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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

Since devolution, the Welsh Government has implemented a range of progressive curriculum reforms that have sought to foster enthusiasm for learning, to develop key academic skills and competencies and to promote a strong sense of citizenship. The Welsh Government has now committed itself to a fundamental and independent review of the national curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales. The Review, led by Professor Graham Donaldson, seeks to contribute to the development of ‘a coherent, relevant, challenging and rewarding curriculum that is first for the twenty-first century’. The Welsh Government’s approach to this Independent Review of the National Curriculum and Assessment provides an innovative and inclusive strategy for informing future curriculum policy. The Call for Evidence seeks to go beyond ‘the usual suspects’ and invited contributions and comments that has not been confined to closed responses. In doing this it is hoped that the exercise would also generate a ‘national’ debate about the future of curriculum and assessment in Wales. It therefore provides an important source of evidence alongside the other activities of the Review, including focus groups, visits, meetings and various independent task and finish reports commissioned for the Review.

The Call for Evidence involved sending out two questionnaires – an ‘Adult Questionnaire’ designed to be completed by key stakeholders, including teachers, parents/carers and organisations and a ‘Children and Young People’s Questionnaire’ which was shorter but covered some of the same general areas as the ‘Adult’ version. The Call elicited a large and varied response. There were 364 responses to the Adult Questionnaire – including many from individuals, groups and organisations throughout Wales. There were 349 responses from to the Children and Young People Questionnaire – representing learners at all key stages from the Foundation Phase to post-16 education.

In this report of their responses, we have drawn attention to the common themes that emerged and have sought to ensure that the diversity of responses is represented. Because the questionnaires were anonymous, we do not know very much about the background of our respondents and, as is always the case in surveys of this kind, we know that some voices will be under-represented. However, we do know that all sectors, regions and key stakeholders in Wales are included. And the breadth of contrasting opinions evident in the responses suggests that the evidence gathering exercise has managed to capture the perspectives of a broad constituency.

Main findings

In terms of the priorities for the education system in Wales, it is clear from the many responses that schools should be doing more than simply imparting knowledge. While successful learning was a highly valued outcome of education for all stakeholders (including children and young people), so too were a range of other outcomes. General social competences, life skills and personal confidence were seen by all as important things to be gained from school. A key difference that emerged from the Children and Young People's Questionnaire was the importance of schools in developing friendships – something that did not really feature in the responses to the Adult Questionnaire.

The overwhelming majority of respondents – children, young people and adults - were appreciative of many aspects of education in Wales. Not surprisingly, the Adult Questionnaire elicited responses relating to policies and system attributes and the Children and Young People Questionnaire elicited responses on the more immediate school context. In terms of the 'best things' about education in Wales, *there was general support for some of the 'flagship' policies of the Welsh Government*. The most frequently mentioned 'best things' were the Foundation Phase, the Welsh language and bilingualism and the focus on Welsh identity and the Curriculum Cymreig. Independence from England was also frequently mentioned. For Children and Young People, there was significant appreciation of schoolwork, of school friends and of school staff.

Although there seems to be general support for many initiatives introduced by the Welsh Government, respondents identified a *number of areas where improvements could be made*. Responses to both questionnaires indicated that the curriculum and assessment needed to be changed if education in Wales is to improve. In general though there does not appear to be any consensus about precisely how it should be changed. Respondents to the Adult Survey were concerned about the increasing amount of assessments. One of the clearest findings from the Survey overall is that *the current balance between assessment and learning is not right* – with too much emphasis being given to the former at the expense of the latter. While children and young people were actually far less likely to identify assessment as an area in need of change, they did feel that the balance between subjects could be improved. They also raised issues about pedagogy and suggested a number of ways in which they felt their lessons might be more relevant and engaging.

Issues of the curriculum and its relevance for adult life were also raised in the Adult Questionnaire. The three most frequently cited subject areas that respondents felt should be enlarged and/or improved were PSE, basic skills (i.e. literacy and numeracy) and more vocational education and careers guidance.

In terms of the organisation of the curriculum, respondents were divided about whether the current arrangements (Areas of Learning in the Foundation Phase followed by individual subjects) were the right way to proceed. However, those who wished to see changes were more likely to want to *move away from a traditional subject-based approach*. The most frequent responses suggested extending the Areas of Learning approach to the end of KS2 and even KS3 or organising learning around skills and/or themes.

In terms of changing the curriculum, it is clear that the majority of respondents felt that this should be an area of Government policy rather than decided at the school level. Only a small minority felt that schools should have complete freedom over what they should teach. *There was general support for a common curriculum or for freedom only within the parameters established by a National Curriculum.*

One reason for the support for a National Curriculum framework is *the need for schools to provide regular and comparable data about pupil progress* that was identified by many. Although to some extent this might be seen to run counter to concerns about over-assessment, information about attainment was considered the most important means to assess progress through school. Indeed, it was one of the major areas of concern expressed by parents/carers when invited to comment on the adequacy of current forms of reporting. Information about personal strengths and weaknesses was also the main kind of information which children and young people themselves felt they needed to know to help them progress.

Overall, the Call for Evidence revealed general support for the direction that the Welsh Government is taking and appreciation for many aspects of schooling. However, the one area that comes across clearly as in need of attention is the relationship between the curriculum and assessment. This suggests that the Independent Review of Assessment and the National Curriculum is timely and important.

MAIN REPORT

SECTION 1: Introduction

Overview of respondents to the Adult Questionnaire

We received 364 questionnaires. Of those 364, 331 (90.9%) were completed in English and 33 (9.1%) were completed in Welsh.

With regards to the personal details and the types of people who responded, survey participants had the option to tick one of seven boxes – pupil/student;¹ parent/carer; teacher/support staff; governor; other; organisation; and group discussion. Of course, these categories are not mutually exclusive. Some respondents are teachers, as well as being organisational representatives, governors and parents/carers. Where multiple roles were entered, we have privileged their professional and organisational roles over voluntary and parental ones. Thus, those who answered that they were teachers and parents/carers have been coded as teachers. Those who said they were teachers and governors have also been coded as teachers, and those who ticked governor and parent boxes have been coded as governors. The overall distribution is shown in Table 1 and the distribution of teachers and support staff is shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Types of respondent

| | Frequency | % of all adult respondents |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Pupil/student | 2 | 0.5 |
| Parent/carer | 30 | 8.2 |
| Teacher/Support Staff | 137 | 37.6 |
| Governor | 17 | 4.7 |
| Other Individual | 33 | 9.1 |
| Organisation | 79 | 21.7 |
| Group discussion | 11 | 3.0 |
| Not entered | 55 | 14.9 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>364</i> | <i>100.0</i> |

¹ These have been incorporated into the responses to the Children and Young People Questionnaire,

Table 2: Categories of teachers and support staff respondents

| | Frequency | % of all adult respondents |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Support | 11 | 3.0 |
| Class | 25 | 6.8 |
| Subject | 13 | 3.6 |
| Middle | 39 | 10.7 |
| Senior | 17 | 4.7 |
| Head | 33 | 9.1 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>138</i> | <i>37.9</i> |

Although all respondents were asked to identify their local authority, the responses are patchy. In some cases this is because many of the organisations have a national remit and did not want to identify themselves as belonging to any particular locality. In addition, respondents with multiple roles (e.g. parent/carer and teacher) reported two different local authorities as they lived in one and worked for another. The distribution of those responses we did receive grouped into the four Wales consortia is outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Geographical distribution of respondents

| | Frequency | % of all adult respondents |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| No LA given | 275 | 75.5 |
| Central South | 25 | 6.9 |
| ERW | 31 | 8.5 |
| North Wales | 15 | 4.1 |
| South East | 18 | 4.9 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>364</i> | <i>100.0</i> |

Of the 79 organisations that responded, only 56 identified sector: 33 are third sector, 17 are public sector, 3 are private sector and 3 identified themselves as 'other'. Many of the organisations that responded have a particular campaigning brief and their answers reflect their own particular agendas.

Overview of respondents to the Children and Young People Questionnaire

349 young people completed the young person's questionnaire. Of these, 29 (8.3%) completed the survey in Welsh. The distribution in terms of Key Stage is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Age profile of respondents to Children and Young People Questionnaire

| | Frequency | % of all children and young people respondents |
|------------------|------------------|---|
| Foundation Phase | 1 | 0.3 |
| KS2 | 108 | 30.9 |
| KS3 | 74 | 21.2 |
| KS4 | 82 | 23.5 |
| 16+ | 48 | 13.8 |
| Not completed | 36 | 10.3 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>349</i> | <i>100.0</i> |

In terms of school type, of those who answered the question, 113 were in primary schools, 178 in secondary schools, six in special schools.² Sixteen reported they were in ‘other’ institutions, which may include further education and 6th form colleges.

It is our impression that, in many cases, the Children and Young People Questionnaire was completed in class. This has led to some ‘clumping’ of answers where pupils have clearly been discussing and exchanging ideas with each other.

Organisation of the analysis

In this report of the analysis, the responses are presented question by question. Responses to the Adult Questionnaire are presented first, followed by responses to the Children and Young People Questionnaire. Where appropriate, numerical frequencies are reported – sometimes these relate to responses and at other times to respondents. We also report if there is any systematic variation in response according to type of respondent. Where relevant, we draw attention to the organisational responses of key stakeholders (e.g. professional associations, teaching unions).

In the Appendix, we have provided evidence from our HEFCW-funded WISERDEducation research programme that we believe supports the findings for the Call for Evidence.

² We recognise that these numbers do not entirely tally with the Key Stage the respondents reported being in, but this demonstrates issues with the accuracy of the data rather than its analysis.

SECTION 2: The Adult Questionnaire

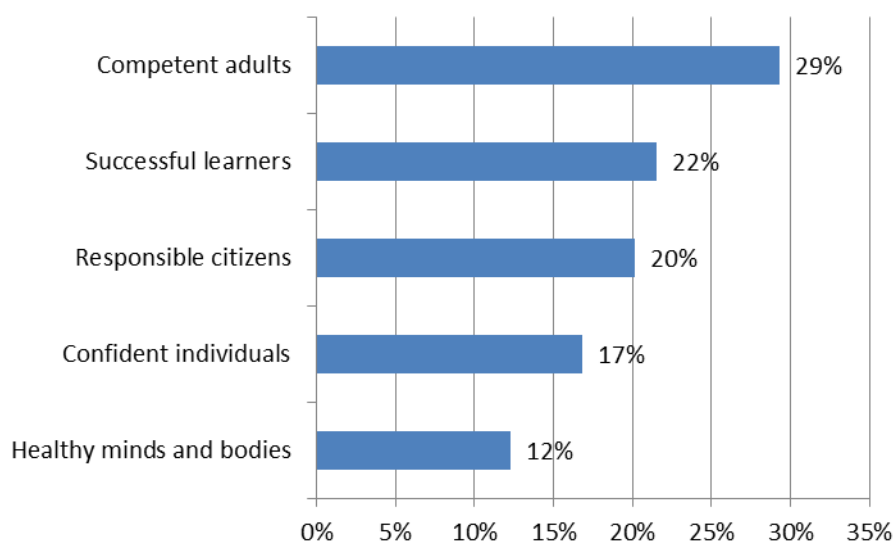
Q1a. Besides qualifications, what are the three most important things young people should gain as a result of their time in school?

After an iterative process involving scoping the responses against general typologies of the purposes of education, a coding framework was developed which was derived loosely from the Scottish *Curriculum for Excellence* aims. We felt this framework offered a useful starting point as it provides some differentiation with relatively few categories. Five broad educational aims were identified: successful learners; confident individuals; responsible citizens; competent adults; and healthy minds and bodies.

- *Successful learners*: responses in this category refer to what might be called the cognitive outcomes of education and attitudes towards learning and knowledge.
- *Confident individuals*: responses in this category refer to aspects of personal efficacy and self-assurance.
- *Responsible citizens*: responses here relate to the need to education to instil a sense of social responsibility.
- *Competent adults*: responses here cover what might loosely be called 'life-skills'.
- *Healthy minds and bodies*: responses here relate to the need for schools to foster mental and physical well-being.

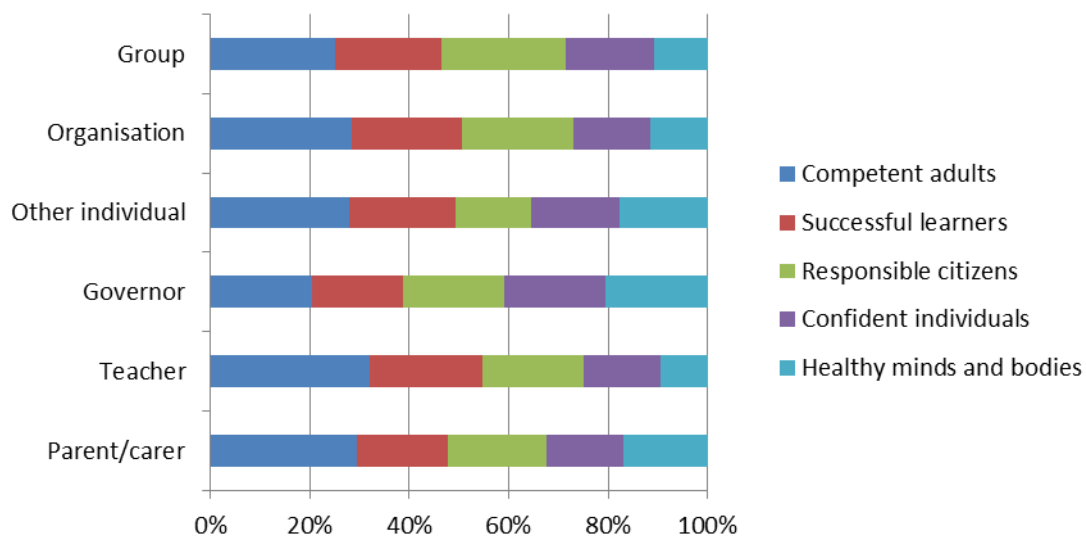
The distribution of responses by these five broad aims is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Five broad educational aims of schooling (% of all responses, n=864)



As Figure 2 shows, there were few differences between the priorities of respondent groups.

Figure 2: Distribution of broad aims of schooling by respondent type



An outline and examples of typical responses are given below.

Competent adults

This category includes all those skills which respondents felt schools should foster in order to help the learner make a successful transition into adulthood. Often these covered general communicative and motivational competences, but nearly one third (31.6%) specified particular life skills such as cooking, finance and parenting. A typical example of this was:

Life skills - time, money, place, basic calculations, expression, ability to complete forms, follow instructions etc. (Parent/Carer)

Successful learners

Most respondents identifying this as a priority mentioned skills in basic subjects, for example:

To be literate; To be numerate; To be digitally literate (Organisation)

A minority specified particular subjects, such as science and technology:

Understanding of the scientific method and the importance of science as a reliable route to knowledge and understanding about the Universe. (Organisation)

A few respondents mentioned the importance of teaching young people about Wales and its global context, for example:

Good knowledge of the history and geography of Wales in order to be aware of and understand its place in the world and its historical development and to raise the self-esteem of the Welsh nation and our profile in the world. The important contribution Welsh people have made to progress has often been ignored, subsumed or usurped by history written outside Wales/from a non-Welsh perspective. (Governor)

In addition to particular bodies of knowledge, many respondents (63.5%) mentioned the importance of a more general enthusiasm for learning – something that they felt had been sacrificed with the current emphasis on standards:

Love of learning - children are not ' buckets to be filled but fires to be lit ' Too often so called 'education ' is about such an incredibly narrow range of facts to attain a 'level' 'score' or 'grade. (Teacher)

Please, please, please, creativity. The ability to be playful, immersed in imagination; this is crucial to preserve a child's childhood and to arm them with crucial problem-solving techniques and a relishing in the wonder of the world. (Parent/Carer)

A love of learning - schools should stimulate, stretch and inspire not stifle and straitjacket. (Teacher)

Responsible citizens

In terms of citizenship there were a wide variety of priorities with issues relating to environmental sustainability, civic responsibilities and personal character-building all being mentioned:

An appreciation of right and wrong, of the importance of helping others and standing up for your beliefs. Essential elements of a 'useful' citizen. (Teacher)

A values based education which encourages social and civil responsibility. School has a significant role to play in the socialisation processes for children and young people which are the foundation of a civilised society. (Teacher)

An understanding and awareness of the need to treat all members of society with respect, and to value diversity rather than see it as a threat. To value community cohesion. (Teacher)

An acceptance of social and racial diversity, regardless of the composition of the school intake. (Parent/Carer)

For some it's about fewer rights and more responsibilities. For others, citizenship is about rights and respect:

Young people should develop a sense of being part of the school community, the wider local community, the national community with its distinct Welsh identity, and its fit with the wider global community (Organisation)

Healthy minds and bodies

While a small number of respondents (5) mentioned concepts such as 'physical literacy' and 'motor skills', more often than not it was issues relating to mental well-being that mattered:

emotional stability, to have an awareness of how they feel and react, how they develop emotionally and how to manage their emotions in different situations (Teacher)

There were particular concerns about the sexualisation of young teenagers and violence against women, for example:

understanding safe relationships and respecting self and others. Including violence against women in the national curriculum (Organisation)

Q1b. Do you think these things will remain important in ten years?

Not surprisingly, almost every respondent who answered this question (99%) felt that the three priorities they had each identified would be as important in the future – if not more so – than they are today. Many of the respondents were concerned that there were a number of serious challenges to be faced in the future – economic, social, and environmental – that schools needed to prepare their pupils for. Explanations include:

They are likely to be even more so. Families today are so busy and so diverse that children need to acquire skills which prepare them for a world which will be very different in terms of jobs and technology but where good citizenship and tolerant relationships should be at the heart of what becomes an increasingly unstable world. (Organisation)

I think social skills are going to become increasingly important as more and more human contact is becoming virtual and electronic. We need to focus on this in order

to prevent young people from developing what some experts are calling learned autism. And the general knowledge thing - well a lot of people will argue that it's not about learning stuff, it's about acquiring skills. But my argument is, if you don't know stuff, what is there to apply those skills to? (Individual)

These issues are likely to be increasingly important as the labour market becomes more challenging for young people to enter, and insecure employment increases, particularly for those with lower level skills. (Individual)

Qualifications and Skills are the bedrock of careers and the economy. Knowledge of culture history and self is fundamental to identity and social cohesiveness. (Teacher)

There will be a lot of changes in the next decade due to climate change, and a formal literary based education will not necessarily be of value to children, it's important that they learn skills such as working together, natural home building (shelter building), growing food and plants, and other survival and environmental skills, in addition to book learning. (Parent/Carer)

I'd argue emotional intelligence is the most important intelligence. It will forever matter, particularly as we are becoming more socially isolated (due, ironically, to IT, social media) and we are also becoming cut off from the environment. (Parent/Carer)

Q2a. What are the three best things about education in Wales?

Responses to this question were coded into 24 items. The most frequently reported example of the best thing about education in Wales was the Foundation Phase (Figure 3). In contrast to what is often claimed in the media, the role of Welsh language and bilingualism came second. Welsh identity and aspects of the Curriculum Cymreig came third. Interestingly the fifth most cited example was the fact that Wales had its own education system, and in particular its independence from policy reforms in England and political interference from the Department for Education in the UK Government. Other strengths of education in Wales included its focus on skills and its inclusive, comprehensive and community-oriented system.

However, 25 respondents (just under 7% of respondents) either said they could not identify anything good about education in Wales or thought some aspects of education system deficient.

Because the answers have been coded into quite precise categories, it is not possible to do any tests for associations with particular types of respondents. However, if we focus on the

'top' six features that received the most mentions, we can see some small but interesting differences between respondent types (Figure 4).

We can see that it was teachers who were most appreciative of the focus on skills in the curriculum – an aspect that was not mentioned by any parent/carer. Parents/carers were the most appreciative of the Foundation Phase and governors were the most supportive of teachers and the quality of teaching in Wales.

Four of the six teacher unions and associations who responded to this survey identified a range of aspects they appreciated. Three identified the Foundation Phase, and three also referred to the fact that Wales had stuck to the principles of comprehensive education.

Figure 3: The three best things about education in Wales (% of all responses, n=797)

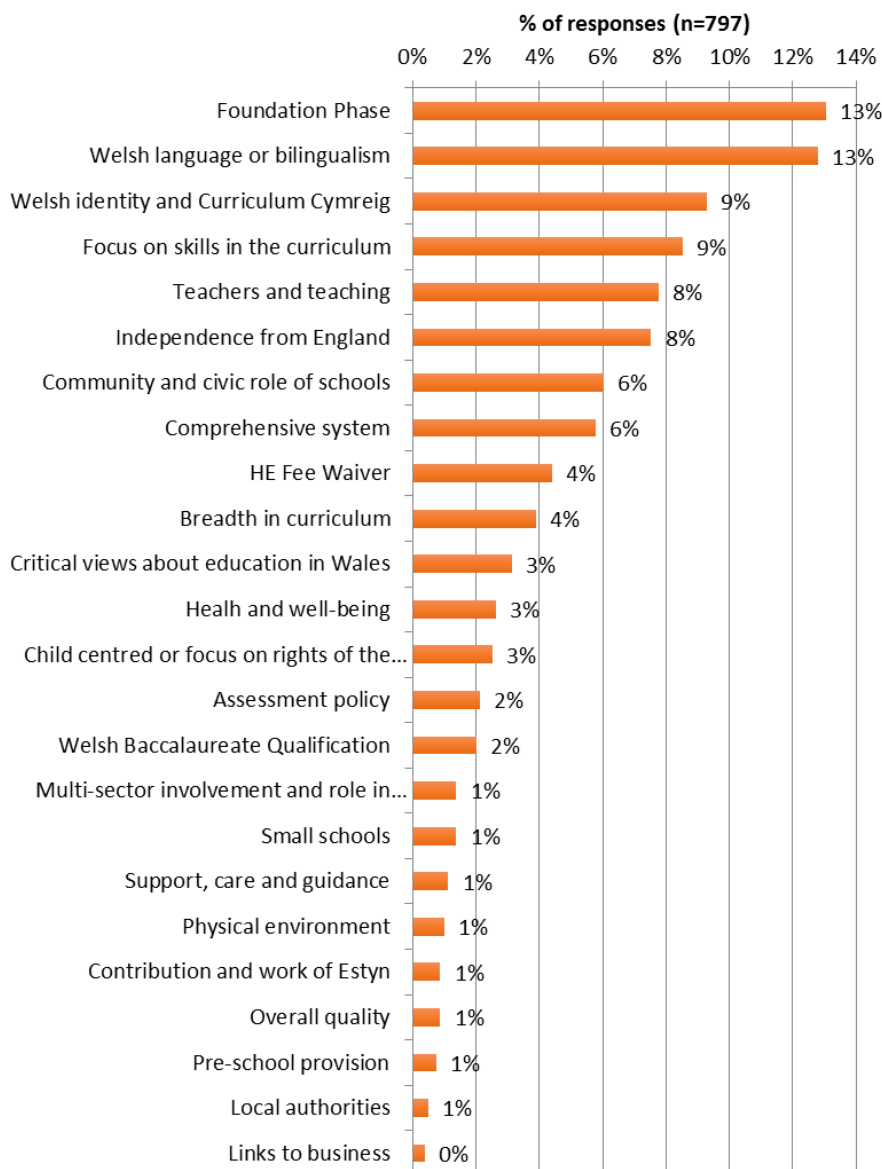
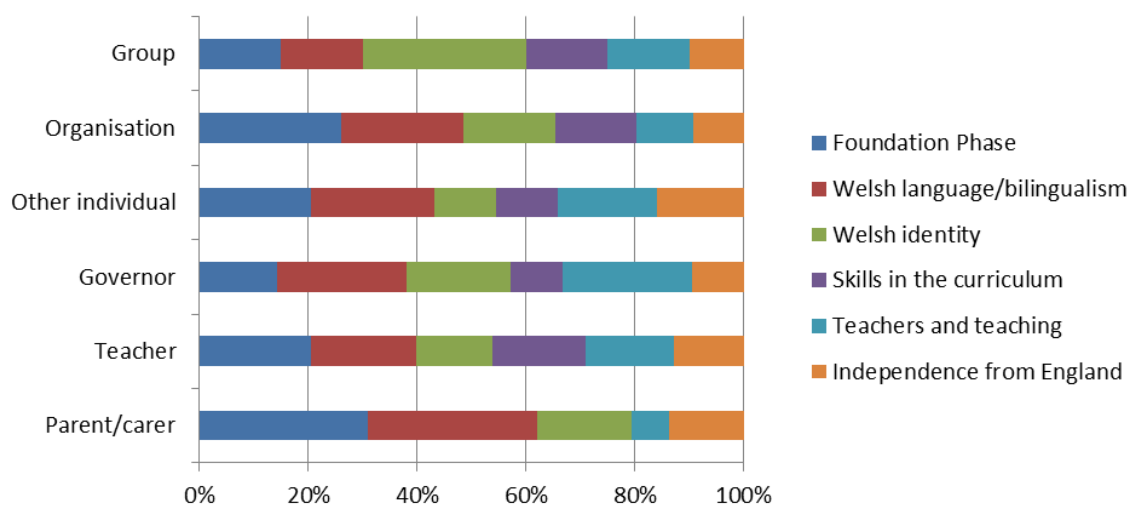


Figure 4: Most frequently mentioned ‘best things’ about education in Wales by respondent type



Q2b. What are the three main things that we need to change to improve education in Wales, and how would you change them?

Responses to this question were numerous and quite varied. We have organised the 949 different aspects into 35 more general categories (Figure 5). In addition to the list of things that need changing, somewhat paradoxically there was also a frequently expressed view that education in Wales actually needs *less* change more stability and less change.

The overwhelming response to what needs to be changed related to issues of assessment, qualification and performance management – this was mentioned by almost one third of respondents (29.1%). Many respondents were critical of the current system of assessment, and felt that pupils were being assessed too much. However, there was also a strong view that there was a need for greater or more sophisticated performance management measures. While this might at first sight seem contradictory, the general view was that assessment should be used for the performance management of schools and teachers and not to monitor the performance of individual pupils (although the tracking of pupils’ abilities was also recognised by some as an area that needed more attention). It is interesting to note that relatively few respondents highlighted the significance of assessment for the learning process rather than for learning outcomes. Some respondents also suggested that pupils should do fewer qualifications at GCSE, and instead ensure there is more depth of understanding in a smaller range of subject areas (also see later).

Another frequently cited area for improvement (mentioned by 18.4% of respondents) related to funding levels, either because of concerns relating to parity within Wales or parity

with the rest of the UK. Although respondents rarely went in to details about what the additional funding would be for, many did say they thought classroom sizes needed to reduce.

Another important set of responses to this question related to the quality and development of teachers, with many (15.4% of respondents) claiming that there needed to be substantial improvements in the selection, initial training and continued professional development of teachers. Allied to this, was the view (expressed by 11.8% of respondents) that teachers and schools need to be given more autonomy in educational decision-making.

A greater focus on basic skills was mentioned by 13.2% of respondents (although a few said there needed to be less focus on basic skills). Other frequently cited areas for change included: a reduction in the size and breadth of the curriculum (10.7% of respondents), particularly in the early years, and perhaps conversely a greater focus on the broader purposes and aims of education (i.e. less focus on qualifications), particularly in the later stages of education; greater focus on more creative subjects (5.5%); less focus (6.3% of respondents) and, in contrast, more focus (3.8%) on Welsh language development; and a greater focus on STEM and/or ICT subjects (5.2%).

In terms of how these changes should be achieved, it has already been noted that many respondents thought that teachers and schools should have more autonomy to make such decisions. But other suggestions included more personalised learning (7.4%), greater cooperation within the system (6.6%), and more support for particular disadvantaged (socially, economically and cognitively) pupils (8.2%).

A relatively large proportion (9.1%) of respondents raised issues about the importance of international comparisons and other global challenges. These included a strong message about reducing or even removing the importance of PISA tests and comparisons, but also a concern that any changes in Wales ought to be mindful of what is happening internationally, both in terms of the future needs of learners (see also the focus on sustainable development and global citizenship), but also to ensure education and qualifications in Wales are commensurate with what is going on outside Wales (including England).

As with the Question 2a, the diversity of responses makes it impossible to look for significance across the full range. However, if we again select the 'top six' aspects most frequently cited as in need of change, we can see some interesting variations by respondent type (Figure 6).

It is parents/carers and governors who are most anxious about issues of qualifications and assessment. Perhaps not surprisingly, teachers are the group who are most concerned about funding and class size. Again, not surprisingly, teachers are the least likely to argue

that the quality and training of teachers need to be addressed – similarly, governor respondents are the group least likely to think that governance and performance management issues need to be addressed. Parents/carers and organisations are those most keen to see more focus on basic skills.

If we focus on the six teacher union responses, four identified key areas where they would like to see change. Funding was raised by three of them and innovation overload by two. Issues around performance management (e.g. ‘stop blaming schools’) were also raised by two. One union response questioned the need for Estyn.

Figure 5: The things that we need to change to improve education in Wales (% of all responses, n=949)

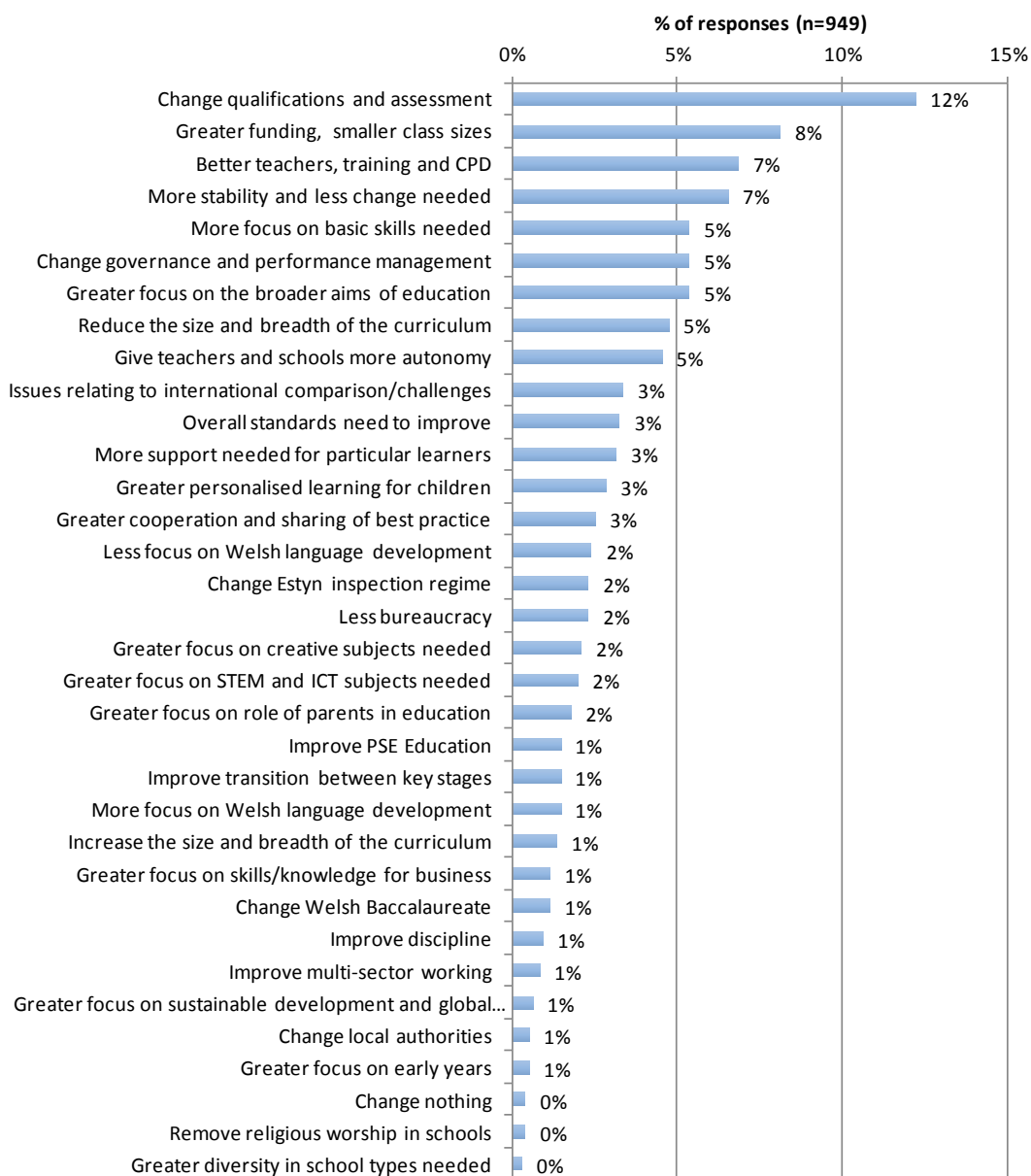
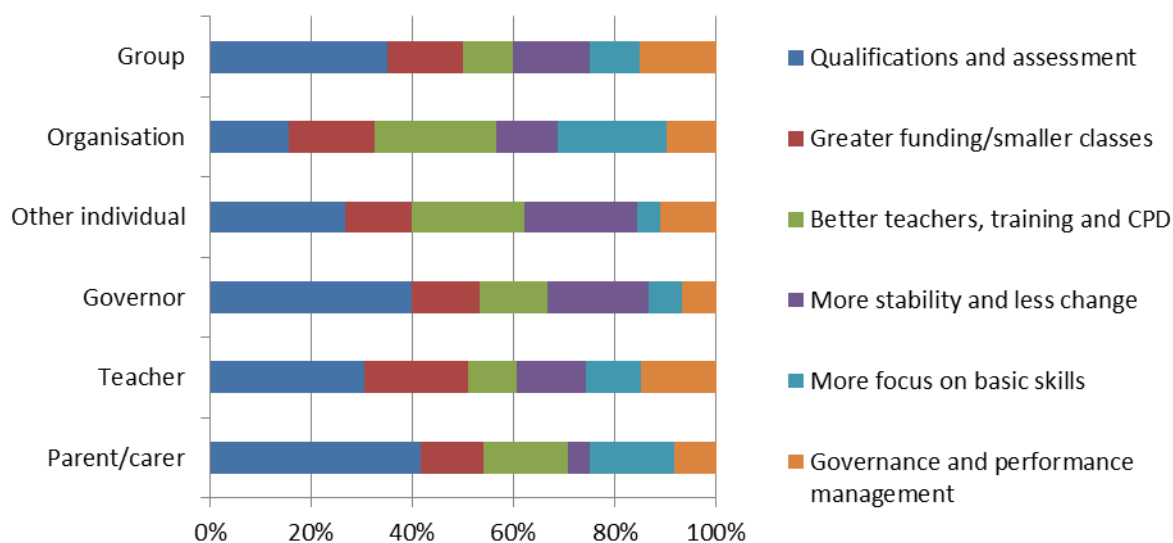


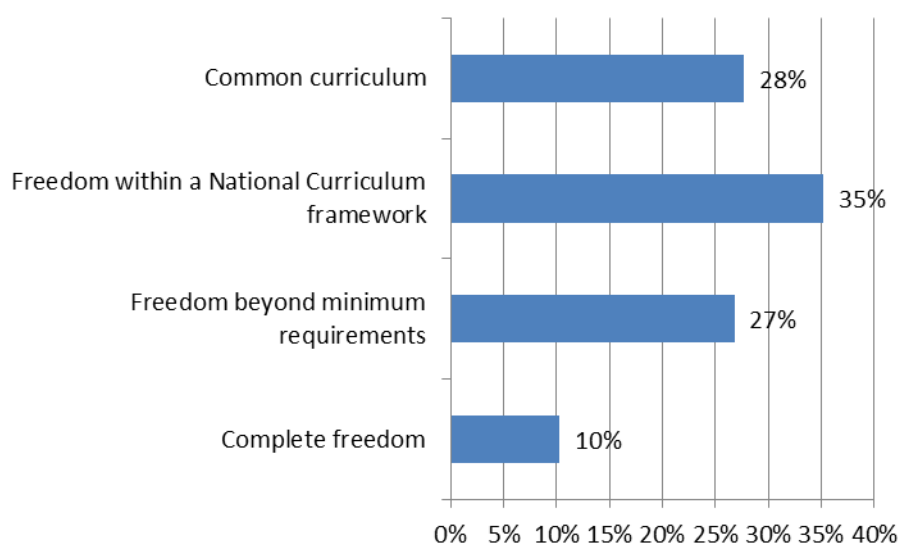
Figure 6: Most frequently mentioned ‘things that we need to change’ by respondent type



Q3a. How much freedom should schools be given to decide for themselves what they should teach?

There was a clear division between those who thought schools should have less or more freedom over curriculum content (Figure 7). However, the large majority (63%) want either a common curriculum or freedom only within a national framework.

Figure 7: Amount of freedom schools should have (% of respondents, n=321)



Within this subsample, there appears to be a relationship between type of respondent and response. Teachers were the most likely to want complete freedom or freedom beyond minimum requirements (often couched in terms of literacy and numeracy). This was most marked amongst our respondent headteachers, over half (51.6%) of whom wanted complete freedom or freedom beyond minimum requirements. Parents/carers were more likely to be in favour of a common curriculum.

Several campaigning groups argued for common curriculum on the basis that it ensured that schools had a legal obligation to cover particular subjects/topics that might otherwise get excluded.

A minority of respondents gave qualified answers, e.g. arguing for more freedom at Key Stage 2 or later. Two respondents suggested that the degree of freedom should relate to a school's ability to perform well in terms of outputs.

Q3b. Is it important that all children in Wales learn the same thing as each other until the age of 16?

Perhaps surprising in view of the support for strong government control were the responses to the question inviting respondents to consider whether all children should learn the same thing as each other until the age of 16. Of those respondents who expressed an unambiguous view, a substantial minority (46.3%) said 'yes', the majority (53.7%) said 'no'.

Those arguing for commonality of the curriculum at 16 emphasised issues of equity, fairness and the merits of a general broadly-based curriculum. Those arguing against commonality emphasised differences between learners and the need to provide more tailored approaches – particularly from 14 years onwards.

Q4a. In Wales, children aged 3 to 7 study broad Areas of Learning in the Foundation Phase. This is followed by a focus on individual subjects for the rest of their primary and secondary education. Do you think this is the right way to arrange our curriculum?

Opinions were fairly evenly divided on this issue. Of the 261 unambiguous adult responses, 57.5% of respondents said they would want a change in the way the curriculum is arranged and 42.5% thought this was the right way to arrange the curriculum. It should be noted that 26% did not answer this question clearly and seven respondents ticked yes and no.

Those most likely to agree with the current arrangements are governors and parents/carers (Figure 8). The majority of teachers and support staff disagreed with the current arrangements. Interestingly, and somewhat counter-intuitively, it was primary teachers rather than secondary teachers who were more likely to disagree with current arrangements (Figure 9). However, more often than not it appears as if this is because they would like to see a less subject-focused curriculum in the later years.

Figure 8: Is the current way the right way to arrange our curriculum?

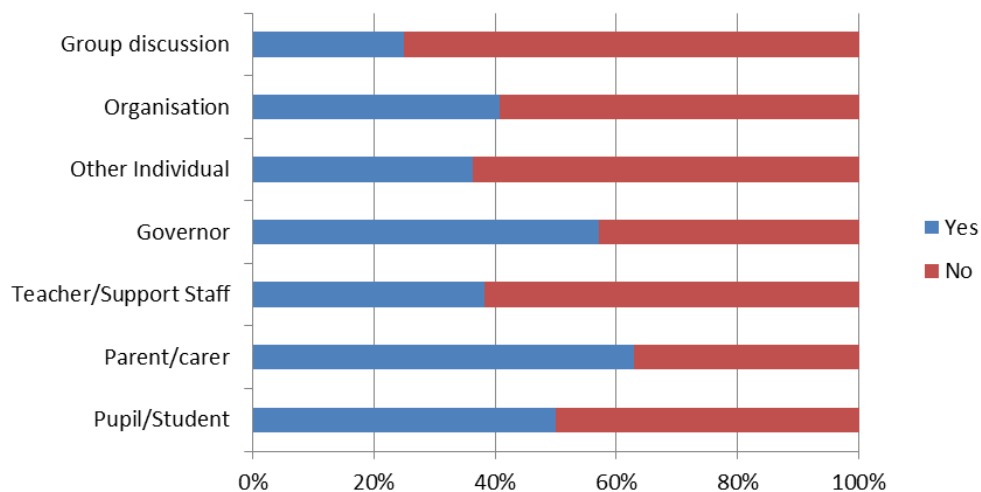
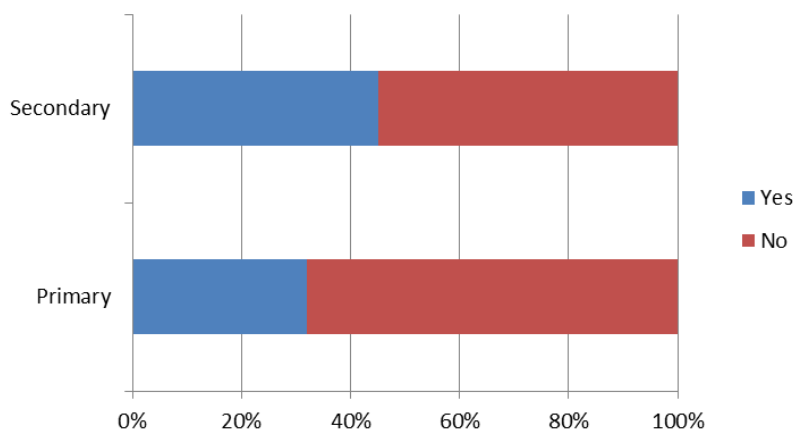


Figure 9: Is the current way the right way to arrange our curriculum? (by teacher phase)

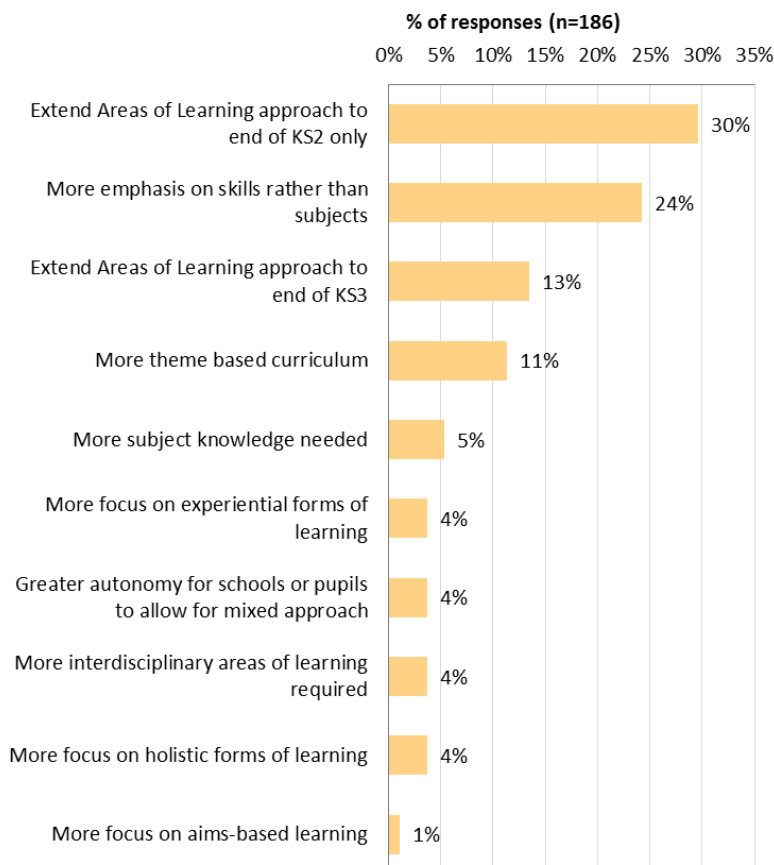


Q4b. If not, what alternative models would you suggest?

Of the 150 respondents who clearly said they would want the way the curriculum is delivered changed 136 provided alternative suggestions. In total we coded 186 responses to

this question. Just under 30% of responses said that the Areas of Learning approach (and the Foundation Phase pedagogy more generally) should be extended to the end of Key Stage 2 (Figure 10). A relatively smaller proportion (13%) of respondents said that a different approach to the organisation of the curriculum should even be extended to the end of Key Stage 3. To what extent respondents were referring to changes to KS2 and KS3 curriculum or whether they actually wanted Areas of Learning to be extended to these Key Stages is not entirely clear. But clearly there was a strong appetite amongst the 57.5% of respondents who said they would like to see change for a shift away from a subject-based curriculum for the later Key Stages, to a more skills-based and experiential approach to the curriculum. But apart from this general principle, ideas for how the curriculum could be otherwise structured were not particularly sophisticated, with a relatively small number of respondents referring to ambiguous notions of holistic, interdisciplinary, aims-based or theme-based approaches to learning. It is perhaps also worth noting that of those who said they wanted to see changes to the curriculum a small number indicated that more subject knowledge was needed. But given responses to previous questions it is likely that this refers to a reduction in the breadth of the subject curriculum in order to allow for a more in-depth understanding of a smaller range of subjects (see later).

Figure 10. Distribution of suggested alternatives to the organisation of the curriculum (% of responses, n=186)



Q5. Should any subjects be added to or removed from the curriculum?

Of the 272 respondents who gave an unambiguous answer, 30.9% of respondents said that there should be no change in the number of subjects in the curriculum and 69.1% said that some change was required. Again, it should be noted that 23% did not answer this question.

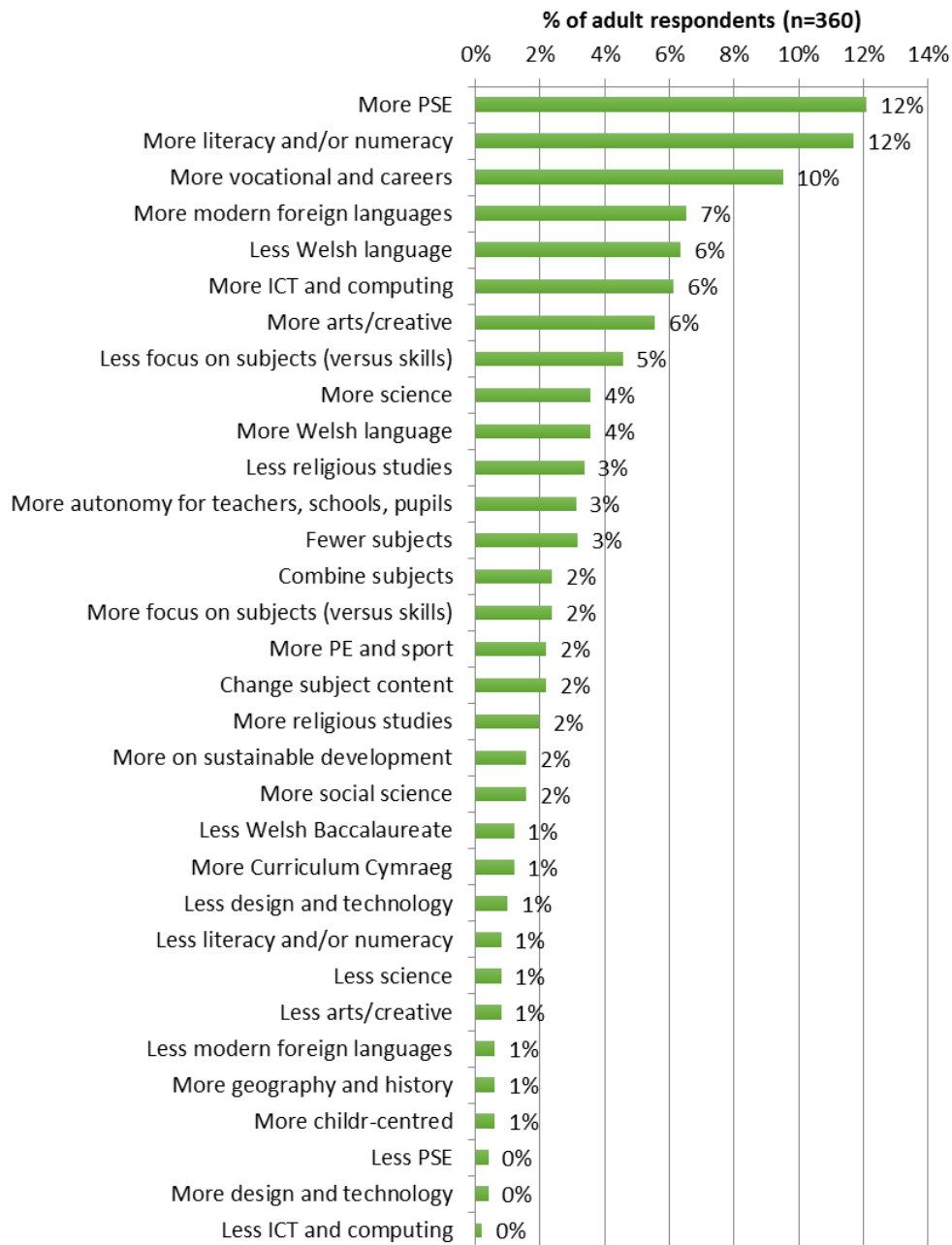
Of those that indicated they wanted to see changes to the content of the curriculum, the most frequently suggested changes (Figure 11) can be loosely categorised under the themes of personal, social and health education (PSE), such as citizenship and relationship education. The next two most popular suggestions relate to more focus on literacy and numeracy and more vocational education and careers guidance.

In terms of changes to specific subjects there were often conflicting views. Despite the prominent view throughout many of the questions in the consultation that the curriculum should be reduced there were often more respondents who said they wanted a greater focus on, or the addition of, particular subjects than those that said they needed to be limited or removed. Specific subjects requiring greater focus included personal, social and physical development, ICT and computing, modern foreign languages, arts and creative subjects, literacy and numeracy, career development and science. However, in many of these cases there were other respondents who said these subjects should be given less attention or removed (e.g. literacy and numeracy, personal, social and physical development, science, ICT, and modern foreign languages). Clearly, the responses of organisations with particular campaigning briefs reflected their particular agendas – which ranged from increasing environmental awareness to reducing domestic violence.

It is also notable that a relatively large proportion of respondents said that the presence of the Welsh language should be limited, particularly in removing its compulsory nature (especially in Key Stage 4). However, this needs to be considered against responses to other questions in the consultation exercise where the presence of the Welsh language in the curriculum was commended or needed greater attention.

It is also interesting to note that a small proportion (4.6%) of respondents suggested that there needed to be more autonomy to schools, teachers and pupils in deciding what subjects needed adding or removing, reflecting previous views about greater personalisation and a more child-centred approach to curricula decision-making.

Figure 11: Subjects to be added or removed from the curriculum (% of respondents, n=360)



Q6. Children come from different backgrounds and have different talents and abilities. How can we make sure that their education helps all of them to achieve the best they can?

There is a great diversity of opinions here – which can broadly be divided into those who think that schools should work to *reduce* the differences between pupils (usually focusing on

differences by background) and those who think that schools should *celebrate* the differences between pupils (usually focusing on differences in talents and abilities). Clearly both objectives have merit, but have rather different policy implications.

If we look at the balance of opinion, there was a general preference for 'minimising' difference (32.7% of respondents) as opposed to fostering different talents and abilities (14.2%). However, the majority response (53.2%) was to express uncertainty over the best way forward – which probably partly reflects the ambiguity in the question.

Clearly the strategies to promote education for *all* vary according to whether the aim is to minimise background effects or foster individual talents. Those who are concerned to *reduce* differences recommended a number of approaches:

Firstly abolish private education and all selection. Ensure that the Doctor's child is in the same classroom as the Cleaner's child. By such means you ensure that enthusiasm for education that comes from the aspiring middle classes drives a quality education service that benefits all in society. You ensure that children from all backgrounds get the same opportunities. Ironically this is what Grammar schools did. But we can't have selection because of its gross unfairness. What we can have is the Grammar school ethos in schools: high quality education, a love of learning and high standards. (Teacher)

Those who wanted to *celebrate* differences wanted not surprisingly to remove standardised assessments and curriculum frameworks:

If you take a holistic approach to education, then this will naturally happen. But the focus on tests and goals mean that only those who are 'academic' will 'do well' at school. (Individual)

Everyone has talents in some areas, so why not boost the child's self-esteem in the classroom by letting them share those talents – e.g. someone who is good at maths helping someone who is struggling, a child who a brilliant artist is leading a project to make a giant collage. (Parent/Carer)

A varied curriculum appreciating the different talents and exploring this will help children achieve their best.... (Organisation)

Q7. What information do you need to know about children’s educational achievement as they progress through school?

The distribution of responses to this question is illustrated in Figure 12. There were some variations across respondent types that we have explored (Figure 13), but all respondents emphasised that information relating to academic attainment was most important.

Figure 12: Information needed about children’s educational achievement as they progress through school (% of respondents, n=364)

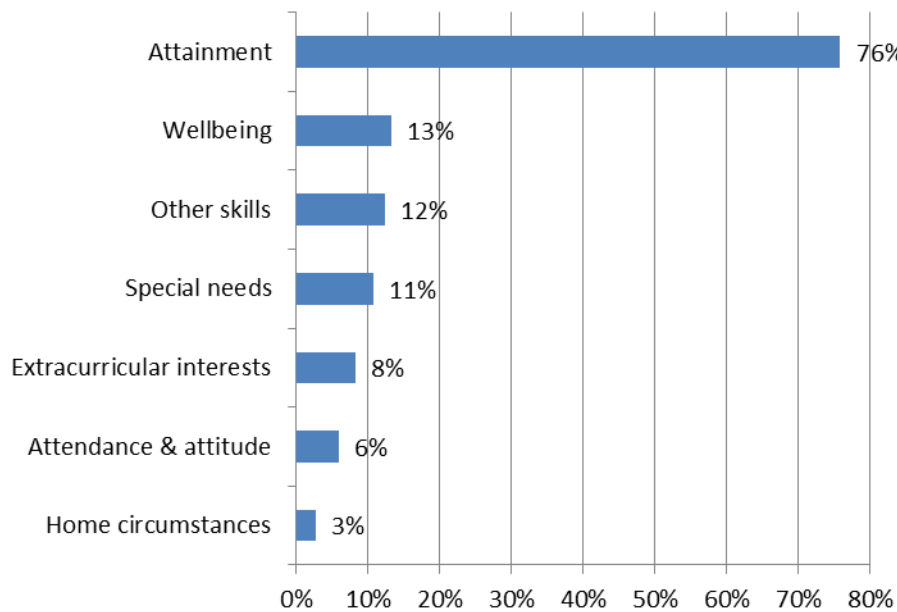
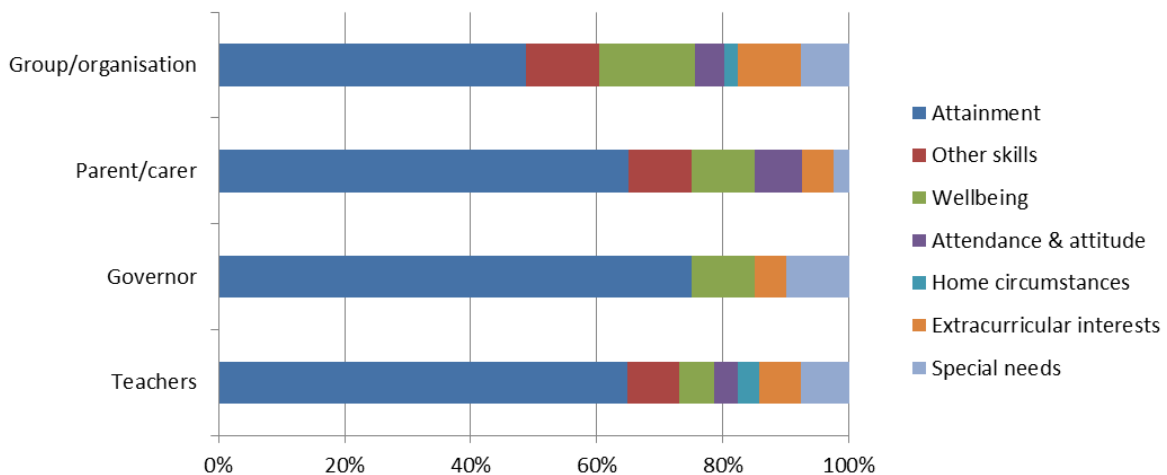


Figure 13: Information needed about children’s educational achievement as they progress through school, by respondent type



The overwhelming majority (75.8%) of all respondents wanted information about cognitive achievements – and usually comparative information – either in terms of previous attainments or relative to their age group:

Need to have a clear criteria to track progress against the continuum of skills. An effective continuum of skills and tracking ensures teachers are able to identify the next step in learning and plan accordingly. Challenging targets can be set for pupils and teachers. (Group response)

Some respondents expressed frustration at the way in which attainment data were reported:

A standard report that stops changing format every 5 minutes so it can be compared from term to term and year to year. (Parent/Carer)

Termly reports - easy to understand with grades for achievement and effort. And an end of year report detailing achievement in exams. Any slippage in a pupil's education should be flagged up immediately and reported to the parents. (Parent/Carer)

I like being able to meet and talk to teachers regularly. I prefer chatting to my children's teachers to reports. I am happy to get reports too, but I think they should be fairly simple and brief and feature personalised comments, rather than huge things full of tick boxes. (Parent/Carer)

There was some difference of opinion over the relative validity of teacher or test assessments:

We need to look at achievement through teacher assessment. We need to know the value added success that each individual child makes on an individual basis. We don't need to keep comparing and focussing on attainment ... (Group response)

Externally verified high quality assessments. Teacher assessed is pointless, it is just fiddled. The numeracy testing in wales does not qualify as high quality, it is not differentiated and completely demoralising for 50% of the pupils. (Teacher)

Validity of teacher assessments - data is SO important for a school success that the data is open to manipulations. Until a schools success of based on more than data this will not change. Whilst I don't want to see SATS style tests that pupils are 'taught' to pass, I do think the current system does not allow teachers to genuinely

assess and evaluate pupils' achievements. Does a snap shot of one assessment prove a pupils ability to demonstrate a specific skill? Should teachers be assessing progress over the full academic year instead? It would be nice if, as professionals, a teacher evaluation of a student was accepted; however do teachers have the professional respect to ensure rigor and fairness? (Teacher)

While most respondents talk about attainment generally, some (12.4%) mentioned that information on specific skills should be recorded:

Formative information about the skills and how to help them progress those skills. Help to identify interests and aptitudes. The extent to which they are able to learn independently. Information about instances when they showed respect or lack of it. (Teacher)

I'm much more interested in their personal achievements. There is too much focus on academic ability. What about the child that helps another who is on the autistic spectrum or gives up his seat for someone else. When I'm hiring someone, academic excellence is important but personality, morals and emotional intelligence are much more of a deciding factor. (Parent/Carer)

One in eight parents/carers (13.3%) were also interested in having information on their children's wellbeing:

In Primary school, I believe their emotional well being is paramount, giving them a good basic grounding for how to be able to study effectively; thus knowing their ability, without the stress of tests (and primary children are aware of this) - personally I believe the results are more about how the school is performing rather than the child. (Parent/Carer)

Those saying they needed to know about home circumstances were largely teachers.

Q8. Do you feel we currently have the right balance in schools between assessment and teaching/learning?

The majority (56%) of those responding to this question who expressed a clear opinion felt the Welsh Government had *not* got the right balance between assessment and teaching and learning (Figure 14). It should be noted though that 30% of respondents did not answer this question.

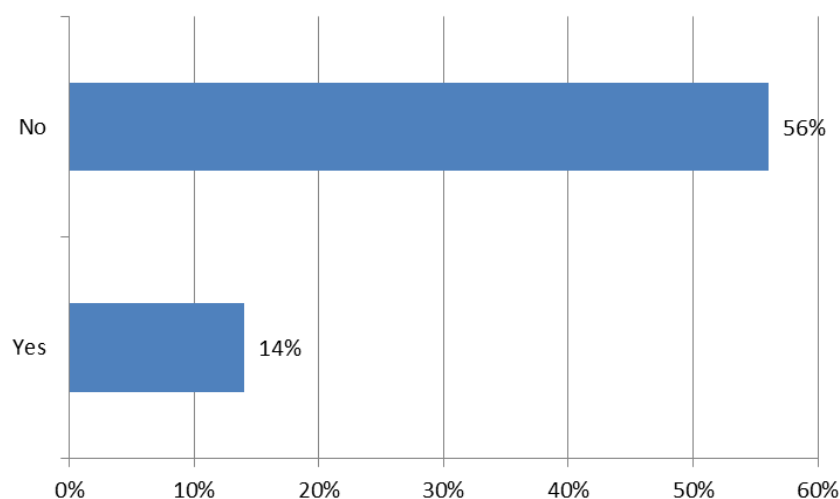
All of those saying 'no' felt there was too much assessment in general, for example:

No it is too heavily assessment based and we don't give children time to improve and progress. (Teacher)

No, we have far too much assessment in our schools. This assessment drives the government which in turn the county and the school leadership and all this pressure lands on the teachers. Schools are so obsessed with being top of a band or table of some kind that focus is being lost. (Teacher)

I do not think the pressure of sitting tests at Key Stage 1 or 2 is beneficial to individual children, or to the schools which have to administer the tests. (Individual)

Figure 14: Is the current balance between assessment and teaching/learning right? (% of respondents, n= 255)



There were not notable differences according to type of respondents, but parent/carer responses revealed significant anxieties:

My [child] has been taught to pass a test this year, which has stripped all the joy out of learning for them. The new tests do not seem to have any benefit for the child. I am not interested in whether 7-year-olds somewhere else in Wales scored higher in a test than my child, nor in whether the school up the road got better results than hers. (Parent/Carer)

No. Why did my seven year old [child] have to go through formal assessments that distinctly caused him worry and concern? He has spent 4 years learning through play

and then has to sit in formal exam conditions similar to those that 16 years olds do.
(Teacher)

There were also concerns that the assessments were too narrow and focused on institutional performance and not the quality of the teaching:

The current situation does seem to focus on measuring schools' performance through assessing children against age related 'norms' rather than on the effectiveness of the teaching/ learning in achieving an individual's potential. Comparing an individual child's educational achievement against a set of artificially created international standards may give an indication of the performance of one national educational 'system' against another, but does little to further the development and build the aspirations of the individual. (Teacher)

Other comments related to getting the right balance between different types of assessment:

Currently too much emphasis on 'assessment of learning', not enough 'assessment for learning'. This restricts the capacity for teachers to be creative in delivery of learning experiences and does not necessarily improve outcomes for pupils. Schools focus is on national tests and inspection - literacy and numeracy. We have several examples of schools not engaging projects because of a want to prepare learners for tests and inspection. (Organisation)

We believe it's important to get the right balance between exam condition testing and coursework. There is a clear gender difference in performance in assessment type with boys testing better under exam conditions and girls doing better with coursework. Too much focus on either could disadvantage half the pupils in a school. As England moves towards a more controlled assessment focused approach we would advise caution and that Welsh Government consider the full impacts of such an approach before making any changes to assessment in Wales. As outlined above we believe that it is important that education equips young people with more than just academic skills. Getting the balance right between assessment and teaching/learning is important if we are to enable educators to provide this wider learning. (Teacher)

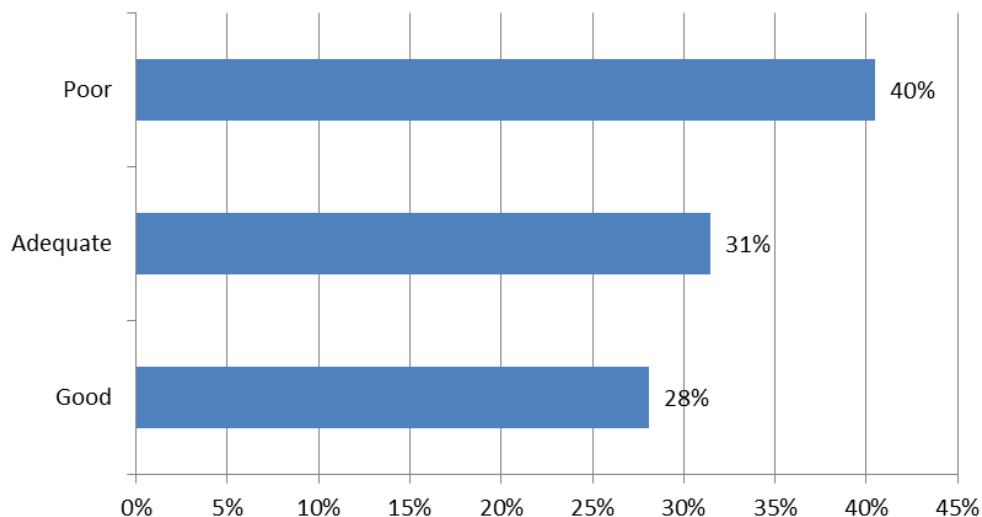
Additional question for parents/carers

Q9. How far do the current forms of reporting from schools help you to understand how your child(ren) is (are) progressing at school?

The majority of those identifying themselves as parents/carers (including those who are also teachers and governors) were not happy with current forms of reporting (Figure 15):

Overall, poorly. Face-to-face meetings/written reports are too infrequent (twice a year) and too short. (Parent/Carer)

Figure 15: Adequacy of current reporting from schools about children's progress (% of parent/carer respondents, n=89)



Parents' evenings were seen to be particularly problematic – either because they did not impart useful knowledge or were too infrequent:

Parents evenings tend to be like a cattle market with lots of parents trying to see the same teacher and when you get there, there is a limited time period. (Parent/Carer)

Written reports were also deemed to be too infrequent (in one case, apparently non-existent). Most often, though, it was the content of the written reports that parents/carers did not like:

Written reports which use statement banks are not worth reading. They are lengthy, impersonal and give no idea of where my children are in terms of ability. They tell me what my child is doing but not what they should be doing or how they compare to

other pupils of the same age. I find this out at secondary school level - too late, almost. (Parent/Carer and teacher)

The lengthy school reports have been impersonal and meaningless, measuring my children against a set of pre-determined goals. I'm sure they are tedious for the teachers to fill in too. The parents evenings are better, but only because I have learned to come prepared with a list of questions that I really want to know the answers to - like what do they enjoy doing, how do they fit into the class as a whole, do they get on with others etc. (Parent/Carer)

As a parent I feel that my children's reports tell me very little about my child's progress. There is too much use of comment banks so reports all say exactly the same thing. The main thing I look at is effort grade and if they are on target or not. (as a teacher I am forced to write bland reports using comment banks) (Parent/Carer and teacher)

Less than one third of parent respondents felt that reporting arrangements were good:

I feel well informed about my child's progress, receiving a written report and having two face-to-face parents evenings per year. We also receive the governors' report form the school which contains performance data for the school, so this is a useful comparison. (Parent/Carer and teacher)

I only have one child in school at present, and it is a small school, so I am able to talk to staff easily, and we have met their teacher. I like plenty of face-to-face contact. Ideally for me, I would like a face-to-face meeting 3 times a year (one each term) and a personalised report at the end of the year. I only work part time so can make daytime meetings, but I think there should be ample opportunities for working parents to meet teachers. In general, I like to be involved with my children's school, hence choosing a small school. (Parent/Carer)

What, if anything, would you prefer?

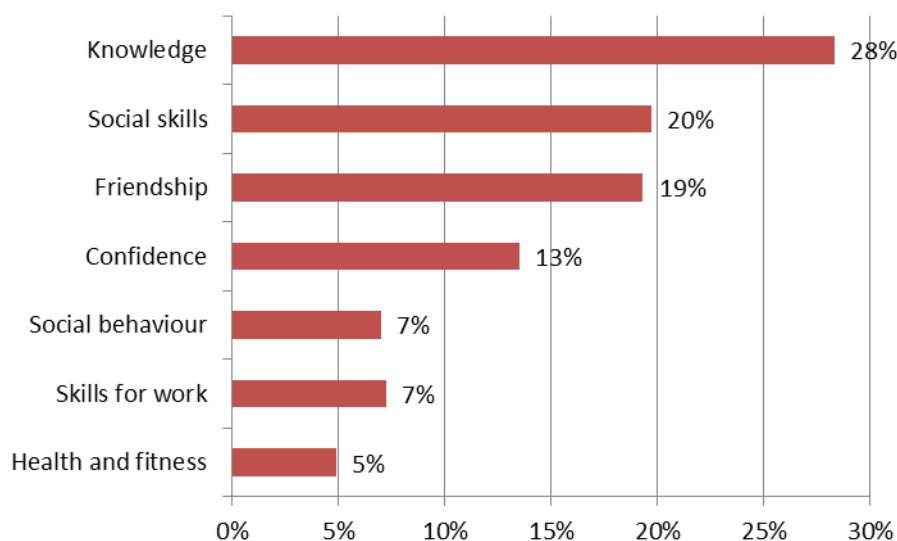
Parents/carers' suggestions as to how to improve the system usually focused on increasing the number of parents evening (twice yearly or termly), increasing the frequency of written reports (termly or monthly) and making them more personal. One parent/carers wanted online progress monitoring of their child, another a home-school link book to aid dialogue between parents/carers and teachers.

SECTION 3: The Children and Young People Questionnaire

1a. Besides qualifications, what are the three most important things you should gain from school?

We used a different classification system for these responses, because the content of the majority of answers was so different from the responses elicited from the Adult Questionnaire. In particular, these respondents emphasized the *social significance* of going to school. Eight categories of responses were identified and their relative distribution is illustrated in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Most important things that children and young people think they should gain from school (% of responses, n=756)



The most mentioned single words were ‘knowledge’ and ‘friendship’ and these words appear remarkably frequently. Various kinds of social skills were also mentioned often.

In terms of knowledge, pupils rarely specified any particular knowledge. ‘Knowledge’ was generally seen as essential to do well in life or make it easier to gain qualifications. Notable exceptions related to Welsh, IT, maths and PE.

Pupils frequently identified the importance of schools for helping them gain various social skills such as working with others, communication and becoming independent. This included teamwork and social skills.

For children and young people one of the most important things about school is their relationship with their classmates. Reasons given for this included the need to avoid loneliness, but also reflected that this was one of the main purposes of education.

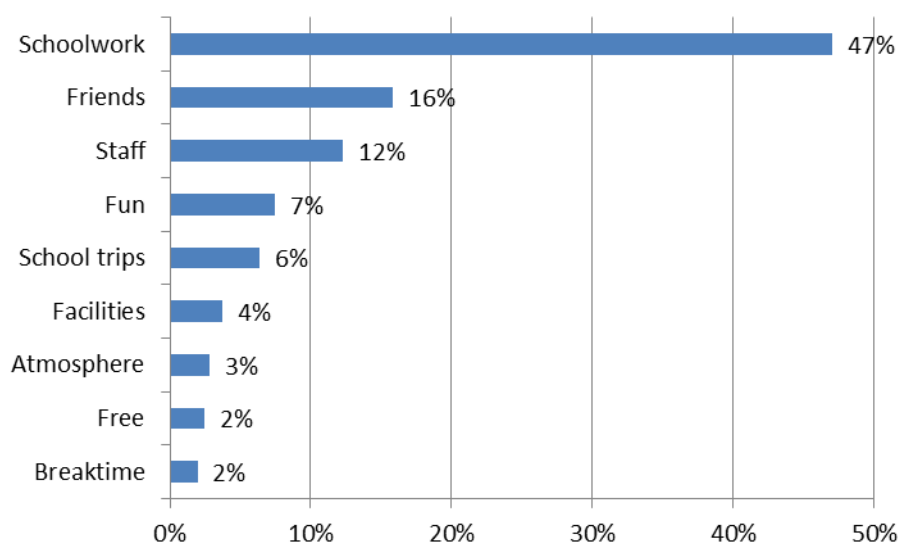
1b. How do you think these things will help you in the future?

The majority of respondents explained that these aspects will help in securing jobs and opportunities for the future.

2. What are the three best things about your education?

According to children and young people, the best things about education fell into nine main areas (Figure 17). Almost one half of the responses relate to aspects of schoolwork. Sometimes these refer to learning in general, sometimes to particular styles of learning (e.g. group work) and sometimes to particular subjects. Some subjects appear frequently - Maths, History, Reading and especially PE. The opportunity to learn Welsh was also singled out - particularly for those in Welsh medium schools.

Figure 17: Best things about education in Wales according to children and young people? (% of responses, n= 563)



Again, and in contrast to the responses to the Adult Questionnaire, we see the importance of friendships and social relationships to children and young people.

Pupils also made positive comments about the quality of staff (teachers *and* supply teachers) as well as the generally supportive and encouraging aspect of their schools. Out-of-classroom activities (break time and school trips) were also mentioned.

A small minority of respondents mentioned that they appreciated that school was free. However, these answers were clustered in the returns and we therefore suspect that they reflect one particular class's discussion about this.

3. What are the three main things that we need to change to improve your education?

In terms of what could be improved nearly one in five of all suggestions by children and young people were largely about changing the balance of subjects (Figure 18). However, there was no clear direction in which they wanted the subjects to be rebalanced. Some wanted more of a particular subject, some less. Welsh in particular divided our respondents – with a small minority wanting it not be compulsory and others wanting more Welsh. There was an age dimension here with the younger respondents being more enthusiastic about Welsh.

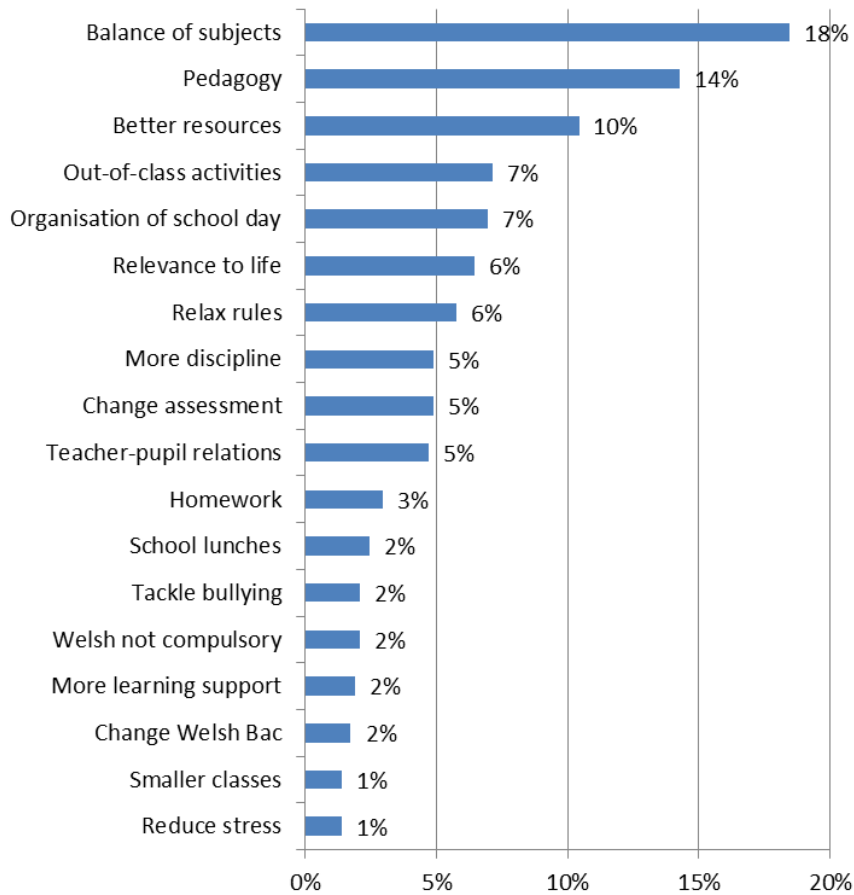
There were, not surprisingly, other age-related differences. For example, older pupils were more likely to worry about changing examinations. KS3 and KS4 respondents were also most likely to want more coverage of life-relevant issues in the curriculum and smaller class sizes. However, the very small number of respondents in each category by age means some caution is required in interpreting these differences.

A significant number of respondents in all Key Stages wanted to see changes in how they were taught. Comments related to pedagogy revolved around making lessons more practical (like science experiments), more fun and interactive.

The next most frequently expressed suggestion for improvement – again expressed across respondents from KS2, KS3 and KS4 – was for more out-of-classroom activities.

Forty respondents mentioned the organisation of the school day – but the nature of the desired change varied. Some wanted later start to the school day, others and earlier start.

Figure 18: What children and young people think needs to change to improve their education (% of responses, n=574)

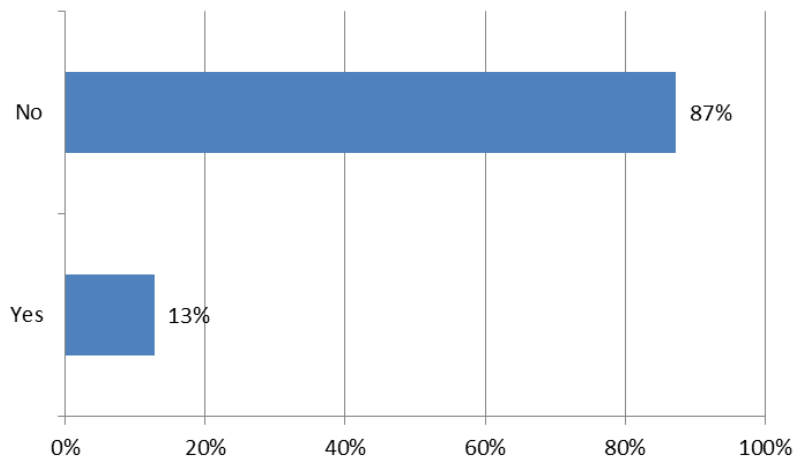


4. Does it matter if you study different things from your friends in school?

Of the 338 codable answers, the overwhelming majority indicate that they do not think it matters if you study different things from your friends at school (Figure 19).

The overwhelming majority of pupils felt this did not matter. Reasons given for this included that some children may not enjoy what their friends are doing and should be allowed to do what they want, or because some children may be struggling with the same content. This reflected the view amongst some children that they are all different from one another.

Figure 19: Do children and young people think it matters if they study different things to their friends (% of respondents, n=338)



5. In Wales, between the ages of 3 and 7 children study Areas of Learning, like ‘Knowledge and Understanding of the World’. As you get older you study individual subjects, like science, history and geography. How do you think the things you learn should be organised to help you get the most from school?

It is difficult to analyse the responses to this question systematically because they are rather diverse and do not make much sense. We are not convinced the children understood the question. Responses ranged from that they should be organised alphabetically, by age groups, or by difficulty, to getting more time off to revise.

6. Pupils in your school come from all sorts of different families and backgrounds and have different talents and abilities. How can we make sure that education helps all pupils to do the best they can?

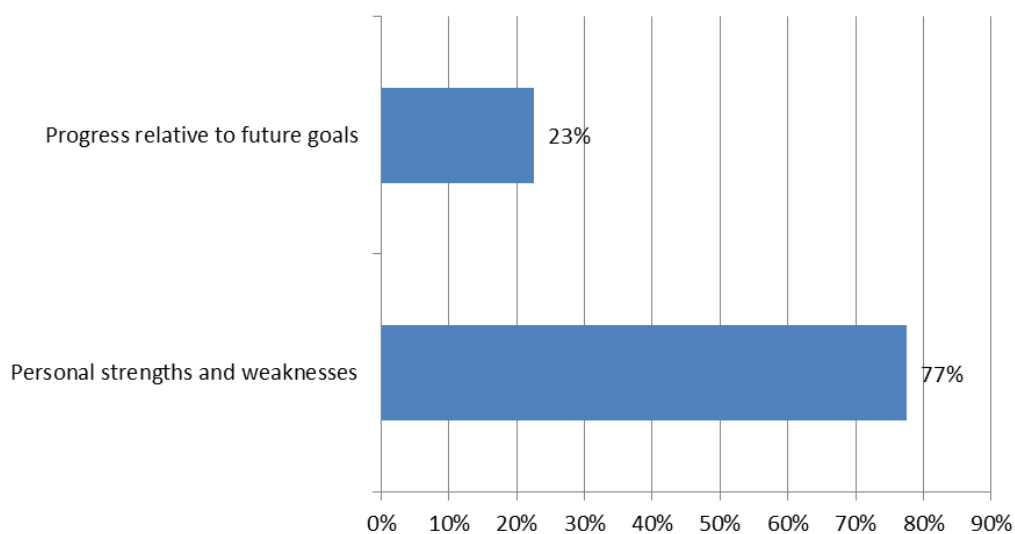
We have similar concerns about their understanding of this question. A minority suggested particular strategies, including: lessons that support all abilities or giving those with specific educational needs additional tutoring.

But more often there was no response or the answers were somewhat at a tangent, for example, it depends on where they are from, or that children should re-read questions, or allowing children to decide what clubs are organised after school.

7. What do you need to know about your achievements as you go through school?

We categorised children and young people's responses to this question into two main overarching categories – how well they are doing and the how their achievement relates to future goals (Figure 20). Within those two categories, there is a focus on where their talents lie and what areas they need to improve. In addition, 'exam results' was an interesting category – many were commenting on when they will get the results, and when are the exams (so it may be better categorised as exam logistics and communication).

Figure 20: What children and young people think they need to know about their achievements (% of respondents, n=244)



The majority were just interested in how they were doing and what their strengths and weaknesses were.

However, over one in five specifically mentioned the need for information about the relevance of what they were doing for their future and how their own progress matched up to their ambitions.

Not surprisingly, those particularly interested in knowing about the significance of their progress for future goals were in the KS4 and 16+ categories.

SECTION 4: Conclusion

The invitation to participate in the Independent Review of Assessment and the National Curriculum elicited a large and varied response. There were 364 responses to the Adult Questionnaire – including many from individuals, groups and organisations throughout Wales. There were 349 responses from children and young people – representing learners at all key stages from the Foundation Phase to post-16 education.

In this report of their responses, we have drawn attention to the common themes that emerged and have sought to ensure that the diversity of responses is represented. Because the questionnaires were anonymous, we do not know very much about the background of our respondents and, as is always the case in surveys of this kind, we know that some voices will be under-presented. However, we do know that all sectors, regions and key stakeholders in Wales are included. And the breadth of contrasting opinions evident in the responses suggests that the Call for Evidence has managed to capture the perspectives of a broad constituency. In the following section we provide an overview of the main findings that emerged:

In terms of the priorities for education, it was clear from the many responses that schools should be doing more than simply imparting knowledge. While successful learning was a highly valued outcome of education by all stakeholders (including children and young people), so too were a range of other outcomes. General social competences, life skills and personal confidence were seen by all as important things to be gained from school. A key difference that emerged from the Children and Young People Questionnaire was the importance of schools in developing friendships – something that did not really feature in the Adult Questionnaire.

All respondents were appreciative of many aspects of education in Wales. Not surprisingly, the Adult Questionnaire elicited responses relating to policies and system attributes and the Children and Young People Survey elicited responses on the more immediate school context.

In terms of the ‘best things’ about education in Wales, there was overall support for the general direction of travel of the Welsh Government. The most frequently mentioned ‘best things’ were the Foundation Phase, the Welsh language and bilingualism and the focus on Welsh identity and the Curriculum Cymreig. Independence from England was also frequently mentioned. For Children and Young People, there was significant appreciation of schoolwork, of friends and of school staff.

Although there seems to be general support for many initiatives introduced by the Welsh Government, respondents identified a whole number of areas where improvements could

be made. Responses to both surveys indicated that the curriculum and assessment needed to be changed if education in Wales were to improve. In general though there does not appear to be any consensus what precisely how it should be changed. Respondents to the Adult Questionnaire were concerned about the increasing amount of assessments. One of the clearest findings from the Survey overall is that the balance between assessment and learning was not right – with too much emphasis being given to the former at the expense of the latter.

Children and Young People were actually far less likely to identify assessment as an area in need of change, but they did feel that the balance between subjects could be improved. They also raised issues about pedagogy and suggested a number of ways in which they felt their lessons might be more relevant and engaging.

Issues of the curriculum and its relevance for adult life were also raised in the Adult Questionnaire. The three most frequently cited subject areas that respondents felt should be enlarged and/or improved were PSE, basic skills (i.e. literacy and numeracy) and more vocational education and careers guidance.

In terms of the organisation of the curriculum, respondents were divided about whether the current arrangements (Areas of Learning in the Foundation Phase followed by individual subjects) were the right way to proceed. Those who wished to see changes were more likely to want to move away from a traditional subject-based approach. The most frequent responses suggested extending the Areas of Learning approach to the end of KS2 and even KS3 or organising learning around skills and/or themes.

In terms of changing the curriculum, it is clear that the majority of respondents felt that this should be an area of Government policy rather than decided at the school level. Only a small minority felt that schools should have freedom over what they should teach. There was general support for a common curriculum or for freedom only within the parameters established by a National Curriculum.

One reason for the support for the National Curriculum might be the need for schools to provide regular and comparable data about pupil progress. Although to some extent this might be seen to run counter to concerns about over-assessment, information about attainment was considered the most important means to assess progress through school. Indeed, it was one of the major areas of concern expressed by parents/carers when invited to comment on the adequacy of current forms of reporting. Information about personal strengths and weaknesses was also the main kind of information which children and young people themselves felt they needed to know to help them progress.

Overall, this Call for Evidence has elicited a broad range of perspectives from a diverse range of respondents. It has revealed general support for some of the flagship policies of the Welsh Government and an appreciation for many aspects of schooling. However, the one area that comes across clearly as in need of attention is relationship between the curriculum and assessment. This suggests that the Independent Review of Assessment and the National Curriculum is timely and important.

APPENDIX

Relevant data from the WISERDEducation Research Programme

The following information contains data we have collected during the first two sweeps of the WISERDEducation research programme that we feel is of particular relevance to the Call for Evidence. The information is organised with reference to original questions presented in the review and the relevant findings.

WISERDEducation is a three-year, multi-cohort, longitudinal study involving over 1,500 pupils in 29 secondary and primary schools throughout Wales. The schools and pupils participating in our study were chosen to reflect the geographical, ethnic, economic and linguistic diversity of Wales. At the beginning of the study, the pupils were organised into the following four cohorts: Cohort A (Year 2), Cohort B (Year 6), Cohort C (Year 8) and Cohort D (Year 10). In addition to our work with pupils, we have been collecting data from headteachers and their staff through both qualitative interviews and surveys regarding their professional profile and educational issues both within their school context and in Wales in general.

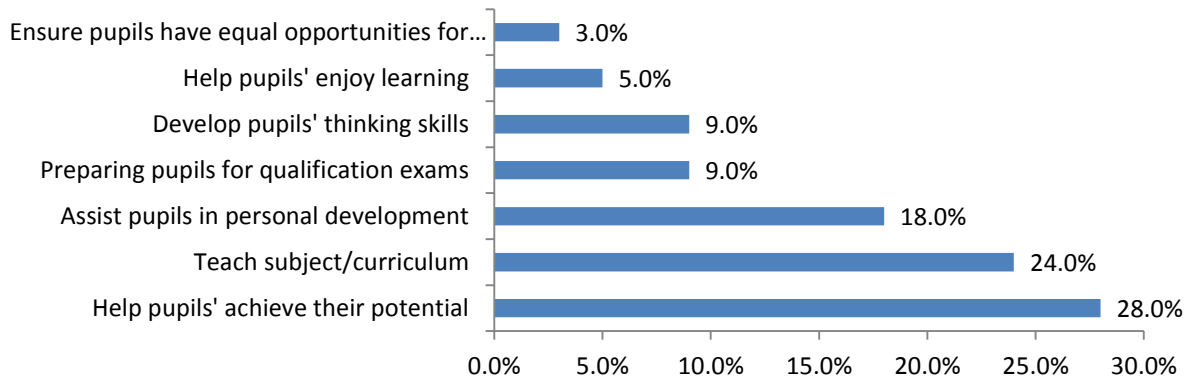
What are the three most important things young people should gain as a result of their time in school? (AQ1a)

In our study, teachers were provided with a list of five teaching objectives and asked to rank them on scale of one to six in order of their importance, with one being most important and six being least important. The responses ranked as most important are provided in the following table:

| % | Response |
|------|---|
| 46.8 | Basic skills and build up knowledge |
| 17.5 | To develop pupils' capacity to think |
| 27.2 | To foster pupils' moral and social development |
| 3.6 | To instil respect for the pupils' and other peoples' property |
| 2.0 | To teach pupils to work cooperatively |

Teachers were also asked to describe what they felt was their greatest priority in the classroom. The responses were coded using thematic analysis and the results are provided in the following chart.

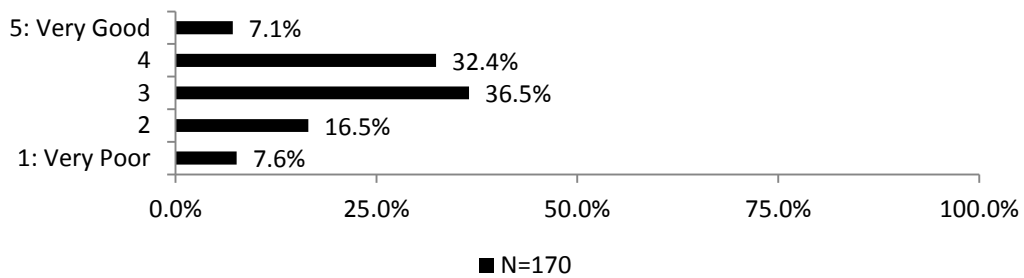
% of response (n=150). What is your greatest priority in the classroom?



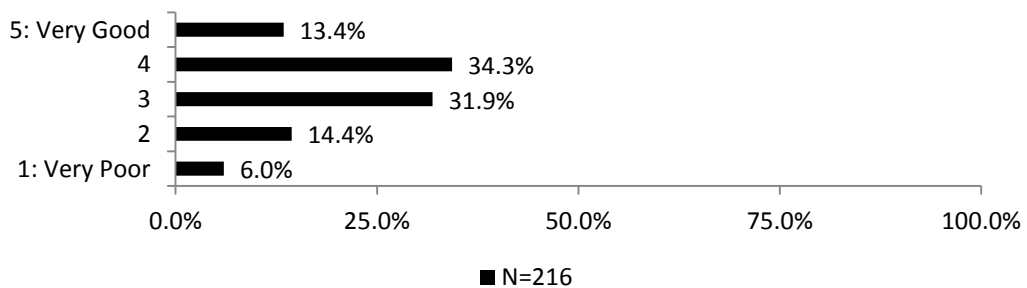
What are the three main things that we need to change to improve education in Wales, and how would you change them? (AQ2b)

The WISERDEducation Teacher Survey asked teachers to 'rate' a number of key Welsh Government policies. Many of their answers reflect those given by teachers in the Call for Evidence.

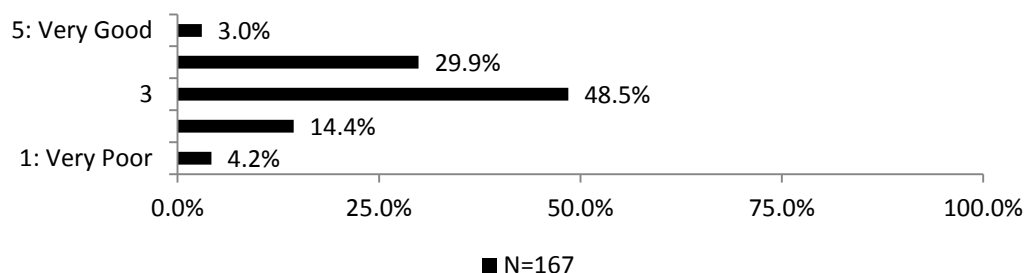
Foundation Phase



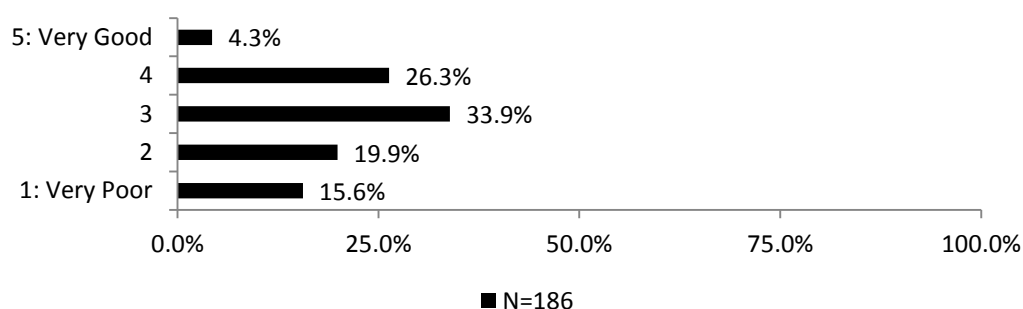
National literacy and numeracy framework



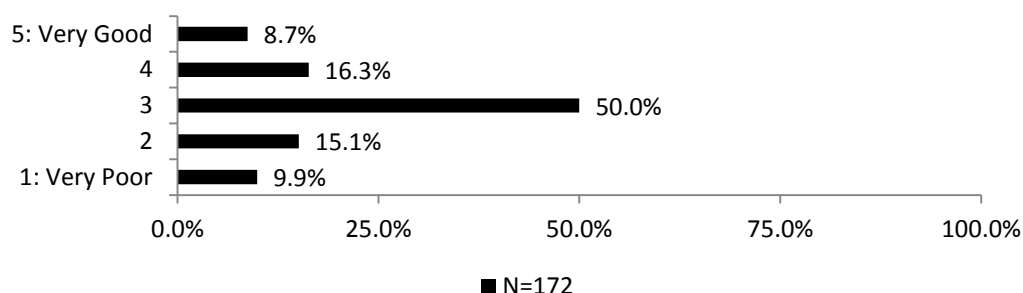
Learning Pathways 14-19



Welsh Baccaulaureate



Welsh medium education strategy



In addition, teachers in the WISERDEducation survey were asked to identify what they felt were the three most pressing issues in education in Wales. This open-ended question elicited a range of responses that mirror many of the issues raised by the respondents in the Call for Evidence. The majority of responses we received concerned a lack of adequate funding and budgeting issues. The teachers also mentioned curricular issues, such as the need for a comprehensive curricular review and reform that streamlined the national curriculum and granted greater individual freedom at the school level within the curriculum. The teachers were also asked what educational policy in Wales needed the most reform. Again, educational funding was the most frequently raised issue. Finally, teachers were asked what they felt were the main obstacles they faced as teachers. Overwhelmingly,

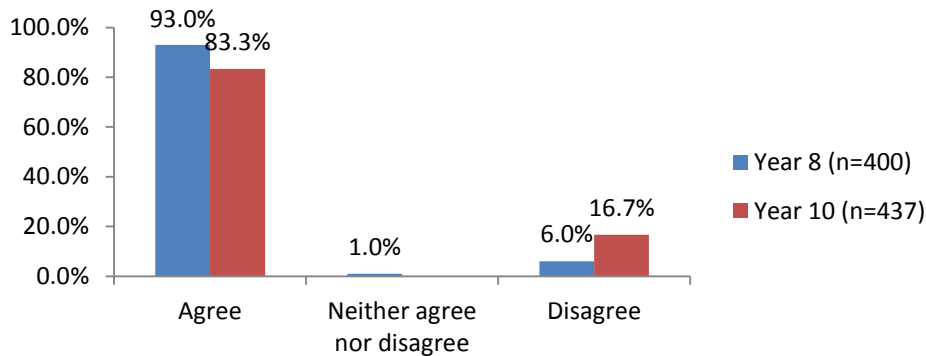
teachers responded they felt there was ‘too much change’ and that they felt there were constantly trying to ‘catch-up’ to shifts in education policy. Many teachers also mentioned that funding issues undermined their ability to effectively teach their pupils. Lastly, teachers perceived education in Wales as being laden with too much bureaucracy, which in turn, they felt negatively impacted their ability to create the best circumstances for learning for their pupils.

What are the three most important things you should gain from school? (CYPQ1a)

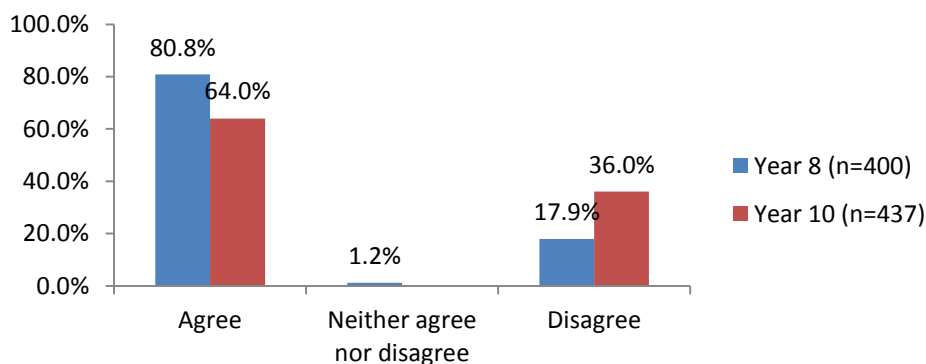
Although the pupils in our study were not asked questions specifically regarding what they should learn in school, they were asked about the potential benefit school can have on their current and future circumstances. For example, Year 8 and Year 10 pupils were asked how much they agree with the following statements:

- (a) The things I learn now in school help me in my everyday life
- (b) The work I do now in school will help me achieve my future goals

% of response. The work I do now in school will help me achieve my future goals



% of response. The things I learn now in school help me in my everyday life.



What are the three best things about your education? (CYPQ2)

In WISERDEducation, we asked Year 8 and year 10 pupils to list up to three things they liked most about their school. Their answers endorse the findings from the Call for Evidence on the importance of social relationships at school. The pupils in WISERDEducation said the ability to meet people and develop friendships were what they liked most about their school. They also mentioned teachers that they thought were good teachers either through their commitment to teaching, ability to teach the subject matter and/or their level of pastoral care for the pupils.

In relation to specific subjects and Welsh language in particular, pupils in Year 6, 8 and 10 were asked how much they like Welsh as a school subject.

How much do you like Welsh as a school subject?

