
Use of Charities' Resources in the Classroom

March Omnibus Survey

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Executive Summary

Background and objectives

With the growth in the volume of educational resources produced by the charities, there is a growing awareness from this sector that resources need to be market led, and be sufficiently differentiated from other free resources, in order for them to be used by schools.

The purpose of this survey is to take a snapshot of teachers' current usage of charities' resources, focusing on the following key objectives:

1. Subject areas which are commonly resourced by charities' materials
2. Key factors that encourage classroom usage
3. How teachers find out about resources
4. Preferred delivery formats
5. Listings of 'best' free resources

This data will enable charities to gain a better understanding of market needs, opportunities and preferences in order to inform their product development and marketing / distribution strategies.

Awareness and use of charity resources

For the most part, charities with high public profiles, or those which are well-established in the media tend to prompt the highest levels of awareness. In this survey, the most frequently mentioned charity was Oxfam (119 mentions), followed by British Red Cross (54 mentions) and then RSPCA (29 mentions). Children in Need, Sport Relief and Comic Relief didn't feature as highly, and this is surprising, given that they are so well established in the media. However, this survey didn't distinguish between use of their educational resources and use of their fundraising material, so teachers may not have cited these charities on the basis that they use their fundraising material but not educational resources to use for classroom teaching.

High awareness of charities' resources tends to correlate with usage of their resources, for example, 84 teachers had used Oxfam's resources, i.e. 71% of those aware of the charity.

Drivers to using charity resources

Teachers have wide ranging expectations of charity resources, but above all, they expect them to be free. Other important criteria are:

- Age appropriate and relevant to the children
- Topical/relevant to real-life, current events
- High quality and visually appealing
- Downloadable and editable
- Up-to-date

In addition to resources that are free, teachers clearly expect charity resources to be up-to-date, current and relevant. In contrast to commercial resources, which can become quickly outdated due to publishing cycles, charities are in a better position to provide online materials that respond to current affairs and are right up-to-date. Based on this survey, this forms a key part of teachers' expectations when it comes to charity resources.

Teachers across all subject areas are interested in using charity resources to support their teaching, but this is particularly notable in PSHE/Citizenship, indicating that these are the strongest subject links. Primary teachers are also more likely to use charity resources across all subject areas, compared to secondary, most likely because secondary teachers seek much more subject-specific resources and already have a list of 'go to' sources, such as subject associations, which aren't so prevalent at primary level.

Finding out about charity resources

Teachers are most likely to go online to find out about charity resources, and run an internet search to find something that meets their needs. Some might also turn to specialist teaching sites, although this research didn't explore which specialist teaching sites teachers would turn to, or particular search phrases that they would use on Google to find what they needed. Further research into this would be needed to unpick exactly how teachers search for resources, and the search phrases that would be worth tagging to.

Most teachers agreed that the best person for charities to inform about educational resources was the Subject Leader for primary, and the Head of Department for secondary, or the PSHE Leader. Overall, this would depend on the curriculum focus of the resource.

Format preferences

The resource format favoured by most teachers is digitally accessible documents (Word, PDF, PowerPoint), that can be downloaded. Videos were also particularly popular. How teachers would use these resources was beyond the scope of this survey, and it would be worth carrying out further research to identify how teachers would use these different resource formats to best suit their needs.

Only around a quarter of the sample encouraged the use of charity websites at home. Whilst we didn't ask teachers why this wasn't something they actively promoted, one possible reason is that they're reluctant to set internet-based homework as it would discriminate against pupils who don't have access. Those who do encourage home-use of charity websites tended to set research-based tasks in preparation for follow-up lessons in school.

Profiling Summary

Schoolzone carried out an Omnibus survey in March 2016 to explore teachers' use of charity resources. This was sent out to Schoolzone's primary and secondary research community. In total, there were 310 responses.

Within this report, the bracketed number in each chart heading designates the number of responses for that particular question. Participants were not 'locked in' to answering questions, and could proceed to the next page without answering. This is to prevent 'false' submissions for respondents for whom none of the answers were valid.

Participation was incentivised through automatic entry of all complete, unique, valid responses into a cash prize draw worth £500. In addition, participants signed up to the Schoolzone loyalty scheme received a £2 personal credit.

For all questions, we cross-tabbed the findings by school phase (primary/secondary) to explore any differences in feedback. Where there were significant differences in their responses, we have included the chart or made reference to this in the text.

The following is a quick summary of profiling:

- The sample was weighted slightly more towards secondary (62%), compared to 34% primary. The remaining 4% selected 'other' or 'not applicable'.
- A range of geographical regions were represented across the UK. The sample was skewed towards England (95%), with Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland making up the other 5%. This is broadly representative of the Schoolzone research community.
- The sample reflected a range of years' teaching experience: 12% were NQTs, whilst 20% had been teaching for 11+ years.
- 38% were male, and 62% female.
- The sample reflected a range of subject specialisms, with Science (24%) and English (21%) most prevalent.
- Respondents had a range of job roles/responsibilities: most were classroom teachers (44%), but there were also Subject Coordinators/Heads of Departments (28%), and Senior Leaders (14%).

Research Findings

Awareness and use of charity resources

Levels of awareness

To begin with, respondents were asked the question: *'when you think of free educational resources, which charities spring to mind'*. They were asked to enter their responses into an open text box, rather than select from a list of charities, to establish their spontaneous awareness of charities rather than prompted awareness.

The most frequently mentioned charities were:

- Oxfam (119 mentions)
- British Red Cross (54 mentions)
- RSPCA (29 mentions)
- NSPCC (28 mentions)
- British Heart Foundation (22 mentions)
- CAFOD (21 mentions)
- Christian Aid (20 mentions)

Generally, the charities prompting the highest levels of awareness were those with high public profiles, which are well-established in the media. However, it was surprising to find that Children in Need, Sport Relief and Comic Relief weren't mentioned more widely. A possible reason for this is that the question asked about 'free educational resources' and teachers may use these charities' resources for fundraising materials rather than classroom teaching materials.

A full list of the charities, along with the number of times they were mentioned, can be found in Appendix A.

Use of charities' resources

There was a high correlation between the charities that teachers were aware of and teachers' use of their educational resources:

- Oxfam (84 had used the resources, i.e. 71% of those who were aware of the charity)
- British Red Cross (24 had used the resources, i.e. 44% of those who were aware of the charity)
- RSPCA (16 had used the resources, i.e. 55% of those who were aware of the charity)
- NSPCC (15 had used the resources, i.e. 54% of those who were aware of the charity)
- British Heart Foundation (14 had used the resources, i.e. 64% of those who were aware of the charity)
- CAFOD (21 had used the resources, i.e. 100% of those who were aware of the charity)
- Christian Aid (16 mentions, i.e. 80% of those who were aware of the charity)

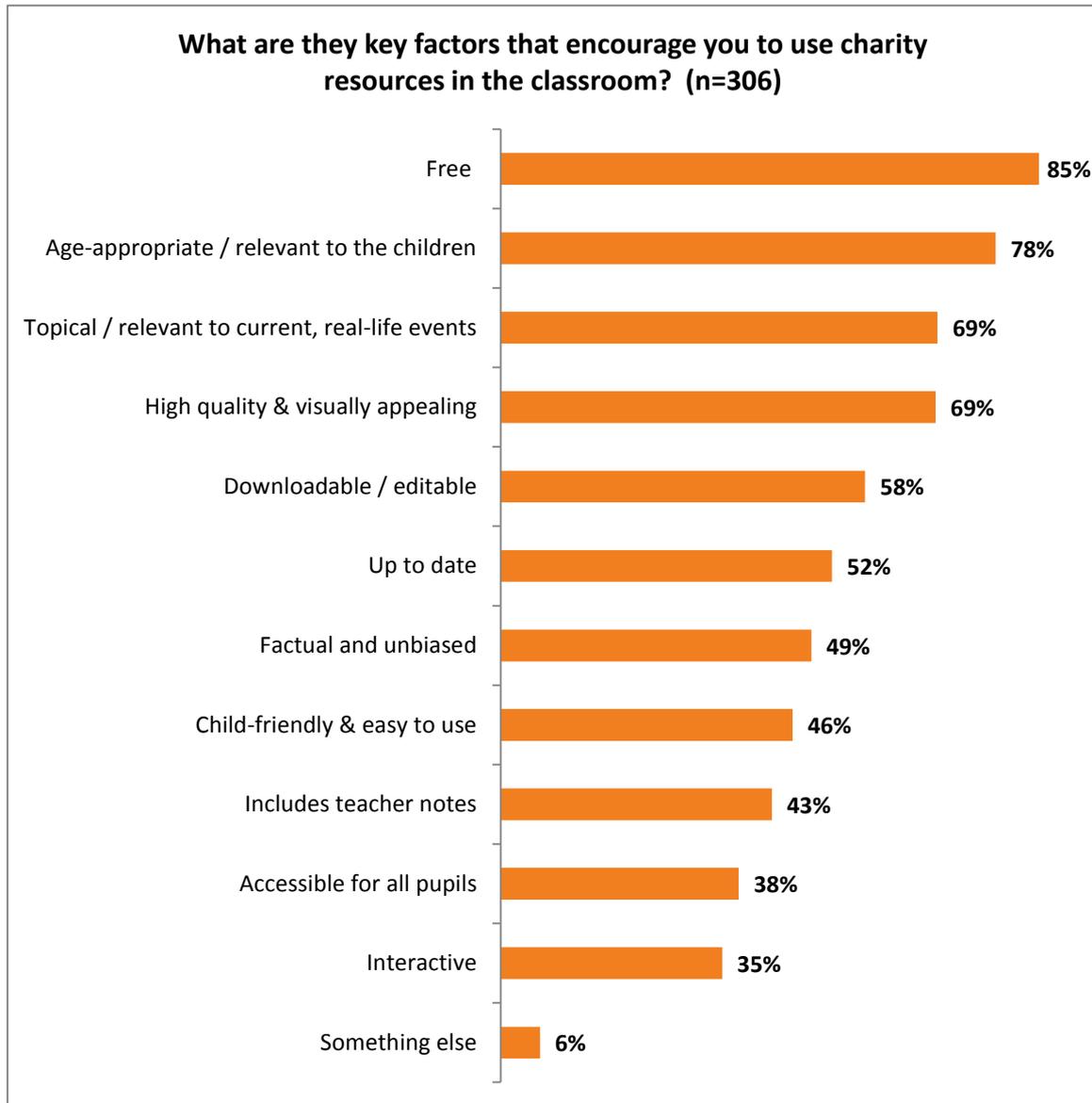
Whilst the number of respondents who initially thought of Comic Relief was lower than other organisations (17 teachers), this charity had a particularly high correlation between awareness and use of the resources:

- Comic Relief (16 had used the resources, i.e. 94% of those who were aware of the charity)

The distinction that has not been made in this survey is whether the resources are being used to support teaching and learning in the classroom, or whether they are being used to support fundraising campaigns. For some charities, e.g. Comic Relief, that place a high level of importance of their fundraising campaigns, this may have inflated the numbers of teachers stating that they used these resources.

Drivers to using charity resources

Key factors that encourage use of charities' resources

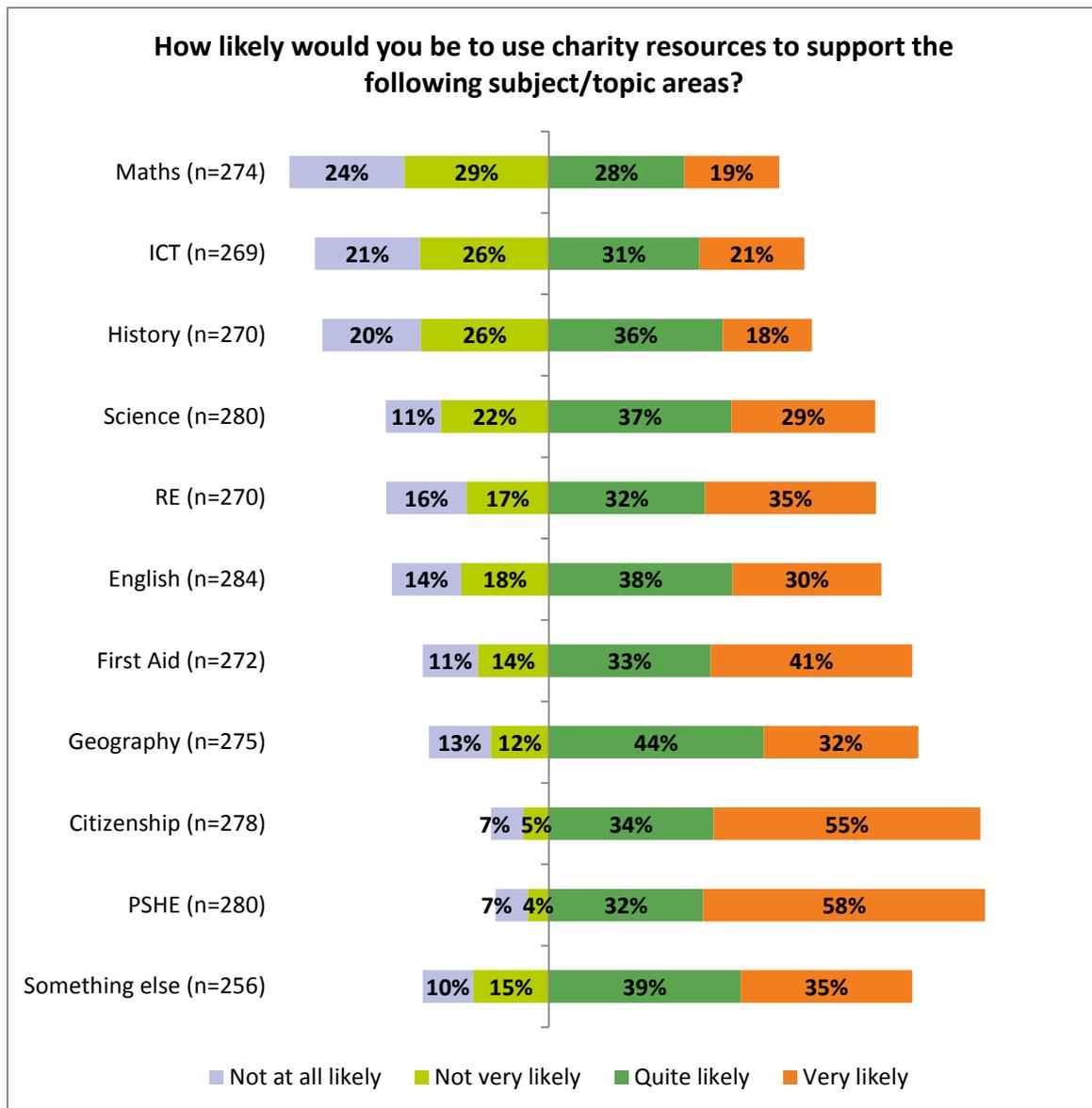


Teachers have high expectations of charity resources: on average, respondents selected six different factors.

It is unsurprising that, given the squeeze on school budgets, cost is a particularly big consideration when it comes to using charity resources in the classroom. Given the supplementary role of charities' resources in the classroom, it also seems to be of great importance that the resources are easy to use, engaging, and offer a different perspective from commercial resources. Because commercial resources are, to some degree, limited by publishing cycles, they can quickly become out-dated and lacking in links to current, real-life events. Therefore, teachers are more likely to look to charities for these topical, up-to-date resources.

We also broke down this chart by primary/secondary, but the results yielded no significant differences between school phases.

Subject areas most commonly resourced with charities' materials



When we compared responses for primary and secondary, primary were significantly more likely to use charity resources to support all curriculum areas, compared to secondary. This may be because secondary teachers have a reliable bank of subject-specific 'go to' sources for resources, e.g. subject associations, which aren't so widely used in the primary sector.

Amongst those who selected 'something else', eleven were quite/very likely to use charity resources in tutor/pastoral time. Eight also said that they would be likely to use charity resources to support drama/performing arts.

Charity resources that are most-highly regarded

Respondents were asked: 'what is the best charity resource you have used to teach in school, and why?'

The most commonly cited charities, each receiving ten or more mentioned, are provided below:

- Oxfam (mentioned by 20)
- British Red Cross (mentioned by 14)

- RSPCA (mentioned by 11)
- Water Aid (mentioned by 10)
- Fairtrade (mentioned by 10)

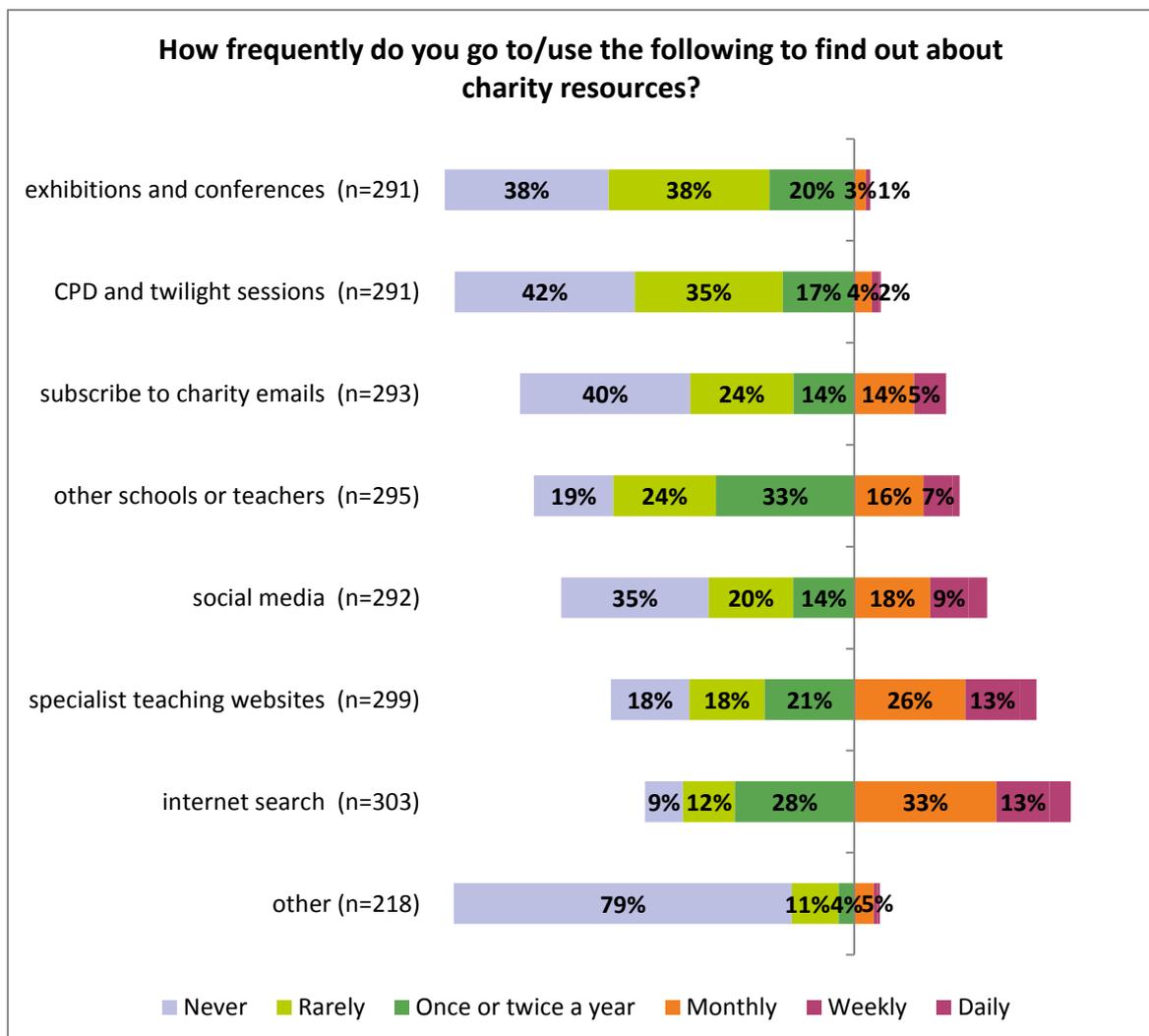
Commonly cited strengths of these resources included references to the resources being informative/ engaging; visually appealing; authentic 'real life experiences'; linked in very well with topic work.

It is worth taking into account how many teachers had used the resources, for example, 11 teachers said they had used Fairtrade resources, of which 10 said the resources were the best they had used. This is a very high success rate for Fairtrade. In contrast, 84 had used Oxfam resources, of which 20 said they were the best charity resources they'd used.

Those who rated Fairtrade as their 'best charity resource' said that they particularly liked them because of the range of practical activity ideas, with accompanying videos, posters and stickers. Overall, they commented that the activities were visual, engaging and relevant to their schemes of work.

Finding out about charity resources

Sourcing and locating resources



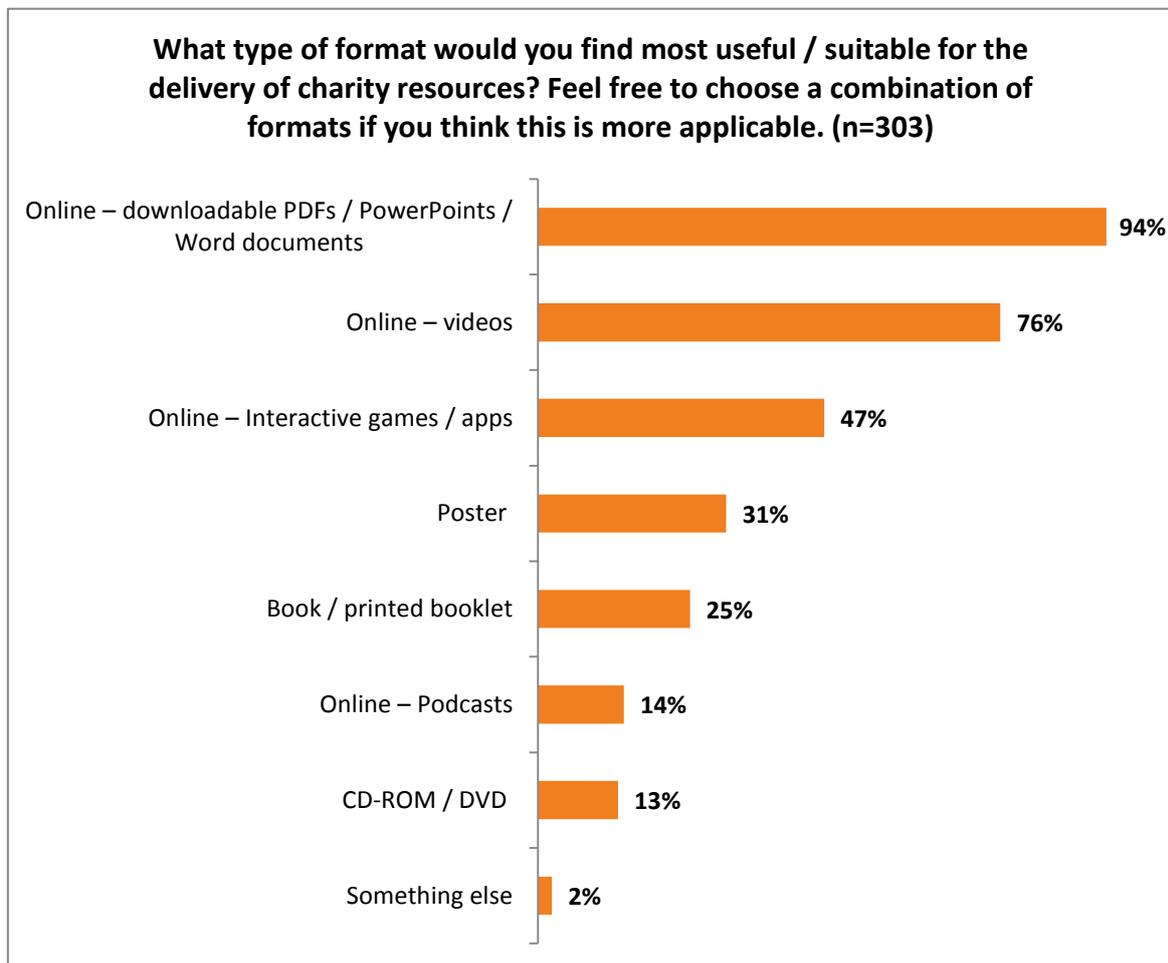
Internet searches are, unsurprisingly, the most common method of finding out about charity resources. However, the type of search words, or search engines used, was beyond the scope of this research. Specialist teaching websites were also popular, although again, we didn't explore which particular sites were used.

The use of social media is a growing trend in both the primary and secondary sectors. In December 2014 Schoolzone ran some syndicated research into primary and secondary teachers' use of social media, which found that at secondary, YouTube and Twitter were most popular, whilst at primary, Pinterest and YouTube were most widely used. Although many teachers are users of Facebook in their personal lives, only a handful also use it for professional purposes.

Preferred contact at school

For the most part, teachers said that the best person in the school for charities to inform about educational resources was the Subject Leader for primary, and Head of Department for secondary (dependent on the curriculum focus of the resource), or PSHE Leader.

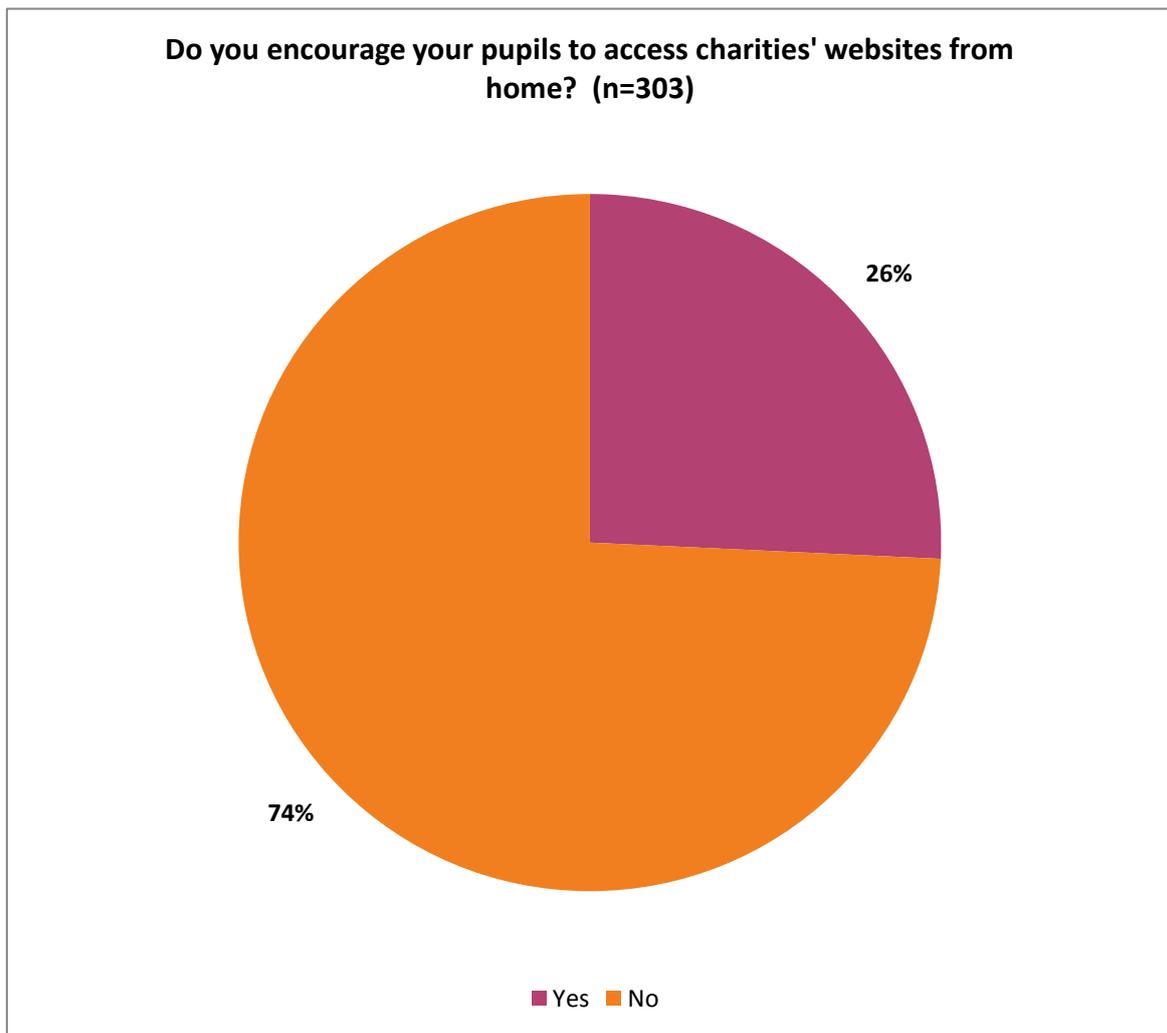
Format preferences



The chart above indicates that teachers have a strong preference for digital/downloadable content over printed content. Whilst 94% of respondents selected 'online – downloadable PDFs / PowerPoints / Word documents', it is likely that they would prioritise content in an editable format, i.e. PowerPoints or Word, so that they can tailor it according to the need of their own class.

There were no significant differences in format preferences between primary/secondary respondents.

Use of charities' websites by pupils at home



Just over a quarter of teachers encourage their pupils to access charities' websites from home, and there were no strong differences between primary/secondary. This may be because teachers are reluctant to set internet-based homework, as this will discriminate against pupils who do not have access.

The 26% who stated that they did encourage pupils to access charities' websites from home were prompted to say which types of tasks they set. Almost all said that they set research tasks, e.g. finding out about a charity and what they do, in order to produce a PowerPoint presentation for a follow-up lesson, or prepare for a debate in class.

Appendix A: Awareness of charities

The following table shows the charities cited in response to the question: *'when you think of free educational resources, which charities spring to mind?'*

***Note:** Other charities were mentioned, but only by three or less respondents, so they haven't been included in the table below

Charity name	Frequency
Oxfam	119
Red Cross	54
Water Aid	29
RSPCA	29
None	29
NSPCC	28
British Heart Foundation	22
CAFOD	21
Christian Aid	20
Comic Relief	17
Children in Need	17
Save the Children	16
British Legion	16
Action Aid	14
Sport Relief	13
Fairtrade	12
Barnardo's	12
WWF	10
RNLI	10
Greenpeace	8
Amnesty International	8
RSPB	6
UNICEF	6
Cancer Research	6
ChildLine	6
Mind	5
Children's Society	5
MacMillan	5
St John's Ambulance	4
Shelter	4
Holocaust Trust	4



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