# Schools’ growing use of AI for homework and behaviour management sparks debate over teaching quality



Schools across Britain are increasingly investing in artificial intelligence (AI) software designed to assist teachers in managing homework and student behaviour. This software, known as Team Satchel, has garnered government approval and is reportedly being utilised in approximately one-third of secondary schools in the UK.

The platform enables educators to assign homework and award points based on students' behaviour, featuring a virtual leaderboard for tracking performance. Some institutions are anticipated to allocate substantial funds—up to £27,000—for a three-year subscription to the management information system. The service is marketed as a means to alleviate the workload of teachers, suggesting it would offer them “their weekends and evenings back.”

However, this growing reliance on AI in education has sparked considerable concern among various stakeholders. Critics, including Chris McGovern, chair of the Campaign for Real Education, have warned that such technology could lead to a loss of inspiring teaching practices. Speaking to MailOnline, McGovern stated, "Reliance on AI may have some administrative advantages but it will mark the end of inspirational teaching," characterising the shift towards algorithm-driven education as detrimental to the learning experience.

The evolution of educational technology is seen by some as being driven by government initiatives; in March, the Labour government committed £45 million to improving internet connectivity in schools, further accelerating the integration of AI tools. Research conducted by the National Literacy Trust revealed that two in five teachers employed generative AI in 2024 to create lesson content, highlighting its increasing presence in classrooms.

Molly Kingsley, co-founder of the parenting group UsForThem, expressed her thoughts on the implications of AI in teaching. She argued that while technology can streamline administrative tasks for educators, it may not serve the best interests of students. "The core purpose of teaching should be to encourage children to think critically and for themselves," she remarked.

The concerns extend beyond pedagogical efficacy to matters of data privacy and security. James Bore, managing director of a cybersecurity consultancy, cautioned against the unchecked use of AI in education. "While everyone's very excited about AI, I cannot stress enough how important it is to recognise that most of the AI out there has absolutely no understanding," he explained to MailOnline, underscoring the risks of relying on AI without human oversight.

Britain's strictest headteacher, Katharine Birbalsingh, who heads the Michaela Community School in London, has also been vocal in her opposition to the technology. She warned that screen-based learning could hinder students’ cognitive abilities, stating, "If you’re on a screen, you’re just not going to learn as much." Her perspective aligns with broader concerns regarding the physical and mental wellbeing of students who may already be grappling with a mental health crisis exacerbated by excessive screen time.

As discussions continue around the role of AI in education, the GMB union has voiced its apprehensions in a letter to Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson. National officer Stacey Booth emphasised concerns over potential dehumanising effects, stating, "The increase of technology in schools may lead to a devaluing of the tangible aspects of education, like the social and emotional development that schools support."

Supporters of the technology, including Team Satchel’s founder Naimish Gohil, envision a future where AI becomes synonymous with education, claiming their solutions can aid in the effective management of schools. Gohil has articulated a commitment to enhancing educational experiences through technology, aiming for it to benefit teachers, students, and parents alike.

As the incorporation of AI into educational frameworks expands, the dialogue reflects a complex interplay of optimism for improved efficiency and significant reservations regarding the potential impact on teaching quality and student engagement.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.teamsatchel.com/sidekick.html> - This page details Team Satchel's AI tool, Sidekick, which assists teachers in creating homework, quizzes, and lesson plans, aiming to reduce their workload and provide more time for teaching.
2. <https://www.teamsatchel.com/newsroom-sidekick-launch> - This announcement highlights the launch of Sidekick, an AI-powered tool integrated into Satchel One, designed to help teachers with everyday processes like homework creation and lesson planning.
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ai-teacher-tools-set-to-break-down-barriers-to-opportunity> - This government press release discusses £1 million in funding awarded to 16 ed-tech companies to develop AI tools that assist teachers with feedback and marking, aiming to improve education standards.
4. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/politics/research-department-for-education-dfe-chatgpt-government-b2503597.html> - This article reports on a study revealing that a quarter of children are using generative AI tools for schoolwork, highlighting the growing presence of AI in education and the need for more guidance from the Department for Education.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/oct/12/schools-not-preparing-children-to-succeed-in-an-ai-future-mps-warn> - This article discusses concerns that UK schools are not adequately preparing students for an AI-driven future, emphasizing the need for updated curricula to include computer programming and creativity.
6. <https://www.headteacher-update.com/content/news/transformational-and-problematic-study-reveals-teachers-conflicted-over-use-of-ai-in-education/> - This study reveals that while many teachers acknowledge the transformative potential of AI in education, they also express concerns about its reliability and the potential for student misuse.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14655457/school-paying-AI-set-students-homework-fear-lazy-teachers.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data