

ISA House
5-7 Great Chesterford Court
Great Chesterford
Essex CB10 1PF
T: 01799 523619

isa@isaschools.org.uk
www.isaschools.org.uk



The independent sector is proud to be working alongside colleagues in UK maintained schools as part of the Teaching and Learning International Survey 2018. There are few genuine opportunities to compare conditions for teaching across the globe, so TALIS is a rare chance to contribute to an area of vital significance.

The 2013 survey provided a wealth of relevant information for the UK independent sector, including whether our teachers feel sufficiently prepared for teaching and how professional development enhances teachers' classroom practices. We discovered that instructional leadership - the set of practices that principals and headteachers use in relation to the improvement of teaching and learning - is the most common approach taken in most countries, yet some school leaders never engage in this area. In addition, school leaders that recognised the value of shared leadership were more likely to incorporate teachers into the school decision making processes but these opportunities differ enormously when parents/guardians and students are offered to actively participate. The UK is as guilty as others in this area, often with little more than lip-service paid via PTAs and the occasional student/pupil council. Given the complexity and dynamics of educational change, there seems little doubt that these subtle differences in engaging additional stakeholders in the decision-making process could represent important differences in the quality of educational processes that take place within our schools. In addition, TALIS made clear that the UK independent sector isn't alone in not providing sufficient training to headteachers to match the diversity of their responsibilities. It is even more worrying to see that this gap is not filled later on during their career.

And there were important challenges for many of our schools highlighted by TALIS. Women represent the majority of the teaching workforce for most countries at all levels of education. Despite this and the fact that most principals and headteachers are former teachers, significantly fewer principal/heads are women at all education levels. While the UK performs better than some in terms of equality, the gender distribution of teachers in the UK is still not reflected in school leadership positions. And in all TALIS countries, there are low rates of co-operative professional development and collaborative teaching practice. This remains a challenge for our independent schools where "go on a course" still tends to be the dominant approach to professional development.

Not every school will get the opportunity to collaborate on the project, but taking part will help all schools, private or state-funded, to understand more about the national and international contexts in which they operate. This is perhaps even more vital than ever, as teaching becomes globalised and all countries look to ensure that their children gain the advantages upon which their prospects depend. If chosen, please do not miss such an important opportunity to help shape the future.

Neil Roskilly

Chief Executive of the Independent Schools Association and Independent Schools Council Board