes that they had planned or were contemplating. All three comments made by those following the OCR B (SHP) specification noted that the school was switching to the thematic study on 'Migrants to Britain c1250 to the present'. Both of those that followed the OCR A (EMW) specification were switching to other boards because of the extensive content or style of interpretations questions within the OCR papers.

4. A-level uptake and module choices

4.1 A-level exam board choice

Responses related to post-16 teaching were provided by 182 schools, of which 176 reported that they offered A-level history. Respondents were asked to identify which exam boards they worked with. As Figure 38 shows, AQA accounted for almost half of the schools, while the remainder were fairly equally divided between OCR and Edexcel, at least in the non-selective state sector. Among the grammar school respondents, Edexcel accounted for around one-third of schools, while respondents in the independent sector appeared more likely to opt for OCR (the board chosen by 40% of such schools).

Figure 38: The exam boards with which respondents from different types of school entered students for A-level History



There are no very clear patterns or relationships evident between the ethnic mix of the schools' populations and the particular exam boards that schools had chosen to work with.

4.2 Uptake of A-level history by students of different ethnic backgrounds

In response to a question about how closely the uptake of history at A-level reflected the ethnic balance of each school's student population, a much higher proportion of respondents than at GCSE reported a disparity in terms of subject take-up. Only 65% of schools reported a close match between the ethnic profile of their cohort and that of those taking history. Disparities are more commonly noted in schools with a relatively equal mix of White and BAME students, 46% of which reported a gap, compared with 33% of those with a majority White population and 30% of schools with majority BAME population.

This greater disparity seems to be reflected in national figures related to A-level entries obtained from the Department for Education, but patterns are particularly difficult to establish because of the high proportion of entries for which the students' ethnicity is not identified. Whereas 4.7% of the 2019 entries at GCSE were classified as 'unknown' or other, the proportion classified in this way at A-level was 16.5%. Nonetheless, Table 6 shows that there appears to have been a small fall in the proportion of entrants from White backgrounds (from 71% of entries in 2013 to 68% of entries in 2019), accompanied by a small rise in the proportion of entries accounted for by students of 'mixed' heritage (from 3% in 2013 to 4% in 2019), by Asian students (from 6% to 7%), and by Black students (from 3% to 4%). The proportion of A-level entries in 2019 accounted for by Chinese students has, however, held steady over this period, accounting for 0.3% of entries.

Table 6: The proportion of A-level history entries in previous years accounted for by different groups of students

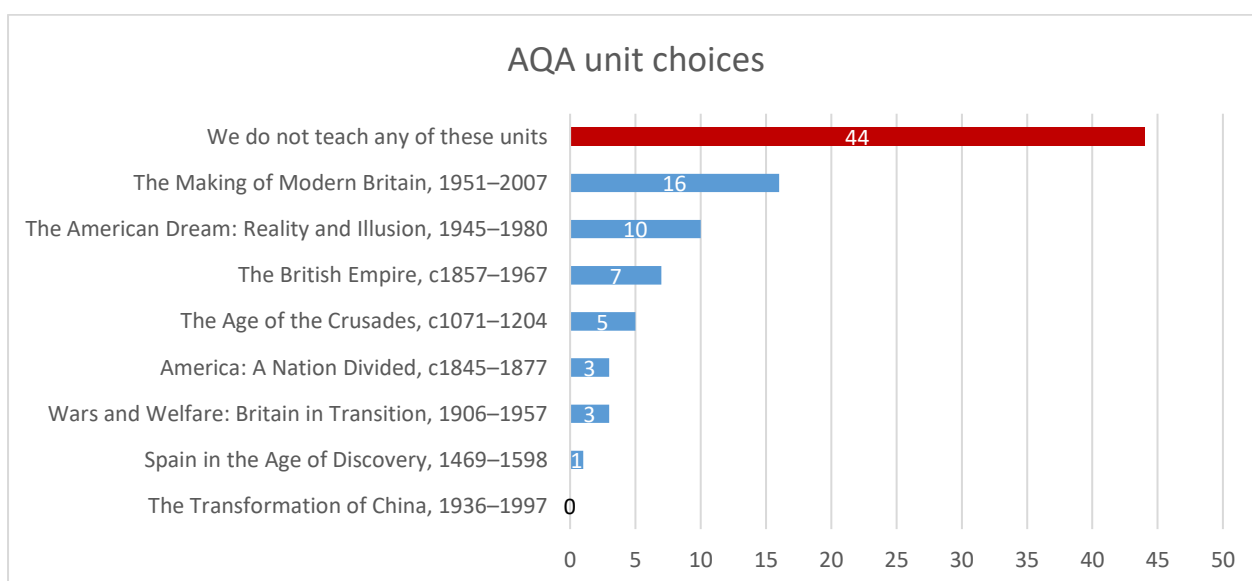
Group	2013	% of total entries	2014	% of total entries	2015	% of total entries	2019	% of total entries
White	33,009	71%	32,383	70%	34,864	70%	31,133	68%
White British	31,495	68%	30,880	67%	33,126	67%		
Mixed	1,333	3%	1,466	3%	1,622	3%	1,819	4%
Asian	2,271	5%	2,397	5%	2,852	6%	3,245	7%
Black	1,406	3%	1,627	3.5%	1,813	4%	1,839	4%
Chinese	133	0.3%	147	0.3%	147	0.3%	146	0.3%
Total Entries	46,421		46,006		49,588		45,760	

Twenty-seven respondents offered an explanation for the disparity that they had noted. Eight of these suggested that BAME students' choices were based on career ambitions/preferences for STEM subjects. Five attributed the gap to the fact that their school had very few BAME students. Three respondents cited cultural or parental pressures. Only one respondent attributed the lack of take-up among BAME students to the curriculum.

4.3 AQA unit choices

As at GCSE, the survey asked schools about whether or not they taught any of the more obviously diverse units within each of the A-level specifications. Among the 83 AQA schools that responded to this question, over half (44) reported that they did not teach any of these units.

Figure 39: The number of schools among the 83 schools entering candidates for A-level history with AQA that reported teaching the more diverse units

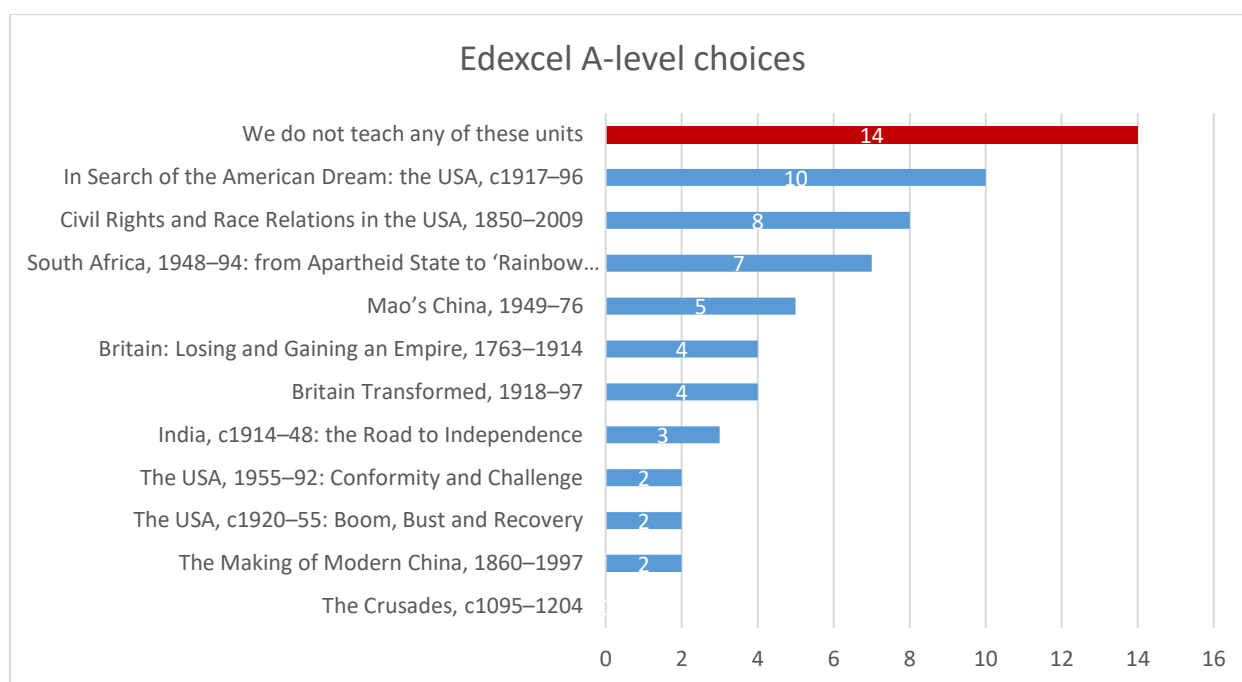


The most popular choices among the more diverse units focused on post-war British and American history, and then on the British Empire across the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century.

4.4 Edexcel unit choices

Among the 44 schools that reported teaching Edexcel A-level, only one-third of schools (14) reported that they did not teach any of the more 'diverse' units. As Figure 40 shows, among the more diverse choices that were made, the focus tended to be on America in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, although interest in South Africa was also relatively high.

Figure 40: The number of schools among the 44 schools entering candidates for A-level history with Edexcel that reported teaching the more diverse units



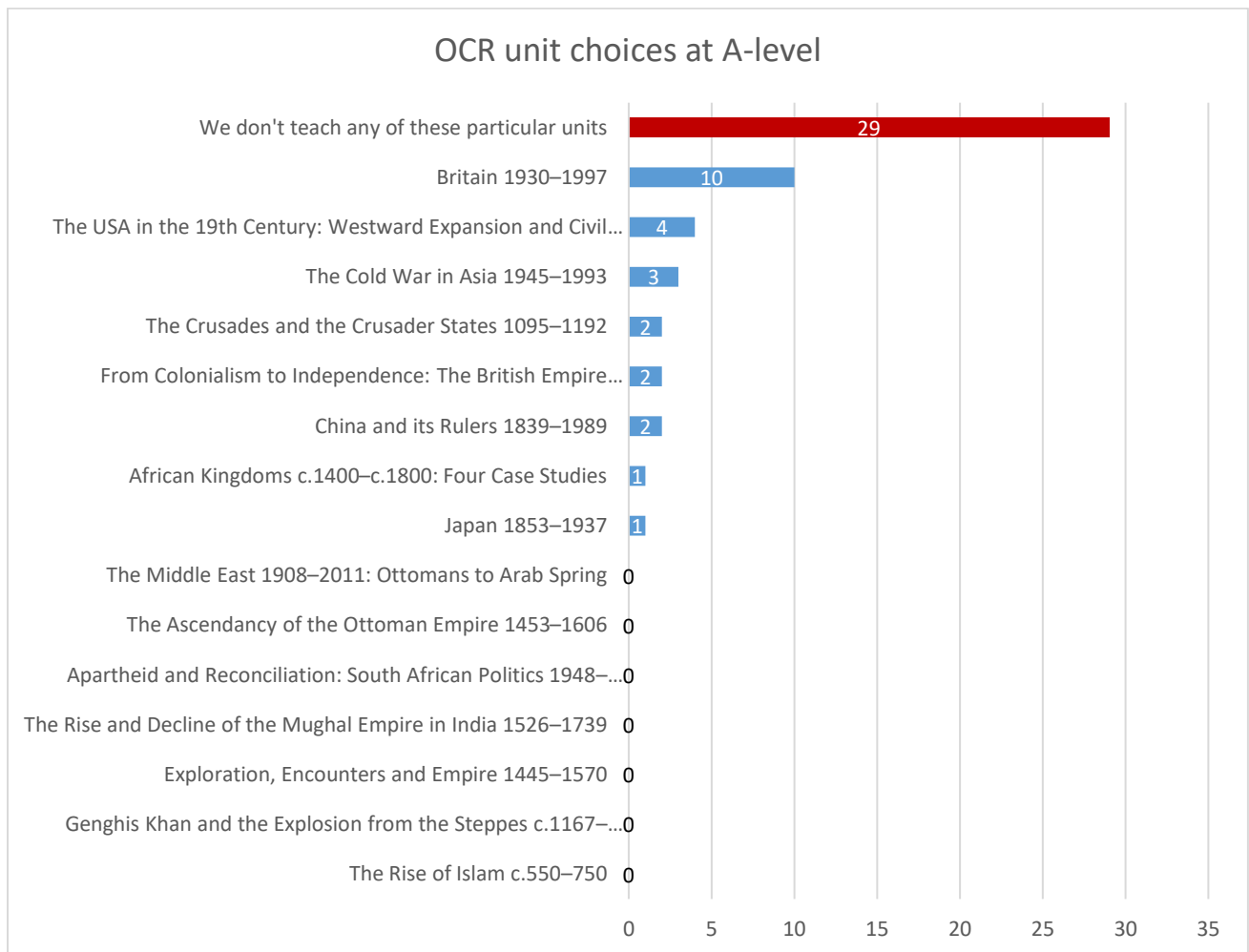
4.5 OCR unit choices

Among the 49 schools that reported teaching an OCR A-level specification, well over half (29 respondents) reported that they did not teach any of the more 'diverse' units. Among the schools that had opted for one or more of the units identified as containing some kind of diverse content, the most popular were (as with Edexcel) those units dealing with twentieth-century Britain and with 'westward expansion' in nineteenth-century America. Beyond the three schools teaching about the Cold War in Asia (1945–93), only the Crusades and Crusader states, the British Empire and mid-twentieth-century China were reported as being taught by at least two schools.

It is quite striking that, despite the apparent efforts of OCR to include an extensive range of non-British and non-European options, the schools following this specification seem particularly to have shied away from embracing the more diverse options on offer.

Across all three exam boards, the most commonly taught units that allow some scope for teaching Black and Asian history are those dealing with modern Britain and the United States.

Figure 41: The number of schools among the 49 schools entering candidates for A-level history with OCR that reported teaching the more diverse units



4.6 Satisfaction with A-level specifications in terms of their inclusion of more diverse topics

Respondents were asked how far they agreed with the claim that their particular A-level specification allows sufficient scope for them to include the history of specific groups: Black and Asian British people, women, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities and lower or working class groups. As at GCSE, Figures 42 to 46 show that there was generally most agreement with the statements in relation to teaching about the history of lower or working class groups (with 74% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the claim) and in relation to including the experiences of women (68%); there was less agreement in relation to the inclusion of the history of Black and Asian British people (43%) and least agreement in relation to the inclusion of LGBTQ+ people or people with disabilities, with both these last claims accepted by only around 30% of respondents.

Despite the concerns noted in relation to the inclusion of certain groups, these responses are generally more positive than those recorded in relation to the GCSE specifications. Overall, A-level specifications appear to be raising fewer concerns for teachers, an impression that is confirmed by the fact that only 20% of respondents gave any indication that they were considering making changes to either their choice of A-level units or their choice of exam board (compared with 32% who reported considering changes at GCSE). Only 22 respondents offered any comments to explain their intentions, and few common themes were evident within these reflections beyond the concern expressed by five teachers that they were seeking to diversify their curriculum.

Figure 42: The proportion of schools agreeing or disagreeing with the claim that their particular exam board provided sufficient scope for them to include the history of Black and Asian British people

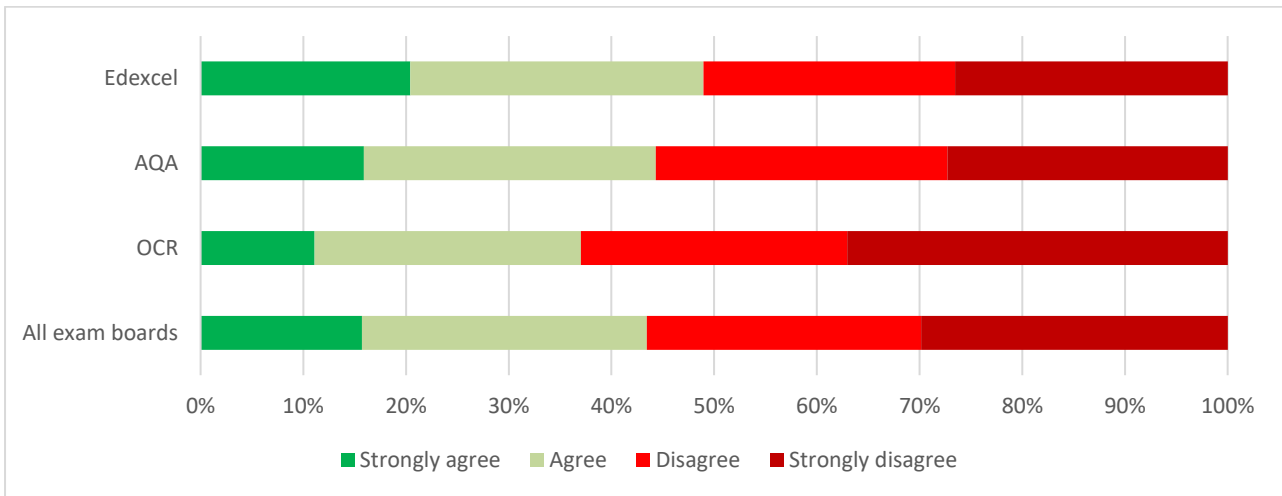


Figure 43: The proportion of schools agreeing or disagreeing with the claim that their particular exam board provided sufficient scope for them to include the history of women's experiences

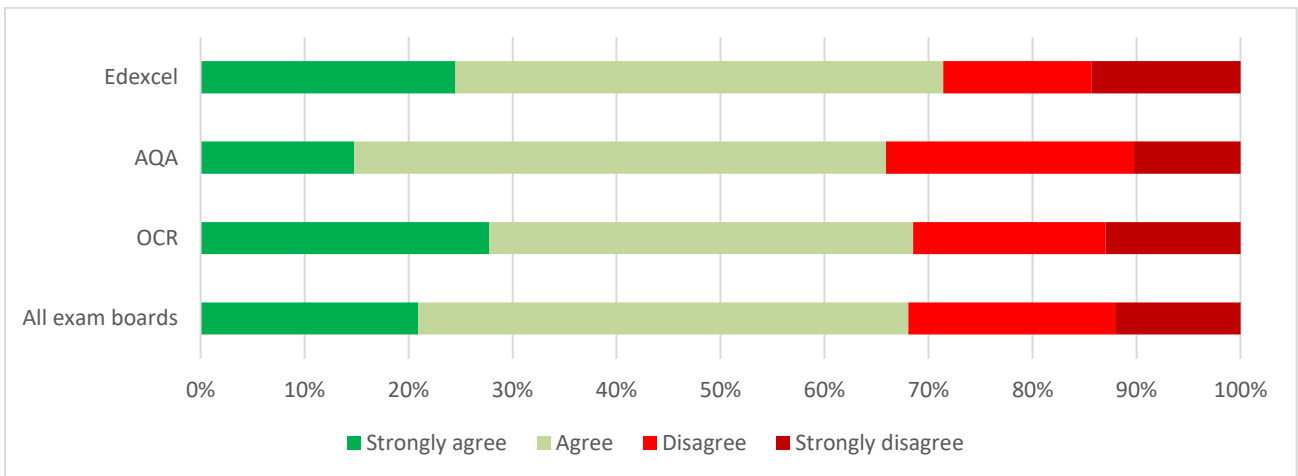


Figure 44: The proportion of schools agreeing or disagreeing with the claim that their particular exam board provided sufficient scope for them to include the history of LGBT+ people

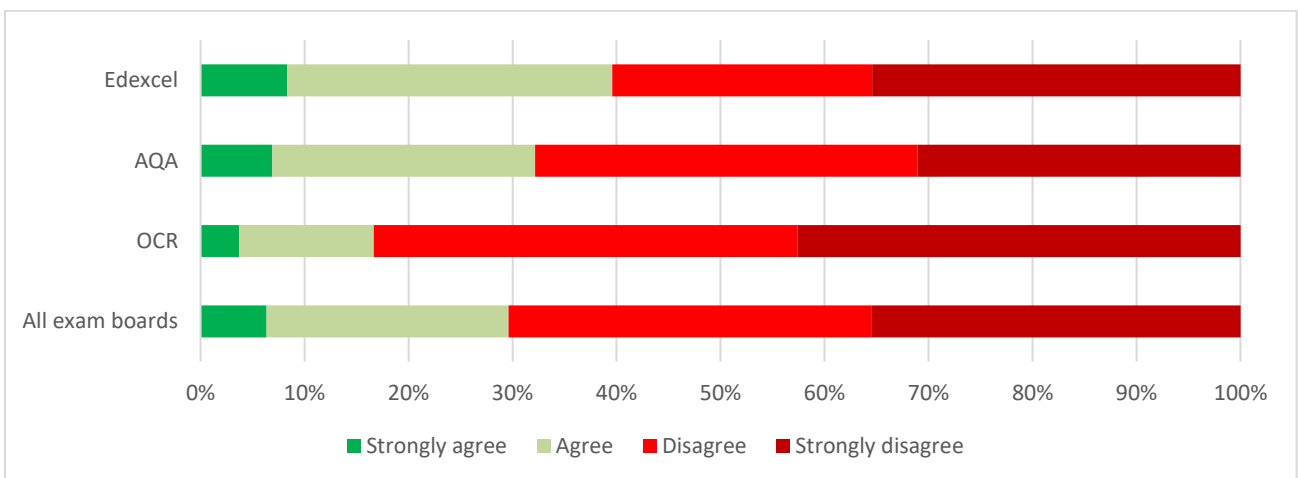


Figure 45: The proportion of schools agreeing or disagreeing with the claim that their particular exam board provided sufficient scope for them to include the history of people with disabilities

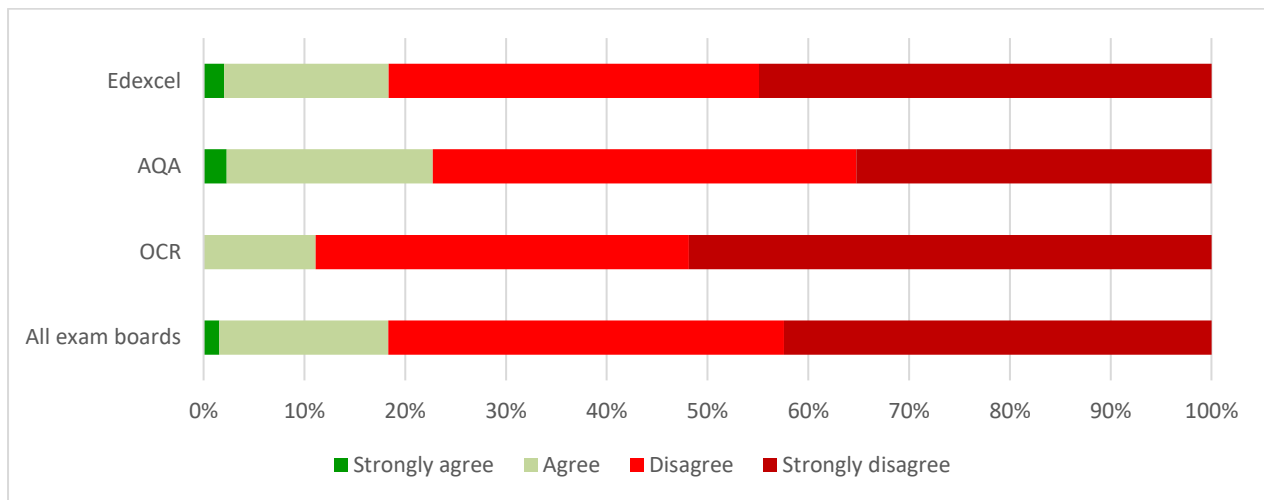
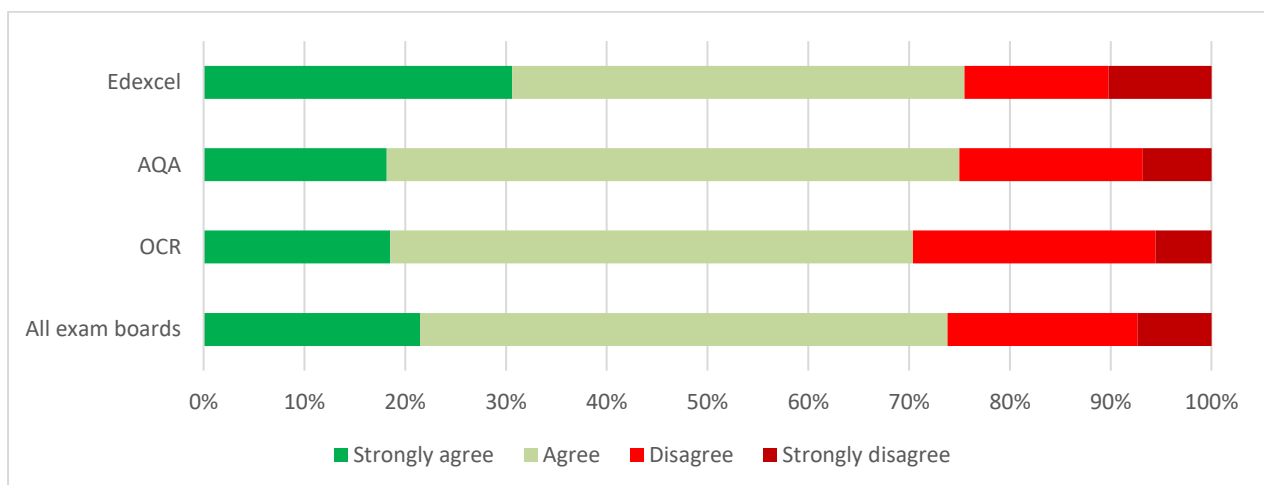


Figure 46: The proportion of schools agreeing or disagreeing with the claim that their particular exam board provided sufficient scope for them to include the history of the lower or working classes



4.7 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on students progressing to university

Respondents were asked to reflect on the impact of prolonged school and college closures (during the academic years of 2019–20 and 2020–21) on the ways in which students planning to continue with history in higher education would be less well-prepared and/or better prepared for university-level study of history than previous school leavers. On balance, more comments were made identifying negative consequences – some 140 comments, compared with 123 comments noting positive outcomes. In many cases where positive outcomes were noted, respondents took care to stress that they applied only to *some* of the students with whom they had been working, noting that while particular students had flourished or developed greater independence and resourcefulness, others had faced challenges that they had not been able to overcome.

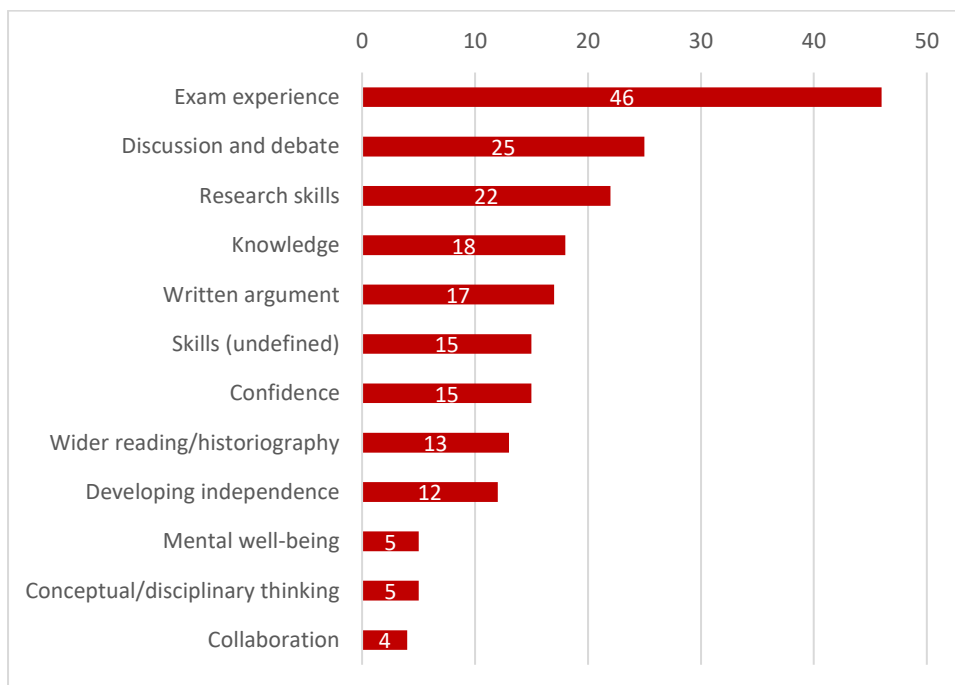
As Figure 47 shows, the issue to which most respondents (46) made reference was students’ lack of experience of formal examinations. The experience of examinations was linked to a number of particular outcomes, such as developing greater confidence in their own abilities and security of subject knowledge, but teachers were clearly worried that the fact that students had not experienced formal examinations might make them particularly anxious or unable to perform well in timed examinations at university. Linked

with the lack of exam practice was a concern about the quality of students’ written arguments, specifically identified as a potential area of weakness by 17 respondents.

The lack of opportunities for face-to-face discussion and debate, identified by 25 respondents, was of particular concern in relation to students’ abilities to engage effectively in university seminars. A lack of familiarity with various research skills – including the use of university libraries and practice in referencing sources appropriately – was cited as an area of weakness by 22 respondents, while 15 others made reference to ‘skills’ that were otherwise undefined. Gaps in students’ knowledge as a result of not having covered the whole syllabus or not being able to explore issues from different perspectives (such as history from below) were cited by 18 respondents. Lack of engagement with academic scholarship and historical debates through wider reading was specifically highlighted by 13 respondents.

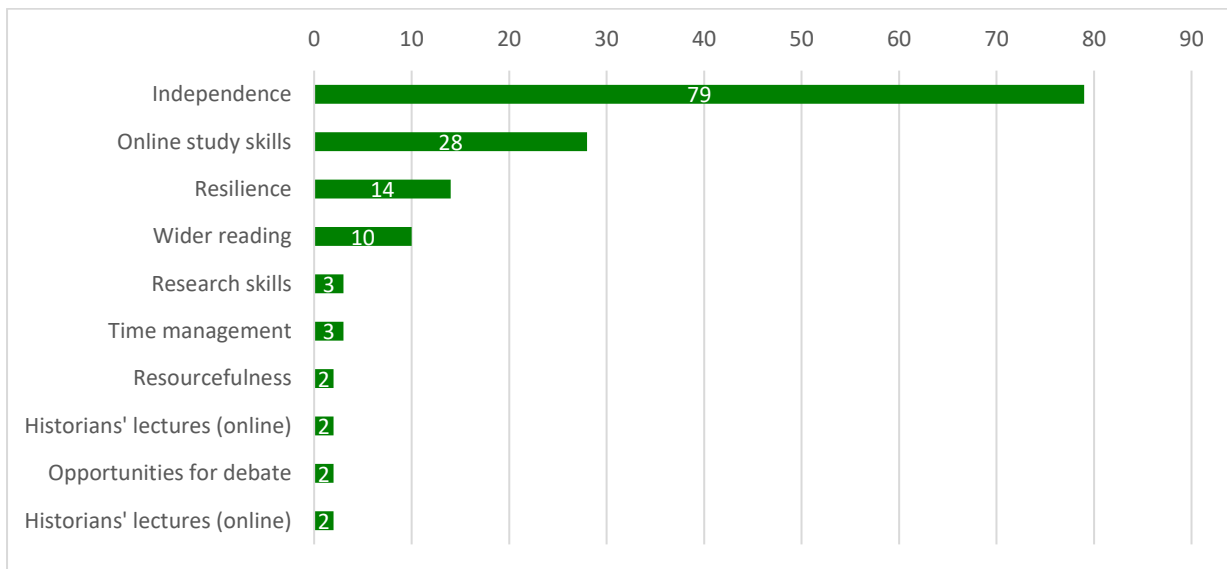
More general concerns about the effects of the disruption on students’ mental well-being and confidence and on their capacity to work independently were also highlighted in various ways by respondents.

Figure 47: The ways in which respondents expected school leavers progressing to university to be less well-prepared than those in previous years as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic



As noted previously, reflections on ways in which students might be *better* prepared for university-level study of history tended to be expressed slightly more cautiously, highlighting the differences between students in noting that not all had been able to learn more independently or flourish in the ways that were possible for some. There was greater agreement, however, as Figure 48 shows, on the main kinds of benefit that were related to students’ ability to learn independently, explicitly mentioned by 79 respondents and frequently linked to associated capacities such as resilience (14), time management (three) and resourcefulness (two).

Figure 48: The ways in which respondents expected school leavers progressing to university to be **better** prepared than those in previous years as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic



The other specific benefit seen in terms of preparing students for university was their ability to use online resources for learning (28), to carry out research, to follow up on reading and to communicate effectively with their peers and their teachers. In some respects – and for some students – the scope to work online had opened up more opportunities to engage with academic scholarship, both in written form (often through Google books, rather than library collections) and in the form of online guest lectures.