

Millennium Cohort Study
Sweep 4
Teacher Survey
Technical Report

Yachien Huang and Reg Gatenby

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1 Introduction

1.1 MCS4 Teacher Survey in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

The first Teacher Survey was part of MCS3, when the children were aged five. At that time, it involved the collection of information from the teachers of cohort children only in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In England, permissions were sought from parents to access their child(ren)'s Foundation Stage Profile, held centrally by the Local Education Authority.

There was also a Teacher Survey as part of MCS4, when the children were aged seven. However, this time the information was collected from the cohort child's class teacher in all four countries in the form of an 12-page self-completion questionnaire.

This report contains details of the design and conduct of the MCS4 Teacher Survey. Full details of the design and conduct of the Millennium Cohort Study can be found in the separate MCS Technical Report, but a brief summary of the study follows.

1.2 The Millennium Cohort Study

The Millennium Cohort Study (also known as the Child of the New Century Survey), is one of Britain's world famous national longitudinal birth cohort studies, three of which are run by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies at the Institute of Education, University of London.

Britain has a unique tradition of carrying out national birth cohort studies, following the same group of people from birth into and through adulthood, and providing a picture of whole generations. There are four such surveys, of which the Millennium Cohort Study is the fourth:

- National Survey of Health and Development (started in 1946)
- National Child Development Study (started in 1958)
- 1970 British Cohort Study (started in 1970)
- Millennium Cohort Study (started in 2000)

Each follows a large number of individuals born at a particular time through the course of their lives, charting the effects of events and circumstances in early life on outcomes and achievements later on. The questions on health, education, family, employment and so on are put together by academic researchers and policy makers to understand and improve life in Britain today and in the future.

The study is funded by the ESRC (the Economic and Social Research Council) and a consortium of other government departments led by the Office for National Statistics. Some of the government departments involved in the study are the Department of Health (DoH), Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), and all of the devolved administrations (Welsh Assembly Government, the Scottish Government and the Northern Ireland Executive).

Following competitive tender, the Centre for Longitudinal Studies commissioned the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) to carry out the instrument development, data collection and initial data preparation for the fourth sweep (Age 7 Survey) of the

Millennium Cohort Study. Fieldwork in Northern Ireland was sub-contracted by NatCen to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

1.2.1 The first sweep

The first sweep of the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS1) was conducted during 2001-2002 and laid the foundations for a major new longitudinal research resource. Information was collected from co-resident parents of almost 19,000 babies aged nine months. The first survey covered the circumstances of pregnancy and birth, as well as those of the all-important early months of life, and the social and economic background of the family into which the children were born. NatCen was involved in the first sweep of MCS in 2000-2001. The data from the first study is now being used by researchers and policy-makers and a book covering the main findings was published in October 2005¹.

1.2.2 The second sweep

The second sweep (MCS2) took place during 2003-2004 when the children were three. Interviews were conducted with the co-resident parents and there were some additional questions about Older Siblings and (in England) a self-completion questionnaire for siblings aged 10-15. The cohort children were also involved directly in the study for the first time. They completed a cognitive assessment and had their height and weight measured by interviewers. A saliva sample was also taken (by parents) from the children in order to measure exposure to common childhood infections. The saliva was not used for DNA or genetic testing. Interviewers were asked to record some observations about the home environment and the neighbourhood.

The data from this sweep was deposited at the UK data archive in the summer of 2006, and a report on the results was published in June 2007².

1.2.3 The third sweep

The third sweep (MCS3) took place during 2006-2007 when the children were five and had started their first year of compulsory schooling. Co-resident parents were interviewed and the cohort children participated in cognitive tests (i.e. Sally and Anne, Naming vocabulary, Picture similarity, and Pattern construction) and physical measurements (i.e. height, weight, waist). Their siblings (in England only) were asked to complete a paper questionnaire. As the children just started schooling in this sweep, a teacher survey was later devised and conducted in order to collect important information about the children's development and performance at school.

The data of MCS3 was deposited in 2007. The results and findings were published in 2008.³

1 'Children of the 21st Century: from birth to nine months', Edited by Shirley Dex and Heather Joshi, Bristol: Policy Press 2005

2 "Millennium Cohort Study Second Survey: A User's Guide to Initial Findings", edited by Kirstine Hansen and Heather Joshi, Centre for Longitudinal Studies, Institute of Education, University of London, 2007

3 "Millennium Cohort Study Third Survey: A User's Guide to Initial Findings", edited by Kirstine Hansen and Heather Joshi, Centre for Longitudinal Studies, Institute of Education, University of London, 2008

1.2.4 The fourth sweep

The fourth sweep (MCS4) was carried out when the children were aged seven. Fieldwork started in January 2008 and finished in February 2009. The cohort children were in their third year of compulsory schooling. Interviews were conducted with the co-resident parents. The cohort children were asked to participate in four cognitive tests (i.e. Sally and Anne, Word Reading, Progress in Maths and Pattern Construction), three physical measurements (i.e. height, weight/body fat and waist circumference), and complete a simple questionnaire. In addition, the children were asked to take part in two projects led by the Institute of Child Health (ICH) by wearing an activity monitor that recorded the level of their daily activities, and by donating one (or more) milk tooth that could be used to study their level of lead exposure.

The data from this sweep was deposited at the UK data archive at the end of 2009 and a report on the results will be published towards the end of 2010.

1.3 Overview of the elements of MCS4

The fourth sweep of the Child of the New Century survey consisted of the following elements:

- Household questionnaire
- Main respondent interview (CAPI and CASI)
- Partner interview (CAPI and CASI)
- Child cognitive assessments
 - Sally and Anne
 - Word reading or All Wales Reading Test (Wales only)
 - Progress in Maths
 - Pattern Construction
- Child physical measurements
 - Height
 - Weight & body fat
 - Waist
- Interviewer observation of the conditions in which the cognitive assessments were conducted
- Child self-completion questionnaire
- Activity monitoring
- Every tooth tells a story
- Collection of consents
 - Data collection
 - Information from other sources (i.e. permission for the teacher survey, and release of health, economic and education records)
- Updating contact information
- Teacher survey

The household questionnaire, main respondent interview, and collection of consents are described briefly below as these were used to generate the sample for the Teacher Survey. For details of the other elements of the survey, please refer to the technical report for MCS4.

1.3.1 Household questionnaire

This was the first part of the CAPI, and was completed by the main respondent or partner from a previous sweep. If neither was living with the cohort child, interviewers were instructed to complete the household questionnaire with any resident parent.

The household questionnaire collected information about the household members, and checked availability for interview. At the end of the household questionnaire the CAPI determined which parent was to be the main respondent, and which the partner respondent.

1.3.2 Main respondent interview

The main respondent was asked a series of CAPI questions, supplemented with showcards where appropriate. The CAPI modules covered the following areas:

- Family context
- Education and childcare
- Child activities
- Parenting activities
- Child health
- Parent's health
- Employment, education and Income
- Housing and local area
- Other matters
- Self-completion section
- Consents and updates to contact information

1.3.3 Collection of consents

An important requirement for this survey was that all respondents had to give informed consent to take part in the study. This necessitated the use of several consent forms that had to be completed before parts of the survey could be administered. In addition, written consent was requested for linkage to health records, economic records, education records and to approach the class teacher. There were five consent forms in MCS4:

- Consent 1: Main respondent data collection and information from other sources
- Consent 2: Cohort child data collection
- Consent 3: Cohort child teacher survey and information from other sources
- Consent 4: Siblings information from other sources
- Consent 5: Partners data collection and information from other sources

Interviewers were prompted to collect the data collection consents immediately after the household grid was completed. They were prompted to collect the remaining consents (teacher survey, and information from other sources) at the end of the main interview.

Details of the consent forms can be found in the technical report for MCS4, and a copy of the consent form which includes consent for the Teacher Survey can be found in the appendix of this report.

2 Development work

2.1 Background

MCS4 took place when the children were aged 7 and in their third year of compulsory schooling. From the inception of MCS4, it was felt that a Teacher Survey would provide valuable information on a cohort child's early educational development as well as further reference to understand a child's cognitive results and data gathered in the main interview. The design for the Teacher Survey was in the form of a postal self-completion questionnaire sent to the school.

During the MCS main respondent interview the parent was asked to give the name of the child's class teacher and to give permission for the teacher to be contacted. The head teacher of the school would also receive an information pack containing a covering letter and survey leaflet at the same time when teachers were first sent the questionnaire.

This section covers the development work in relation to the Teacher Survey only. Full details of the development work for MCS4 as a whole can be found in the MCS4 Technical Report.

2.2 Ethical approval

Ethical approval for the Teacher Survey was obtained by CLS. Approval was given by the Northern and Yorkshire Multi-Centre Research Ethics Committee (MREC) of the NHS. Further details can be found in 'Millennium Cohort Study First, Second, Third and Fourth Surveys: A Guide to the Datasets' edited by K. Hansen, March 2010, Centre for Longitudinal Studies, Institute of Education. Further approvals were sought and given for carrying out the survey in each country. For England, the survey was approved by the Star Chamber in the Department for Children, Schools and Families; for Wales, it was approved by the Schools Workforce Advisory Panel; for Scotland, by the Directors of Education in the LEAs; and for Northern Ireland, no formal approval was needed.

2.3 Teacher survey pilot one

2.3.1 Pilot one overview and procedures

MCS pilot one fieldwork was conducted between 20th March and 11th April 2007 and included households in England, Wales and Scotland (NI was not included in Pilot 1). During the interview the interviewer asked for permission from the cohort child's family to approach their school teacher and obtained the name and address details for the teacher and school. After researchers verified the receipt of consent forms and checked the teacher's contact information, teachers were sent a covering letter, a questionnaire, a leaflet describing the study, and a feedback form, along with a reply-paid envelope for the return of the questionnaire and feedback form. Teachers were offered a token of appreciation in the form of a book voucher for returning the questionnaire⁴.

The main aims of pilot one of the Teacher Survey were to:

⁴ A ten-pound book voucher was sent to each of the 23 teachers who returned their completed questionnaires in October 2007.

- Test the content of the questionnaire, indicating how acceptable and comprehensible the questions are for respondents
- Estimate how long the questionnaire will take to complete

It was not designed specifically to test contact procedures or survey administration, as these procedures were well established from the age 5 Teacher Survey.

Thirty eight families in total were interviewed for MCS4 pilot one. Of these, 32 families gave consent for NatCen to approach their child's teacher (see appendix for the consent form) and provided full contact information for the teacher and the school. Thirty two questionnaires were therefore sent out: 28 were to teachers in England, 4 to teachers in Scotland, and none in Wales (no-one had consented in Wales).

These 32 questionnaires were sent out to a total of 27 teachers. Most teachers (24) received only one questionnaire, but a few received more than one questionnaire as they had more than one cohort child in their class: two teachers were sent two questionnaires and one teacher was sent three questionnaires.

Three versions of the teacher survey questionnaire were produced: versions for England, Scotland and Wales. Each version was sixteen pages long. The Scotland and Wales versions of the questionnaire were virtually identical to the England version, the differences being that the Scottish and Welsh versions did not ask about National Curriculum levels and guidelines for literacy/numeracy strategy, but they did ask about the language the child was educated in and the Scottish version asked different questions on special needs.

The questionnaire for all countries had two parts: the first part asking about the study child, and the second part asking about the teacher and their class in general. The questions about the study child were designed to collect information on their abilities in various areas, their behaviour and whether they have any special needs. The second part of the questionnaire covered details of the teacher's experience and details of the class they teach, such as the make-up of lessons and what support the class gets.

A separate letter was also sent to the head teacher of the school, informing them that one of their teachers had been asked to participate. If the questionnaires and feedback forms had not been returned by the class teacher three weeks after the initial mailing, a reminder letter was sent to the teacher, with an additional questionnaire, leaflet and feedback form. If the questionnaire had still not been returned two weeks after this, a further reminder letter was sent along with the same materials as with the first. Teachers were informed that they would be given book tokens as an incentive for taking part.

The dates of the teacher survey mailings in pilot one were as follows:

First mailing.....	30 th April 2007
First reminder.....	21 st May 2007
Second reminder.....	4 th June 2007

2.3.2 Key findings in pilot one

Following the pilot fieldwork, 23 completed questionnaires were received (from 20 teachers), giving a response rate of 72%. All teachers also returned a feedback form (20 in total).

Data from the feedback form indicated that

- Teachers took between 10 and 45 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The mean time taken was 22.6 minutes.

- In general, the questionnaire was 'fairly easy' to fill in.
- 26% of the respondents raised concerns about the confidentiality of the data.

2.3.3 Post pilot one changes

Changes after pilot one were primarily about the content of the questionnaire. Feedback from the teachers found that the length of the questionnaire could be reduced. The subsequent reduction mainly came from the removal of several questions in the "You and your class" section. Questions regarding how teachers prepare for the class, how often they give homework, and to which members of the class they give homework were deleted. Also, the question where the teacher was asked to put the parents of all class's children into different job categories proved to be too difficult to complete and was consequently removed.

2.4 Teacher survey dress rehearsal

2.4.1 Dress rehearsal overview and procedures

The overall logistics of the Teacher Survey was proven successful in pilot one. Hence, the same protocol was repeated in the dress rehearsal.

During the fieldwork for the MCS4 dress rehearsal, which took place in July and August 2007, parents were asked to give permission for their child(ren)'s school teacher(s) to be sent a questionnaire. If they gave permission, the families were asked to provide the name of the teacher as well as the name and address of the school their child attended. The school name and address were later checked by the researcher using a schools database in the CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing) or on the Internet if the school did not exist on the database.

The main aims of the teacher survey dress rehearsal were to:

- Test the content of the questionnaire, indicating how acceptable and comprehensible the questions were for respondents
- Estimate how long the questionnaire would take to complete
- Assess practicality issues that could affect response rates

In total, 102 families were interviewed for the MCS4 dress rehearsal. Of these, 84 (82%) families gave consent for NatCen to approach their child's teacher (see appendix for the consent form) and provided full contact details for the teacher and the school. Eighty four questionnaires were therefore sent out: 60 were sent to teachers in England, 3 to teachers in Wales, 12 to teachers in Scotland, and 9 to teachers in Northern Ireland.

These 84 questionnaires were sent out to a total of 70 teachers. Most teachers (59) were sent one questionnaire, but 8 teachers were sent two questionnaires and 3 teachers were sent three questionnaires.

There were four versions of the teacher survey questionnaire: one each for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Each version was twelve pages long. The Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland versions were virtually identical to the England version, except they asked additional questions about the child's education and ability in Gaelic, Welsh and Irish languages respectively.

The section order in the questionnaire for all countries was unchanged from pilot one. The sections were:

- Study child's ability
- Strength and difficulties
- Child profile
- Special needs
- Class groupings
- You and your class

In addition to the questionnaire, the pack sent to the teachers also included a covering letter, a leaflet, a feedback form, and a reply-paid envelope for the return of the questionnaire. Teachers were offered no incentive for returning the questionnaire. Head teachers in the school were informed about the study by a covering letter and a survey leaflet.

The dates of the mailings were as follows:

First mailing.....	26 th October 2007
First reminder.....	19 th November 2007
Second (final) reminder.....	3rd December 2007

2.4.2 Key findings in dress rehearsal

Out of 84 issued questionnaires, 45 completed questionnaires were returned by 34 teachers. 28 completed questionnaires were received from teachers in England, 1 from Wales, 9 from Scotland, and 7 from teachers in Northern Ireland. The overall response rate for all countries was 53%. The response rates were very different across countries, with Northern Ireland (78%) and Scotland (75%) demonstrating a significantly higher tendency to reply. It was also noted that those teachers who had received multiple questionnaires were less likely to have returned these questionnaires at the end of fieldwork.

The responses on the feedback form indicated that:

- Teachers took between 5 and 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The mean time taken was 20 minutes.
- In general, the introduction and instructions were helpful and clear, and straightforward.
- In general, the questionnaire was easy to complete.
- Concerns over confidentiality doubled (52%) compared to pilot one (26%).
- There was a greater sense of confusion over which academic year to answer about among teachers, since the fieldwork of the MCS dress rehearsal and the dress rehearsal teacher survey happened in different school years.
- The lower response rate was potentially due to the change of school year between fieldwork of MCS dress rehearsal and dress rehearsal teacher survey,
- Some teachers found it difficult to give information about the child for the previous school year, especially when the child was no longer in their class.

2.4.3 Post dress-rehearsal changes

Level of child's personal information on the front of questionnaire

In response to the high-level data security alert after a series of government data missing scandals in late 2007 (and just prior to this dress rehearsal), discussions on scaling back the level of child's personal information revealed on survey correspondence were held. Previously in the pilots, each child was identified by their first name, date of birth and a unique reference number on the front page of the questionnaire to the teacher. However, their date of birth was later changed replaced by the family interview date - a less sensitive piece of information - to avoid any data misuse should the questionnaire go missing in transit after the questionnaire had been completed.

In the rare case of duplication of first name in the same class, the teacher could still answer about the correct child by comparing their information against the attached covering letter which contained child's full name and their unique reference number.

Level of teacher information on the Head Teacher letter

The purpose of the Head Teacher letter was mainly to inform them that the study was underway in their school, but was also to enlist their help in tracing the teachers who had left the school, or to pass the questionnaire on to another teacher better able to answer about the child's performance.

The Head teacher letter used in dress rehearsal did not contain the individual names of the teachers chosen for the study. The lack of this information generated queries from a couple of Head teachers who argued that the name(s) of the teacher(s) needed to be included on the letter in order for them to offer help. As there was no objection in principle to releasing the name of the selected teacher(s) to their Head teacher, it was then decided that the name(s) of the individual teacher(s) would be added to the letter in the mainstage.

Changes to the individual questions

Overall it was felt that the questionnaire was now of a suitable length and the routing was easy to follow. However, teachers did still have queries and issues with individual questions. The findings of the dress rehearsal was discussed with CLS and sent to consultation in Feb 2008. There were few changes in all, and the questionnaire remained largely the same as before. Just three questions were cut: two which asked about child absences (it was felt these should more appropriately be asked of the parent) and one on the amount of time the teacher spends planning lessons. Only one question was added, and that was to establish if the person answering the questionnaire was indeed the named teacher to whom the questionnaire was sent. The other changes were re-wordings and clarifications of existing questions, and a few question orders were changed. A few questions were split into two questions for ease of asking e.g. rather than asking how many literacy sets there were (code 0 for none), instead we now first ask if there were literacy sets, then separately ask how many

3 The sample for the Teacher Survey

The total targeted sample for the Teacher Survey was all teachers of children in the Millennium Cohort Study at the time of the MCS4 interview.

The actual issued sample comprised teachers of children in the Millennium Cohort Study at the time of the MCS4 interview and whom:

- the main respondent had given written consent for the teacher to be contacted, and
- the contact details for the teacher and the school were complete enough for a questionnaire to be posted.

The information needed to collate this sample was collected from parents of the cohort children during the MCS4 main respondent interview, along with permission to send a questionnaire directly to the child's teacher. The following paragraphs explain each step in more detail following the order of where prompts to collect this information appeared in the interview.

3.1 Collecting the school details

During the MCS4 main respondent interview, the main respondent was asked if the cohort child was still attending the same school as last time. If this were the case, the school information was fed-forward from MCS3.

If the cohort child had moved to another school, the interviewer asked the main respondent for the following details about the new school.

- Name
- Town
- Postcode
- Local Education Authority

Once interviewers entered this information in the CAPI (or part of the information), the programme then searched for the school in a school-name look-up table that was incorporated into the questionnaire. A list of possible matches was displayed in a new window on the interviewer's laptop, and interviewers then selected the correct school from the list. Once the correct school had been selected, interviewers were asked to confirm the selection with the respondent. If it was incorrect, interviewers could repeat the process.

However, as the school name look-up table contained the names and addresses of most - but not all - of the schools in the UK, it happened that on a few occasions that interviewers could not find the correct school. In those cases, they were instructed to code the school as not found, and then manually enter the details in the CAPI.

3.2 Gaining consent for the Teacher Survey

Part A of consent form 3 referred to the Teacher Survey (Part B was parental permission to release routine health and education records). Interviewers were prompted by the

CAPI to collect consent to contact the cohort child's school teacher in the following question at the end of the main respondent interview:

CSCO

We have asked about cohort child's health and experiences at school. To make this information complete we would like to find out more about cohort child's health and education at school from routine records and from their school teacher.

The interviewer was then instructed to refer the respondent to the leaflet on 'information from other sources' and hand the respondent the consent form. After the respondent had read them carefully, the interviewer asked if the respondent was willing to give consent for their child's teacher to be contacted. If so, the respondent was asked for the name of the cohort child's teacher and this was written on the consent form. The respondent and interviewer then signed the form. The interviewer then also coded whether or not consent was given in the CAPI programme.

The consent form used in mainstage is contained in Appendix A.

3.3 Collecting teacher's name

On the consent form 3, there was a space for the main respondent to write in the name of the teacher. This information was then entered into the CAPI interview by the interviewer when they completed the administration section of the interview at home.

Some children might have been taught by more than one teacher at the time of the interview. In such cases, interviewers would ask the parent to nominate the teacher who had/has spent the most time with the cohort child or who they considered the most appropriate to provide information about the child's performance at school.

In the situation where parents could not remember the full name of the child's teacher, interviewers were instructed to collect at least a partial name and the title.

The teacher's contact information provided by the parents could be incomplete and contained misspellings. The cleaning and reconciliation process is described in the next sections.

3.3.1 Sample preparation

In order to prepare the sample for the Teacher Survey, the following data was extracted from the MCS4 data and from the control systems NatCen has in place for tracking the status of cases:

- Consent – whether or not consent was given
- Consent – whether or not the paper consent form had been received at NatCen
- Teacher's name
- School name and address
- School Unique Reference Number (URN)
- Cohort child's name
- Family interview date

This data was collated, and then checked and edited by the NatCen research team. The checking and editing of the names were done manually and could be laborious. Some examples of what had to be done are listed below:

3.3.2 Cohort children's names

All cases had to be checked to see if interviewers had recorded any changes to the cohort child's name during the main respondent interview. In about 3% of cases, the child's name had changed. If changes had been made, then the following checks were performed by researchers:

The information was checked to ensure that the child's title, first name and, surname were in correct fields, i.e. no multiple entries in one field, and amended if necessary.

- Any changes were checked for spelling, and, if necessary corrected.
- Any surnames that had been changed were checked against the surname provided in the sample file for MCS4. If the surnames in the Teacher Survey sample and the MCS4 sample file differed, the new surname was checked against the surnames of the main and partner respondents in case of typographical errors.

3.3.3 Teachers' names

The research team at NatCen cleaned teachers' names in the following four stages to improve the quality of data extracted from MCS4 main interview.

1. Incomplete and unusable names (e.g. Miss A, Mr.C.A.) were removed.
2. Appropriate titles to cases where the information was not already available were added. Different formats in title spelling were unified.
3. Mixed use of cases was corrected. All contact names were made into "proper case".
4. The names were edited on a "wave-basis".

Some teachers taught more than one cohort child in their class and were therefore nominated by more than one parent in the MCS4 interview. Despite referring to the same teacher, different parents might offer different spellings or different level of information. Therefore, upon receiving the file the research team alphabetically sorted the names (surname and first name) within the same school, comparing information offered by different parents to identify discrepancies (e.g Miss Hullousmous and Ms Holosmous, and Miss Rosy Grey and Miss Rosie Gray). The team then reconciled the names by correcting obvious misspellings and by usually taking the majority view of the correct spelling.

3.3.4 School names and addresses

The Teacher Survey sample file contained three different sources for the school name and address:

1. Fed-forward school information from the MCS3 data.
2. School information from the look-up table selected by the interviewer in the CAPI main respondent interview.
3. School information keyed by the interviewer during the CAPI main respondent interview where the school could not be found on the look-up table.

An indicator field was created in the file to identify which entry to use. This then led to a set of school names and address ready to be edited. About 80% of the children were still

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in the same school as at the previous interview. For the remaining 20% the schools look-up table was used, and the quality of that had improved since last time, which meant that the editing work was kept to a reasonable scale. Editing comprised mainly the following steps:

1. If the school address appeared in a different city or far away from the respondent's address, the research team double checked the school details from the look-up table. This was to identify apparent interviewer's error in entering information into CAPI. A handful of cases were found to be at fault due to selecting the wrong school from the look-up table.
2. If the school was not on the look-up table, and the interviewer had keyed in the school name and address (with full or partial details), the school name and address were checked on the internet (using Google) for completeness and accuracy. Using Google, the research team successfully found full address details for most schools that were missing from the look-up table or for which partial information had been provided.

4 The questionnaire

4.1 Format of the questionnaire

The questionnaire for the teacher survey was a 12-page paper self-completion questionnaire. Four versions of the questionnaire were produced: one each for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Wales version was also translated into Welsh.

Each version, including the Welsh translation, was assigned a different background colour to facilitate differentiation when they were returned: blue for England, pink for Wales, yellow for Scotland, lilac for Northern Ireland and green for Welsh. The choice of the colour was carefully considered to avoid undesirable political associations.

4.2 Content

The survey questionnaire was designed to investigate the development and behaviour of the cohort child from their teacher's point of view, as well as providing additional information about the child's study environment. Teachers were instructed on the front page of the questionnaire to answer about the school term in which the study child's family were interviewed, unless stated otherwise. The family interview date was clearly shown in a label affixed on the front page.

The questionnaire had sections in the following order:

➤ **Study child's abilities**

This section asked the teacher to rate the child's abilities in relation to the average age 7 child, including attainment in speaking, listening, reading, writing, maths, and physical education.

Teachers in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland were asked additional questions about the child's abilities in Welsh, Gaelic and Irish language respectively.

➤ **Study child's behaviour**

The first part of this section contained questions about the child's behaviour over the last six months, followed by the second part which asked about any concerns over the child's emotions, concentration, behaviour and social ability.

➤ **Study child profile**

The section asked about any special need the cohort child had and any support the child received. The term used to refer to special needs varies between countries.

The England version asked whether the child receives English as an Additional Language support or has Special Education Needs (SEN).

The Wales/Welsh version asked whether the child receives English or Welsh as an additional language support as well as whether the child was recognised as having Additional Learning Needs in addition to having Special Educational Needs (SEN).

The Scottish version asked whether the child receives English or Gaelic as an Additional Language support and the special needs were referred to as 'Additional Support Needs (ASN)' and 'Co-ordinated Support Plan'. Moreover, at the last question

in this section (Question 47) there were four additional answer categories concerning specific problems applying to the child: English as an additional language, young carer or sibling of a disabled child, and bullying and bereavement.

The Northern Ireland version asked whether the child receives English or Irish as an additional language support and whether the child has Special Education Needs (SEN).

➤ **Study child's parents**

This section inquired about the parent's attitude towards the study child's education and potential.

➤ **Class groupings**

Teachers were asked about types of groupings between and within classes in the child's year (i.e. streaming, setting and within-class ability grouping), followed by questions on the level of child's ability in relation to the grouping.

➤ **Study child's teacher**

This section collected information on the characteristics of teachers.

It was designed to be completed once per teacher or per class. Once a teacher had filled in this section for one child, they would not have to repeat this part in the subsequent questionnaires they received and would be routed to the end of the questionnaire.

➤ **Study child's class**

The section collected information on the study child's class, peer groups and teaching environment. Similarly, if the teacher had more than one cohort child in the same class and had answered this section previously for another child, they would be routed past these questions in the subsequent questionnaires.

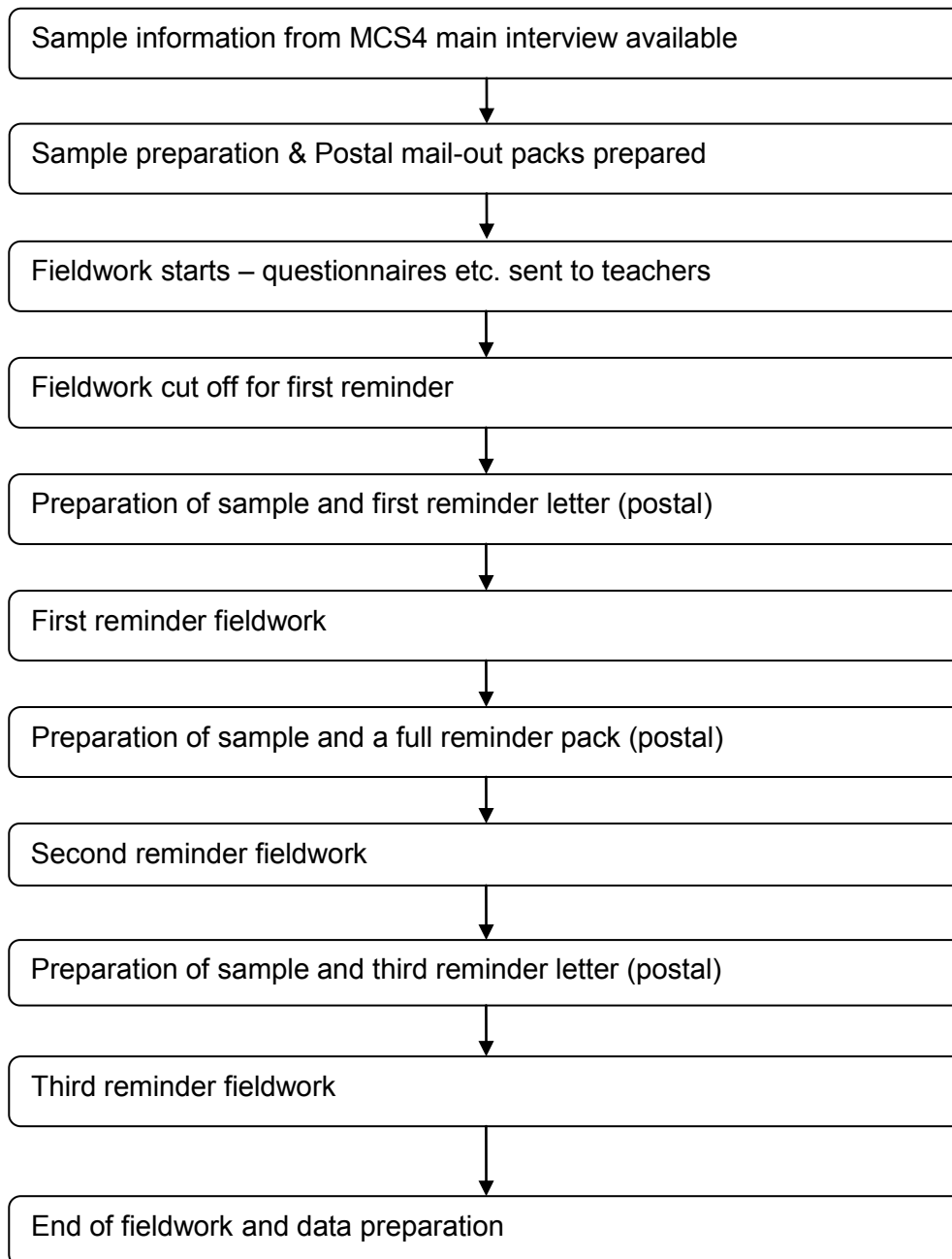
Copies of the questionnaires are contained in Appendix A.

5 Conduct of fieldwork

5.1 Overview of the procedure for the Teacher Survey

Each wave of the Teacher Survey had several stages. These are summarised in the diagram below, and described fully in section 5.2 to 5.4.

Figure 5.1 Overview of processes in each wave of the Teacher Survey



5.2 Fieldwork wave structure

5.2.1 Devising the wave structure for the Teacher Survey

The timing of the Teacher Survey was primarily dependent on the timing of the MCS4 mainstage interview, because the information required for sending out the Teacher Survey questionnaires, and the permission to do so, were collected in the main respondent interview.

In MCS4, the sample was allocated to eight waves determined by the country of residence and dates of birth (and hence the school starting age) of the cohort children.

Table 5.1 Revised MCS4 fieldwork wave structures and sample size

MCS4 wave name	Country	Scheduled MCS4 fieldwork dates	Sample size in MCS4
E1	England	Jan-Apr 2008	5413
E2	England	Apr-Jun 2008	5495
W1	Wales	Jan-Apr 2008	1213
W2	Wales	Apr-Jun 2008	1174
S1	Scotland	Apr-Aug 2008	426
S2	Scotland	Aug-Dec 2008	1603
N1	N. Ireland	Apr-Aug 2008	854
N2	N. Ireland	Aug-Dec 2008	826

The fieldwork of MCS4 mainstage was originally scheduled to start from November 2007, but was delayed to January 2008. The delay in launching MCS4 fieldwork inevitably had a knock-on effect on the Teacher Survey which was initially set to be three waves (T1, T2, T3) with the first wave (T1) commencing in March 2008. Consequently the wave structure and fieldwork dates of the Teacher Survey were revised.

Three options were considered:

1. Start fieldwork as scheduled in March 2008

It was estimated that the cycle of each wave would take 16-18 weeks to complete. Hence, if fieldwork started at the beginning of March 2008, it should finish by the end of July 2008. This option had the merit of keeping the entire fieldwork within the same school year as the family interview in main MCS4 studies. However, with MCS4 fieldwork only starting in late January 2008 and with a weekly field progress at 300 productive cases from week 3, it was estimated that T1 would only be able to capture between 600 and 1500 cases if the Teacher Survey was to be launched in March 2008. Also, this would lead to an unbalanced distribution of cases across waves, leaving a large number of cases (estimated about 14,000 at the time) in the next two waves.

2. Start fieldwork in May/June 2008

This option would help to maintain a more evenly-distributed sample size across waves. If coupled by more flexible cut-off dates and manipulation of wave frequencies, it could ensure a satisfactory number of teachers receiving the questionnaire in the same school year as the family interview date. However, the drawback is that subsequent reminder mailings might slip into the different school year and school closure over the summer holidays would add a significant amount of time to the fieldwork period.

3. Start fieldwork in September 2008.

This option could avoid conducting fieldwork during the summer holidays and a sufficient number of cases could be issued in the initial wave. However, the crucial drawback in starting fieldwork in September 2008 is that the majority of the children in England and

Wales would be studying in year 3, rather than in year 2 as the survey intended it to be. Also, conducting the Teacher Survey in the new school year would see a higher percentage of children whose current teacher is different from the parents' nomination during the main MCS4 interview (due to the child changing class or moving school).

The relevant school term dates are listed in Table 5.2 below⁵.

Table 5.2 Relevant school terms dates 2008/2009 in each country

	Start	Finish
2008/2009		
Summer holidays		
England	25/07/2008	31/08/2008
Wales	18/07/2008	02/09/2008
Scotland	27/06/2008	22/8/08 (latest)
Northern Ireland	01/07/2008	02/09/2008
Christmas holidays		
England	22/12/2008	02/01/2009
Wales	19/12/2008	06/01/2008
Scotland	22/12/2008	07/01/2009
Northern Ireland	22/12/2008	02/01/2009
Easter holidays		
England	06/04/2009	17/04/2009
Wales	03/04/2009	21/04/2009
Scotland	04/04/2009	14/04/2009
Northern Ireland	09/04/2009	20/04/2009

5.2.2 Revision of the fieldwork wave structure and mail-out dates

Option 2 was considered the most balanced solution, as it catered for the scientific objective of the survey and the practical issues arising from the fieldwork.

The wave structure was also revised from three waves to four waves (i.e. T1, T2, T3, T4), and more importantly the first two waves would start before the school summer closure in 2008 to maximise the number of teachers receiving the questionnaire in the same school year as the MCS family interview⁶. The two waves are described below.

T1, beginning on 16th of June, would include all cases in England and Wales interviewed before the 30th of April. T2 would be split into T2a and T2b. Fieldwork in T2a would start on the 16th of June (same as T1) and contained cases in Scotland and Northern Ireland interviewed before the 30th of April. T2b would have initial mail-out on the 7th of July and contained cases in England and Wales interviewed between 1st of May and 27th of May. Despite the different initial mail-out dates, T2a and T2b share the same subsequent reminder mailing dates.

⁵ Websites: <http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/85-schools/5-school-management/79-school-holidays.htm#optional>,

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/12/Session2007-2008>, <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/tourism/news/1616970?lang=en>,

<http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schoollife/schooladministration/termdatesandholidays/>

⁶ Findings in the dress rehearsal point to problems of recalling and lower response rate when conducting Teacher Survey in a different school year.

With this wave structure we achieved the goal of maximising the number of cases issued before summer 2008. The only minor drawback was that the timing of sending the first reminder would become non-standard in some countries, as the fieldwork period of the initial mailing had to be stretched in order to avoid the school summer closure.

This was particularly true in Scotland and Northern Ireland where most schools closed on 27 June and on 1 July 2008 respectively. In order to avoid the school closure and give the teacher enough time to respond to the initial mailing, the despatch of the first reminder would have to wait until the new school term. Thus the first reminder in T2a was delayed until 8 September 2008, which was 11 weeks after the initial mailing. However, as the first reminder mailing only contained a letter (no questionnaire), a longer interval was not expected to cause detrimental impact on the overall response rate.

The later two waves, T3 and T4, would take place in the new school year. T3, scheduled to start on 6th of Oct, was expected to be the largest wave and T4 would be the last wave containing only cases from the second wave Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The revised wave structures and fieldwork dates are shown in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3 Revised wave structure and estimated sample size for the Teacher Survey

Revised Teacher Survey wave	Revised Teacher Survey fieldwork launch dates	MCS4 waves included	Estimated teacher sample size
T1	16 th Jun 2008	E1, E2, W1, W2	4000
T2	T2a 16 th Jun 2008	S1, N1	
	T2b 7 th Jul 2008	E2, W2	1700
T3	6 th Oct 2008	E2, W2, S1,N1	7200
T4	9 th Feb 2009	S2, N2	2500

5.2.3 Actual wave structure and fieldwork dates

The final wave structures and sample size are very similar to the planned revised version. Especially in the first two waves, all the estimates were very close to the figures actually achieved. A total of 5827 cases were issued on schedule before the end of the 2007/08 school year.

There were however four minor differences.

Firstly, 108 Scotland cases that we intended to hold back and issue after the school summer holidays in wave T3 were instead issued in wave T2b (i.e. the next available wave). Although these 108 questionnaires were sent during the school summer holidays, 70 were completed and returned, giving a response rate very similar to that in Scotland in T3, so this wave change had minimum impact.

Secondly, the actual wave size in T3 was significantly lower than estimated. This was because the original estimates was over-optimistic and did not take into account further fieldwork delay and the higher percentage of unusable teacher/school contact information than expected.

Thirdly, due to the fieldwork delay in MCS4 mainstage, 618 England cases and 270 Wales cases had their MCS4 interviews in Year 3, and needed to have the Teacher Survey issued in wave T4 (which was originally only scheduled to include Scotland and Northern Ireland cases). This meant that for these 888 cohort children their teacher would be answering about their situation in Year 3 rather than Year 2, as the survey originally intended. The survey correspondence to teachers in England and Wales needed a slight modification to reflect this.

Finally, a small mop-up wave, T5, was later added. It was devised to include all cases whereby paper consents for the Teacher Survey were returned late. The mini-wave contained cases predominantly from Scotland, but also included some cases from England and Wales.

Table 5.4 Achieved wave structures and actual issued numbers for the Teacher Survey

Actual Teacher Survey wave	Actual Teacher Survey fieldwork launch dates	MCS4 waves included	Actual teacher sample issued
T1	16 Jun 2008	E1, E2, W1, W2	4109
T2	T2a 16 Jun 2008	S1, N1	
	T2b 7 Jul 2008	E2, W2, S1	1718
T3	6 Oct 2008	E2, W2, S1, N1	4331
T4	9 Feb 2009	E2, W2, S2, N2	2596
T5 (mop up)	24 Mar 2009	E1, E2, W1, W2, S1, S2	124

5.3 Add-on mailings after the launch of fieldwork

In addition to those differences mentioned above, there were two mailing activities later added to the survey design after the launch of fieldwork.

5.3.1 Head teacher reminder

The original survey design only specified a three-stage reminder strategy aiming at teachers. There was no intention to send a head teacher reminder. However, in late October 2008, the research teams felt that a reminder sent to the head teacher could help boost the response rate.

Moreover, in order to maximize the effectiveness of this reminder letter, it was thought to be the most appropriate if the reminder is sent the same time as a teacher reminder mailing that contained a questionnaire (i.e. the second reminder). That way the teacher would have a fresh questionnaire at hand when being reminded by their head teacher, and that head teacher's encouragement would seem more timely. The timing of this change was such that we were able to send the Head Teacher reminder for waves T4 and T5, and other arrangements were made for waves T1 to T3. The detailed operation for each wave as follows:

Operation in T1

At the time when the head teacher reminder was devised, T1 had finished all its three reminders. Instead, the head teacher reminder was sent three weeks after the third reminder.

Operation in T2 and T3

In T2 and T3, the timing allowed the head teacher reminder to be mailed out with the third reminder. There was a further suggestion to swap the content of the second reminder with the third reminder in T3, so that the head teacher reminder would be accompanied by a teacher reminder mailing that contained a questionnaire. However, this suggestion was dropped because of reservations about the possible negative reactions from the teachers and/or the head teachers who might view the numerous mailings as a bombardment and annoyance. Therefore, in order not to jeopardize the response rate by deviating too much from the original design - particularly in T3 where response rate had shown signs of weakness, the research team decided to take a less risky approach and only include the head teacher reminder with the third teacher reminder in T3.

Operation in T4 and T5

The head teacher reminder was sent on the second reminder teacher mailing dates in T4 and T5.

The dates of the mail-out in different waves are as follows.

Table 5.5 Mailing dates for the head teacher reminder in the Teacher Survey

	T1	T2a/T2b	T3	T4	T5
Timing	3 weeks after third reminder	With the 3 rd reminder	With the 3 rd reminder	With the 2 nd reminder	With the 2 nd reminder
Mail-out date	27 Oct 2008	24 Nov 2008	2 Feb 2009	20 Apr 2009	26 May 2009

5.3.2 Intervention in Wales

Since the start of the survey, the response rate in Wales was on average 5 -10% lower than the other three countries. To ensure the appropriate level of representative-ness in Wales, in a further enhancement of the survey design, the CLS research team asked the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) to draft a supporting statement for the Teacher Survey.

Two letters were consequently devised by WAG in late January 2009: one to teachers and one to the head teachers in Wales. These WAG letters functioned as a reminder in Wales. The timing and the logistic of dispatching these letters varied across waves. Details are as follows:

Operation in T1 and T2

A total of 238 cases were still outstanding in Wales from T1 and T2 when the WAG letters became available. As the fieldwork in these two waves had finished some months ago, the mailing of the WAG letter would involve a separate mailing operation. In order not to

mislead the teachers into thinking their response was monitored by the WAG, the WAG letter was not addressed to individual teachers. Instead, in a further enhancement to the survey design, a bespoke fourth reminder (TR4-W) was devised to go out with the WAG letter and mail-merged with teacher's information. The format of the fourth reminder was the same as previous reminder letters, but the content stressed the support from the Welsh Assembly and introduced the enclosed WAG letter. It also emphasised on the importance of their response and reassure teachers of confidentiality.

Moreover, it seemed unlikely that teachers who had not responded to previous mailings would still have their questionnaires at hand, so we also included the information leaflet and Wales questionnaire (including the Welsh version) in the WAG letter mailing.

Operation in T3

In Feb 2009 T3 still had 293 cases outstanding in Wales and the fieldwork was at the stage of preparing for the third reminder mailing. Although at short notice, this gave the opportunity of including the WAG letter in the third reminder mailing as an insert, which was a more subtle approach in encouraging the teachers and would incur fewer extra operational costs. To accommodate this change the team delayed the third reminder teacher mailing in Wales to 16th of Feb.

Operation in T4 and T5

As for T4 and T5, the WAG letters went out as an insert in the second teacher reminder mailing. That way, the teachers were more likely to have the questionnaire at hand the same time when they receive the reminder.

The mail-out dates of the WAG letter across waves were as followed.

Table 5.6 Mailing dates for the WAG reminders in the Teacher Survey

	T1	T2a/T2b	T3	T4	T5
Timing	four months after the 3rd reminder	Two and half months after the 3 rd teacher reminder	With the 3 rd teacher reminder	With the 2 nd teacher reminder	With the 2 nd teacher reminder
Mail-out date	16-Feb-09	16 Feb 2009	16 Feb 2009	20 Apr 2009	26 May 2009

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Table 5.7 Actual mailing dates for the Teacher Survey in different waves

Wave	T1	T2a	T2b	T3	T4	Mop-up T5
Initial mailing						
Cut-off for initial mailing	30/04/2008	30/04/2008	27/05/2008	05/09/2008	21/01/2009	09/03/2009
Preparation for sample and pack	w/c 02/06/2008	w/c 02/06/2008	w/c 23/06/2008	w/c 15/09/2008	w/c 26/01/2009	w/c 16/03/2009
Mail out	16/06/2008	16/06/2008	07/07/2008	06/10/2008	09/02/2009	24/03/2009
First reminder						
Cut-off for first reminder	07/07/2008	01/09/2008	01/09/2008	17/11/2008	11/03/2009	14/04/2009
Preparation for sample and pack	w/c 07/07/2008	w/c 01/09/2008	w/c 01/09/2008	w/c 17/11/2009	w/c 11/03/2009	w/c 16/04/2009
Mail out	14/07/2008	08/09/2008	08/09/2008	24/11/208	16/03/2009	20/04/2009
Second reminder						
Cut-off for second reminder	01/09/2008	29/09/2008	29/09/2008	17/12/2008	14/04/2009	18/05/2009
Preparation for sample and pack	w/c 01/09/2008	w/c 29/09/2008	w/c 29/09/2008	w/c 22/12/2008	w/c 16/04/2009	w/c 20/05/2009
Mail out	08/09/2008	06/10/2008	06/10/2008	05/01/2009	20/04/2009	25/05/2009
Third reminder						
Cut-off for third reminder	29/09/2008	17/11/2008	17/11/2008	27/01/2009	18/05/2009	05/06/2009
Preparation for sample and pack	w/c 29/09/2008	w/c 17/11/2008	w/c 17/11/2009	w/c 27/01/2009	w/c 20/05/2009	w/c 05/06/2009
Mail out	06/10/2008	24/11/2008	24/11/208	02/02/2009	25/05/2009	08/06/2009
Head teacher reminder						
Cut-off for Head teacher reminder	20/10/2008	17/11/2008	17/11/2008	27/01/2009	14/04/2009	18/05/2009
Preparation for sample and pack	w/c 20/10/2008	w/c 17/11/2008	w/c 17/11/2009	w/c 27/01/2009	w/c 16/04/2009	w/c 20/05/2009
Mail out	17/10/2008	24/11/2008	24/11/208	02/02/2009	20/04/2009	25/05/2009
Welsh Assembly Government Reminder mailing						
Cut-off for WAG reminder	09/02/2009	09/02/2009	09/02/2009	09/02/2009	14/04/2009	18/05/2009
Preparation for sample and pack	w/c 09/02/2009	w/c 09/02/2009	w/c 09/02/2009	w/c 09/02/2009	w/c 16/04/2009	w/c 20/05/2009
Mail out	16/02/2009	16/02/2009	16/02/2009	16/02/2009	20/04/2009	25/05/2009

5.4 Content of the initial mailing to teachers

For each wave of the Teacher Survey the initial mailing to teachers consisted of the following materials in the pack sent to their school:

- Covering letter
- Reply-paid envelope
- Questionnaire
- Information leaflet about the teacher survey

The envelopes used to send the information to the teachers were specially printed for the study. On the back of the envelopes there were instructions on what to do if the teacher to whom the pack was addressed did not work at the school, as shown in Figure 1. This was designed to help trace the teachers who have left the school. If new contact information was provided, a questionnaire would be despatched to the new address.

5.4.1 Covering letter

A covering letter was enclosed in the initial mailing inviting the teachers to participate in the survey. It contained the full name of the child, brief details about the Teacher Survey⁷, and explained how their contact detail was registered.

It also highlighted endorsement from the government, and because the endorsement was from different authorities in each of the four countries, there were of necessity four versions of the letter.


The letter reinforced the study's compliance with the Data Protection Act, and reassured that data would not be released in a form that would allow the teacher, the child or the school to be identified.

A Freephone number was also provided if they wanted further information.

Copies of the covering letter are contained in Appendix A.

⁷ This letter is identical across waves. However, in T4, the children in England and Wales would have moved to a different school year by the time their teacher received the letter, the part of sentence that mentioned about them being 'in their third year of compulsory schooling' was deleted to keep the statement consistent with the fact.

Figure 5.2 Instructions on back of Teacher Survey envelopes



If the person named overleaf no longer works at this school, do you know their current whereabouts?

Yes	Go to section A
No	Go to section B

Section A

Please can you help by giving us details of their new school, or another address at which we can contact them?

Please give the details requested, then return this letter to the Freepost address printed on the front of this envelope. If you prefer, you can call us on 0800 783 5890 (your call will be free) or email us at childnc@natcen.ac.uk

—————→

The person named overleaf has left this school and now works at / can be contacted at:

Name of school / contact name

.....

Address

.....

Postcode.....

LEA (if school address not known).....

Section B

If the person named overleaf no longer works at this school and their current whereabouts are not known, please pass this envelope to the Head Teacher. We would like the Head Teacher to pass this on to the most appropriate person.

If the person named overleaf has never worked at this school, please tick the box and return this letter to the Freepost address printed on the front of this envelope.

Thank you for your help.

5.4.2 The questionnaire

Each questionnaire had a label on the front page containing the following information:

- Name of teacher
- **First name** of the cohort child
- Family interview date
- Serial number of the teacher questionnaire (bar-coded)

We opted for using only the first name of the child as the personal identifier post to the dress rehearsal (see 2.4.3). This prevents the child being identified in the rare situation where a completed questionnaire was lost in the post or mislaid by the teacher. Teachers would compare the first name on the questionnaire with the full name on the covering letter to ensure they were using the right questionnaire for the right child, particularly if they have cohort children of identical first names in the class.

The serial number of the teacher questionnaire on the label was bar-coded to facilitate booking-in when the questionnaires were returned. This serial number was made from a combination of the cohort child's serial number, child number, questionnaire version, point number, plus a check letter and mailing number. The inclusion of the child's serial number in the questionnaire serial number would help analysts later by making it easy for them to match the teacher data with other MCS data.

The questionnaire versions were as follows:

1. English questionnaire
2. Welsh questionnaire
3. Scottish questionnaire
4. Northern Irish questionnaire
5. Welsh language questionnaire

Teachers in Wales were sent copies of the questionnaire in both Welsh and English. For details about the content of the questionnaires, see section 4.

5.4.3 The information leaflet

The information leaflet was designed to supplement the information provided in the covering letter. It contained further details about the Millennium Cohort Study and the Teacher Survey. A Welsh translation was included in the mail-out in Wales. A copy of the leaflet is contained in Appendix A.

5.5 The reminder process to teachers

A three-stage reminder process was implemented for the Teacher Survey. The different stages are described in details below.

5.5.1 The first reminder

The first reminder consisted of a letter and was sent to teachers that had not yet returned a questionnaire. A duplicate questionnaire was not sent as it was felt that mailing a new questionnaire pack so soon after the initial mailing may annoy respondents. Instead, teachers were advised to telephone the Freephone number if they had mislaid the original questionnaire pack so a replacement could be sent if needed.

The first reminder mailing took place 4 to 12 weeks after the initial mailing. The actual mail out date was chosen to avoid the fieldwork running into school holidays.

Table 5.8 Actual mailing dates and timing of the first reminder

	First reminder mail-out dates	Time between the initial mail-out and the first reminder
T1	14 Jul 2008	4 weeks
T2a	8 Sep 2008	12 weeks
T2b	8 Sep 2008	9 weeks
T3	24 Nov 2008	7 weeks
T4	16 Mar 2009	5 weeks
T5	20 Apr 2009	4 weeks

Two versions of the reminder letter were produced: one for teachers in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland (TR1), and one for teachers in Wales (TR1-W). The content of the letters was identical, but the latter was printed in both Welsh and English⁸.

Copies of the first reminder letters are contained in Appendix A

5.5.2 The second reminder

The second reminder took place four weeks to eight weeks after the first reminder, with the actual mail out date chosen to avoid school closures.

Table 5.9 Actual mailing dates and timing of the second reminder

	Second reminder mail-out dates	Time between the first reminder and the second reminder
T1	8 Sep 2008	8 weeks
T2	6 Oct 2008	4 weeks
T3	5 Jan 2009	6 weeks
T4	20 Apr 2009	5 weeks
T5	26 May 2009	5 weeks

This mailing consisted of a reminder letter, a leaflet, a questionnaire and a return envelope. The provision of a replacement questionnaire was necessary as some teachers might have mislaid the questionnaire or the questionnaire might have been lost in the post in previous mailings.

Two versions of the second reminder letter were produced: one for teachers in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland (TR2), and one for teachers in Wales (TR2-W). The content of the letters was identical, but the latter was printed in both Welsh and English. Both versions can be found in Appendix A.

⁸ The letter is identical across waves. However, as a higher percentage of the nominated teachers in T3 were not expected to be the child's current teacher due to the change of school year, the first reminder letter used in T3 had an additional sentence to encourage response even if the child was no longer in their class. The rest of the letter remained the same as other waves.

5.5.3 The third reminder

The third reminder was a letter-only mailing sent two to seven weeks after the second reminder.

Two versions of the reminder letter were produced: one for teachers in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland (TR3), and one for teachers in Wales (TR3-W). The content of the letters was identical, but the letter for teachers in Wales was printed in both Welsh and English.

Table 5.10 Actual mailing dates and timing of the third reminder

	Third reminder mail-out dates	Time between the second reminder and the third reminder
T1	6 Oct 2008	4 weeks
T2	24 Nov 2008	7 weeks
T3	2 Feb 2009	4 weeks
T4	26 May 2009	5 weeks
T5	8 Jun 2009	2 weeks

Copies of the letters are contained in Appendix A

5.5.4 The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) teacher letter mailing

The WAG has devised two letters: one for the teacher and the other for the head teacher. This section only applies to the WAG letter teacher mailing. Please see 5.7.3 for WAG letter head teacher mailing.

The content and the operation of the WAG letter mailing varied between waves. In T1 and T2, WAG letter was sent out as a separate mailing and contained the following items:

- WAG letter (Welsh translation on the reverse side)
- Fourth reminder letter
- Wales teacher questionnaire (including a separate Welsh version)
- Information leaflet
- Return envelope

In T3, T4 and T5, WAG letter was sent out as an insert with the existing reminder mailings. Copies of these letters are contained in Appendix A.

5.6 Mailing to head teachers

5.6.1 Initial mailing to head teachers

In addition to informing head teachers of the Teacher Survey, we were also hoping that they could be involved in helping to trace teachers who had moved and pass on the questionnaire. A pack containing a covering letter and an information leaflet was sent out to 'The Head teacher' on the same day as the initial mailing to the teachers.

The head teacher letter introduced the Teacher Survey and highlighted the importance of the teacher's participation. It explained the procurement of the teacher's contact details and the permission given by the parents (or the guardian) for the teacher to be contacted.

The **full name** of the teacher(s) selected to participate in the study was printed at the beginning of the letter, so that the head teacher could identify the absent teacher and provide helpful information and action.

The endorsement from the central educational authority was also mentioned. As the endorsement came from different authorities in different countries, there were four versions of the letter: one for each country. The rest of the letter was identical to each other. Copies of the head teacher letter are contained in Appendix A.

The letter also reinforced the study's compliance with the Data Protection and informed them of a Freephone number if further information was required.

5.6.2 Reminder mailing to head teachers

The head teacher reminder mailing contained a reminder letter (HTR-E, HTR-W, HTR-S, HTR-NI) and an information leaflet. The letter informed the head teacher of the outstanding questionnaire and reiterated the importance of high response rate and Data Protection Act. The letter can be found in Appendix A.

The actual mailing dates differed across waves, as this was an add-on mailing activity devised half-way through the fieldwork. The detailed logistics in each wave are as previously described.

5.6.3 WAG letter head teacher mailing

The mailing dates to the head teacher were identical to the one used for WAG teacher letter mailing. Please see section 5.5.4 for more details.

The content of the WAG letter mailing to head teachers contained the following items:

- WAG head teacher letter (Welsh translation at the reverse side)
- Information leaflet

6 Survey response

6.1 Summary of contact and response for the Teacher Survey

The selected sample for Teacher Survey comprised all productive interviews from MCS4, which amounted to 13794. Of these, 98.0% (13505) consented to participate in the Teacher Survey, and of these 95.3% (12878) had provided complete or partial contact information of teacher and school⁹.

In the end, 12878 cases were sent a questionnaire. However, amongst these 223 (1.6%) cases were later classified as "out-of-scope" for the following reasons:

The majority (149 cases) of out-of-scope cases were returned to NatCen marked as 'teacher left school'. 25 were returned due to 'address unknown' and 35 due to 'teacher not known at address'. Five cases had consent withdrawn after mailing; four cases returned by Royal Mail marked as 'school moved or demolished'; and another five cases were returned for other reasons (or no reasons were given).

Table 6.1 Summary of sample eligibility for Teacher Survey

	All Teacher Survey countries	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
	N	N	N	N	N
Total selected sample = productive interviews from MCS4	13794	8853	1968	1609	1364
Total ineligible	916	619	122	127	48
<i>Refused consent during interview</i>	289	212	26	29	22
<i>Incomplete school or teacher details</i>	627	407	96	98	26
Total out of scope	223	140	34	39	10
<i>Refused consent after mailing</i>	5	5	0	0	0
<i>Address unknown</i>	25	13	1	10	1
<i>School moved or demolished</i>	4	0	3	1	0
<i>Teacher not known at address</i>	35	20	8	3	4
<i>Teacher left school</i>	149	100	20	24	5
<i>Other reason</i>	5	2	2	1	0
Total eligible and in scope	12655	8094	1812	1443	1306
	%	%	%	%	%
Ineligible	6.6	7.0	6.2	7.9	3.5
Out of scope	1.6	1.6	1.7	2.4	0.7
Eligible and in scope	91.7	91.4	92.1	89.7	95.7

⁹ In total, 916 cases (6.6%) were ineligible for the teacher survey because consent for inclusion in the Teacher Survey was refused by the parent of the child (2.0%), or because the sample information was incomplete despite having given consent (4.5%).

6.2 Response to the teacher survey by country

A total of 12665 cases were left as eligible and in-scope for the study. Of these, over seventy percent (70.1%) were productive. Response was highest in Scotland where 76.2% productive questionnaires were returned and was lowest in Wales (66.1%), reflecting the trend in the MCS4 main study.

Table 6.2 shows the breakdown of response by country.

Overall, the majority of productive questionnaires were returned after the initial mailing (45.7%). As mentioned before, sample procurement and school closing dates were crucial in deciding the time-frame of each mailing in each wave, and this has resulted in very different spans between mailings in different waves. For example, a four-week period was scheduled between the initial mailing and the first reminder in T1, whereas the period was extended to 12 weeks in T2a and 9 weeks in T2b respectively to avoid school closures. Similarly, teachers in T3 were given 7 weeks to respond to the initial mailing and in T4 teachers only had four weeks before they received the first reminder. However, it is clear that the length allowed for response between mailings was not the sole factor influencing the response rate, as a longer response period between mailings did not necessarily match up with a higher response rate.

There were three main reminder letters in each country and each of the reminder stages resulted in additional questionnaires being returned. The first reminder was the most effective and brought back 11.7% productive cases. Second reminder resulted in 7.9% productive cases and the third reminder (including extra Welsh letters) 4.8% productive returns.

There were also differences in the effect of each mailing between countries.

Scotland had the highest response rate after the initial mailing (51.8%) and after the first reminder (15.2%) amongst all countries. In fact, it was also the only country that had half of the eligible cases returned after the initial mailing, and over 90% of the productives in Scotland were returned after the first two mailings, pointing to a 'early return' tendency in Scotland. This corresponded to lower response rates after the second and third reminder in Scotland.

England and Northern Ireland had similar response rates after each mailing. Wales had considerably lower response rate after the initial mailing (40.1%) and an average response rate after the first two reminders. It however demonstrated the highest response rate after the third reminder due to the extra mail-out that contained encouraging messages from the Welsh Assembly.

SECTION 6: SURVEY RESPONSE

Table 6.2 Summary of response for Teacher Survey – response by country

	All countries	England	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
	N	N	N	N	N
Total eligible and in scope	12655	8094	1812	1443	1306
Total productive	8876	5628	1197	1100	951
<i>After initial mailing</i>	5781	3697	726	747	611
<i>After the first reminder</i>	1478	916	199	219	144
<i>After the second reminder</i>	1005	618	149	103	135
<i>After the third reminder</i>	612	397	123	31	61
Total unproductive	3779	2466	615	343	355
Refusals	472	307	67	63	35
<i>No reason given</i>	177	126	32	10	9
<i>Too busy</i>	160	114	12	20	14
<i>Questionnaire too long</i>	9	5	4	0	0
<i>Teacher not interested/cannot see the benefit</i>	104	53	16	29	6
<i>Teacher concerned about confidentiality</i>	8	4	0	3	1
<i>Teacher spoke to child's parents and decided not to complete questionnaire</i>	6	2	1	0	3
<i>Other refusal</i>	7	3	1	1	2
<i>Refusal via CLS</i>	1	0	1	0	0
Non-contact	24	14	5	5	0
<i>Teacher temporarily away from school</i>	16	8	4	4	0
<i>Teacher retired</i>	7	5	1	1	0
<i>Teacher died</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Other non-contact</i>	1	1	0	0	0
Outstanding	3288	2145	543	275	320
	%	%	%	%	%
Total productive	70.1	69.5	66.1	76.2	72.8
<i>After initial mailing</i>	45.7	45.6	40.1	51.8	46.8
<i>After the first reminder</i>	11.7	11.3	11.0	15.2	11.0
<i>After the second reminder</i>	7.9	7.6	8.2	7.1	10.3
<i>After the third reminder</i>	4.8	4.9	6.8	2.1	4.7
Total unproductive	29.9	30.5	33.9	23.8	27.2
<i>Refusals</i>	3.7	3.8	3.6	4.4	2.7
<i>Non-contact</i>	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.0
<i>Outstanding</i>	26.0	26.5	30.0	19.1	24.5

6.3 Response to the teacher survey by wave

The overall response rate is 70.1%. Three out of the total five waves, accounting for 65.5% of the total sample, achieving response rates higher than 70%. Table 6.3 shows how response varied between different fieldwork waves.

It needs to be noted that the design of the wave structure was highly country-based. Therefore the 'country' factor, as well as wave size and the timing of the mail-out, should be considered when comparing the response rates between waves.

Response rate was the highest in T2a, which was a small wave with only 224 cases and consisted of teachers in Scotland and Northern Ireland - both countries achieved a higher overall response rate compared to their England and Wales counterparts. The lag between the family interview and the teacher questionnaire dispatch was controlled to be no longer than two months. This arguably contributed to the very satisfactory response rate (81.2%) in this wave.

T3, the largest wave with 4246 eligible cases across all four countries, achieved the lowest response rate (62.8%) among all waves. As mentioned earlier, its initial mailing took place in a new school term which might or might not be the same term as the family interview. This wave comprised mainly teachers in England and Wales. Changes in the school term might have made it inconvenient for teachers to retrieve information asked about in the questionnaire or difficulty for the questionnaire to reach the sampled teacher. Table 6.3 also shows that the refusal rate and no-contact rate in this wave were higher than other waves. Teachers in Scotland and Northern Ireland in this wave however were less affected by the change of the school term due to the different fieldwork dates in MCS4 main study. Response rates of both countries in T3 maintained at a similar level as the other waves.

T5, the mini mop-up wave, also received a lower response than the overall average. As it was a mop-up wave issued after delayed consent forms, some teachers would have received the questionnaire a long time after the date of the family interview, and that could possibly affect their willingness to participate. This is particularly applicable to teachers in England in this wave where fieldwork had finished much earlier and explains why only 36.6% of the questionnaires sent to teachers in England were returned their questionnaires.

SECTION 6: SURVEY RESPONSE

Table 6.3 Summary of response for Teacher Survey – response by wave

	All Waves	T1	T2	T3	T4	Mop-up T5	
	N	N	N	N	N	N	
Total eligible and in scope	12655	3768	1960	4246	2559	122	
Total productive	8876	2856	224	1214	2667	80	
<i>After initial mailing</i>	5781	1876	168	859	1689	1145	44
<i>After the first reminder</i>	1478	583	16	125	351	378	25
<i>After the second reminder</i>	1004	204	25	157	377	237	4
<i>After the third reminder</i>	613	193	15	73	250	75	7
Total unproductive	3779	912	52	470	1579	724	42
Refusals	472	90	2	60	225	93	2
<i>No reason given</i>	178	39	0	22	108	7	2
<i>Too busy</i>	160	41	1	21	61	36	0
<i>Questionnaire too long</i>	9	0	0	2	7	0	0
<i>Teacher not interested/ cannot see the benefit</i>	104	8	1	13	45	37	0
<i>Teacher concerned about confidentiality</i>	8	2	0	1	1	4	0
<i>Teacher spoke to child's parents and decided not to complete questionnaire</i>	6	0	0	0	1	5	0
<i>Other refusal</i>	6	0	0	1	1	4	0
<i>Refusal via CLS</i>	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Non-contact	24	0	0	1	17	6	0
<i>Teacher temporarily away from school</i>	17	0	0	1	11	5	0
<i>Teacher retired</i>	6	0	0	0	5	1	0
<i>Teacher died</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Other non-contact</i>	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Outstanding	3283	822	50	409	1337	625	40
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total productive	70.1	75.8	81.2	72.1	62.8	71.7	65.6
<i>After initial mailing</i>	45.7	49.8	60.9	51.0	39.8	44.7	36.1
<i>After the first reminder</i>	11.7	15.5	5.8	7.4	8.3	14.8	20.5
<i>After the second reminder</i>	7.9	5.4	9.1	9.3	8.9	9.3	3.3
<i>After the third reminder</i>	6.9	6.8	6.7	6.0	9.4	4.1	8.8
Total unproductive	29.9	24.2	18.8	27.9	37.2	28.3	34.4
<i>Refusals</i>	3.7	2.4	0.7	3.6	5.3	3.6	1.6
<i>Non-contact</i>	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.0
<i>Outstanding</i>	25.9	21.8	18.1	24.3	31.5	24.4	32.8

7 Data preparation

Keying of the self-completion paper questionnaire data was undertaken by an external agency. The questionnaire contained a small amount of routing and only a few open-ended questions, and consequently the editing of the data was not laborious.

Coding and editing instructions are included in Appendix A.

7.1 Survey outputs

Table 7.1 Survey outputs

Output	Date delivered	Notes
First Pilot		
First Pilot data	22 June 2007	
First Pilot Report	30 July 2007	
Dress Rehearsal		
Dress Rehearsal data	16 July 2007	
Dress Rehearsal Report	14 October 2008	
Main survey		
Questionnaire data	4 August 2009	
Variable look-up table	4 August 2009	List of question names and question labels
Personal identifiers	4 August 2009	Teacher names and school names & addresses

Appendix A: Main stage materials

- A1. Consent form for Teacher Survey**
- A1. Consent form for Teacher Survey: Welsh translation**
- A2. Teacher Survey leaflet**
- A2. Teacher Survey leaflet: Welsh translation**
- A3. Information from Other Sources leaflet**
- A3. Information from Other Sources leaflet: Welsh translation**
- A4. Letter sent by CLS to the Directors of Education in Scotland**
- A5. Teacher letter: England**
- A5. Teacher letter: Wales**
- A5. Teacher letter: Scotland**
- A5. Teacher letter: Northern Ireland**
- A6. Head teacher letter: England**
- A6. Head teacher letter: Wales**
- A6. Head teacher letter: Scotland**
- A6. Head teacher letter: Northern Ireland**
- A7. Teacher questionnaire: England**
- A7. Teacher questionnaire: Wales**
- A7. Teacher questionnaire: Scotland**
- A7. Teacher questionnaire: Northern Ireland**
- A7. Teacher questionnaire: Welsh**
- A8. First teacher reminder: England, Scotland and N. Ireland**
- A8. First teacher reminder: Wales**
- A9. Second teacher reminder: England, Scotland and N. Ireland**
- A9. Second teacher reminder: Wales**
- A10. Third teacher reminder: England, Scotland, and N. Ireland**
- A10. Third teacher reminder: Wales**
- A11. Head teacher reminder: England**
- A11. Head teacher reminder: Wales**
- A11. Head teacher reminder: Scotland**
- A11. Head teacher reminder: Northern Ireland**
- A12. Fourth teacher reminder: Wales only**
- A13. Welsh Assembly Government teacher letter**
- A14. Welsh Assembly Government head teachers letter**
- A15. Teacher questionnaire editing spec**