

4. THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Who are the teachers?

- On average in OECD countries, 30% of primary teachers, 33% of lower secondary teachers and almost 36% of upper secondary teachers are 50 or older.
- On average, just over 80% 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, 30% of primary teachers are 50 or older, but the levels are much higher in some countries: 50% in Germany and 49% in Sweden and 42% in Italy. Except Sweden, these countries also have high proportions of lower secondary teachers aged over 50: 52% for Germany and nearly 60% for Italy. In Italy, less than 1% of lower secondary school teachers are aged below 30, compared with an 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 27 and just under 30%. Teachers aged 39 or below 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 a little less than 35%.

Looking at all levels of education, including tertiary, women represent an average of just over 66% of all teachers in the OECD area, but the percentage of women teachers tends to fall from one level of education to the next: On average across the OECD area, women account for almost 97% of teachers at pre-primary level; just over 80% at primary level; just under 67% at lower secondary level; slightly more than 53% at upper secondary level; and just over 40% in tertiary education.

Definitions

Data refer to the academic year 2007-08 and are based on the UOE data collection on education statistics administered by the OECD in 2009.

Going further

For additional data and notes go to “Indicator D7” at www.oecd.org/edu/eag2010.

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 OECD

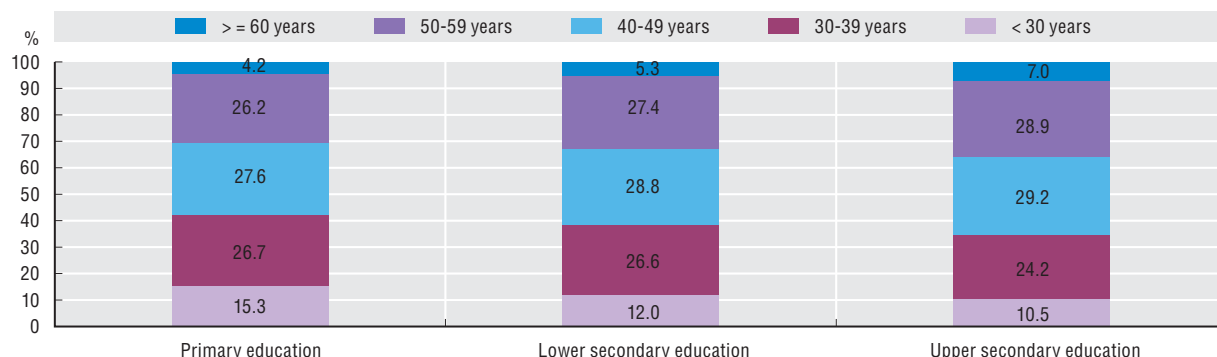
Educating Teachers for Diversity: Meeting the Challenge (2010).

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

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

Figure 4.9. Age distribution of teachers, OECD average, 2008

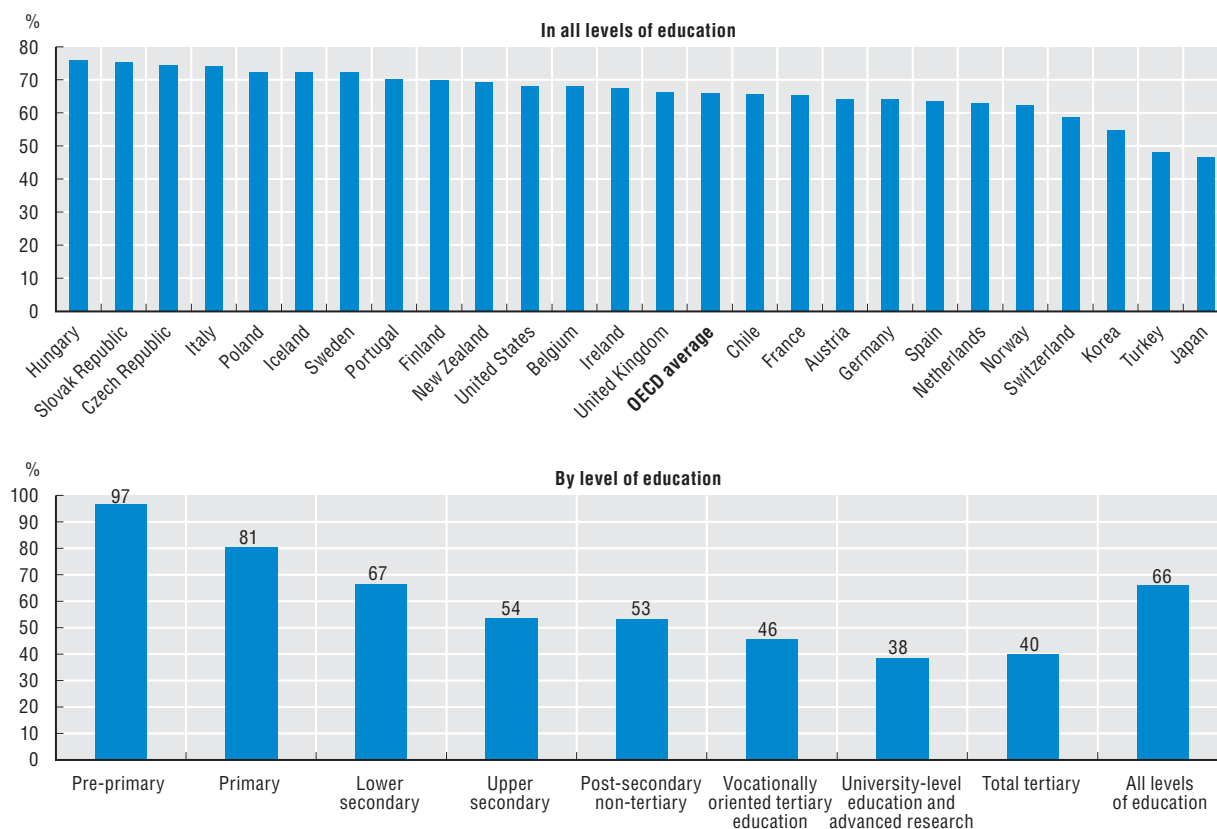
This figure shows the OECD average percentages of teachers in each age group in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education.



Source: OECD (2010), *Education at a Glance 2010*, Table D7.1 (web only), available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932310586>.

Figure 4.10. Gender distribution of teachers in OECD countries, 2008

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



Source: OECD (2010), *Education at a Glance 2010*, Table D7.2 (web only), available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932310586>.



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