

4. THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Who are the teachers?

- On average in OECD countries, about 30% of primary teachers, 33% of lower secondary teachers and 36% of upper secondary teachers are at least 50 years old.
- On average, over 81% of primary school teachers in OECD countries are women.
- The proportion of women among teaching staff tends to decline at higher levels of education, reaching just over 40% at tertiary level.

Significance

This spread presents a profile of the teaching workforce. Getting a better understanding of the teaching workforce means countries can anticipate teacher shortages and work to improve the teaching profession's attractiveness as a career choice.

Findings

On average across the OECD, about 30% of primary teachers are at least 50 years old, but the levels are much higher in some countries: 49% in Germany, 48% in Sweden and 45% in Italy. Germany and Italy also have high proportions of lower secondary teachers aged over 50: 52% and 60%, respectively. In Italy, fewer than 1% of lower secondary school teachers are aged below 30, compared with the OECD average of 12%.

As for the broader age distribution of teachers across the OECD area, the average percentage of teachers in the 40-49 age group is roughly the same in primary and lower and upper secondary education – between just over 28% and just under 30%. Teachers aged below 40 tend to be more prevalent in primary education, where they account for 42% of teachers on average. At lower secondary level, they account for just over 38% of teachers, and at upper secondary slightly under 35%.

Across all levels of education, including tertiary level, women represent just over 66% of all teachers in the OECD area, but the percentage of women teachers declines from each level of education to the next. For example, on average across the OECD area, women account for almost 97% of teachers at pre-primary level; just over 81% at primary level; less than 68% at lower secondary level; 56% at upper secondary level; and just over 40% in tertiary education.

Definitions

Data refer to the academic year 2008-09 and are based on the UOE data collection on education statistics administered by the OECD in 2010.

Going further

For additional data and notes go to “Indicator D7” at www.oecd.org/edu/eag2011.

Areas covered include:

- Age distribution of teachers by country and level of education.
- Gender distribution of teachers by country and level of education.

Further reading from the OECD

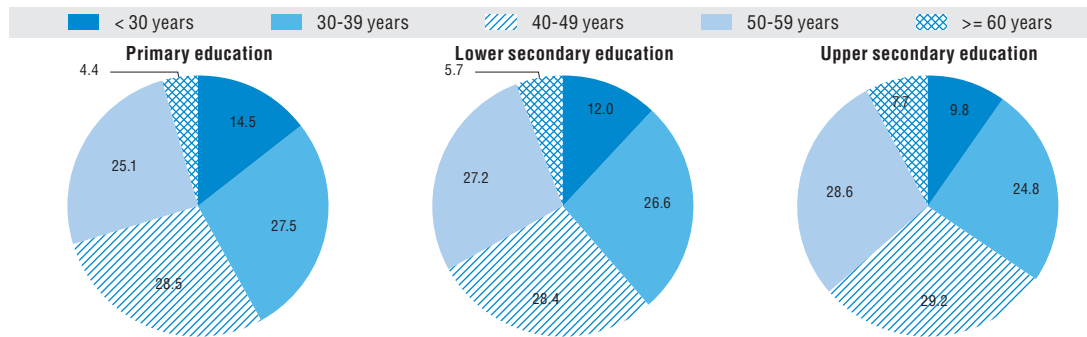
Educating Teachers for Diversity: Meeting the Challenge (2010).

Evaluating and Rewarding the Quality of Teachers: International Practices (2009).

Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers (2005).

Figure 4.10. Age distribution of teachers, 2009

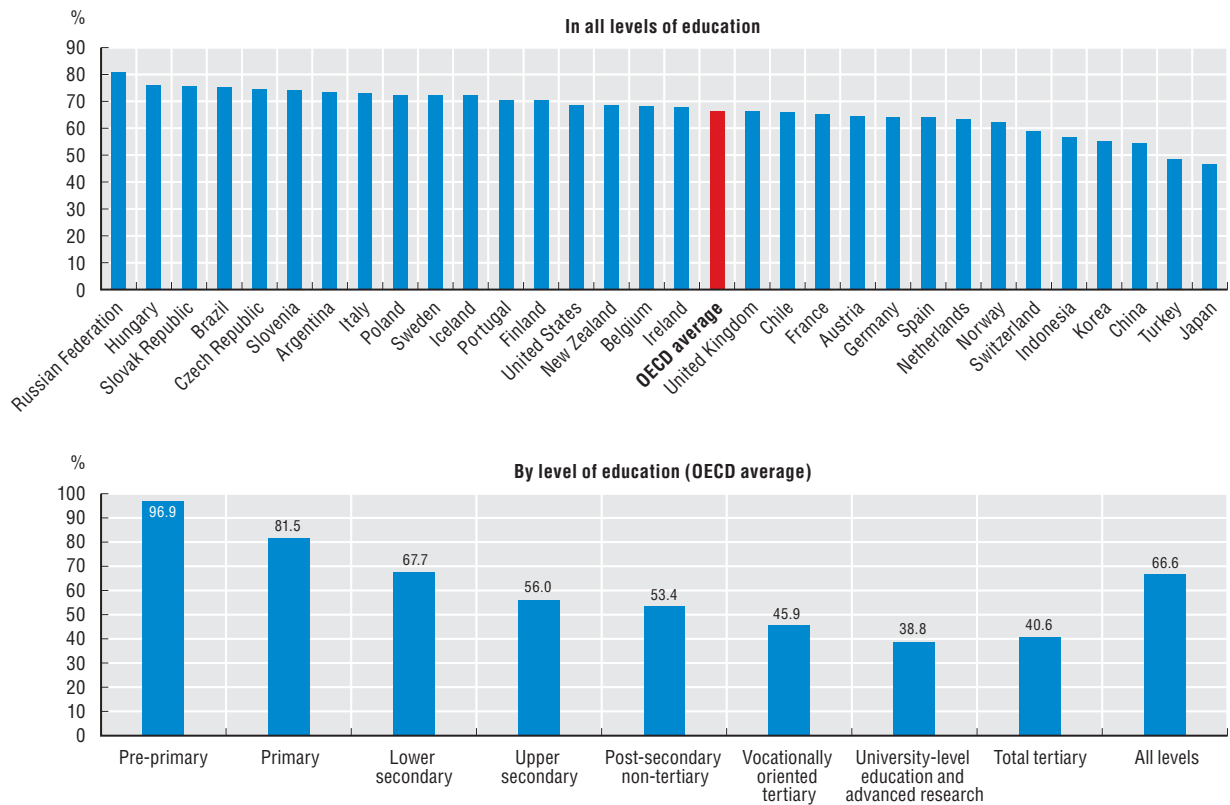
This figure shows the average percentage of teachers in each age group in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education.



Source: OECD (2011), Education at a Glance 2011, Table D7.1 (web only), available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932466652>.

Figure 4.11. Gender distribution of teachers, 2009

These figures show the percentage of women teachers across all levels of education, and by each level of education in OECD countries.



Source: OECD (2011), Education at a Glance 2011, Table D7.2 (web only), available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932466671>.



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